OLD TESTAMENT
PSEUDEPIGRAPHA
More Noncanonical Scriptures
VOLUME 1

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FOREWORD BY
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Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur
A new translation and introduction

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This pseudopigraphon, consisting in its present form of a single paragraph, contains the prophecy quoted in Matt 27:9-10 concerning the thirty pieces of silver which were given to Judas Iscariot for his betrayal of Jesus and subsequently used, by the Jewish chief priests, to purchase the field of the potter:

Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the sons of Israel had set a price, and they\(^1\) gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."\(^2\)

The words "cited" by Matthew appear nowhere in the canonical Book of Jeremiah. The most probable explanation for the quotation is that Matthew here combined words, phrases and themes from Jeremiah (18:1-12; 19:1-2, 6, 11; 32:6-15) and Zechariah (11:13), but attributed the whole to the more famous of the two prophets. Such conflated prophetic citations are encountered elsewhere in early Christianity (e.g., Matt 21:5; Mark 1:2; Rom 9:27; 1 Clem. 34:6).\(^3\) The Prophecy to Pashhur offers a "solution" to the difficulty of Matthew's "misquotation" of Jeremiah by placing on the prophet's lips this same combination of canonical Jeremiah and Zechariah in a rebuke addressed to a certain Pashhur, a priest, temple official and false prophet mentioned in Jeremiah 20:1-6.\(^4\)

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is today found only in medieval and early modern manuscripts which stem from Coptic, Ethiopian and Arabic Christianity. It is still read in the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches as an authentic prophecy of Jeremiah. Nonetheless, there is good reason to conclude it was not composed in any of these Eastern branches of Christianity, but in all probability is a product of early Jewish Christianity and reaches back to a time before the emergence of Coptic, Ethiopian or Arabic Christian traditions. It is not to be confused with the Legend of Jeremiah which also appears in some Ethiopian

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1. Some MSS read, "I gave them."
2. Adapting the NRSV.
4. The Pashhur of Jer 20:1-6 is "the son of Immer." At 21:1 and 38:1 MT another Pashhur, the "son of Malchiah" is also mentioned. In addition, 38:1 also speaks of a "Gedaliah son of Pashhur." There is, however, no reason to think that either of these two Pashhurs should be identified with the "Pashhur son of Immer" of 20:1-6 or that any ancient exegete ever made such an identification.
biblical manuscripts and in fact is the Jeremiah chapter from the Lives of the Prophets (see OTP, 2:379-99).

Manuscripts and Versions

To this day Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur serves as one of the readings in Coptic lectionaries for Good Friday. Three manuscripts have been consulted for the translation here presented, although many more are probably in existence. Two of the manuscripts are in Sahidic and the third is in Bohairic. Each of the Sahidic manuscripts has been published at least once. The Bohairic manuscript, however, has to my knowledge never been published, although Henry Tattam published the text of a similar manuscript over a century ago.

Sa: Oxford, Bodleian Coptic XX (= Huntington 5). A fragmentary codex written on paper of which only 37 folia survive. A Lectionary for Holy Week, with readings from both Testaments. Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is found on fol. 177-177, that is, the 273rd and 274th pages of the once complete codex. Given the fragmentary nature of the ms, it is impossible to be certain for which day and office our text was appointed to be read. The manuscript has been dated to the twelfth (so Horner) or twelfth-thirteenth (Feder) centuries. The text of the Prophecy to Pashhur from this manuscript was published by Adolf Erman.

Sa: Rome, Borgian. 109, N. xcix. A reasonably complete Sahidic-Arabic lectionary for Holy Week, with readings from both Testaments in Coptic and, in the margins, prayers, liturgies, Trisagion and hymns in Arabic. The Prophecy to Pashhur occurs at fol. 134v-135r. i.e., pages 212-13, and is the fourth reading for the first daylight Office for Good Friday. (The days of Holy Week are divided into five night offices and five day offices.) This paper manuscript has been variously dated to the twelfth-thirteenth (Hynernat), the thirteenth (Horner) or the thirteenth-fourteenth (Balestri) centuries. Our text from this manuscript has been published twice, in 1810 by George Zoega and then in 1889 by P. Agostino Ciasca.

Bo: London, British Library, Add. 5997 (= Crum 1247). A Bohairic and Arabic manuscript, from Nitria, written in 1274 C.E. and described by Crum as "a Lectionary for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter." The manuscript is written on paper and the Prophecy to Pashhur is found on fol. 213a-213b, which corresponds to pages 431 and

5. Similarly, the noncanonical 2 Esdras (5 Ezra) 2:42-48 is still a possible reading for All Saints' Day in the lectionary of the Church of England.
7. Adolf Erman, Bruchstücke der oberägyptischen Übersetzung des alten Testamentes (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlags, 1880), 34.
Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur

432 of the original manuscript. Here also it is the fourth reading for the first daylight
office of Good Friday. The Bohairic text of the Prophecy to Pashhur was published by
Henry Tattam from another manuscript and included in the preface to his critical edition
of the Bohairic text of the Major Prophets. Tattam's manuscript is very closely
related to, but not identical with BL Add. 5997. Where they differ, I designate Tattam's
text as Bo7 and the British Library manuscript as Bo1.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is also found in numerous Ethiopic manuscripts. In-
deed, most but not all Ethiopic manuscripts that contain the Septuagint corpus of Jeremiah
texts—Baruch, Lamentations, and the Epistle of Jeremiah—add to them the Prophecy to
Pashhur and the Paralipomena Jeremiae or 4 Baruch. Because the Prophecy to Pashhur
was often copied in biblical manuscripts of the Old Testament prophets, literally dozens
of manuscripts are known which include it. I list only a few of the most important and a
number of others which I was able to consult in the British Library.12

Ambässal, Ethiopia, Private Library, fol. 117b; fifteenth-sixteenth cent. (= EMML
2080)13
London, British Library Or. 496, fol. 121b; seventeenth cent. (= Wright's 20; Heider's M)
London, British Library Add. 24991, fol. 35a; seventeenth cent. (= Wright's 14; Heider's
K)
Paris, Abbadie 35, fol. 176r; seventeenth cent. (= Heider's A)
Paris, BN Eth. 9 (Zotenberg 6), fol. 63a; seventeenth cent. (= Heider's P)
Berlin, Or. Quart. 986, fol. 112; seventeenth to eighteenth cent. (= Hammerschmidt &
Six's 106)
London, British Library Or. 484, fol. 118b; eighteenth cent. (= Wright's 7; Heider's G)
London, British Library Or. 486, fol. 158b; eighteenth cent. (= Wright's 8; Heider's H)
London, British Library Or. 489, fol. 57b; 1730 C.E. (= Wright's 11; Heider's I)
London, British Library Or. 492, fol. 117b; eighteenth cent. (= Wright's 16; Heider's L)
London, British Library Or. 502, fol. 59a; eighteenth cent. (= Wright's 26; Heider's N)

All of these manuscripts witness to a text of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur which is
reasonably near to that found in Sa6 and Bo (and Ar, see below). Another Ethiopic form

11. Henry Tattam, Propheetae majores in dialecto linguae aegyptiacae memphiticae seu opticae (Oxford:
Clarendon, 1852), 1:v-vi.

In his preface, Tattam asserted that Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is to be found "in many manuscript
copies of the Coptic Church prayer books," but he only mentions two specific manuscripts: one in his own
possession "for the seven days of holy Pascha," which he transcribed, and a "Manuscript of the British
Museum, numbered 5997." The designation "numbered 5997" is not particularly helpful, but I have been able
to identify it with BL Add. 5997 (= Crum 1247). I have not been able to trace the second MS mentioned by
Tattam, the one which belonged to him and which he transcribed.

12. For descriptions of the following manuscripts, see William Wright, Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manu-
scripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1847 (London: Gilbert & Rivington, 1877), 816; August
Heider, Die steiobiopische Bibelübersetzung (Halle: Zahn & Baendel, 1902), 21-23; Getatchew Haile and
William F. Macomber, A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Hill Monastic Manuscript
Library (Collegeville: St. John's Abbey and University, 1982), 6:147-49; and Ernst Hammerschmidt and Ver-
onica Six. Äthiopische Handschriften Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), 200-204.

13. Photographs of this manuscript were supplied by Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's
Abbey and University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

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of the Prophecy to Pashhur, however, is known. This other version is decidedly longer, about twice the length, and is to be found in a single manuscript: Frankfurt Or. Rüpp. II, 5; seventeenth century (= Heider's F). This long recension (EthLR) differs from the short recension (EthSR) of the majority of manuscripts in another respect as well. Unlike the majority text, it does not appear as a discrete work in a corpus of Jeremian writings, but as an interpolation between the third and fourth verses of the second chapter of canonical Jeremiah. This long recension shows itself, in a number of respects, to be a secondary expansion of the short recension. The long recension was edited by August Heider,\(^1^4\) while an edition of the short recension was prepared by August Dillmann.\(^1^5\)

An Arabic translation of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is also in existence. The Arabic translation of the Old Testament prophets made in the ninth century by a certain Pethion ibn Ayyub al-Sahhar includes our text immediately following Jer 20:3. Alberto Vaccari, S.J., prepared a critical edition of this Arabic version as part of his larger study of the Arabic versions of the Old Testament prophets.\(^1^6\) Vaccari concluded that the Syriac Peshitta serves as exemplar for Pethion's translation of the Prophets and that it was none other than Pethion himself who translated our pseudopigraphon into Arabic and interpolated it into his translation of Jeremiah. However, as Pethion occasionally drew on Greek texts, as well as the insight of commentators, we cannot be certain from where he obtained our brief pseudopigraphon or from what language he translated it. The four manuscripts which Vaccari used are the following:

A: Milan, Ambrosiana C 58; 1226 C.E.
C: Rome, Casanatense 169; seventeenth cent.
L: London, British Library Or. 5918; 1618-19 C.E.
V: Rome, Vatican Library Arab. 503; 1361 C.E.\(^1^7\)

As the notes to the translation make clear, Sa\(^O\), Bo, Ar and, to a lesser degree, Eth\(^SR\) often agree and are probably to be regarded as the most reliable witnesses to the original text of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur. Both Eth\(^LR\) and Sa\(^R\) have clearly been revised, the former by considerable expansion, the latter by the addition of an ending which harmonizes the text with Jer 20:6. Nonetheless, all our witnesses are late and there are occasions when either Sa\(^R\) or Eth\(^LR\) will agree with one or more of the other witnesses in support of the best reading. The translation, therefore, represents an eclectic text which draws on the best from each of our six text-types.

If Vaccari is correct, the Prophecy to Pashhur first entered into an Arabic translation of the Bible in the latter half of the ninth century, when Pethion's translation was produced. It is significant, however, that our text does not seem to have had a wider currency in Arabic bib-

\(^1^4\) Heider, Aethiopische Bibelübersetzung, 46-48.
\(^1^5\) August Dillmann, Chrestomathia Aethiopica (Leipzig: Weigel, 1866), viii-ix, and republished in August Dillmann and Johannes Bachmann, Anthologia Aethiopica (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1988), viii-ix, n. 2.
\(^1^6\) A. Vaccari, "Le versioni arabe dei Profeti," Bib 3 (1922): 401-23. See also Vaccari's previous installments under the same title and in the same journal: 1 (1920): 266-68, and 2 (1921): 401-23. I am grateful to Wieland Willker who called my attention to these articles and to the Arabic version, of which I was unaware.
\(^1^7\) Arabic is not a language I read. Vaccari, however, provides a literal Italian translation (421). James R. Davila also made a literal English translation for me; I here record my thanks and indebtedness to Prof. Davila.
litical translations. Just when the Prophecy to Pashhur entered the Coptic lectionary tradition and the Ethiopic biblical manuscript tradition is uncertain. It must have entered the former before the twelfth or thirteenth centuries and the latter before the fifteenth or sixteenth, the date of our earliest manuscripts of each, respectively. Moreover, the Prophecy must have been translated into Coptic considerably earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century for it to have established a place in the liturgy on as important a day as Good Friday. Concerning Ethiopic, it is probably significant that some of our earliest Ethiopic manuscripts of the Jeremian corpus (e.g., Berlin Peterm. Nach. 42, fourteenth-fifteenth cent. [= Heider B]; Ambassal, Ḥayq Estifanos, late fifteenth cent. [= EMML 1768]; Paris, Abbadie 55, fifteenth-sixteenth; Cambridge, UL Add. 1570, 1588 C.E. [= Heider C]) do not include the Prophecy to Pashhur, even though many of them do have the Paralipomena Jeremiae or 4 Baruch. This suggests that Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur entered the Ethiopic tradition rather late, perhaps not before the Ethiopian cultural renaissance of the thirteenth century. If this is correct, then the Ethiopic text is in all probability a translation of an Arabic Vorlage. The numerous agreements between Ar and Eth, especially EthSR, lend support to this conclusion. Given the history of the document detailed below, a Greek version almost certainly once stood behind the Coptic and Arabic versions. However, it is an open question whether either was translated directly from the Greek or the Coptic depends on the Arabic, as Vaccari supposed, or vice versa. In other words, I do not think we can decide, given our current knowledge, on the priority of the Coptic or Arabic version, but both in all probability descend, directly or via the other, from a now lost Greek version.

The textual witnesses for the Prophecy to Pashhur can be set out as follows:

| Sa0 | Sahidic Coptic; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Cod. XX (Huntington 5); twelfth-thirteenth cents. |
| Sa8 | Sahidic Coptic; Rome Borgian. 109, N. xcix; twelfth-fourteenth cents. |
| Sa | The agreement of the two Sahidic witnesses. |
| BoJ | Bohairic Coptic; London, British Library, Add. 5997; 1274 C.E. |
| BoT | Tattam's manuscript. |
| Bo | The agreement of the two Bohairic witnesses. |
| Copt | The agreement of the three Coptic versions. |
| EthSR | Short recension of Ethiopic. |
| EthLR | Long recension of Ethiopic. |
| Eth | The agreement of the two Ethiopic versions. |
| ArA | Arabic; Milan, Ambrosiana C 58; 1226 C.E. |
| ArC | Arabic; Rome, Casanatense 169; seventeenth cent. |
| ArL | Arabic; London, British Library Or. 5918; 1618-19 C.E. |
| ArV | Rome, Vatican Library Arab. 503; 1361 C.E. |
| Ar | The Arabic version. |

18. A gloss in the margin of EMML 2080 opposite the end of Lamentations and the beginning of the Prophecy to Pashhur reads: "Here is the end of the Hebrew Book [of Jeremiah]." A similar gloss in British Library Or. 489 opposite the end of the Epistle of Jeremiah and the beginning of the Prophecy to Pashhur reads: "Here is completed the Bo[ok] of Jer[emiah] which was written in Hebrew." In other words, these two scribes recognized that the Prophecy to Pashhur and the Paralipomena Jeremiae, which follow, did not belong to the original Hebrew of the Book of Jeremiah, although they thought that Baruch and Lamentations (so EMML 2080) or Baruch, Lamentations and the Epistle of Jeremiah (so BL Or. 489) did.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur

Matt 27:9-10 in the Early Church and Early Attestation of Prophecy to Pashhur

The fact that the quotation of "Jeremiah" cited at Matthew 27:9-10 does not appear on the pages of canonical Jeremiah exercised some of the Church's earliest exegesis. Some scribes, for example, solved the difficulty by simply omitting the name "Jeremiah." Others substituted the name "Zechariah," and at least one added "Zechariah" to "Jeremiah." 20

Origen, in his commentary on Matthew, admitted that the passage was not to be found either in the version of Jeremiah read in the Church, i.e., the Septuagint, nor in that read by the Jews, i.e., the Hebrew original. Origen supposed that "Jeremiah" might be a copyist's error for "Zechariah" or that the passage was to be found in an apocryphal writing under the name of Jeremiah. In defense of this latter suggestion, Origen reminds his readers that Paul quoted an apocryphal Elijah at 1 Cor 2:9, as well as the Book of Jannes and Jambres at 2 Tim 3:8 (Comm. Matt. ser. 117). Origen clearly knows an apocryphal Elijah which contained the saying Paul quotes in 1 Cor 2:9 and an apocryphon about the two Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres, to which allusion is made in the Second Epistle to Timothy, but it is not at all clear that he actually knows of an apocryphal Jeremiah. Origen's words can be understood one of two ways. First, he is indulging in pure speculation: He knows the two apocrypha he mentions and on the basis of such hazards the guess that a Jeremiah apocryphon was also in existence. Second, Origen is vaguely aware of or half-remembers such an apocryphon attributed to Jeremiah, which he had heard about or, perhaps, read long before. The first option takes us nowhere for Origen's pure speculations are no better than ours. The second possibility, if it is correct, offers evidence for the existence of such an apocryphon in the middle of the third century.

The witness of Jerome suggests that the latter option may in fact be correct. In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, when he arrives at Matthew's quotation of "Jeremiah," Jerome informs us that "I recently have read in a certain Hebrew book, an apocryphon of Jeremiah, which a Hebrew of the Nazoraean sect showed me, in which I found this, word for word" (Comm. in Matt. on 27:9-10). Jerome claims to have read, in Hebrew, a work attributed to Jeremiah, but not identical with canonical Jeremiah, and which contained the prophecy that Matthew cites. While Jerome is not the most trustworthy authority, in this case his testimony should probably be credited, for he harboured a strong suspicion of Jewish apocrypha and, unlike Origen, would not have regarded an appeal to such an apocryphon an adequate solution to a problem text. 23 Since Jerome's commentary on Matthew was dashed off in a few weeks in March of 398, 24 we may conclude that this Hebrew Jeremiah apocryphon was current among the Jewish-Christian sect of Nazoraens around the end of the fourth century. 25 If this is the same work as the Jeremiah work

20. Including the scribes of Greek (Θ 33), Latin (I 65) and Syriac (Syr 44) witnesses.
21. So a late Greek manuscript (22) and a marginal note in one Syriac version (Syr B).
22. So a manuscript in Middle Egyptian Coptic (Cop20).
23. Jerome had a more positive attitude toward the Apocrypha (i.e., the Jewish works included in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew canon) than toward other apocrypha. Even so his view of all such writings was not positive and seems to have hardened as he grew older. Cf. e.g., Ep. 107.12, written in 401 or 402, in which he gives the following advice for the education of a young girl: "Let her avoid all the apocryphal books..." or his exegesis of Ps 103: "...the devil lies in wait in the apocrypha" (Comm. Isa. 17).
25. Jerome dealt with the problem of Matt 27:9-10 on one other occasion, in a letter to Pamphilus (Ep. 57.7) which was written in 395. Since on that occasion Jerome does not mention the Nazoraean Jeremiah
which Origen half-remembered—if that is the correct interpretation of his words—then Origen's discussion would replace Jerome as our earliest attestation of the work. All this, of course, carries real significance for dating Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur (see below). A note of caution must, however, be sounded. It is possible that Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur is entirely unrelated to Jerome's Hebrew Jeremiah apocryphon, to say nothing of Origen's speculation. For, as we have seen, the problems raised by the "Jeremiah" quotation in Matt 27:9-10 were widely felt in early Christianity and they could well have inspired more than one such Jeremiah apocryphon. While this cannot be entirely ruled out of consideration, it nonetheless seems more probable than not that there is some connection between Jerome's text and the apocryphon here translated. The match is simply too close to be ignored.

Original Form of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur

Jerome speaks of a passage which he had read "in a certain Hebrew book," and the text here translated can easily be read as an excerpt from a longer work. Note the "again" at the beginning of Jeremiah's words to Pashhur; this alone implies a larger context. In other words, it seems the Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts transmit a pericope taken from a larger work and one which Jerome had read in Hebrew. Jerome's description, brief as it is, offers a few clues as to the nature of this work. Clearly it was attributed to Jeremiah and, since he describes it as an apocryphon (apocryphum), could not have been merely an interpolated version of canonical Jeremiah. Further, since Jerome received it from a member of the Jewish-Christian sect of the Nazoraean and given the content of the Prophecy to Pashhur (e.g., "the one who heals diseases, and forgives sin"), it must have been a Jewish-Christian composition or, perhaps, a Jewish-Christian adaptation of an earlier Jewish work. Moreover, the work shown to Jerome was in Hebrew.

We know of at least one other Jeremiah work which circulated among Christians during the early centuries, the Paraleipomena Jeremiae or 4 Baruch, and it is possible that others also reach back into this period (e.g., the Coptic Apocryphon of Jeremiah, the Jeremiah portion of the Lives of the Prophets). Moreover, a number of Jeremiah apocrypha existed in pre-Christian Judaism: 2 Macc 2:1-8; the Epistle of Jeremiah; and the Qumran Jeremiah texts provisionally entitled Apocryphon of Jeremiah A (4Q383), Apocryphon of Jeremiah B (4Q384), and Apocryphon of Jeremiah C (4Q385a, 387-390). All of this suggests that it would not be greatly surprising if another Jeremiah work had been composed by the Nazoraean. To be sure, it may be that this Nazoraean work was not a composition from whole cloth, but a Jewish-Christian revision of an already existing Jewish work. For example, it is possible that a Jewish-Christian took a Jeremiah apocryphon like one of those preserved at Qumran, and Christianized it by adding passages like the excerpt here

work, it is possible that when Jerome says in 398 that he had only "recently" become acquainted with this work he means it: He had only been shown the work sometime between 395 and 398.

26. Cf. the similar conclusion of Georg Strecker, Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 80-81. Although he makes no mention of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur, Strecker argued that Matthew quoted a pre-Christian Jeremiah apocryphon at 27:9-10. He makes a few strong points, but most scholars have not been convinced. Even if Strecker were correct, the clear Christian elements in Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur (the persecution of the one who heals disease and forgives sins, the obstinacy and condemnation of the Jews, the allusion to Matt 27:25) make it obvious that it is a Christian work and not a pre-Christian Jewish one.
translated. Something similar may have taken place in the case of the Coptic Apocryphon of Jeremiah.  

**Original Language, Date and Provenance**

If Jerome's Jeremiah apocryphon originally included *Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur*, then it follows that the original language of our text was Hebrew, that it was composed sometime in the early Christian centuries and that it was probably written in Palestine or, perhaps, Syria. Each of these statements can be expanded upon. First, regarding original language, Jerome clearly did not read Aramaic or at least did not read it well (as he admits in his prologue to his Latin translation of the Book of Tobit). Thus, when he claimed that this Jeremiah apocryphon was in Hebrew, he meant Hebrew and was not using "Hebrew" for "Aramaic." Further, Jerome at first claimed that the Nazoraeans used a gospel written in Hebrew (Vir. ill. 2-3; Comm. Matt. 12.13), but later was of the opinion that this gospel was written in "the Chaldean (i.e., Aramaic) and Syriac language but with Hebrew letters" (Pelag. 3.2). His latter opinion would seem to be the better informed of the two, and probably reveals that Jerome at first only knew about the gospel indirectly, most probably having read about it in Origen, and only later came into direct contact with it.  

In any case, on the basis of the Aramaic gospel which Jerome knew, we may conclude that it is entirely plausible that the Nazoraeans preserved writings in Semitic languages, either Hebrew or Aramaic; that they had a Jeremiah apocryphon in Hebrew presents no great difficulty. Secondly, regarding date, Jerome's testimony offers us a firm *terminus ad quem*: The work must have been written sometime before March 398 when Jerome wrote his *Commentary on Matthew*. A *terminus a quo* is provided by the composition of the Gospel of Matthew itself, probably sometime in the 80s-90s. In other words, the Jeremiah apocryphon must have been composed sometime during the three-hundred-year period between ca. 90 and ca. 390. Attempting to arrive at a narrower time period for the apocryphon's composition is fraught with difficulties, but a few suggestions can be made. It would have taken some years for Matthew's gospel to have established itself as a work of some authority and for the problem of the Jeremiah attribution in Matt 27:9-10 to have been noticed. In other words, it is unlikely that Jerome's Jeremiah apocryphon was composed before the first half of the second century. Origen's half-remembered testimony—if it is that and not pure speculation—would take the highest possible date of composition back into the first-half of the third century. These considerations tentatively allow us to narrow the date of the work to the century between ca. 150 and ca. 250. Thirdly, regarding provenance, the use of Hebrew suggests Palestine. Jerome, however, informs us that he encountered Nazoraeans in Beroea in Syria, modern day Aleppo (Vir. ill. 3). Origen could support the former possibility, for his Matthean commentary was written during his Caesarean period. I regard Palestine as the more probable possibility, but Syria cannot be ruled out. In any case, there is no reason to place the Jeremiah apocryphon with its prophecy against Pashhur anywhere other than the Eastern end of the Mediterranean world.

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27. A translation of the Coptic Apocryphon of Jeremiah is to be published in volume two of this collection.

Other Passages from Apocryphal Jeremiah?
A number of other texts, canonical and noncanonical, were assigned to Jeremiah apocrypha in antiquity. For example, the hymnic fragment cited in Eph 5:14 was attributed to an apocryphal Jeremiah by George Syncellus in his Chronography and in the Euthalian Apparatus found in many NT manuscripts (PG 85.721C). However, Hippolytus once attributed this hymn to Isaiah (Comm. Dan. 4.55.4) and once to "the prophet" (Christ and Antichrist 65), while Epiphanius says that Paul derived it from "Elijah" (Pan. 42.12.3). A prophecy of Christ's descent to the realm of the dead is quoted as scripture by both Justin and Irenaeus. Justin asserts that Jewish scribes had removed the words from their copies of the Book of Jeremiah. Irenaeus, who cites this "scripture" five times, twice credits it to Jeremiah (Haer. 4.22.1; Dem. 78), once to Isaiah (Haer. 3.20.4), once to "the prophet" (5.31.1) and once to "other (prophets)" (4.33.12). The Passion of James Son of Zebedee, which has come down to us as Book 4 of Pseudo-Abdias' History of the Struggles of the Apostles, records in a speech of the apostle James a prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the advent of the Messiah who will open the eyes of the blind, restore hearing to the deaf and raise the dead. It is possible that any or all of these were once found in Jerome's Nazoraean Jeremiah apocryphon, from which the Prophecy to Pashhur probably derives. It is more probable, however, that none of them do. The hymnic fragment of Ephesians is accredited to so many different sources that one suspects that they are all nothing more than guesses. The prophetic "scripture" quoted by Justin and Irenaeus is probably best explained as a Christian interpolation in the canonical Book of Jeremiah (or Isaiah). And the witness of Pseudo-Abdias is so late and so uncertain that it would be hazardous to place much weight on it. In the end we simply do not know what the apocryphal Jeremiah contained beyond its probable inclusion of the Prophecy to Pashhur.

Literary Context
The author of Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur was clearly dependent on at least two canonical writings. The very purpose of the passage is to remove the difficulty which arises from Matthew's attribution of his mixed citation to the prophet Jeremiah. The author of the Prophecy to Pashhur clearly wrote this passage to defend Matthew's authority. In addition, the final line of Jeremiah's words to Pashhur about the eternal judgment which will come on "the sons of Israel and their children because they condemned" to death

29. For the following, cf. the discussions in Albert-Marie Denis et al., Introduction à la littérature religieuse judo-hellénistique (Pseudépigraphes de l'Ancien Testament) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 1:713-18; and James, Lost Apocrypha, 60-64.
31. Similarly, the Euthalian Apparatus attributes 1 Cor 2:9 to an Elijah apocryphon, Gal 6:15 to an apocryphal Moses text, 1 Cor 15:33 to Menander, Tit 1:12 to an oracle of the Cretan soothsayer Epimenides, Jude 9 to the Assumption of Moses, Jude 14-15 to the Book of Enoch, and identifies 1 Cor 15:32 as an ancient laconic proverb.
32. "The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered his dead that slept in (the) earth of (the) grave, and he descended to preach to them his salvation" (Dial. 72.4).
33. Ps. Abdias' History, compiled no earlier than the end of the sixth century, brings together legends about the missions and deaths of individual apostles. It purports to be the work of Abdias, one of the Seventy and the first bishop of Babylon, who wrote in Hebrew. The collection is manifestly a late Latin production.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Pashhur

“innocent blood,” recalls the statement of the crowd to Pilate, “His blood be upon us and our children” (Matt 27:25). It follows, from both these facts, that the author of the Prophecy to Pashhur must have known the Gospel of Matthew with more than a passing familiarity. The author also knew well the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. For he has chosen to build this passage on the basis of a rather minor character who appears only once in the whole of the longest prophetic book in the Hebrew Scriptures (20:1-6). Why Pashhur was chosen and not, say, one of the troika of 38:1—Shebattai, Gedaliah and Jucal—is not altogether clear. If we had more of the context from which this excerpt comes, the choice of Pashhur might be obvious. As it is, the context of Jer. 20:1-6, the only mention of Pashhur in the Book of Jeremiah, offers a possible clue. Pashhur is described as a false prophet (20:6) as well as a priest, a potent combination. It is noticeable that “the chief priests” figure as major dramatis personae in Matt 27:3-10. Moreover, prophecy—true prophecy—is a major theme of Matthew’s gospel and one which figures significantly in Matt 27:3-10. The selection of Pashhur, then, may rest on a penetrating intertextual reading of Jer 20:1-6 and the Gospel of Matthew. It may be possible to go even further. The Prophecy to Pashhur quite clearly condemns Pashhur’s descendants as those who will “receive thirty (pieces) of silver (as) the price” of the one betrayed. Since Pashhur is not only a priest, but is even described as “chief officer in the house of the LORD” (Jer 20:1), it is possible that the author of the Prophecy found in Pashhur an ancestor of the high priest, or at least the high priestly family, of Jesus’ day. Those who condemned Jesus were true sons of him who persecuted the prophet Jeremiah. One further possible connection with the Book of Jeremiah could perhaps be suggested. The sons or children of Pashhur, who follow him and whose deeds of lawlessness surpass his, could be construed as the mirror image of the Rechabites of Jeremiah 35: The children of Pashhur are “faithful” to the example of their father, just as the Rechabites were faithful to the commands and example of their father.

There are no obvious connections between the Prophecy to Pashhur and any of the apocryphal books other than the very general connection which our text has with Jeremiah apocrypha like the text(s) preserved in 4Q383, 4Q384, 4Q385b and 4Q389a, the Paraleipomena Jeremiae or 4 Baruch and the Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon, all of which are peopled with characters from the canonical Book of Jeremiah. It should be noted, however, that in no Jeremiah apocrypha, other than the text here translated, do we encounter Pashhur. Obviously, if we possessed more of the apocryphon of which the Prophecy to Pashhur is but an excerpt, we might well find a number of other parallels and connections to canonical and noncanonical literature.

If Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Pashhur is indeed an excerpt from the Jeremiah apocryphon in Hebrew which Jerome had read, then it becomes an important piece of evidence for Jewish Christianity in general and the Nazoraeans in particular, a piece of evidence which until now has been largely neglected in scholarship. The Jewish Christianity of the early Christian centuries, including its Nazorean manifestation, is a movement for which we have little information and for which we must be grateful for every fragment which survives. Further, if the Prophecy to Pashhur was composed in the period ca. 150 to ca. 250, which I tentatively suggested above, then it must be regarded as an important witness

34. At 21,835 words, Jeremiah is the longest of the three so-called major prophets. Ezekiel follows with 18,730 words and Isaiah with 16,932. See J. R. Lumbom, Jeremiah 1-20 (AB 21A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1999), 57.

35. I owe this suggestion to Richard Bauckham.
to the early development of the New Testament canon and reflects one of the earliest attempts to wrestle with the difficulty of an authoritative and apostolic writing seemingly containing an obvious error and, in particular, with the problem of Matt 27:9-10. Of course, if it was written a century later, then its importance in this regard is lessened. Finally, the picture, here depicted, of the Jewish rejection of the claims made for Jesus of Nazareth by Christians and the prophecy of a “judgment of eternal destruction” which is to come on the Jews, reminds us of the unfortunate history of Christian anti-Semitism. *Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur* is the kind of text which has been used to justify ghettos, pogroms and gas chambers. It does not take a great deal of imagination to suppose that it may have been appealed to numerous times through the centuries by anti-Semitic Christians just as Matt 27:24-25, 1 Thess 2:14-16, and John 8:44-45 have been.  

**Bibliography**

**COPTIC TEXTS**


**ARABIC TEXTS**


**ETHIOPIC TEXTS**


**GENERAL**


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36 Nonetheless, one must also remember the likely Nazorean origin of *Jeremiah's Prophecy to Pashhur*. Its author, in his historical context, was no more anti-Semitic than the author of the *War Scroll*, although both said very hard things about Jews who did not belong to their particular form of Judaism. Historical criticism demands that we must always make careful distinction between the purpose for which a text was originally written and the use to which it has been put in subsequent history.
Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Pashhur

Jeremiah said again to Pashhur, "You (plur.) and your ancestors always oppose the truth. And your children, who come after you, they will commit lawlessness which surpasses yours. They will sell the one for whom there is no price. And they will injure the one who heals diseases, and (who) forgives sin. And they are bound to receive thirty (pieces) of silver (as) the price of one whom the

Melito, On the Passover 73

a. So SaO Bo Ar. Sa8 Eth omit "again"; the Arabic word could be rendered "also." It is difficult to imagine why a scribe would add this, but not at all difficult to understand why a scribe copying a lectionary might find it superfluous.

b. So Sa Bo Ar and EthSK (although with various spellings of "Pashhur"). BoT reads "La-fachshour" (evidence that the Bohairic is dependent upon Arabic syntax). EthLR omits the whole phrase, doubtless as part of the process of conforming the passage to the text of Jer 23:4.

c. So Sa8 EthSK. SaO reads "will at that time be opposed to the truth," while Bo EthLR have "from of old you have opposed the truth" and Ar "(were) resisters of the truth."

d. Both the Coptic and the Ethiopic terms for "truth" also carry the connotation of "justice, righteousness."

e. So SaO Bo EthMAX (Ar: "vile error"). Sa8 and EthMAX: "they have committed lawlessness..."

f. So SaO Bo Eth (Ar: "will set a price on") Sa8. "They have sold...."

g. SaO Bo have or presuppose the future tense, while Sa8 reads the present. The imperfect tense of the Eth and Ar could support either translation.

h. So Copt. and ArACL. Arv reads "forgives sinners and sin." The Ethiopic versions both expand the text. EthSK merely adds "and will condemn the one" before "who forgives sin." EthLR, however, replaces this sentence with "And they will deny the one who restores the sick and heals the ill. And they will reject [lit. dismiss] the one who forgives [lit. dismisses] transgression and sin and iniquity. And they disdain the one who will cause the blind to see and the deaf to hear and the mute to speak and the leprous to be clean, the one who will expel unclean spirits from men, the one who will cause the lame and (those with) broken (limbs) to run about, the one who will walk on the sea as one walks on dry land, the one who reproves the wave(s) of the sea and the flood and the winds and they will obey him, and they will deny and reject the one who does all these things among [lit. to] them."

i. SaO and Sa8, utilizing the emphatic Coptic third future, could be translated as "they are bound to receive..." or "they must inevitably receive..." EthLR effectively agrees with this: "they will eagerly receive..." Ar and EthSK have simply "they will receive." Bo appears to have a scribal error here, but apparently agrees with the reading of the Sahidic Mss and EthLR.

j. So SaO Bo Ar and EthLR. Sa8 and EthSK insert after "the price" and before "whom the children of Israel" the phrase "of one who is honored." The latter agrees more closely with the text of Matt 27:9 and so is suspect.
children of Israel will hand over. They gave the price for the field of the potter, just as the Lord commanded. And thus it will be said, 'A judgment of eternal destruction will come down upon them and upon their children, because they condemned innocent blood.'

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a. So Sa\(^\circ\) Bo. Ar Eth read "whom the children of Israel will sell," but otherwise agree with Sa\(^\circ\) and Bo. Sa\(^\circ\) once again goes its own direction: "This is (the price) fixed for him by the children of Israel." Again this is closer to the text of Matt 27:9 and, one suspects, has been revised toward it.

b. So Sa\(^\circ\) (Ar) Eth\(^{SR}\), Sa\(^\circ\) Bo Eth\(^{LR}\) all leave the object implied.

c. So Sa\(^\circ\) Bo. Sa\(^\circ\) Ar (Eth), probably under the influence of the text of Matthew, add "me." Eth\(^{LR}\) replaces "commanded me" with "told me." To the phrase, most ms of Eth\(^{SR}\) add "so I will speak," while some have "so I will say and speak and do."

d. So Sa\(^\circ\) Bo (Ar), Eth\(^{SR}\), "Therefore,..." Eth\(^{LR}\), "Therefore, just as he said so he will cause..." Sa\(^\circ\), "Thus, these are the things which the Lord said..."

e. The word the Arabic uses here can mean either "judgment" or "the final judgment."

f. So Sa\(^\circ\) Ar Bo (Eth\(^{SR}\)). Eth\(^{LR}\) is similar but intensifies the text replacing the "judgment of eternal destruction" with "a condemnation of affliction ... which will never end" and "innocent blood" with "innocent blood and righteous blood." Sa\(^\circ\) is very different: "Thus, these are the things which the Lord said, 'Behold, I will bring about your death, and (that of) all your children [so Zoega, Ciasca: "your companions"]). They will fall by the sword of their enemies. Your [sing.] eyes will see, and you [sing.] and all Judah I will send to the Kingdom of Babylon and they will be removed (there), they will be slaughtered by the sword.'" The influence of Jer 20:4 on Sa\(^\circ\) is obvious.