Among the enormous number of studies on the Book of Jeremiah in the Hebrew tradition, of particular interest are those that discuss the issues of its non-homogeneous structure and hence also the issues of how it evolved. We should note that the majority of researchers from the beginning of the twentieth century until now are of the opinion that the Book of Jeremiah consists at least of three, and according to some authors, four different sources: a) rhythmically-structured oracles (poetic oracles) by the prophet and information about him; b) information (stories) about Jeremiah told in the third person singular, known as Baruch’s biography; c) discourses in prose in a Deuteronomistic revision; and d) predictions of salvation for Israel and Judah in chapter 30 and the chapters that follow it.

As far as chronology is concerned, chapters 1–39 (using the Masoretic chapter numeration system, hereafter MT) refer to the time before the fall of Jerusalem and chapters 40 to 45 inclusive to the time afterward, but “insofern ein gewisses chronologisches Gerüst, als etwa die Worte der ersten Periode Jeremias (Kap. 1–6) der zweiten (Kap. 7 ff.) vorgeordnet sind” (Schmidt 1995: 241). Only the first 25 chapters, which are notable for their predominantly poetic style (Herrmann 1990: 48ff.), are considered authentic. The body of the text grew slowly; additions were made at different times and from different sources so that “von einer methodischen Komposition, einer einheitlichen Disposition kann keine Rede sein.” (Duhm 1901: XX) In all probability, chapters 26–52, which have a different compositional structure (Herrmann 1990: 4), were combined into a single entity together with the main corpus, i.e. chapters 1–25, only in the late

second or early third century B.C. Chapters 46–51, which contain the prophecies against the Gentiles that are known as “Predictions against foreign nations”, also refer to the latest additions. Chapter 52 is a concluding historical supplement (Duhm 1901: XXI; Herrmann 1990: 39), identical in content with 2 Kings (4 Kings) 24:18 – 25:30 (Rudolph 1958: 295).

The Greek translation of the seventy translators (the Septuagint), which was the earliest to emerge, is of major importance to the critical study of the Hebrew Old Testament, as the oldest textual tradition of the Masoretic text before the discovery of the Qumran scrolls (Tov 1987: 153; Tov 1997a: 112–113). According to historical evidence, the Pentateuch was the first book of the Septuagint that was translated (in the third century B.C.), whereas the books of the Prophets were translated in the late second century B.C. (Tov 1987: 134–135; Tov 1997a: 114). The Septuagint, however, includes not only the initial translation of the complete collection but also later revisions and biblical books that had been composed originally in Greek (Tov 1987: 125). Thus, for instance, because of the multi-layered character of the Septuagint, the second part of the Greek version of the Book of Jeremiah (chapters 29–52, LXX numbering) follows an anonymous Greek redaction, whereas the Book of Lamentations (Ἑκάτερα) is in Aquila’s translation from the second century (Tov 1987: 136).

The content of the archetype of the Septuagint’s translation came from different sources. Because Hebrew books usually were written on two or more scrolls, in order to copy the Septuagint in the form of a codex, enveloping a greater amount of text, it was necessary to gather a large number of scrolls for the translation of the individual books, and „wahrscheinich hat er, wenn er keine andere Wahl hatte, Rollen unterschiedlichen Charakters zusammengefaßt.“ (Tov 1987: 136). This explains to a large extent the differences among the individual translations of the books with regard to vocabulary and style of translation (Tov 1987: 136).

In the Septuagint the books from the Hebrew canon are arranged in a different order. According to some scholars they belong to four parts: Low, historical, poetical, and prophetical books (Schmidt 1995: 3), but in the view of some other authors the first two parts form one common section: “1. gesetzliche und geschichtliche Bücher” (Tov 1997a: 114). The Minor Prophets precede the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, the last of which was added later. This biblical codex, however, also includes some of the so-called non-canonical