JEREMIAH 1–25 AND THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

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To a significant extent the prophetic books may be regarded as collections of collections in which the primary material consists of prophecies that were originally orally delivered and most of which were originally short in length. They have been preserved in writing by unknown editors, and in this process of written preservation some degree of grouping and structuring of the prophecies has certainly taken place. By what principles this structuring occurred is far from clear. The inclusion of short superscriptions (as in Jer. 1.1-3; 2.1; 3.1; 7.1; 11.1; 21.11; 25.1-2) has served to offer some brief contextual setting for the prophecies, and there appear also to be appropriate closures (so Jer. 5.18-19; 9.12-16). It is possible that other units were intended to mark transition points in the collection. Since we do not know in what context the prophecies were read, whether by small groups of trained scribes, or by larger communities in more formal acts of public confession and worship, the role of these beginnings and endings is not clear. They do little more than provide a bare minimum of historical information for the elucidation of the prophecy. They are, however, sufficient to indicate that we cannot be altogether dismissive of the role of the book's editors.

Alongside this we can note that there sometimes appear to be signs of a chronological sequencing of material, although this is not consistently carried through and the context of many prophecies remains obscure. Such a chronological scheme, even though very incompletely maintained, seems likely to reflect the processes of transmission. Further to this we may note that the classification of material on formal grounds, best linked with the name and work of S. Mowinckel, contains some implications for the editorial shaping of the book (Mowinckel 1914; cf. Hobbs 1972: 258). Mowinckel himself appears strongly to have hinted in the direction of assuming that the different

classes of material were preserved in different transmission strata, although he later modified this conclusion substantially (Mowinckel 1946: 61ff.). Yet the nature and content of the so-called 'Source C' material fails to support the conclusion that it derives from a separate transmission 'source' as such. It appears rather to have been intended to be read in conjunction with other material in the book, on which it is partly dependent.

All of this suggests that we are faced either with assuming (1) that there is no very clear structure at all to the grouping of prophecies in Jeremiah 1–25, other than a very loose one, or (2) that whatever structure there may originally have been has undergone significant disturbance in the course of the book's further preservation and transmission.

What I wish to do in this short paper is to suggest one avenue of investigation, which appears to me to be sufficiently defensible to be worth serious consideration, and which does have some bearing upon the historical and literary context in which the book was formed.

Prophecy in the Deuteronomistic History

There exists in 2 Kgs 17.7-23 a very noteworthy reflection upon the final collapse of the Northern Kingdom, under Hoshea, before the power of King Shalmaneser of Assyria. It is listed by Martin Noth as one of the key passages, otherwise set out in the form of speeches or prayers, by which the Deuteronomist directly injects an element of meaning and explanation into the events narrated concerning Israel's rise and fall (Noth 1981: 6). We may summarize the main contents relatively concisely:

1. The people of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their God... They had worshipped other gods...They set up for themselves pillars and sacred poles... They served idols, of which Yahweh had said to them, 'You shall not do this' (vv. 7-12).
2. Yet Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law that I commanded your ancestors and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets'. They would not listen but were stubborn, as their ancestors had been. They went after idols

and became false... They rejected all the commandments of Yahweh their God...(vv. 13-17).

3. Judah also did not keep the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced... (vv. 19-20).
4. When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel from following Yahweh and made them commit great sins. The people of Israel continued in all the sins that Jeroboam committed; they did not depart from them... So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day (vv. 21-23).

The four central themes are the following: 1. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had been disloyal to God, and this is proven by its idolatry. 2. Yahweh had warned of God's anger through prophets, but the people rejected the prophetic warnings. 3. Israel was punished by being sent into exile, but Judah also has disobeyed God. 4. Disloyal kings, who followed the path of Jeroboam and disobeyed God's law, were primary causes of Israel's downfall.

What is worthy of note is that this reflects very closely indeed the central themes of the structure of Jeremiah 1–25. We can outline these as follows and note the correspondences. It is evident that this overall structural pattern is introduced by the opening call and commissioning narrative of Jer. 1.1-19 and is provided with a summarizing conclusion in Jer. 25.1-14. These two units provide an outer framework for the whole larger structure. The call narrative, with its appended visions, reflects a certain stylizing, but almost certainly draws on authentic elements of the Jeremiah tradition. It serves both as an affirmation of the divine origin and authority of the message that is given in the book that follows, and also as a key to its central message. This latter is then the subject of Jer. 25.1-14, which is unusual in that it makes reference to the written scroll of the prophecies (25.13), but, by doing so, clearly betrays its role as a formal ending to a literary collection. It must undoubtedly have been composed to perform this function.

The recognition that the material characterized by S. Mowinckel as 'Source C' had its origins in a Deuteronomistic circle of authors has gained convincing recognition among recent scholars (so Nicholson 1970: 38ff.; Thiel 1973: *passim*; Stulman 1986: 49ff.). The purpose of the present study is to extend this towards a recognition that the

structural shape accorded to Jeremiah 1–25 also betrays a strongly Deuteronomistic origin. By demonstrating this, it is hoped to suggest ways in which the use of the Jeremiah prophetic tradition contributed a major, and final, component of the Deuteronomistic theological development of the exilic era.

Both the opening and concluding sections of Jeremiah 1–25 contain explicit summaries of the purport of Jeremiah's prophecies (so especially 1.14-19 and 25.8-14). Such summaries reveal their purpose of serving as editorial guides to the comprehensive written collection of Jeremiah's sayings referred to in 25.13. They have been designed from the outset to introduce, explain the historical relevance of, and to summarize the message of the prophet Jeremiah. Their message, put briefly, is that God has called for hostile nations to come from the north to threaten and punish Judah for its many and grievous sins. These nations will set their thrones against Jerusalem to accomplish God's judgment upon the city (Jer. 1.14-16). This enemy from the north has materialized in the person of Nebuchadrezzar, who is Yahweh's 'servant' to punish Judah (25.9), so that the whole land will be left a ruin (25.11; cf. Overholt 1968: 39-48). While this enemy comes to inflict God's punishment, the faithful prophet, within the walls of Jerusalem, will be threatened but not overwhelmed (1.17-19).

Judah and Israel

Jeremiah 2.1–3.5 follows the call narrative with a long, and broadly based, indictment of Israel as a whole, but specifically addressed to the citizens of Jerusalem (Jer. 2.2). The nature of the indictment, and the appeal back to the national origins in the wilderness, make it clear that it is still 'all Israel' that is the subject of this prophetic condemnation. However, the immediate sequel in 3.6-11, which is, unexpectedly, specifically ascribed to 'the days of King Josiah' (3.6), affirms that the punitive lesson meted out to the Northern Kingdom had not been learned by Judah: 'Yet for all this her false sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but only in pretense, says Yahweh' (Jer. 3.10). On the contrary, Israel's disobedience was not as bad as that of Judah: 'Faithless Israel has shown herself less guilty than false Judah' (3.11). The central features here are consistent with a Deuteronomistic origin (Thiel 1973: 83ff.; Stulman 1986: 56ff.). The appeal to Israel to return to Yahweh, which follows in 3.12–4.2 (interrupted by the

reassuring insertion of 3.15-18) then establishes the possibility of repentance and renewal. What follows this in 4.3–6.30 is then very explicitly addressed to 'the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem' (Jer. 4.3; cf. also 4.5, 11; 5.1, 20).

All of this suggests that there is an overall structure extending from 2.1 to 6.30 which pivots upon the basic assertion of 3.10-11 that Judah was more guilty of disobedience to God than its sister kingdom in the north. This links up closely with the Deuteronomistic assertion of 2 Kgs 17.7-23 that the Northern Kingdom's downfall was an act of Yahweh's punishment upon her. Although it is true that this concerns what happened to the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century, the lesson that it teaches was evidently intended to be a lesson learned by Judah. If Yahweh punished Israel so harshly, how much more did Judah and Jerusalem deserve to be punished since their sins were greater than those of the sister kingdom in the north! Jeremiah's prophecies were addressed to a specific community in a particular crisis situation. The structural setting has provided this warning with a larger context by establishing that the threat to Judah was fully justified and vindicated by comparison with the fate of its sister kingdom in the north. When the Northern Kingdom had suffered at the hands of the Assyrians, Judah had failed to heed the implicit warning this had provided.

That the overall structure of Jer. 2.1–4.2 endeavours to make this the lesson to be learned from the fate of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century BCE can then be better understood if precisely the opposite conclusion was the one widely held. Study of the presuppositions of Josiah's cultic reform, of the rise and development of the Deuteronomic reform movement as a whole, and of the kind of hot-headed counsel that appears ultimately to have swayed Zedekiah into rebellion against Babylon—all these point to the conclusion that this was indeed the case in Judah (cf. Hardmeier 1990: 161ff.). Judah's survival in the eighth century, which contrasted with the ruination of the Northern Kingdom, had been widely interpreted as a mark of Judah's loyalty to Yahweh, in contrast to Ephraim's faithlessness. It is possible to go on from this to suggest that, at the heart of the reform movement which motivated Josiah, there lay such an interpretation of the events of the eighth century. It has left an imposing legacy in the collection and redaction of Isaiah's prophecies, and not least in the elaborated accounts of what had happened when Sennacherib

confronted Hezekiah in 701 BCE. Judah's reprieve from Sennacherib's threat was understood as a consequence of her faithful allegiance to the Davidic dynasty (cf. 2 Kgs 19.34). Therefore, a primary problem of theodicy lay before the Deuteronomic movement—that of showing why the 'favoured' deliverance of Judah at the time of Ephraim's near destruction should have turned out merely to have been a temporary reprieve. What was thus necessary was to demonstrate that Judah's sins were as great as, and indeed even worse than, those of its sister kingdom in the north. This is precisely the central point of the section that follows in Jer. 7.1–10.25.

Idolatry—The Worst of Sins

If we turn next to consider the question, 'What was the evidence that the Northern Kingdom's downfall was an act of punishment from God?', we have a clear answer set out in 2 Kgs 17.7-12, with its decisive summarizing conclusion: 'they served idols, concerning which Yahweh had said to them, "You shall not do this"' (v. 12). This is then precisely the controlling theme which holds together the larger unit of Jeremianic prophecies in Jer. 7.1–10.16. It is introduced by the Deuteronomistic prose address concerning the Jerusalem temple in 7.1–15 (W. Thiel 1973: 103ff.; Stulman 1986: 58ff.), an affirmation regarding the uselessness of animal sacrifice as a means for removing sin (7.16-26), and a denunciation of the evil nature of the child-burning cult on the high-place of Topheth, which defiled the very temple area itself (7.30-34). The Jerusalem cultus had become no better than a form of idolatry, alongside which the overt practice of idolatry was widespread among the people (Jer. 10.10-16). The final unit of Jer. 10.12-16, which is didactic in character, reasserts the folly of idolatry as a form of human delusion. It would certainly appear that this admonition, with its psalm-like formulation, was originally of independent origin. Nevertheless the theme that it expresses, that idols are a delusion, that they characterize the worship of Gentile nations, but Yahweh is the true God, is a significant summing up.

The accusation of idolatry and its inevitable punishment holds together overall the unit of Jer. 7.1–10.16 and points directly to the central Deuteronomistic polemic regarding the downfall of the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kgs 17.7-12. Not only are Judah's sins worse than those perpetrated by its sister kingdom in the north, but they are

essentially of the same character, namely idolatry. The detailed evidence given in support of this argues, as in Ezek. 8.1-18, that the temple of Jerusalem had become the setting for such idolatrous acts (Jer. 7.30-34). Even worse, this temple of Yahweh had been made into an idol (Jer. 7.4), for the people had trusted in its physical actuality rather than in the God who was worshipped there (Jer. 7.8-11).

The short unit of Jer. 10.17-25, which follows this extended affirmation concerning the idolatrous character of Judah's religion, concludes the section by offering a summary concerning the prophet's message and the divine judgment that it foretold. That there is an overall structure to the section of Jer. 7.1–10.25, which has been loosely built around the theme of idolatry, appears certain. So also does the fact that it is markedly Deuteronomistic in character. Where the reformist tendencies on which this movement was built had adopted a progressively more restrictive attitude towards the temple cultus, now the Deuteronomistic editors have affirmed that the entire cultus of Jerusalem had become unacceptable to God. First Hezekiah's age had witnessed the rejection of the Nehushtan image (2 Kgs 18.4). Then later the Asherah symbol within the temple had needed to be condemned (2 Kgs 21.7). The line of polemic was now drawn to an end-point, by the comprehensive condemnation of the temple cultus as idolatrous because of the way in which worshippers trusted in it falsely. Certainly much of this must be regarded as reflective apologetic made in the wake of the catastrophe of 587 BCE, but no doubt authentic Jeremianic material can be found in it. The important point is that the accusation of idolatrous practices has been built up to provide an explanation for a religious disaster of immense proportions. God had to destroy the sanctuary where the name of Yahweh was invoked, because of the manner in which it had been abused. In defence of such a claim the earlier example of the fate of Shiloh is cited (Jer. 7.14).

The Prophet as Covenant Mediator

The lengthy section, extending from Jer. 11.1–20.18, begins with a general introduction concerning the covenant nature of Israel's relationship to Yahweh and evidences a strongly Deuteronomistic character (Jer. 11.1-8; so Thiel 1973: 139ff.; Stulman 1986: 63ff.). This feature has been widely recognized, not least on account of its forthright covenant language and ideology. However, it is not simply

the Deuteronomistic nature of this piece by itself, but the fact that it appears clearly to have been designed in order to establish a covenant framework for the larger unit it introduces. It is followed directly by a presentation of the prophet's role as a mediator of this covenant. The painful nature of this mediatorial role is illustrated by the first of Jeremiah's 'confessions', which immediately follows it (Jer. 11.18-20). This appears as a response to the threat upon his life made by the people of Anathoth (Jer. 11.21-23). At the beginning of the larger unit, therefore, a certain structural pattern is established: the prophet of God is a mediator of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, but this mediatorial role is threatened by popular rejection.

Jeremiah is presented as the intermediary established by God to summon the people back to obedience to the covenant. However, not only had the people broken this covenant (Jer. 11.10), but their actions in threatening Jeremiah's life now served as proof of their rejection of the prophetic mediator. As the larger unit unfolds, punctuated by the further pain expressed through Jeremiah's confessions, we find that the experiences of the prophet parallel closely those of the 'founder' of the covenant—Moses. Yet, whereas Moses's intercession had availed to avert final disaster for Israel's ancestors in the wilderness before their entry into the land (Deut. 9.8-29), this could not now be repeated. Jeremiah's prayers could not avail to avert the inevitable consequences of the people's total rejection of Yahweh as Israel's God (Jer. 11.14-15). Israel's refusal to hearken to the prophet's words is demonstrated by the rejection of the message-bearer.

The theme of mediation, which provides a structure to the whole unit, is then further exemplified by additional signs of the people's rejection of the prophet (Jer. 15.15-21; 17.14-18; 18.19-23) and intensified warnings of the judgment that must follow. The entire sequence of Jeremiah's so-called 'confessions' finds its theological context in the understanding that the prophet is, like Moses, a mediator of the covenant. His likeness to Moses is spelled out for all to recognize in that he suffers pain and rejection as Israel's founding leader had done.

In case this point might be overlooked it is given explicit declaration in the brief introductory unit of Jer. 15.1-4. The Deuteronomistic character of this is clear (Thiel 1973: 178ff.), and is strikingly reinforced by the cross-linkage to 2 Kgs 21.10-15, which refers to the period of Manasseh's reign, with all its fearful brutalities, as explanation for the fact that even Josiah's reforms could not avert the final

downfall of Jerusalem and Judah. If we follow the suggestion of F.M. Cross (Cross 1973: 285-86; cf. Nelson 1987: 247ff.), then this use of Manasseh's reign as explanation of the final catastrophe was a late feature introduced into the Deuteronomistic history. It helped to turn the original more hopeful narrative composed in Josiah's reign into one coloured by awareness of ultimate disaster at the hands of the Babylonians.

This covenant theology has an oddly dual character. On the one hand it makes clear that judgment is not a predetermined and fixed fate, but affirms that room for mediation and reconciliation exists. On the other hand it introduces a conditional factor that does not shrink from envisaging that Israel might finally be destroyed. The story of Moses's intercession in the wilderness serves to demonstrate this point. That prophets served Israel's needs as intercessors, in the manner of Moses and Samuel, is expressly made clear in Jer. 15.1:

> Then Yahweh said to me: 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not relent concerning this people' (Jer. 15.1).

Overall it is clear that the historical figure of Moses has exercised a powerful role on the part of the editors of Jeremiah 1–25 in shaping a portrait of the office and role of Jeremiah as a prophet (Seitz 1989: 3-27). At the same time a reverse influence is also evident on the part of the Deuteronomists in which the portrait of Moses has been shaped according to Judah's encounter with prophets such as Jeremiah. 'Deuteronomy saw Moses as the first of the prophets. Intercession was an integral part of his prophetic vocation' (Seitz 1989: 7).

The conclusion of the entire larger unit comprising Jeremiah 11–20 finds its climax with a violent outburst from Jeremiah in which the prophet complains against the total rejection of his message by the people (Jer. 20.7-12). The full extent of this rejection, and the ultimate cry of pain with the prophet's recognition of its irreversible nature, are revealed in Jeremiah's curse upon the day of his birth (Jer. 20.14-18).

All of this parallels very closely indeed the highly distinctive Deuteronomistic presentation of the prophets as the rejected mediators of God's covenant set out in 2 Kgs 17.13-14:

> Yet Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law that I commanded your ancestors

> and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets'. They would not listen but were stubborn, as their ancestors had been, who did not believe in Yahweh their God (2 Kgs 17.13-14).

What is especially significant in this, and what links it so closely with the Jeremianic material, is that it not only presents the work of prophets as that of covenant mediators, but it presents the rejection of such prophets as an accomplished reality. This marriage between the idea of popular rejection and of the 'true' prophet marks a formative stage in the development of the notion that God's faithful prophet is a martyr figure (Steck 1967: 199ff.). Such a development has provided a central feature of the Deuteronomistic interpretation of prophecy in the divine economy of Israel (Clements 1975: 41ff.). Admittedly such earlier figures as Amos and Hosea were 'rejected' prophets of this kind, but not until the time of Jeremiah could it be fully recognized that prophecy had 'failed' in the sense that it had been unable to avert the final collapse of the surviving part of Israel as Yahweh's people. Until that time the hope could still be entertained that God's appointed prophets would summon the people back to their ancestral loyalty.

Jeremiah is, in fact, the paradigmatic illustration of the degree of total national rejection of the message of the prophets which is described in this Deuteronomistic reflection. The theology of covenant shows the conditional nature of Israel's continuance before God; the prophets are portrayed as reaffirming the terms of this covenant. Now the figure of Jeremiah, typified in his rejection, serves to make plain that Israel has not kept the covenant and must suffer the inevitable curse spelled out in Jer. 11.1-8. More than any other prophetic figure he is presented as the classic exemplar of 'the prophet like Moses' who is ascribed an ongoing place in the life of the nation in Deut. 18.15-22 (Clements 1975: 41ff.; Seitz 1989: 3ff.).

If these observations are correct, to the effect that there is a close correlation between the structure of Jer. 11.1–20.18 and the portrayal of Jeremiah as an outstanding exemplar of the Deuteronomistic conception of a prophet 'like Moses', then some significant features must be related to them. Not only are there passages of an undoubtedly Deuteronomistic flavour within the larger unit as a whole, as has been widely recognized, but the overall framework bears a Deuteronomistic character. The individual 'confessions' of the prophet are located so as to highlight this covenant-mediatorial role. Kathleen O'Connor notes

this vital structuring role of the so-called 'confession' passages within their larger setting:

> The arrangement and distribution of materials, the development of the theological argument, the placement of the confessions and the unifying function of both the call account and closing summary show that the final form of cc. 1–25 came from a writer (O'Connor 1988: 155; cf. Diamond 1987: 149ff.).

Overall the structure of Jeremiah 11–20 demonstrates, in a comprehensive fashion, an important presupposition of the covenant theology that the Deuteronomists had come to embrace. Disobedience could push Israel beyond the brink of disaster. Whereas Moses had interceded successfully with Yahweh on Israel's behalf (Aurelius 1988: 18ff.; 88ff.), such intercession could now no longer hold back the nation from catastrophe.

Undoubtedly all of this has been given its final shape in the aftermath of 587 BCE, as we should expect. It uses fundamental elements of the Deuteronomistic theology to develop a theodicy. The confessions attributed to Jeremiah have been incorporated by the prose writer in order to illustrate the indictment of Israel and to explain the disaster that finally overtook the nation (O'Connor 1988: 113; cf. Diamond 1987: 182). Nevertheless it is not simply a backwards-looking review, justifying an irremediable situation of the past. Rather it is forward-looking in that it ties the explanation of past tragedy to concepts of covenant, and to the realities of prophecy and *tōrâ*, which were to carry the remnants of the nation into a new future.

The Faithless Shepherds

We can move on then to a further observation in respect of the concluding part of the structure of Jeremiah 1–25. The final section in Jer. 21.1–24.10 has, as its central core, a series of prophecies concerning the fate of the various kings of Judah who ruled, sometimes only briefly, during Jeremiah's ministry. These prophecies are introduced in 21.1-10 by a prose section, with a broadly based announcement to Zedekiah, the last of the Davidic kings to rule in Jerusalem, that the city will fall to the king of Babylon. The collection of prophecies that deal with the Davidic kingship therefore begins chronologically at the end with the last of such rulers, but in a way that is thematically appropriate since it draws attention to the fact that

it is the fate of the dynasty as a whole that is at issue. That this was an issue that lay close to the centre of the Deuteronomic movement as a whole is shown by the fact that the notion of a dynastic promise to the royal house of David provides the Deuteronomistic History with a pivotal centre (2 Sam. 7.1-17).

The sequel to the introduction in Jer. 21.1-10 concerning the fate of Judah's royal house is a sharp condemnation of an unnamed 'king of Judah' in Jer. 21.11-14. This monarch is addressed in 21.13 as 'You who are enthroned above the valley'. It is likely that one specific ruler was originally intended (Jehoiakim?), but, as it now stands, a larger framework has been accorded to it showing that it is the entire 'house of David' that is threatened (cf. the address in v. 12). As it now reads, the threat serves to draw out the important feature that the reproof, raised against an individual ruler in Jerusalem, places in jeopardy the future of the entire Davidic dynasty.

This feature is even more fully brought out in the passage that follows, which has served as something of an exemplary illustration of the manner in which the prophet's Deuteronomistic editors have developed the message of his prophecies. There stands in vv. 6-7 a short poetic threat, addressed to an unnamed king of Judah:

> For thus says Yahweh concerning the house of the king of Judah:
> You are like Gilead to me,
> like the summit of Lebanon;
> but I swear that I will make you a desert,
> —cities without inhabitants.
> I will prepare destroyers against you;
> all of them with their weapons,
> will cut down your prime cedars
> and hurl them into the fire.
> Jer. 22.6-7

The authentic Jeremianic origin of this unit can be reasonably defended, with its poetic play on the imagery suggested by the impressive House of the Forest of Lebanon (cf. 1 Kgs 7.2; 10.17, 21). The link with 21.13-14 through the imagery of 'forest' and 'fire' is clear (Holladay 1986: 583). However, the threats of 21.11-14 and 22.6-7 addressed to the contemporary Davidic ruler have been given a Deuteronomistic elaborative interpretation in 22.1-5 that reinforces the threat and provides it with a fuller explanation (Thiel 1973: 230ff.; Stulman 1986: 81-82). W.L. Holladay opposes the Deuteronomistic ascription of this material, while largely conceding the strength of the

arguments for it (Holladay 1986: 580-81). The kingship, even that of so august a dynasty as that of David, is to serve the welfare of the people by upholding justice (v. 3). It must operate within the requirements of the divine covenant made at Horeb between Yahweh and Israel.

This point is then spelled out further, and quite explicitly, by the Deuteronomistic editors in 22.8-9:

> When many nations pass by this city and say among themselves, 'Why has Yahweh treated this great city like this?' Then they shall answer, 'Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh their God and worshipped other gods and served them' (Jer 22.8-9).

In this manner the threat directed against a specific ruler in Jerusalem, most probably Jehoiakim, is broadened by the book's editors into a condemnation of the dynasty which he represented. The behaviour of one individual king is drawn upon to demonstrate that the future of the entire dynasty had been put in jeopardy. The God-given grace of a royal house could not override the necessity for each king to rule with justice and fairness. Where, in the past, such failure of individual kings had brought condemnation upon themselves, the message is now extended to threaten the continuance of the Davidic dynasty.

That the monarchy was a conditional institution in Israel, is a point explicitly made by the Deuteronomistic Historian (cf. 1 Sam. 12.25) and this is fully in line with the concessionary nature of the institution of kingship in Israel set out in Deut. 17.14-20. Jer. 22.9 makes the same point by insisting that the royal throne of David was subordinate to the covenant that Yahweh had made with his people. So we come to see that the editorial framework which has been given to Jeremiah's royal prophecies displays a strongly Deuteronomistic character. The Davidic kings were to be regarded as mediators of Yahweh's covenant with Israel, but only if they themselves obeyed the conditions of this covenant (cf. especially vv. 4-5).

Following on these primary oracles dealing with the Davidic kingship we have pronouncements concerning the fate of Shallum-Jehoahaz (Jer. 22.10-12), Jehoiakim (Jer. 22.18-19, preceded by sharp invective in vv. 13-17), and Jehoiachin (Jer. 22.24-30).

We can then relate this point to the observation that the structure of Jer. 21.1–24.10 appears to display a distinct interest in the fate of the Davidic dynasty in general, over and above the question of the

personal fates of the last individual rulers of Judah. This more comprehensive concern with the final collapse of what had survived as a remnant kingdom of Judah, epitomized in the fate of its royal rulers, is further shown by the placing of 24.1-10 as a concluding element. Whether or not this unit, with its lessons from the good and bad figs, really goes back to a saying from Jeremiah has been disputed. Unterman summarizes a very probable conclusion thus: 'It cannot be denied that 24.4-7 has all the signs of an authentic Jeremianic prophecy' (Unterman 1987: 56; cf. also Holladay 1986: 656-57). Holladay would locate the saying in 594 BCE. Yet this is not to deny that there has been some Deuteronomistic elaboration of Jeremiah's words and the placing of the unit in its present position appears to fulfil a particular editorial role (W. Thiel 1973: 253ff.).

The symbolic fate of the good and bad figs comes to a meaningful end with a warning that king Zedekiah of Judah, together with those who had remained with him in Jerusalem, were all doomed (vv. 8-10). The significant point for the overall structure of Jeremiah 1–25 is that the characterization of the Judaean community as 'bad figs' has been given a larger significance in the wake of subsequent events and thereby has served to orient the hope expressed in the book towards the community exiled in Babylon. The threefold agents of death—sword, famine and disease—link together the opening and closing sections concerning the disastrous nature of Zedekiah's reign from its beginning to its end (so especially 21.9 and 24.10; cf. also 29.18).

By the use of such opening and closing declarations, the prophecy of 24.4-7 concerning the fate of the 'bad figs' who remained in Judah after 598 BCE is related to an awareness of the tragic events of 587 BCE, which brought the kingdom of Judah, and the royal dynasty which had given it a divine foundation, to an end. This is then repeated in 29.17. The final rounding off of the whole collection in Jeremiah 1–25 is then given in 25.1-38, with a remarkable summary statement of what was regarded as the divine plan determining the world events relating to Jeremiah's ministry in 25.8-13.

Clearly it cannot occasion surprise that a prophet such as Jeremiah should have made forceful pronouncements concerning the various kings who ruled Judah after Josiah's death in 609 BCE. Undoubtedly these rulers carried a primary level of responsibility for Judah's ultimate downfall. What is surprising is the extent to which the Deuteronomistic framework that is given to these royal prophecies

invests them with a larger theological and political significance. Not only is the Davidic monarchy, as a primary institution of Israel, accorded only conditional approval, but the fate of the Davidic dynasty as a whole is placed in question. We cannot be in doubt that it is the Deuteronomistic editors of the book who have imposed this broadened layer of meaning onto Jeremiah's prophecies, and that they have done so in the light of what they knew had taken place in 587 BCE, with as much help as they could obtain from Jeremiah's authentic prophecies. At the same time they have used these prophecies to address issues that lay open, and unresolved, in the major history-work they had compiled.

The conditional interpretation of the kingly office compares closely with the Deuteronomistic Historian's explanation of the role of the monarchy in contributing to the downfall of the Northern Kingdom:

> When he (Yahweh) had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel from following Yahweh and made them commit great sin. The people of Israel continued in all the sins that Jeroboam committed; they did not depart from them until Yahweh had removed Israel out of his sight...' (2 Kgs 17.21-23).

In this evaluation the importance of the kingship as an institution is affirmed, its role in the downfall of the Northern Kingdom recognized, and the central significance of the Davidic dynasty implied. Defection from allegiance to the Davidic dynasty is presented as the beginning of Ephraim's misfortunes. These assertions fit smoothly with the points which the editorial framework of Jeremiah's prophecies to Judah's kings seek to bring out. Kingship only existed within Israel in order to serve the needs of the Mosaic covenant.

Conclusion

It remains to draw some basic conclusions from this examination of the structures of Jeremiah 1–25. First of all we may note again the primary point that there is a broad structural shape to these chapters, which fall into four major sections. These deal respectively with the coming downfall of Judah, rendered inevitable because it had failed to heed the warning implicit in the fate of the sister kingdom of Ephraim more than a century earlier. Secondly, the question of the temple of Jerusalem is focused upon, and the necessity for its destruction is explained in terms of the idolatry practised there. The historical

sanctuary had served as a cover for idolatrous practises, but worst of all, the temple itself had been made into an idol because it had been treated as a false basis of security. The belief that human beings could 'possess' the presence and power of deity, and could thereby be assured of divine protection, was precisely what made an image of God an offence and an illusion. The house of Yahweh in Jerusalem had been regarded by the people of Judah in the same manner that worshippers of an idol believed that it gave them assurance of divine protection.

The third and fourth sections of the prophetic collection of Jeremiah 1–25 focus respectively upon two types of divine mediation. The first is that of Israel's prophets whose task had been to warn Yahweh's people of the divine anger when they departed from obedience to the divine order. The second was that of kingship, and more particularly that of the dynasty of the royal house of David, which had ruled in Jerusalem for almost four hundred years.

These are all issues of prime significance for the Deuteronomistic movement, the origins of which are to be traced back to Josiah's reign, and perhaps even earlier still to the time of Hezekiah. It is a well-nigh classic expression of the situation outlined by M. Weber that the words of a 'charismatic' prophetic leader have led to a process of 'routinization' in order to make his words accessible and adaptable to a larger community and their ongoing needs (Clements 1986: 56-76; Clements 1990: 203-20). However, in the structure given to Jeremiah 1–25 the shaping of the units does not simply reassert familiar, and firmly established, features of Deuteronomistic theology. Instead it uses these central themes as a tool for accommodating, interpreting and applying Jeremiah's prophecies. This literary process illustrates very clearly the way in which a prophet's editors provide the record of his sayings with a context of historical, theological and institutional references by which the enduring meaning of his prophecies is to be grasped. It illustrates the aims of such a work of 'routinization' by which the unique and extraordinary elements of the prophet's preaching are set within a larger context in which they are to be applied and understood.

The Final Days of the Deuteronomistic Movement

If these observations are correct regarding the structural shape that has been accorded to Jeremiah 1–25, then they provide us with an impor-

tant clue to the origin and purpose of many of the Deuteronomistic elements to be found within this impressive collection. From the outset this material was written, and was designed to serve a literary and theological purpose. Its intention is to be seen in the literary and structuring role which it serves in its surviving location in the Jeremiah scroll. This at least would appear to be the case for such passages as Jer. 3.6-12, 15-18; 7.1-15; 11.1-8; 21.1-10; 22.1-9; 24.1-10; 25.1-14. There is therefore no need to posit a separate stratum of supposed Deuteronomistic homilies, composed independently and subsequently incorporated into the scroll of Jeremiah's sayings. The aim rather has been to elucidate and elaborate the meaning of Jeremiah's prophecies, seen in the painful retrospect of the events of 587 BCE. The Deuteronomistic authors were writers, not preachers, a characteristic which is wholly in line with the observations of M. Weinfeld regarding the wisdom–scribal aspects of the Deuteronomistic literature (Weinfeld 1972: 158ff.).

A further conclusion deserves serious consideration. If, as is argued here, Jeremiah 1–25 displays a clear structure, a coherent attachment to central Deuteronomistic themes, and an overall conformity in its theological ideas, then it is this work which constitutes the original 'Deuteronomistic' scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies (cf. Rietzschel 1966: 91ff.). Admittedly some subsequent additions have been made to this, but these are not extensive, and essentially the work has survived as a coherent and consistent unity. When we turn to Jeremiah 26–52, however, the situation is substantially changed. Not only are the literary forms significantly different, with so much narrative reportage (Mowinckel's 'Source B'), but the theology and political outlook is very much modified. Most notably this is evident on three key issues: kingship, covenant and Israel's future hope. It would extend the present study too far to explore these in detail, but we may note some basic points.

In the first instance the hope of a restoration of the Davidic dynasty has been accorded a major role (Jer. 33.14-26), whereas the original 'Deuteronomistic' edition of Jeremiah's prophecies was indifferent to this, and even basically negative in its attitude to such an expectation. Secondly, the covenant theology of Jeremiah 1–25 has been wholly changed and recast with the introduction of the hope of a 'new' covenant in Jer. 31.31-37. Thirdly, and perhaps most remarkably, the original hope of Jeremiah 1–25, which looked for a survival and

renewal within Judah of a chastened and penitent community, has been abandoned. All hope for the future now rests with a return from Babylonian exile of those who had been taken there in 598 BCE, and later (Jer. 29.1–31.26).

Clearly much authentic reminiscence of Jeremiah's part in the events of Judah's final collapse has been preserved and much echoing of 'Deuteronomistic' language and theology is still to be found. Nevertheless the move beyond the central ideas and themes found in the Deuteronomistic History and Jeremiah 1–25 is very marked. The original Deuteronomic movement has clearly collapsed, and new expectations and ideas have taken over the centre stage in the light of new events!

What we have are essentially an original book of Jeremiah's prophecies, edited by the Deuteronomic circle most probably at a time close to the completion of the History (c. 550 BCE?) and an extensive addendum to this in Jeremiah 26–52. This was forced upon the Deuteronomic traditionists in the wake of major upheavals that took place in Judah after 550 BCE, and Part II of the present Jeremiah book undoubtedly reflects this. We may go on to speculate that the original editorial composition of Jeremiah 1–25 took place in Judah, where all the Deuteronomistic literary ventures had their home. The location where the revised book (Jeremiah 1–25 + 26–52) was completed is no longer clear, although a Babylonian setting would seem to be most plausible.

If these conclusions regarding the origin of Jeremiah 1–25 and its connections with the Deuteronomic movement are valid, then we may venture a further comment. Since the study by Martin Noth of the overall shape and composition of the Deuteronomistic History, scholars have noted the seeming abruptness and enigmatic nature of its conclusion in 2 Kgs 25.27-30 (von Rad 1962: 342ff.). If our conclusions regarding the involvement of the Deuteronomic circle in the editing of Jeremiah's prophecies are correct, then we can see in the major shift between the shape of Jeremiah 1–25 and that of Jeremiah 25–52 some important clues as to how this enigma came to be resolved.

There is also an unresolved question concerning the strange pessimism of the work, if it held out no clear line of hope for Israel's restoration in the future (Wolff 1982: 99). The awkwardness and seeming unlikelihood of such perceptions are considerably reduced, once we recognize the closeness of the connections between the History

and the Deuteronomistic edition of Jeremiah's prophecies. They were both products of the same scribal-theological circle. Positions left unresolved in the History, particularly those regarding the uncertain future of the kingship, and the restoration of national life in Judah as God's people (cf. Diepold 1972: 193ff.) are much clarified by the original Deuteronomistic book of Jeremiah (Jer. 1–25). At the time when this was made there was still room to hope that the Judaean community, penitent and spiritually furnished with the Mosaic *tōrâ*, would lift itself up from amidst the ruins of Jerusalem and rebuild the city and surrounding countryside. This was a hope that Jeremiah personally clearly shared (Jer. 40.1-12). By the time that the revised scroll of Jeremiah appeared (Jer. 1–52), all such expectation had been abandoned and the idea of 'Return' (Heb. *šûb*), both spiritually and physically to the land of Judah, and to its cultic centre Jerusalem, remained the only effective line of hope that appeared practicable.

If the claim is correct, therefore, that the original Deuteronomistic edition of Jeremiah is to be found in Jeremiah 1–25, then we are able to shed considerable fresh light upon the contrasting patterns of future hope which took time to achieve resolution after the catastrophe of 587 BCE.

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