

A BIBLE MYSTERY: THE ABSENCE OF JEREMIAH
IN THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY.

Christopher T. Begg.

Introduction:

The Bible, all might agree, is a tantalizing book. It tantalizes in what it relates, and perhaps even more in what it leaves unsaid. A case in point is the account of Judah's last decades in 2 Kings 22-25. Here, amazingly in view of the presentation of the Book of Jeremiah where the prophet appears as a prominent a figure during this period, Jeremiah is not so much as mentioned. This state of affairs tantalizes in that while the fact itself seems so demand of explanation, it at the same time resists definitive resolution. No explanation can claim to be anything more than a somewhat plausible surmise. It is then with all diffidence that we proffer the following remarks concerning this old puzzle.

The puzzle is, of course, one in which a variety of problems come into play. Among such problems we may mention: (1) the mystery of the missing Jeremiah in Kings is part of a wider mystery, i.e., why, apart from Isaiah (see 2 Kgs 18:17-20:19),¹ does the Deuteronomistic History (hereafter Dtr) as a whole nowhere refer to the "classical prophets"?² (2) the composition history of both Dtr and the book of Jeremiah is highly controverted; (3) the nature of the literary relationship between the two complexes (and their respective compositional levels) is likewise a matter of dispute.³

It is not, of course, possible for us to provide solutions to these wider questions here. Moreover, we may, we believe, proceed with our inquiry (largely abstracting from them. We may do so because, whatever views on them one adopts, several points do seem clear. First of all, Jeremiah's status as "non-person" in Dtr is much more cause for wonderment than the Deuteronomist's non-mention of e.g. Amos (however this later fact be explained). The two problems are not at all the same

level. Unlike the much earlier Amos, Jeremiah was a (slightly older) contemporary of the Deuteronomist and the audience for whom he wrote.^{/4} As such, Jeremiah would surely have had an interest for the Deuteronomist and his readers far greater than those various earlier classical prophets whom he also passes over. In addition the book of Jeremiah attests-- and it is hardly credible that its presentation is devoid of all historical basis-- to a significant and extended activity by Jeremiah during Judah's critical final decades. In fact, the only classical prophet to have enjoyed a comparable importance in the affairs of his day was Isaiah--significantly the one such prophet cited by the Deuteronomist. Also from this point of view then Jeremiah would seem to have every claim to mention in Dtr. Finally, Jeremiah's absence in Dtr seems all the more remarkable when one notes the significant role accorded him in subsequent Jewish historical literature; see 2 Chron 35-36; 1 Esdras 1; Sir 49:6-7; 2 Macc 2:1-8; Josephus, Antiquities, Book X.

The foregoing considerations entail a further point, i.e., it is highly unlikely that the Deuteronomist's failure to mention Jeremiah is due simply to his not knowing of his existence (or his knowing him as a mere name). To say this is not necessarily to affirm that the Deuteronomist knew the book of Jeremiah in either its present or a hypothetical earlier form. What does strain belief is rather that the Deuteronomist, whether writing in the land or in the Diaspora, lacked awareness of Jeremiah's major role in Judah's last years, either through personal recollection or view other Jews among whom he lived.^{/5}

The above point has an obvious corolly. If simple "ignorance" cannot account for the Deuteronomist's non-mention of Jeremiah, then this fact is only explicable as a deliberate option on his part. In other words, there was some feature(s) to the figure of Jeremiah known to the Deuteronomist which made reference to him inappropriate or undesirable given the Deuteronomist's purposes. What

then could this feature have been?

Status Questionis

In order to situate our own proposal (as well as to fill a forschungsgeschichtlich lacuna) we begin by surveying previous scholarly suggestions on the question. A first recognition which emerges from such a survey is that the problem of Dtr's non-mention of Jeremiah (and of the classical prophets overall) has not received the deliberate, sustained attention that might have been expected. Moreover, even among authors who do comment on the problem, many confine themselves to the matter of Jeremiah's absence in the account of 2 Kings 22 where the prophetic figure consulted is rather Huldah. In so doing these authors leave out of consideration, however, what seems to be the greater mystery, i.e., the non-mention of Jeremiah in the whole post-Josianic period of Judah's history (2 Kings 23:31-25:30) given that, according to the book of Jeremiah, it was during this period --- as opposed to Josiah's own reign --- that the prophet enjoyed a special prominence.

Still, there are a number of authors who have proffered suggestions concerning the overall question of Jeremiah's absence in 2 Kings 22:25 as a whole. In our consideration of these authors, we shall first treat those whose comments are more summary, and thereafter those who address the question in extenso.

Within the first category cited, we may distinguish a first group of authors working prior to the quasi-universal acceptance of M. Noth's theory of the Deuteronomist. These authors provide an indirect explanation for Jeremiah's absence in Kings. They do this in connection with their defense of the Talmudic tradition (baba bathra 15a) that Jeremiah authored the book of Kings. Specifically, they aver that acceptance of Jeremianic authorship makes understandable the prophet's otherwise puzzling absence in Kings since modesty would

have caused Jeremiah to pass over his own role in the events he narrates there.⁶ Already prior to Noth, this theory of Jeremiah's authorship of Kings had, of course, been increasingly abandoned, even by conservative scholars.⁷ Those doing so, however, rarely attempted to provide an alternative explanation for Jeremiah's absence in Kings.⁸ In any case, though, we note this first view simply as a curiosity of exegetical history since it has no adherents today.

A variant to the above view is that of E. Renan. Renan regards the final redactor of Kings and Jeremiah as identical. In accordance with this supposition, he affirms that his redactor wanted to avoid repeating in one book what he relates in another, and so has relegated everything concerning Jeremiah to the book bearing his name.⁹ Likewise this view is one without contemporary support as such. It may, however, be noted that various recent authors, while not subscribing to the identification made by Renan, do advocate a view comparable to his, i.e., the Deuteronomist, presuming material on Jeremiah to be available to his readers in a Deuteronomistic edition of his words, felt it unnecessary to say anything about the prophet is his own work.¹⁰ Militating against such an explanation is, however, the consideration that the Deuteronomist, as his source indications in Kings suggest, does in fact incorporate into his own work material that was otherwise available -- why then should he not have done the same in the case of Jeremiah (and the other classical prophets)?

This brings us to a consideration of Noth's view on the question, Noth explains the general omission of the writing prophets in Dtr by postulating that these figures -- given their unwelcome announcements of doom -- were not mentioned in the royal annals, the Deuteronomist's main source for the royal period.¹¹ Specifically concerning the case of Jeremiah, Noth suggests that, whereas the Deuteronomist did draw on

Jeremiah 39-41 for his presentation in 2 Kings 25:1-26, he has eliminated from that source everything relating to Jeremiah since here his account concerns itself solely with figures holding official positions.^{/12}

Particularly for what concerns Jeremiah, Noth's view leaves unresolved questions. Why, e.g. would the Deuteronomist have limited his attention, in 2 Kings 25, to official figures, whereas he does not do this elsewhere? Similarly, in the presentation of Jeremiah 39-41 does not Jeremiah, in fact, appear in a quasi-official role?

None of the proposals reviewed so far reckons with conscious "ideological" factors behind Dtr's silence concerning Jeremiah. The first author, to our knowledge, to advance such an explanation was J. Klausner in a modern Hebrew contribution written in 1953.^{/13} According to Klausner, it was lingering animosity over the "pro-Babylonian" policy espoused by Jeremiah among the circles responsible for the book of Kings which prompted their omitting him from their presentation. Subsequent scholarship seems virtually unaware of Klausner's suggestion; we shall comment on it when we come to mention a more recent author who has briefly (and without reference to Klausner) pointed to the same factor as responsible for Jeremiah's absence in Dtr.

Another author invoking "ideological" considerations for Jeremiah's mission in Dtr is S. Granild writing in 1963.^{/14} In Granild's view, Jeremiah, for a variety of reasons, was a persona non grata to most adherents of the "Deuteronomic movement," i.e., the priests and prophets of Jerusalem who produced and promoted the book of Deuteronomy and eventually compiled Dtr. As such, he was passed over by them when they came to recount

Judah's final decades. Among factors which Granild identifies at work in this antagonism is, first of all, the fact of Jeremiah's stemming from the "priests of Anathoth." Such origins made him an object of suspicion to the Zadokite Jerusalem priesthood which had succeeded to its position upon Solomon's expulsion of Abiathar to Anathoth--an event depicted in Dtr as divinely foreordained -- see 1 Kings 2:26-27; 1 Sam 2:27-36. Jeremiah further antagonized the "Deuteronomists" with his criticisms of their confidence in the external realities of law-book and Temple as well as of their selective, self-interested application of deuteronomy's provisions, particularly in the matter of the priestly rights of the country Levites with whom Jeremiah would have made common cause (see 2 Kings 23:9 and compare Deut 18:6-8).

Granild's proposals have, we believe, much to recommend them. They too, however, have their difficulties. In particular, one wonders if Granild does not exaggerate the various oppositions between Jeremiah and the "Deuteronomists" which he evokes to explain the former's absence in Dtr. Thus, e.g., like Jeremiah in his "Temple Speech" (Jer 7:26), the Deuteronomist can envisage the destruction of the Temple; see 1 Kings 9:6-9. Further, Granild himself notes that the combined evidence of 2 Kings 22 and the book of Jeremiah points to a positive relationship existing between the prophet and certain prominent "Deuteronomists" (the family of Saphan in particular). How was it then that such pro-Jeremiah figures failed to get mention of him when Dtr came to be compiled?

At this point in our survey, we turn to a consideration of two recent, more detailed treatments of the problem of Jeremiah's absence in Kings. The earlier of these discussions is that of K.-F. Pohlmann/¹⁵ For Pohlmann, the Deuteronomist leaves Jeremiah unmentioned primarily because, in the traditions about the prophet

known to him, Jeremiah appears as advocate for those left in the land as bearers of Jewish hopes, whereas the Deuteronomist's own expectations (as well as those of the later redactors of Jeremiah's words) focused on Jews living Babylon. Pohlmann's view here obviously stands or falls with his positions on several wider questions. Those positions do, however, have their difficulties. Specifically, there do not seem to be decisive indications for deciding between Palestine and Babylon as the place of composition for Dtr, as several recent authors have noted.¹⁶ Were Pohlmann's views on this point correct, one might well expect that the Deuteronomist would relate more concerning Jewish life in Babylon in the years between 597 and 562 in 2 Kings 24-25. Note too that the one "Babylonian event" recorded by him, i.e., the release of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 25:27-30) would surely have been of concern to all Jews -- wherever they might have been living. Accordingly, his inclusion of this episode is no sure indication that the Deuteronomist was writing among and on behalf of Babylonian Jews.

It is likewise questionable whether Pohlmann is correct in opposing, within the book of Jeremiah, an older, ultimately, "authentic" tradition centred on those remaining in the land as bearers of Jewish future hopes and a later redaction which focused on the Babylonian Jews and denied any salvific role for the remnant in the land. Why could not Jeremiah himself have addressed words of encouragement/promises of survival at one time to those left in the land (e.g., 32:6-15) and at another to the Jews in Babylon (e.g., 29:5-7), as many indisputably "critical" authors hold.¹⁷ Is it furthermore plausible that a "redactor" would have ventured to make Jeremiah mouthpiece for a view directly contradictory to the prophet's known conviction as to the group with whom Jewish future hopes lay? Conceivably, of course, he may have done this, but then why should not the Deuteronomist himself have done the same thing and

thereby made Jeremiah suitable for mention in his (purportedly) Diaspora-oriented work? In view of such questions, Pohlmann's attempt remains less than fully satisfying.

Our second author, writing with a knowledge of and in reaction to Pohlmann, is K. Koch.¹⁸ As the title of his article indicates, Koch wants to develop an explanation for the absence, not just of Jeremiah, but of all the classical prophets (apart from Isaiah) in Dtr; in this connection he criticizes Pohlmann for confining his attention simply to the case of Jeremiah. Likewise rejecting Pohlmann's premise concerning the composition of Dtr in Babylon and its Diaspora-centred future hopes, Koch advances several considerations of his own which would help make understandable Dtr's (conscious) "Profetenschweigen." A first such consideration he adduces is that whereas the prophets mentioned in Dtr are triumphant figures (see, e.g., Elisha), the classical prophets as known to us from their own words (with which Koch supposes the Deuteronomist to have been acquainted) were hardly so. In other words, the classical prophets did not correspond to the Deuteronomist's image of the "true prophet" and so he passes them over.¹⁹ A second consideration, to which Koch himself ultimately attaches little weight, is that the Deuteronomist may have found the classical prophets' words of doom for Israel/Judah too "radical" given his own more hopeful outlook for the nation. Of primary significance for Koch is rather another opposition between the Deuteronomist's conception concerning prophets and the classical prophets themselves, i.e., whereas the former, especially in his programmatic text 2 Kings 17:13-14, views the prophet primarily as "preacher of repentance," "the pre-Exilic classical prophets (including Jeremiah spoke of "repentance" simply as a lost opportunity in Israel's past. Given this divergence, the Deuteronomist would not have been inclined to incorporate the classical prophets known to him in his work.

Koch's proposals evoke a number of remarks. In the first place, we question, as indicated above, whether the Deuteronomist's non-mention of Jeremiah should be subsumed under the more general Profetenschweigen in Dtr as Koch does. Again, Koch's initial opposition between Dtr's triumphant, all-masterful prophets and the forlorn failures presented us in the "prophetic books" seems much overdrawn and so of dubious relevance as an explanator factor. Dtr's various "prophetic figures," e.g., Moses, Samuel, "the man of God from Judah" (1 Kings 13), Elijah and Elisha all experience rejection, persecution and self-doubt. It is then not at all clear that the Deuteronomist really does work with a "triumphalistic" image of the prophet to the extent claimed by Koch. Conversely, various of the classical prophets' words bespeak a self-assurance very much in line with the prophetic image Koch attributes to the Deuteronomist; see e.g., Mic 3:8; Amos 7:15-17; Jer 1:10. Also from this perspective, it is difficult to see why the Deuteronomist would have been adverse to incorporating such figures.

Questions likewise suggest themselves concerning Koch's opposing Dtr and the classical prophets on the matter of the centrality of the call to repentance to the prophet's activity. To begin with the latter, it has initially to be noted that the question whether the pre-exilic classical prophets (up to and including Jeremiah) preached repentance as a possibility for their hearers and something capable of still having an effect on Yahweh has been a matter of intense controversy for over three decades now. Playing into this general problems are, of course, a whole range of sub-problems: the "authenticity" of the relevant passages in the prophetic books, the delimitation and classification of the units within which the apparent references exhortations to repentance in this material originally stood as well as their intended function. On

these points, Koch in this study, as well as in other publications, mostly aligns himself with the approach advocated especially by H.W. Wolff for whom the pre-exilic classical prophets basically did not speak of repentance as a "live option" for their audience.^{/20} Over against this view stands, however, that of a large group of scholars, headed by G. Fohrer, who do see the call to repentance as a significant element in the preaching of these prophets.^{/21}

It is, of course, not possible for us to resolve this wider controversy here. It may, however, be safely said that both sides have pressed the evidence in the interest of their respective theories. Wolff and others appear intent on eliminating--by whatever means-- any suggestion that the pre-exilic classical prophets ever addressed a seriously intended call to repentance to their audiences. Conversely, Fohrer and his followers seem to lay undue emphasis on the rather infrequent "exhortations" in the pre-exilic prophetic books. Trying to reconcile the two extremes, we might suggest, with several recent writers on the controversy, that while the call to repentance is not at the forefront of these prophets' words, it is not completely absent there; see e.g., Amos 5:4-7, 14-15; Josea 10:12; 14:1-3; Isaiah 1: 16-20, etc.^{/22} In any event, passages like those just cited certainly do lend themselves to being understood in this way, as indicated by the fact that numerous scholars have done so right up till the present. But then, the question arises: if, as Koch supposes, the Deuteronomist knew the words of the pre-exilic classical prophets and if (again so Koch) he approached those words with a fixed notion of the prophet as "preacher of repentance," would he not very naturally have interpreted such texts as exhortations to repentance, thereby making their authors fit for incorporation into his work?

In the foregoing we have been speaking of the problem of whether or not the pre-exilic classical prophets in general preached repentance. The problem takes on special

acuity, however, in the case of Jeremiah in that even authors who hesitate to admit a preaching of repentance. The problem takes on special acuity, however, in the case of Jeremiah in that even authors who hesitate to admit a preaching of repentance by, e.g., Amos or Isaiah, do reckon with the presence of this element in the authentic words of Jeremiah; see, e.g., Jeremiah 3:12,14, 22; 4:1; 23:22.²³ Such a recognition implies, however, that even if Koch's supposition holds for the other pre-exilic classical prophets, it becomes less plausible precisely with regard to Jeremiah. Of all the pre-exilic classical prophets, it is Jeremiah whose words would have most corresponded to the Deuteronomist's (purported) image of the prophet as "preacher of repentance." On Koch's premises then his exclusion from Dtr becomes all the more difficult to understand.

Conversely, however, it must be questioned whether the "call to repentance" and the conception of the prophet primarily as one who makes that call is really as central/integral to Dtr overall as Koch supposes. In this connection we note first that the most explicit treatments of the repentance in Dtr, i.e., Deut 4:25-28; 30:1-10; 1 Kings 8:46-53, are widely attributed to a secondary (and relatively small-scale Deuteronomistic stratum (note too that one of these appeals 1 Kings 8:46ff., is placed on the lips of a figure, Solomon, who is not a prophetic Gestalt in Dtr as such).²⁴ It is likewise to be noted that the theme "repentance" is not all that prominent in the words of the prophets recorded in Dtr, whether these be taken over from his sources or composed by him. In other words: 2 Kings 17:13-14 notwithstanding, Dtr's prophets do not, in fact, function as preachers of repentance to any marked extent (1 Sam 7:3 is an exception).²⁵ This consideration

takes on added significance when we note that the Deuteronomist repeatedly introduces prophetic speeches of his own composition (1 Kings 14:7-11, 14,16; 16:1-4; 21:20b-24; 2 Kings 21:10-15; 22:15-20) where he would have had the opportunity to present exhortations to repentance were this something of crucial importance to him. In these speeches what we find, however, are rather announcements of irrevocable doom. There is then no opposition between the content of the prophetic message as formulated by the Deuteronomist and that which Koch claims to be the core message of the classical prophets. Finally, it might be pointed out that the formulation of 2 Kings 17:13-14 itself speaks of the inefficacy of the prophets' repeated summons to repentance; here too there is a correspondence-- rather than a divergency--between the Deuteronomist's presentation and the classical prophets who often refer to their lack of success in promoting repentance; see, e.g., Amos 4:6-12; Isaiah 30:15; Jer 5:3; 8:5-6; 15:7; 23:14.

In light of the above, it becomes questionable whether 2 Kings 17:13-14 can be taken as the key to the Deuteronomist's understanding of "prophecy" and a fortiori to his omission of the classical prophets as does Koch. On the contrary, the passages might well derive from a (isolated) secondary Deuteronomistic hand, as several contemporary authors hold.¹²⁶ If this is the case, the question arises: why should not the earlier, primary Deuteronomistic redaction, with its view of the prophets as announcers of inescapable disaster (see 2 Kings 17:13-14) which coheres much better with the actual content of the Deuteronomistic prophetic speeches than does 2 Kings 17:13-14) have incorporated the classical prophets who, according to Koch, correspond to this conception? and even if 2 Kings 17:13-14 be regarded as integral to the primary Deuteronomistic redaction, it simply does not have such significance for Dtr's presentation of the prophets overall that it would have precluded the Deuteronomist's inclusion of the classical prophets who, in other respects, seem so serviceable for his purposes.

Reference finally might be made here to the views of I.L.Seeligmann.^{/27} Seeligmann does not directly pronounce on the problem of the classical prophets' absence in Dtr, although he alludes to the matter repeatedly. At the same time, however, he does pose the premises for an answer to the question which would run directly counter to that of Koch. According to him, the call to repentance is especially characteristic for the classical prophets, whereas in Dtr. (the late, isolated 2 Kings 17:13-14 excepted), prophets rather proclaim inevitable doom. Such views obviously imply an answer to our question just the opposite of Koch's, i.e., the Deuteronomist passed over the classical prophets because their emphasis on repentance as an actual possibility contradicted his view of the prophet's role. The fact, however, that another scholar can thus interpret both the classical prophets and the Deuteronomist's view of prophecy in precisely the opposite way to Koch does not enhance one's confidence in the latter's construction.

To round off our discussion of Koch, we might note the summary remarks of P. Höffken.^{/28} Höffken begins by asking whether Dtr's non-mention of the classical prophets in general need be so "theologiegeladen" a matter as Koch would have it. He then goes on to suggest, specifically for the case of Jeremiah, that "political" considerations may have influenced the Deuteronomist's passing him over, i.e., Jeremiah's known pro-Babylonian stance as well as his exaltation of the Babylonian Exiles at the expense of those who remained in the land.

Höffken's second factor above represents, we note, a striking reversal of Pohlmann's view. As to his first factor, which, we recall, had already been suggested by Klausner, we might begin by accepting with Pohlmann the historical veracity of the trad-

ition of our book of Jeremiah that the prophet adopted a "pro-Babylonian" stance in the sense that he enjoined submission to Babylon as Yahweh's appointed agent in chastising Judah: such a feature is not likely to be a later tendentious invention!²⁹The question is though whether the Deuteronomist would find this a reason for excluding the prophet from his presentation. In this connection we note that the Deuteronomist has incorporated (or himself composed) a word attributed to Isaiah about the coming Babylonian despoilation of Judah in 2 Kings 20:17-18, a word for which he supplies a fulfillment notice in 24:13. We likewise note that 2 Kings 24:2 speaks of Yahweh's dispatching, during Jehoiakim's reign, "bands of Chaldeans . . . according to the word . . . which he spoke by his servants the prophets." In both instances then the Babylonians appear as executioners of Yahweh's purposes against Judah. Note finally that, nowhere in 2 Kings 24-25, do we find the Deuteronomist making any explicitly critical remarks concerning the measures perpetuated by the Babylonians against Jerusalem in 597 and 587. Accordingly, the Deuteronomist's outlook concerning the Babylonians does not seem to have been all that different from Jeremiah's own; for him too they were Yahweh's designated instruments for the punishment of Jerusalem. And so, it appears questionable whether Jeremiah's pro-Babylonian posture would have been a reason for the Deuteronomist to exclude mention of him from his work.

At the same time however, Höffken's reference to possible "political" grounds for Jeremiah's absence in Dtr does call to mind another sort of "political" divergence between Jeremiah and the "Deuteronomists" which H. Cazelles has recently brought to bear, albeit cursorily, on the question of this study!³⁰The opposition here would revolve around the problem of monarchical legitimacy in Judah in the years after 597. Jeremiah, for his part, dismissed any future kingly prospects for

the deposed Jehoiachin and his line (see Jer 22:24-30), but articulated a rather more favourable outlook regarding Zedekiah (see, e.g., Jer 34:4; 38:17). In this he stands at odds with the stance underlying the presentation of 2 Kings 25, however. Here, the Deuteronomist first relates the Babylonians' terminating royal prospects for Zedekiah's line by killing his three sons and incapacitating Zedekiah himself by blinding him (25:6-7) and then, in a climatic concluding segment (25:27-30), narrates the Babylonian release of Jehoiachin -- significantly designated as "king of Judah." /31 In line with these observations, Cazelles suggests that the Deuteronomist has passed over Jeremiah because of the divergence between them regarding which royal line had the legitimate claim to future rule.

Cazelles' suggestion does, we believe, have a certain validity. At the same time, certain qualifications seem called for. Thus, while the Deuteronomist does seem to envisage the definitive elimination of monarchical prospects for Zedekiah's line, his outlook regarding the house of Jehoiachin and its future is more ambiguous. Here it might be noted that the Deuteronomist, notwithstanding the fact of his reigning only three months does not fail to apply to Jehoiachin one of his condemnatory notices (2 Kings 24:8), he had then no very high estimate of the character of this king. Similarly, the formulation in 2 Kings 25:30 could suggest what is explicit in the parallel text Jer 52:34, i.e., Jehoiachin had already died by the time the Deuteronomist wrote; if so, the account in 25:27-30 becomes simply, as Noth understood it, the record of

one last past episode -- rather than an intimation of the Deuteronomist's future hopes. Note too the absence of any mention of Jehoiachin's sons (known us from 1 Chron 3:17-18) in 25:27ff. This omission could imply that the measures of Evil-merodach enumerated were acts of beneficence for Jehoiachin personally, but not involving any commitment to provide for his descendants. On all these grounds then, we question whether the Deuteronomist should be seen as one who fastened his hopes and loyalty on Jehoiachin's line.

We likewise question whether there is clear evidence that Jeremiah entertained any very different view of Zedekiah and his prospects than he did in the case of Jehoiachin. In this regard we note that Jeremiah's promise of deliverance to Zedekiah in Jer 38:17 is a conditional one -- a condition which the king does not meet. Likewise the oracle of 34:4 speaks only of Zedekiah's dying "in peace" and being duly buried. Conversely, there are strongly negative/critical words to and about Zedekiah in, e.g., 32:4; 34:21; 38:23.

In view of all the above, it seems questionable whether Jeremiah and the "Deuteronomists" should be opposed as proponents of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, respectively. On the other hand, it is possible that Jeremiah's word of 22:24-30 writing off any prospects for Jehoiachin's house, did cause problems for the Deuteronomist who does, in any case, conclude his whole account with a description of an upswing in this king's personal fortunes, and so contributed to his decision to leave the prophet unmentioned.

Finally, reference might be made here to another possible "political" factor behind the Deuteronomist's non-reference to Jeremiah. The factor involves the divergent conceptions concerning the status and prospects

of the inhabitants of the former Northern Kingdom in Dtr and the words of Jeremiah to which M. Cogan has called attention.³² In the former (see especially 2 Kings 17) Israel, in the wake of 721, is depicted as having been totally depopulated, its inhabitants replaced with idolatrous foreigners having no claim to Yahweh's favour. Jeremiah, on the contrary, holds out to the Northerners the prospect that Yahweh is now ready once again to accept them (Jer 3:6-14;31). Although Cogan himself does not draw this conclusion, it could be that remembrance of Jeremiah's favourable posture towards the reprobate Northerners likewise influenced the Deuteronomist to exclude him from his work.

Our Proposal

After the foregoing survey, we now turn to a presentation of a factor, not referred to as such by any of the authors treated, which, we think, may be of relevance for our question. Our starting point here is the depiction of the prophet in the book of Jeremiah. In a recent article, S.E. Balentine has attempted a "reassessment" of the widely held view that "intercession" was a routine activity of Israelite prophets in general.³³ The interest of this article for our purposes lies in its showing that, whatever may be the case for other OT prophets, the book of Jeremiah does frequently introduce references to "intercession" in its presentation of the prophet; see, e.g., 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; 21:2; 27:18; 37:3; 42:2. Given, however, Balentine's evidence that "intercession" was not, in fact, something typical for Israel's prophets overall, the book's use of intercession terminology with respect to Jeremiah cannot, in its entirety, be viewed simply as a standard prophetic topos which a redactor might readily have applied to

him on his own account. This element must, rather, have some basis in Jeremiah's own activity.

The foregoing discussions has implications for the question of the Deuteronomist's handling of the figure of Jeremiah. For supposing that "intercession" was a significant feature of the ministry of the historical Jeremiah, then this feature would undoubtedly have been part of the information available to the Deuteronomist about the prophet. As we shall now try to indicate, however, it was, we believe, precisely his awareness concerning Jeremiah's engagement as "intercessor" which helps explain the Deuteronomist's exclusion of him from his work.

The foregoing statement, we are aware, might occasion some initial surprise. Because, in fact, Jeremiah's intercessory activity as known to the Deuteronomist seems at first sight something that he would have found quite congenial and usable for his purposes. This is so given the presence in Dtr of a whole series of "intercessions" undertaken by "prophetic figures" in the face of potential or actual calamity threatening individuals or the people; see Deut 9:18-25 (Moses); Jos 7:6-9 (Joshua); 1 Sam 7:6; 12:19 (Samuel); 1 Kings 13:6 (the man of God from Judah); 2 Kings 19:4 (Isaiah); cf. also the royal intercessions in 1 Kings 8:27-53; 2 Kings 13:4 as well as the appeals (self-intercessions) by the people (Judg 10:10-15) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:15-19; 20:2-3).³⁴ In view of this strong accentuation of the intercession motif throughout Dtr, the Deuteronomist might appear to have had every reason to incorporate the Jeremiah whom the tradition presented to him as a great intercessory figure. Accordingly, our invocation of Jeremiah's intercessory activity as key to the Deuteronomist's non-mention of him seems to exacerbate rather than to resolve the problem.

At this point, however, a further precision concerning Dtr needs to be introduced. Whereas the Deuteronomist does relate intercessions/appeals through

the bulk of his history, this element is strikingly absent just where it would seem most appropriate and expected, i.e., the account of Judah's so troubled final decades in 2 Kings 22-25. The following indications may be noted in this regard: Josiah, notwithstanding his realization of the threat hanging over his people for their disregard of the terms of the law-book that has been found (2 Kings 22:13), makes no attempt to address a word of intercession to Yahweh on their behalf. In this he stands in contrast with various of Dtr's kings who do undertake intercessions in the face of some threat (Solomon, 1 Kings 8:27ff.; Jehochaz, 2 Kgs 13:4; Hezekiah, 2 Kings 19:15-19, cf. 20:2-3). Similarly, in his instructions to the delegation he dispatches Josiah refrains from directing them to request an intercession from the one to whom they will go. His directive is simply: "inquire of the Lord for me . . . concerning the words of this book . . ." (22:13). Further to be noted is, that, in her response in 2 Kings 22:15-20, the prophetess Huldah does not herself take the initiative in making intercession for the people, as do several of Dtr's earlier prophetic figures, e.g., Moses, Joshua, Samuel, the Judean man of God and Isaiah. Both Josiah and Huldah, then, in the presentation of 2 Kings 22, appear as ones who deliberately refrain from the intercession which is characteristic for their respective offices elsewhere in Dtr (and which the circumstances seem so urgently to require here). Note finally that in the entire post-Josianic period of Dtr (2 Kings 23:31-25:30) there is no mention whatever of appeal or intercession in the face of evermore imminent catastrophe.

The question now is how this state of affairs is to be explained -- what could have led the Deuteronomist to present Judah's final decades -- in contrast to all previous periods -- as a time

devoid of efforts at intercession to avert the looming disaster? In our view, the Deuteronomist's procedure here has to be understood in terms of his programmatic announcement in 2 Kings 21:10-15. Here, "Yahweh's servants the prophets" pronounce a word of doom on Judah-Jerusalem because of Manasseh's sins (and those of the people as a whole). Thereafter, the Deuteronomist's whole presentation in 2 Kings 22-25 seems designed to underscore the irreversibility of this judgment. Thus, Huldah's words concerning the people's fate in 22:15-18 re-echo those of 21:10-15. Again, the Deuteronomist appends to his laudatio of Josiah in 23:25 a statement making clear that the king's piety had no effect on Yahweh's fixed determination to destroy, 23:26-27. Later, the Babylonian incursion under Jehoiakim is explicitly designated as fulfillment of Yahweh's word against Manasseh (24:2b-4), just as the whole of 24:10-25:26 portrays the stages by which the word of 21:10ff. reaches its definitive realization. It is in the same line that we might now understand the Deuteronomist's remarkable exclusion of the intercessory element in 2 Kings 22(23-25). By representing Josiah and Huldah (as well as all subsequent Judean leaders) as refraining from such activity where it would seem so called for, the Deuteronomist wants, yet again, to underscore the absolute irrevocability of Yahweh's earlier word of doom. In the face of that word, appeal or intercession is simply pointless and so is just not attempted.

If the foregoing remarks concerning the absence of "intercession" in 2 Kings 22-25 have some validity, they supply a key for understanding the non-mention of Jeremiah there. The Deuteronomist would, we indicated, have known Jeremiah, among other things, as a great intercessor during Judah's final decades. But now, the Deuteronomist's aim in depicting this period is to represent it as a time in which intercession had been rendered pointless by a previous irreversible divine judgment and accordingly was not attempted. Obviously, however, Jeremiah the intercessor known to the Deuteronomist would not fit into such a presentation,

Begg, Mystery, IBS 7, July 1985.

and therefore was passed over.^{/35}

In concluding, it should be emphasized that it has not at all been our intention to assert a monocausal explanation for the mystery of Jeremiah's absence in 2 Kings 22-25. Beyond the factor just presented, various other considerations may well have come into play here, e.g., tensions between the Anathoth priesthood and the Jerusalem leadership circles of the Deuteronomi(sti)c movement (so Granild), as well as Jeremiah's problematic stances towards Jehoiachin (so Cazelles) and the Northerners (so, implicitly, Cogan). Our aim has simply been to offer another possibility for making of what will always remain one of the Bible's more tantalizing features.^{/36}

Christopher T. Begg.

Catholic University of America,
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

Notes

1. In this connection note that the Isaiah of 2 Kings 18.17-20.19 a miracle worker and medical practitioner (see especially 2 Kings 20.1-11) is a rather different figure than the prophet Isaiah himself.
2. The author is currently at work on further studies concerning the deuteronomist's non-mention of other classical prophets from Amos to Ezekial. It is his sense that particular factors lie behind the non-appearance of each of the figures in Dtr, ie there is no single key that will explain the absence of all of them, See the remarks of F. Crüsemann, "Kritik an Amos im deuteronomischen Geschichtswerk. Erwägung zu Könige 1427" Probleme biblischer Theologie. G.von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. H.W. Wolff (Munich, Kaiser, 1971), p58, n.10: "Die dahinterstehenden Gründe (ie for the non-mention of the classical prophets in Dtr) sind sicher vielschichtig und so wenig eine einheit wie die 'Schriftprophetie'. Sie aufzuhellen ist für eine Verhältnisbestimmung der Dtr Theologie zur Prophetie unerlässlich und damit for das Verständnis dieser (Dtr) Theologie."
3. This question arises especially in connection with those texts of Dtr and Jeremiah which are verbally parallel to a large extent: eg 2 Kings 24.18-25.21; Jeremiah 52.1-27 and 2 Kings 25.22-26= Jeremiah 40.7-9.
- 4 We prescind here from the contemporary controversy about the number of deuteronomistic redactional strata that are to be distinguished. We shall simply work with Noth's conception of a single primary deuteronomistic redactor writing in the exile. We continue to see this conception as the most adequate one available. Recently, it has received powerful new support from H.D. Hoffmann, Reform und Reformen. Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomischen Geschichtsschreibung. ATANT 66 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag 1980). Note too that however many deuteronomistic redactors one distinguishes in Dtr, the fact remains that Jeremiah is absent in all of them.
5. It should, however, be noted that there are twentieth century authors who do see the non-mention of Jeremiah in Kings as an indication that the author lacked access to traditions/documentation concerning the prophet as a figure of sufficient stature for inclusion in his work, so (with varying nuances): S. Mowinckel, Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia (Kristiana: J.

- Dybvad, 1914) 30; C.C. Torrey, "The Background of Jeremiah 1-10," JBL 56 (1937) 193-216, p199,n.4; Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel from the beginnings to the Babylonian Exile, trans. and abridged by M. Greenberg (Chicago: Chicago Univ Press 1960) 157-166; J. Scharbert, Die Propheten Israels um 600 v. Chr. (Cologne:Bachem 1967) 459.
6. So (with various degrees of assurance), eg K.H. Graf, Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel 1866) 110-111; G. Rawlinson, "Kings, Books I and II", The Holy Bible, vol II, ed. F.C. Cook (London, John Murray 1872) 465-624; J.W. Colenso, The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined, Part VII (London: Longmans, Green & Co 1879) 205; J. Prado, Praelectiones Biblicae ad Usus Scholarum: Vetus Testamentum, Liber Primus : De Sacra Veteris Testam enti Historia (Turin: Marietta/Madrid: El Perpetuo Socorro 1934) 262; B. Mariana, Introductio in Libros sacros Veteris Testamenti (Rome: Herder 1958) 180-181
 7. So eg C.F. Keil, Die Bücher der Könige, BCAT 2:3 (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke 1876) 8-9; A.Sanda, Die Bücher der Könige, I, EHAT 9.1 (Münster: Aschendorfsche Verlangsbuchhandlung 1911) xxxvii-xxxviii.
 8. One author who does so is S. Landersdorfer, Die Bücher der Könige, HSAT 3:2 (Bonn: Hanstein 1927)5-6., Landersdorfer attributes Kings to a pupil of Jeremiah. The fact that this author does not mention Jeremiah in his presentation is understandable when it is kept in mind that, in general, Kings makes only occasional references to prophets and further that the description of the final decades of Judah - where there would have been occasion to mention Jeremiah - is a very summary one. For a similar view see A. Médebielle, Les livres des Roi , La Sainte Bible, III (Paris: Letouzey et Ané 1949) 327-800, p567. Prado and Garofalo (see n.5) respond to Landersdorfer's and Médebielle's view with the observation that, whereas Jeremiah's absence in Kings is explicable if he were its author, ie in terms of the prophet's modesty, this is not the case with authorship by a disciple - such a one would have had every reason to magnify his master's role in the events he records.
 9. Histoire du Peuple d'Israel, III (Paris: Calman Levy 1891) 234f, n.3 A similar view is espoused by A. Jepson, Die Quellen des Königsbuches (Halle: M Niemeyer 1956²) 100 who affirms that the redaction of Jeremiah and the "R^{II}" stratum (= Noth's Deuteronomist) in Dtr derive from the same hand. Jepson does not however relatethis view to the question of Jeremiah's absence in Dtr.
 10. So eg with varying nuances: R.E. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition (Atlanta:John Knox 1975) 47-49; Hoffmann, Reform, 267 and n.19; W. Thiel, Die deuteronomische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45, WMANT 52, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1981) 103, N.25

11. Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer 1957³) 97-98. Noth's claim here is rejected as dubious in the case of the other writing prophets and as "incorrect" for Jeremiah by E. Janssen, Juda in der Exilszeit, FRLANT 69 (Göttingen: vanderhoeck & Ruprecht 1956) 88. Janssen goes on (ibid n.5) to affirm that the non-mention of the classical prophets (including Jeremiah) in Dtr is not "surprising" when we consider eg that Moses and Elijah are rarely cited outside the Pentateuch and the Elijah narratives respectively.
12. Ibid, 86-87,87 n.3
13. "Why is Jeremiah not Mentioned in the Book of Kings?" in M.Davis, ed. M.M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume (Hebrew Section) (NYork, Jewish Theological Seminary of America 1953) 189-203 esp 203
14. "Jeremia und Deuteronomium" ST 16 (1962) 135-154. G. Brunet, Les Lamentations contre Jeremie (Paris, PUF 1968) 87,n.5 explicitly aligns himself with Granild's overall thesis of an opposition between Jeremiah and the Deuteronomists. Brunet would however see this opposition more in terms of divergent stances towards the Babylonian threat by the two parties. H. Weippert, Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches, BZAW 132 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973) 20,n.98 affirms that Granild provides "no plausible answer" to the problem of Jeremiah's absence in 2 Kings 22-23. Her own comments on the point (ibid p20) seem to ruin in the same direction however.
15. "Erwägungen zum Schlusskapitel des deuteronomischen Geschichtswerks. Oder: Warum der Prophet Jeremia in 2 Könige 22-25 nicht erwähnt?", Textgemäss. Aufsätze und Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments (Festschrift E. Wurthwein), ed. A.H.J. Gunneweg and O. Kaiser (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1979) 94-109 espec 107-109. Poltmann's presentation here builds on his earlier work: Studien zum Jeremiabuch. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches, FRLANT 118 (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1978)
16. So eg P.R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration (Philadelphia, Fortress 1968) 65-68; J.R. Porter, "OT Historiography," Tradition and Interpretation (Oxford, Clarendon 1979) 132-153, pp142-143.
17. So eg Thiel, Jeremia 24-46, pp11-12,30-31 attributes both Jer 29.5-7 and 32.6-15 to Jeremiah himself, just as do also: S. Böhmer, Heimkehr und neuer Bund. Studien zu Jeremia 30-31, GTA 5 (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1976) 31-33 and J. Schreiner Jeremia 25,15-52,34, Die Neue Echter Bibel (Würzburg, Echter

1984) 168, 190-192

18. "Das Prophetensschweigen des deuteronomischen Geschichtswerk," Die Botschaft und die Boten. Festschrift für H.W. Wolff, ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perliitt (neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1981) 115-128
19. An explanation for the absence of the Classical prophets in Dtr along similar lines is advanced by: M.E.W. Thompson, Situation and Theology: OT Inter-pretations of the Syro-Ephraemite War, Prophets and Historians, Series I (Sheffield: Almond 1982) 87-88 and R.P. Carroll, From Chaos to Covenant Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah NYork: Crossroad 1982) 228.
20. So eg H.W. Wolff, "Das Thema 'Umkehr' in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie," ZTK 48 (1951) 129-148 = Wolff, Gesammelte Studien zum AT, TB 22 (Munich, Kaiser 1973) 130-150; idem, "Die eigentliche Botschaft der klassischen Propheten," Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie, Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. H. Donner et alii. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1977) 547-557. W.H. Schmidt, "Die prophetische 'Grundgewissenheit'," EVT 31(1971) 630-650; K. Koch, Die Propheten I (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer 1978) 66; II (1980) 36; A.V. Hunter, Seek the Lord! A Study of the Meaning and Function of the Exhortations in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Zephaniah (Baltimore: St. Mary's Seminary and University 1982) 277-280.
21. So eg G. Fohrer, Studien zur alttestamentliche Prophetie (1949-1965), BZAW 99 (Berl; in Töpelmann 1967) 16, 31, 159-163, 222-241; O. Keel, "Rechtum oder Annahme des drohenden Gerichts?" BZ NF 21 (1977) 210-218, esp. pp 211-218; J.A. Soggin, "sub," TWAT II (munich: Kaiser/Zurich: Theol. Verlag 1979) 884-891, esp. 889.
22. Eg. L. Markert-G. Wanke, "Die Propheteninterpretation. Anfragen und Überlegungen," Kerygma und Dogma 22 (1976) 191-220, esp. p213; K.A. Tängberg, "Var Israels 'Klassike' profeter bōtspredikanter?," TTK 50 (1979) 93-105, espec. 99-102.
23. On the theme of repentance as an element of the authentic words of Jeremiah, see eg W.L. Holladay, The Root SUBH in the Old Testament (Leiden, Brill, 1958) 138, 152-153; W. Thiel, Die deuteronomischen Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25 WMANT 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 216-217, 251f; Koch, Profeten II 36; Carroll, Chaos, 73-83
24. So eg. H.W. Wolff, "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk,"

Beggs, Mystery, IBS 7, July 1985

ZAW 73 (1961) 171-186 = Wolff, Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament, TB 22 (Munich, 1973^c). 308-324 esp 320f; P. Diepold, Israels Land, BWANT 95 (Stuttgart, 1971) 147-150, 204-209.

25. This has been noted by eg., O.H. Steck, Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten, WMANT 23 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1967) 68f and n.3.
26. So, eg., Dietrich, Prophetie, 42f (from "DtrN"); H. Spieckermann, Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit, FRLANT 129 (Göttingen 1982) 168, n.19 (from "DtrN");
27. I.L. Seeligmann, "Die Auffassung von der Prophetie in der deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtsschreibung (mit einem Exkurs über das Buch Jeremia)", Congress Vol. Göttingen 1977, VTS 29 (Leiden 1978) 254-284 esp 267-270
28. P. Höffken, Recension of J. Jeremias and L. Peritt, eds., Die Botschaft und die Boten (see n.18) in BO 41 (1984) 146-152
29. Pohlmann, Jeremiabuch, 206.
30. H. Cazelles, "587 or 586?" The Word of the Lord shall Go Forth Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His 60th Birthday, ed, C.L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Philadelphia, 1983) 427-435, p430
31. On this text see most recently J.D. Levenson, "The Last Four Verses in Kings," JBL 103 (1984) 353-361
32. M. Cogan, "Israel in Exile - the view of a Josianic Historian," JBL 97 (1978) 40-44. Note that for Cogan 2 Kings 17 dates from the time of Josiah.
33. So E. Balentine, "The Prophet as Intercessor: A Reassessment," JBL 103 (1984) 161-173
34. On these texts see E.E. Staudt, Prayer and the People in the Deuteronomist, Dissertation Vanderbilt University (Ann Arbor, 1980)
35. In response to the question of why the Deuteronomist could not have simply ignored or eliminated this feature of Jeremiah's activity and so made him amenable to inclusion in his work we would suggest that the image of Jeremiah as intercessor was so much a part of both the Deuteronomist's and his audience's view of the prophet that such a move would have been unthinkable
36. See the statement with which C. Vang, Jeremias' of Jeremiasbogens forhold til den deuteronomistiske tradition i lyset af nyere forskning, (Aarhus 1983) XLV, n.131 concludes his summary review of the positions of Klausner, Pohlmann, Koch and Thiel on the question: "Det engyldige ord i denne debat er naeppe sagt endnu!"