

THE EARLY PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH IN THEIR SETTING ¹

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MY purpose today, as in previous lectures I have delivered in the Library, is not to propound new theories, but to examine some of the many theories which have been propounded by others, and to offer what seem to me to be adequate reasons for

¹ A lecture delivered in the Library series of public lectures. The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes below : *A.A.A.* = *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* ; *A.B.R.* = *Australian Biblical Review* ; *A.J.S.L.* = *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* ; *A.T.D.* = *Das Alte Testament Deutsch* ; *B.J.R.L.* = *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* ; *B.W.A.T.* = *Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament* ; *B.Z.* = *Biblische Zeitschrift* ; *C.A.H.* = *Cambridge Ancient History* ; *Camb. B.* = *Cambridge Bible* ; *Cent. B.* = *Century Bible* ; *D.B.* = *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible* ; *E.B.* = *Encyclopaedia Biblica* ; *E. Bib.* = *Études Bibliques* ; *E.T.* = *Expository Times* ; *G.J.V.* = *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes* ; *G.V.I.* = *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* ; *H.A.T.* = *Handbuch zum Alten Testament* ; *H.K.* = *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament* ; *H.S.A.T.* = *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments* ; *H.S.A.Tes.* = *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testamentes* ; *I.B.* = *Interpreter's Bible* ; *I.C.C.* = *International Critical Commentary* ; *J.B.L.* = *Journal of Biblical Literature* ; *J.E.* = *Jewish Encyclopedia* ; *J.N.E.S.* = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* ; *J.R.* = *Journal of Religion* ; *J.T.S.* = *Journal of Theological Studies* ; *K.A.T.* = *Kommentar zum Alten Testament* ; *K.D.* = *Keil-Delitzsch, Kommentar über das Alte Testament* ; *K.E.H.* = *Kürzgefasste exegetische Handbuch* ; *K.H.C.* = *Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament* ; *L.O.T.* = *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* ; *M.V.A.G.* = *Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* ; *P.G.* = *Patrologia Graeca* ; *P.W.* = *Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* ; *R.A.* = *Revue d'Assyriologie* ; *R.G.G.* = *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* ; *R.H.R.* = *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* ; *S.A.T.* = *Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl* ; *S.B.* = *Sacra Bibbia* ; *S.B.U.* = *Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk* ; *S.D.B.* = *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* ; *Th.R.* = *Theologische Rundschau* ; *Th.Z.* = *Theologische Zeitschrift* ; *T.U.* = *Tekst en Uitleg* ; *West. C.* = *Westminster Commentary* ; *Z.A.* = *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* ; *Z.A.W.* = *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* ; *Z.D.M.G.* = *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* ; *Z.Th.K.* = *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*.

preferring the views I adopt. I have frequently observed that problems which appear simple on the surface often prove to be very complex on examination, and it is not seldom difficult to steer one's way through the many solutions which have been proposed. So far as Jeremiah is concerned, many English readers have been fascinated by John Skinner's superb study of the prophet in his book *Prophecy and Religion*¹, without realizing how many scholars today reject the presuppositions on which that study rests. None of the views I shall examine today were original with Skinner. Basically they have appeared in a number of other English works,² as well as in German³ and other foreign⁴ works, but the challenges to them are less familiar to English readers.

Let me say at the outset two things. First, that the scholars who have questioned or rejected those views deserve our thanks, whether we find their challenges to be justified or not, since it is only by questioning and constantly re-examining that our acceptance of the views that survive can be soundly established; and second, that in the matters I shall consider today the views presented by Skinner seem to me to be essentially sound.

At the beginning of the book of Jeremiah we are told that the prophet received his call when he was still but a youth⁵ in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah,⁶ which would be in the year 626 B.C. His early prophecies speak of a peril from the north,⁷ and this has long been thought by many scholars⁸ to have

¹ 1922.

² So, e.g. in A. S. Peake, *Jeremiah* (Cent. B.); A. W. Streane, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* (Camb. B.), 1913; L. E. Binns, *Jeremiah* (West. C.), 1919; G. A. Smith, *Jeremiah*, 1923.

³ So, e.g. B. Duhm, *Jeremia* (K.H.C.), 1901; C. H. Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 1905.

⁴ So, e.g. E. Bruston, *La Bible du Centenaire*, ii (1947), 449 ff.; A. Lods, *ibid.* pp. xxi ff.

⁵ Jer. i. 6.

⁶ Jer. i. 2.

⁷ Jer. vi. 1; cf. i. 14 f.

⁸ So, e.g. H. Venema, *Commentarius ad librum prophetiarum Jeremiae*, i (1765), 142 f.; C. F. Cramer, *Skythische Denkmähler in Palästina*, 1777, pp. 22f.; J. G. Eichhorn, *Die hebräischen Propheten*, ii (1819), 9; F. Hitzig, *Jeremia* (K.E.H.), 1841, p. 33; S. Davidson, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, iii (1863), 92; H. Ewald, *History of Israel*, Eng. trans. by J. E. Carpenter, iv (1871), 226 f.; B. Stade, *G.V.I.*, 2nd edn., i (1889), 643 ff.; E. König, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1893, p. 341; R. Smend, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte*, 1899, p. 244; B. Duhm, *op. cit.* pp. xi, 48 ff.;

reference to the Scythian peril, of which Herodotus gives some account. If this is true, then the predictions of Jeremiah were not fulfilled, and this has been thought to have so troubled the prophet that he relapsed into silence for some time.¹ Whether the prophet was so troubled at this time, it is certain that at some point or points in his career he was bewildered by the non-fulfilment of prophecies which he felt certain he had been moved by God to utter. The proof of this is to be found in the passages that are sometimes called the "Confessions of Jeremiah".² In the year 621 B.C. the Book of the Law was found in the Temple,³ and on it Josiah based the reform he carried through. There are passages in the book of Jeremiah which have led scholars to believe that Jeremiah at first supported this reform, and the anger of his relatives against him⁴ has been explained as due to his advocacy of this reform, which must have menaced the livelihood of the priestly family of Anathoth to which Jeremiah belonged.⁵ Later, it is thought, the prophet perceived that the reform did not go deep enough and gave rise to false hopes. He therefore drew away from the reformers, and again we have a period of silence. Then, in the reign of Jehoiakim, when the Chaldeans appeared on the horizon, he saw a new peril from the north, and reissued his earlier prophecies, perhaps modified to meet the new situation or to take account of the new foe.

C. K. Cheyne, *Jeremiah : his Life and Times*, 1904, pp. 30 ff.; C. H. Cornill, *op. cit.* pp. 82 ff.; A. S. Peake, *op. cit.* i. 4 f.; V. Ryssel, *J. E.* vii (1907), 97a; S. R. Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 1908, p. 21, and *L.O.T.*, 9th edn., 1913, pp. 252 f.; C. Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1912, pp. 544 f.; Streane, *op. cit.* pp. xii, 5; H. P. Smith, *Religion of Israel*, 1914, pp. 163, 165. A. Condamin (*Le livre de Jérémie* [E. Bib.], 1936, pp. 61 f.) observes: "Dans cet exemple on peut voir comment une hypothèse naît, se développe, se propage, passe insensiblement de la valeur de *possible* à celle de *probable*, et finit par se proclamer *certaine*, sans l'apport d'aucune preuve nouvelle, par le seul fait d'être admise et répétée un peu partout." There have, however, always been scholars who have rejected this view. So, e.g. E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*, Pars VIII. i (1826), 137; C. F. Keil, *Jeremia und Klagelieder* (K.D.), 1872, pp. 77 ff. n.; R. Payne Smith, *Speaker's Bible*, v (1875), 314; F. Bleek, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 4th edn., revised by J. Wellhausen, 1878, p. 359; C. von Orelli, *Jesaja und Jeremia*, 2nd edn., 1891, pp. 222 f. (Eng. trans. of 1st edn. of Jeremiah by J. S. Banks, 1889, pp. 16 ff.).

¹ Cf. Peake, *op. cit.* i. 11.

² On the "Confessions" see below, pp. 220 ff.

³ 2 Kings xxii. 3 ff.

⁴ Jer. xi. 21,

⁵ Jer. i. 1,

Of this conception of the early ministry of Jeremiah there is not a single point which has not been attacked, and in defending it I shall seek to take account of those attacks which have been first made or supported in recent years, and to deal with them as clearly as the complex nature of the often interlocked problems will allow.

We may begin with the date of Jeremiah's call. Here I would mention first and briefly the radical suggestion of C. C. Torrey, whose original views so often fluttered the dovescotes of Biblical scholarship, and whose great learning is often forgotten in the rejection of his bold theories. Torrey advanced the view that the first ten chapters of the book of Jeremiah had nothing to do with a seventh-century prophet, but that they were a pseud-epigraph written in the third century B.C.¹ with no more than an imaginary connection with the age in which they are set.² He believed the foe from the north was Alexander,³ on whose career the writer of the pseud-epigraph looked back. But he advanced no possible motive for the throwing back of Alexander's career in this fictitious way,⁴ and many of the prophecies of Jeremiah i-x bear the hall mark of real prophecy, born of a contemporary situation to which the prophet addressed himself in agony of heart,⁵ and it is not surprising that Torrey's view has left no ripple on the surface of serious study of the book.

Little more is to be said for T. C. Gordon's theory⁶ that we should emend the text of Jeremiah i: 2 to place the prophet's call in the twenty-third year of Josiah's reign instead of the thirteenth, and thus to bring that call to the year 616 B.C.,⁷ and it arises from Gordon's rejection of the Scythian hypothesis and of the association of Jeremiah with the reform of Josiah, and his consequent

¹ Cf. *J.B.L.* lvi (1937), 193 ff.; see especially pp. 215 f. ² *Ibid.* p. 216.

³ *Ibid.* p. 209. Cf. *Vom Alten Testament* (Marti Festschrift), 1925, pp. 281 ff., where Torrey refers a number of other passages in the prophets to Alexander.

⁴ Torrey's view is criticized and rejected by J. P. Hyatt, in *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 503 ff. Cf. also H. G. May, *J.B.L.* lxi (1942), 146 n.

⁵ Cf. A. B. Davidson, *D.B.* ii (1899), 570b: "The pathos and depth of these chs. (2-6) are not surpassed by anything in Scripture."

⁶ Cf. *E.T.* xlv (1932-3), 562 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 564b. J. P. Hyatt, *I.B.* v (1956), 798, notes that the same date is given in Jer. xxv. 1, and observes that the same corruption is not likely to have occurred in two passages,

desire to make the call of the prophet synchronize with the rise of the Neo-Babylonian empire. The only grounds presented in support of this date¹ are that the text published by C. J. Gadd in 1923² showed that the fall of Nineveh occurred in 612 B.C., and not in 607 B.C. as had been earlier supposed, and that it brought sure knowledge that Egyptian forces had marched to the help of Assyria in 616 B.C.³ But this can in no sense be said to be evidence that Jeremiah had received his call in that year.

Horst⁴ also rejects the evidence of Jeremiah i. 2, on the ground that in the Septuagint form it is similar in phrasing to the opening verses of Hosea, Joel, Micah, and Zephaniah, and therefore comes from a late editor.⁵ But this is not proof that it does not rest on a sound tradition, and certainly not evidence for a different date. Horst would place the call of Jeremiah after the reign of Josiah was past.⁶ He is thus compelled to eliminate as secondary other verses which bring Jeremiah's ministry into the reign of Josiah. In Jeremiah xxv. 3 Jeremiah himself is represented as dating the beginning of his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah, while in Jeremiah iii. 6, in one of the autobiographical introductions to an oracle, and in xxxvi. 2, in a message which came to him from God, his ministry is represented as going back to the days of Josiah.⁷ These cannot be dismissed on the basis of the opening verses of other prophetic books, and there is no evidence that they have been editorially altered.

J. P. Hyatt at one time⁸ did not go so far as Horst, though he followed him in rejecting the evidence of Jeremiah i. 2 and xxv. 3.⁹

¹ Loc. cit. p. 564a.

² Cf. *The Fall of Nineveh*.

³ H. Bardtke (*Z.A.W.* liii (1935), 211 ff.) adopts a similar view of the date of Jeremiah's call.

⁴ Cf. *Z.A.W.* xli (1923), 94 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 95 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 132: "Die bisherige Chronologie, die das Auftreten des Jeremia auf 626 ansetzte, ist historisch falsch; sie beruht auf einer kultischen und tendenziösen Tradition, noch dazu sekundärer Art. Eine ursprünglichere Tradition verlegt vielmehr sein Auftreten in die Zeit unmittelbar nach der Schlacht von Megiddo."

⁷ H. G. May (*J.N.E.S.* iv (1945), 226) also rejects all these dates, assigning them to the Biographer (on whom cf. *J.B.L.* lxi (1942), 139 ff.). It is not axiomatic, however, that the biographer never told the truth.

⁸ Cf. *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 499 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 512 f. In *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 165 f. Hyatt rejects all the four dates mentioned above,

He maintained that the prophet began his ministry in 614–612 B.C.,¹ and so towards the end of the reign of Josiah.² No tangible evidence for this was brought forward, and more recently Hyatt has pushed the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry into the reign of Jehoiakim³ and suggested that the thirteenth year of Josiah was the date of the prophet's birth.⁴ For this suggestion, again, there is no evidence, and the view really rests on the rejection of the Scythian hypothesis and of the idea that Jeremiah ever supported the Deuteronomic reform, and on the claim that there are no prophecies which can be dated earlier than the reign of Jehoiakim. This means, as we shall see, that a good deal in the book of Jeremiah has to be explained away before the dates we are given can be dismissed.⁵

In the opening verse of the book, Jeremiah is said to have been "of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin". It is often assumed, though there is no direct evidence of it, that the prophet belonged to the priestly family of Abiathar,⁶ the

¹ Cf. *J.B.L.*, loc. cit. pp. 509, 511 (followed by R. Augé, *Jeremias* [Montserrat Bible], 1950, pp. 14 f.). According to this view the foe from the north is to be identified with the Chaldaeans and their allies—more probably the Medes than the Scythians. H. G. May (loc. cit., pp. 225 f.) thinks it complicates the problem unnecessarily to bring in the Medes.

² Cf. H. Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i (1895), 112 f., where the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry is assigned to *circa* 610 B.C.

³ Cf. *I.B.* v. 799b. So also H. G. May, loc. cit. pp. 226 f.

⁴ Cf. *I.B.* v. 779, 798.

⁵ J. Bright (*J.B.L.* lxx (1951), 15 ff.), while rejecting the Scythian hypothesis, argues for 626 B.C. as the date of Jeremiah's call.

⁶ Cf. Lods, *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, p. 405 ("sans nul doute"; cf. *La Bible du Centenaire*, ii, p. xxi: "très probablement"); J. T. Nelis, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, 1960, p. 919 ("sans doute"); J. Steinmann, *Le prophète Jérémie*, 1952, p. 23 ("presque certain"); C. F. Kent, *The Growth and Contents of the Old Testament*, 1926, pp. 116 f. ("appears to have been"); V. Ryssel, *J.E.* vii. 96a ("probably"); A. Penna, *Geremia*, 1952, p. 5 ("con probabilità"; cf. p. 30); B. Mariani, *Introductio in libros sacros Veteris Testamenti*, 1958, p. 357 n. ("probabiliter"); B. N. Wambacq, *Jeremias*, 1957, p. 27 ("mogelijk"); W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (H.A.T.), 2nd edn., 1958, p. 2 ("sehr wohl möglich"); H. Wildberger, *R.G.G.*, 3rd edn., iii (1959), 581 ("möglicherweise"); B. Duhm, *Jeremia*, 1901, pp. 2 f. ("nicht unmöglich"); J. Skinner, op. cit. p. 19 ("the natural, though not absolutely certain, inference"); E. A. Leslie, *Jeremiah*, 1954, p. 20 ("reasonable to suppose"); B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 1957, p. 300 ("possibly"); A. S. Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 3 ("by no means improbable"); E. Bruston, in Westphal,

priest of David who was dismissed from Jerusalem by Solomon, and who went to his estate in Anathoth.¹ Some authors, both ancient and modern, have supposed that his father Hilkiyah was the Jerusalem priest who found the Book of the Law,² but this is generally rejected as quite improbable. Meek goes farther³ and challenges the view that Jeremiah belonged to a priestly family at all. He holds that the words "of the priests" are a

Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible, i (1932), 603b ("vraisemblablement"); J. Condamin, *Le livre de Jérémie* (E. Bib.), 1936, p. v ("peut-être"); R. Liechtenhan, *Jeremia*, 1909, p. 6 ("die Vermutung hat viel für sich"). A. Bentzen (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd edn., ii (1952), 115) contents himself with saying this is generally assumed. R. Augé (*Jeremias* [Montserrat Bible], 1950, p. 13) thinks that Jeremiah's allusions to Shiloh (vii. 14, xxvi. 6) and Ephraim (xxxi. 18-22) favour the view of his descent from Abiathar. G. Hölscher (*Die Profeten*, 1914, pp. 268 f. n.) rightly says this is "eine reine Vermutung" (cf. Hyatt, *I.B.* iii. 796). Abiathar retired to his family estate, and we have no evidence whatever that he served any shrine in Anathoth, whereas it is probable that the family of Jeremiah served in a priestly capacity.

¹ 1 Kings ii. 26 f.

² So Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* I, xxi (P.G. viii (1891), 849, or ed. C. Mondésert and M. Caster, i (1951), 136; Eng. trans. by W. Wilson, i (1871), 431); Kimhi, on Jer. i. 1 (see *Mikrā'ōth Gedhōlōth*, viii (1902), 192b); P. von Bohlen, *Historical and Critical Illustrations of the First Part of Genesis*, Eng. trans. by J. Heywood, i (1862), 265; J. W. Colenso, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined*, vii (1879), 259 ("very probably"); F. C. Jean, *Jérémie, sa théologie, sa politique*, 1913, p. 5. C. W. E. Nægelsbach (*Jeremia*, 1868, p. x; Eng. trans. by S. R. Asbury, 1871, p. 4) pronounced this to be possible, but not certainly provable, and T. K. Cheyne (*Jeremiah: his life and Times*, 1904, p. 19 n.) said it was not impossible (so also R. Payne Smith, *Speaker's Bible*, v (1875), 311 f.). P. Volz (*Jeremia* [K.A.T.], 1928, p. xi; cf. *Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments*, 1938, p. 219) thought his father might have exercised his priesthood in Jerusalem and not at the Anathoth shrine, but without identifying him with the High Priest. Against this, however, is the hostility of Jeremiah's family to him, apparently arising from his advocacy of the newly found Law Book, which the Jerusalem priesthood would have welcomed. Rudolph (op. cit. pp. 2 f.) says it is impossible to say whether his father was High Priest, or whether he exercised his priesthood in Jerusalem, though living elsewhere, like Zechariah (Luke i. 39 f.). A. Neher (*Jérémie*, 1960, pp. 1, 3) thinks Jeremiah was from the family of Abiathar, but that his family was debarred from all priestly service, though the priests of Anathoth, with the exception of Abiathar's descendants, served in the Jerusalem Temple. H. Ewald (*History of Israel*, Eng. trans. by J. Estlin Carpenter, iv (1871), 233 n.) declares that Jeremiah's father was a common Levite.

³ Cf. *Expositor*, 8th ser., xxv (1923), 215 ff. He also denies that Jeremiah lived in Anathoth (ibid. p. 217). Hyatt (*J.B.L.* lix (1940), 511) follows Meek in holding that Jeremiah was not of a priestly family. Cf. also *I.B.* iii. 795.

gloss in the verse.¹ There is certainly no evidence that Jeremiah ever exercised the priesthood, and it is generally believed that though he belonged to a priestly family he did not do so.² That his whole attitude to religion was prophetic rather than priestly³ is agreed, but this does not prove that he did not belong to a priestly family. We are told that the expression "of the priests" is found only here.⁴ To this it could be replied that if every expression in the Old Testament which is found but once were eliminated as a gloss, a great deal would go. It would certainly be strange for Jeremiah to be described in this way if he actually served as a priest, but the phrase is unexceptionable as the description of one who came of a priestly family.⁵ It is probable that the phrase does not recur in the Old Testament because no other member of a priestly family who did not exercise the priestly office calls for description.

Moreover, if the words "of the priests" were a gloss—and there is no textual evidence against them, and few scholars have found any reason to question them—it does not follow that they are mistaken. Meek thinks they were added by someone who jumped to the conclusion that because Jeremiah came from Anathoth he must have been a priest.⁶ It might have been expected that in that case he would describe him as a priest, instead of using the expression to which objection is made on the ground of its rarity. The words could equally well have been added, if they were added, by one who knew that Jeremiah was of a priestly family of Anathoth. Further, we know that the family of Jeremiah plotted against his life,⁷ and the account of this stands in the chapter which tells of the prophet's advocacy of "the words of this covenant".⁸ To this we shall return, but

¹ Loc. cit. p. 216.

² Cf. Rudolph, op. cit. p. 3. A. Haldar (*Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites*, 1945, p. 112) states that Jeremiah is "clearly" (cf. p. 121 "obviously") described as a member of the Temple staff. The adverb is question-begging, as K. Roubos (*Profetie en Cultus in Israël*, 1956, p. 23) points out. L. W. Batten (*The Hebrew Prophet*, 1905, p. 95) says we do not know whether he exercised the priestly office in his younger days.

³ Cf. Meek, loc. cit. p. 218; Hyatt, *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 511.

⁴ So Meek, loc. cit. p. 216.

⁵ Cf. Jos. xii. 4; 2 Sam. iv. 2, xxi. 2.

⁶ Loc. cit. p. 216.

⁷ Jer. xi. 21.

⁸ Jer. xi. 6.

here it may be observed that if, as many scholars have believed,¹ this is a reference to Josiah's Law Book and the centralization of worship that followed its discovery, the anger of a priestly family that served the now suppressed shrine of Anathoth could be understood. But if his kindred were not priests, there is no alternative explanation of their anger against him.² In all the questions we have before us today we must watch the converging evidence, and we should not lightly set aside evidence preserved in the book of Jeremiah which throws light on an incident recorded in the book, which there is no possible reason to doubt.

We may turn now to the Scythian question. At the time when Jeremiah received his call trouble was brewing in the north.³ In the second of the visions he saw at the time of his call, the vision of the seething cauldron, the word came to him "Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land".⁴ It has been widely accepted, since the view was first propounded in the eighteenth century,⁵ that this is a reference to the Scythian

¹ So, e.g. K. Budde, *Geschichte der althebräischen Litteratur*, 2nd edn., 1909, p. 136; Peake, op. cit. i. 13; Streane, op. cit. pp. 75 f.; Binns, op. cit. pp. 106 f.; Skinner, op. cit. p. 21; Condamin, op. cit. p. 107; Bruston, *La Bible du Centenaire*, ii. 485; A. Gelin, *Jérémie* (Bible de Jérusalem), 2nd edn., 1959, p. 79; A. Aeschiman, *Le prophète Jérémie*, 1959, pp. 17, 95. T. H. Robinson (*History of Israel*, i (1932), 428) observes that this view offers a better explanation of the hostility of Jeremiah's family than any other. It is rejected by Volz (*Jeremia*, p. 137), May (*J.N.E.S.* iv (1945), 224), Steinmann (op. cit. p. 152), Hyatt (*I.B.* v. 912 f.).

² Volz (op. cit. p. 137) suggests that Jeremiah's family belonged to the Jerusalem priesthood, and that they acted under the instigation of the Jerusalem authorities. That Jeremiah's family served in Jerusalem is unlikely, or he would scarcely have been described as of the priests that were in Anathoth, and the assumption that the Jerusalem priests sought to kill him can only be justified by the rejection of Jer. xi. 1-14 (see below), or the linking of this incident with Jeremiah's Temple sermon (chapters vii and xxvi) instead of with its context. After Jeremiah's sermon we know that the priests and prophets proposed to condemn Jeremiah to death, but this was not a plot of his own family; and after it had been decided that Jeremiah should not suffer death for his sermon, it is improbable that his family would seek to carry out a sentence that had been rejected. It is far more likely that it was for what they regarded as family interests that they would be incensed against him. ³ Jer. i. 13 ff.

⁴ Jer. i. 14. J. Bright (*Interpretation*, ix (1955), 276 f.) would loose the second vision from any temporal connection with the call of Jeremiah. Similarly Hölscher (*Die Profeten*, p. 270) would ascribe both of the visions to the time when his oracles were gathered together in the reign of Jehoiakim.

⁵ See p. 199, n. 8.

invasion of western Asia, of which Herodotus gives some account. This hypothesis is still widely accepted,¹ but during the last half century it has been rejected by a growing number of scholars,² following the challenge of F. Wilke³ early in the present century.

¹ So, e.g. Streane, *op. cit.* pp. 75 f.; G. Hölscher, *Die Profeten*, pp. 277 f.; Binns, *op. cit.* pp. xix, xxx, 130; J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, 1922, p. 143, and *The Prophets*, 1955, p. 185; Skinner, *op. cit.* pp. 35 ff.; G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 110 ff.; J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophets and their Times*, 1925, pp. 106 ff.; D. G. Hogarth, *C.A.H.* iii (1925), 145 f.; R. Kittel, *G.V.I.*, 7th edn. ii (1925), 414 f.; C. F. Kent, *The Growth and Contents of the Old Testament*, 1926, p. 117; I. Piotrowicz, *Eos*, xxxii (1929), 473 ff.; T. H. Robinson, *op. cit.* i. 412 ff.; E. Bruston, in Westphal, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, i (1932), 604a, and *La Bible du Centenaire*, ii (1947), 451; A. Lods, *The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism*, Eng. trans. by S. H. Hooke, 1937, pp. 130, 163, and *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, p. 405; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 2nd edn., iii (1937), 142; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1941, pp. 482, 488; F. James, *Personalities of the Old Testament*, 1947, p. 307; I. G. Matthews, *The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel*, 1947, p. 146; B. D. Eerdmans, *The Religion of Israel*, 1947, p. 190; J. Paterson, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets*, 1948, p. 99; P. Heinisch, *History of the Old Testament*, Eng. trans. by W. Heidt, 1952, p. 256; O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 2nd edn., 1956, pp. 421, 521, and *apud* T. H. Robinson and F. Horst, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (H.A.T.), 2nd edn., 1954, pp. 188 f.; B. W. Anderson, *op. cit.* pp. 301, 303. H. Wildberger (*R.G.G.* 3rd edn., iii (1959), 588) says: "Da die Gedichte der Frühzeit J.'s angehören, bleibt die Deutung auf den Skythensturm trotz aller Gegenargumente am naheliegendsten, wobei es möglich ist, dass J. selbst sie später auf die babylonisch Gefahr bezogen hat." C. Kuhl (*The Old Testament: its Origins and Composition*, Eng. trans. by C. T. M. Herriott, 1961, p. 185) thinks the reference is "perhaps" to the Scythians.

² So, e.g. J. Lewy, *M.V.A.G.* xxix, no. 2 (1925), 51 ff.; L. W. van Ravesteijn, *Jeremia* (T.U.), i (1925), 82; Volz, *Jeremia*, pp. 57 f.; A. C. Welch, *Jeremiah: his Time and his Work*, 1928, pp. 53, 101 ff.; J. Meinhold, *Einführung in das Alte Testament*, 3rd edn., 1932, p. 231; R. H. Pfeiffer, in Westphal, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, ii (1932), 648a (but cf. preceding note); F. Nötscher, *Das Buch Jeremias* (H. S. A. Tes.), 1934, pp. 78 ff.; A. Condamin, *op. cit.* pp. 61 ff.; L. Gautier, *Introduction à l'Ancien Testament*, 3rd edn., i (1939), 389; J. P. Hyatt, *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 499 ff.; J. Bright, *J.B.L.* lxx (1951), 28 n., *Interpretation*, ix (1955), 275, and *History of Israel*, 1960, p. 293; J. Steinmann, *Le prophète Jérémie*, 1952, pp. 58 f., n.; A. Weiser, *Jeremia* (A.T.D.), 1952, pp. 43 f.; F. Horst, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, 2nd edn., 1954, p. 195; W. Rudolph, *op. cit.* pp. 43 ff. A. Bentzen (*Introduction*, 2nd edn., ii. 121 f.) will not pronounce for or against, while K. Elliger (*Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* [A.T.D.] ii (1956), 56), thinks the Scythian hypothesis is very problematical. Cf. also A. S. Kapelrud, *S.B.U.* ii (1952), 1190.

³ Cf. *Alttestamentliche Studien R. Kittel dargebracht* (B.W.A.T. 13), 1913, pp. 222 ff. On Wilke's article cf. T. L. W. van Ravesteijn, *Theologische Studiën*, xxxii (1914), 22 ff.

Herodotus relates¹ how the Scythians invaded Asia and conquered the Medes and then spread over Asia, which they dominated for twenty-eight years. He says they marched through Palestine with the intention of invading Egypt, but were bought off by Psammetichus. Thereupon they returned northwards, stopping especially at Ashkelon, where they robbed a temple. From cuneiform sources we learn of the activities of the Scythians so far as they affected Assyrian history,² but for an account of their raid through Palestine we have only the narrative of Herodotus. It is sometimes said that Scythian bands shared in the attack that led to the fall of Nineveh,³ but it seems more probable that the Umman-Manda who shared in the attack on Nineveh were an earlier wave of invaders from the southern steppes of Russia who had turned into Media, and by now were mingled with the Medes.⁴

That there are exaggerations and improbabilities in the account of Herodotus may be agreed.⁵ It is improbable that the

¹ *Hist.* i. 105 f.

² Cf. J. Lewy, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte Vorderasiens* (M.V.A.G. xxix, 2), 1925, 1 ff.; L. Piotrowicz, *Eos*, xxxii (1929), 473 ff.; E. H. Minns, in *C.A.H.* iii (1925), 188 f.; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 2nd edn., iii (1937), 139 ff. On the Scythians in general, cf. E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, 1913, and *C.A.H.* iii. 187 ff.; Kretschmer, in *P.W.*, 2 Reihe, ii. 1 (1921), 923 ff.; T. T. Rice, *The Scythians*, 1957.

³ Cf. C. J. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*, 1923, p. 14, and *History and Monuments of Ur*, 1929, pp. 228, 233; followed by B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, p. 320. See also P. (E.) Dhorme, *R.B.* xxxiii, 1924, 230; J. Lewy, *Z.A.* xxxvii (1927), 135; M. Noth, *History of Israel*, Eng. trans., 2nd edn., revised by P. R. Ackroyd, 1960, p. 270. H. R. Hall (*The Ancient History of the Near East*, 7th edn., 1927, p. 511) describes the Umman-manda as "mixed hordes of Scythians, Mannai, and Kimmerians."

⁴ Cf. Piotrowicz, *Eos* xxxii (1929), 495 ff.; P. Schnabel, *Z.A.* xxxvi (1925), 82 f., 316 ff.; F. Thureau-Dangin, *R.A.* xxii (1925), 28 f. That the Umman-manda became fused with the Medes is shown by the fact that Nabonidus in one of his inscriptions refers to Astyages as King of the Umman-manda (cf. S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 1912, p. 220).

⁵ Cf. S. R. Driver, *L.O.T.*, 9th edn., p. 253, where it is agreed that the extent of their rule may be exaggerated, but held that the fact of such an irruption cannot be doubted (cf. J. F. McCurdy, *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, ii (1896), 394); G. Ricciotti, *History of Israel*, Eng. trans. by C. della Penta and R. T. A. Murphy, i (1955), 394, where it is suggested that the period was more probably about ten years; Piotrowicz, loc. cit. p. 489, where similarly "all Asia" is held to be an exaggeration. Skinner (op. cit. p. 40 n.) says the historical perspective of Herodotus is greatly foreshortened.

Scythians dominated Asia for twenty-eight years,¹ though it is not impossible that these nomadic hordes wandered over Asia for many years, spreading terror wherever they went.² It has been questioned whether Psammetichus bought them off in the way Herodotus records,³ but we should not expect this to be recorded in Egyptian sources,⁴ and there is no evidence against the story. It has, indeed, been suggested that Egyptian alarm at this experience may account for the Egyptian change of policy from hostility to Assyria to alliance with her, since Assyria must have seemed the only bulwark for civilization.⁵ It is hard to suppose that the whole story of Herodotus was the free invention of the author. The circumstantial account of the doings of the Scythians at Ashkelon is specifically stated to be based on particular inquiry which the historian made.⁶ To dismiss this on the grounds that the interest of Herodotus was in the identification of the goddess of Ashkelon with Aphrodite,⁷ and that he readily accepted a legend which was current in Ashkelon, will hardly do. A cult legend of Ashkelon can scarcely be assumed to have created a story of Scythian depredations through Syria and Palestine, including the account of the Egyptian purchase of relief.

¹ Skinner (op. cit. p. 41 n.) agrees that this is obviously exaggerated and so Heinisch (op. cit. p. 394).

² T. H. Robinson (*History of Israel*, i. 414 n.) says "they were plundering raids of a miscellaneous horde of savages who did not care who their victim was". On the Scythian reputation for cruelty, cf. Josephus, *Contra Ap.* ii. 37 (269), where they are said to be little better than wild beasts and to delight in killing people. Cf. also 2 Macc. iv. 17, 3 Macc. vii. 5.

³ Cf. Wilke, loc. cit. p. 229; Hyatt, *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 501.

⁴ H. Gressmann (*Der Messias*, 1929, p. 132) thinks the story of the Scythian approach to Egypt rests on an Egyptian tradition, which was carried from Egypt to Philistia. This is accepted by W. Baumgartner, *Archiv Orientalní*, xviii (1950) (Hrozný Festschrift iii), 93.

⁵ So C. J. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*, p. 6; E. H. Minns, in *C.A.H.* iii. 190. Minns had earlier suggested (*Scythians and Greeks*, 1913, p. 42) that the Scythians had been sent by Assyria against Egypt. But that was before it was known from the Gadd tablet that Egypt was allied with Assyria in the last years of the Assyrian empire. Assyria would scarcely have gained an ally by inspiring an attack of this kind.

⁶ *Hist.* i. 105. Baumgartner (loc. cit. p. 93) accepts the view that Herodotus' account rests on a genuine tradition preserved at Ashkelon.

⁷ So Wilke, loc. cit. pp. 228 f.

It is certain that the city of Bethshan became known in the Greek period as Scythopolis, and this would more than suggest that at some time the Scythians were there, as Pliny¹ and George Syncellus state.² Against this it is argued that this name is known only from Hellenistic times,³ and nothing which can be identified as Scythian has been unearthed in the excavations of Bethshan.⁴ To this it may be replied that since Scythopolis is a Greek name, we should hardly expect to find it used before the Hellenistic period, and since, according to Herodotus, the Scythians marched through Palestine and back, harrying and plundering, we should not expect them to leave evidences of their presence, to be archaeologically uncovered, wherever they passed.⁵ In northern Syria, where they may have remained for some time, there are evidences of their presence which archaeologists have found in modern times.⁶ Moreover, whenever the name Scythopolis was first given to Bethshan, it is not likely to have been given to a town which was quite unconnected with the Scythians in tradition. That tradition was not derived from Herodotus, who does not mention the town in his account of the Scythians. If it did not arise in the period of which Herodotus writes, we are entitled to ask when it was. No other incursion of

¹ Cf. *Nat. Hist.* v. 16 [74], where it is said that a colony of Scythians settled at Scythopolis.

² Cf. *Chronographia*, 214 D (ed. Dindorf, p. 405).

³ Condamin (op. cit. p. 65) dismisses the name Scythopolis, and says no serious weight can be attached to it, while Wilke (loc. cit. p. 229) says the name Scythopolis is mere "Volksetymologie". On the other hand Baumgartner (loc. cit. p. 93) thinks this has definite evidential value. So S. A. Cook, in *C.A.H.* iii. 393; R. Kittel, *G.V.I.*, 7th edn., ii. 415 n.; G. Beer, in *P.W.* 2 Reihe, ii. 1, 947. A. Legendre (in Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, i, 1895, 1739) says: "L'explication la plus naturelle est celle qui est tirée d'une invasion des Scythes, mentionnée par Herodote." Cf. E. Schürer, *G.J.V.* 4th edn., ii (1907), 171; S. Vailhé, in *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, xiii (1912), 648b.

⁴ Cf. A. Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-shan*, 1930, p. 42.

⁵ If, as Pliny states (see above n. 1), a colony settled in Bethshan, it is not likely to have been large, and it would probably soon be assimilated to its environment.

⁶ Cf. D. G. Hogarth, in *C.A.H.* iii (1925), 147 n.; Piotrowicz, *Eos*, xxxii (1929), 491. Cf. also C. L. Woolley, *A.A.A.* vii (1914-16), 122 f., where, however, it is said that "if we recognise a Scythian element in North Syria, it does not follow that this first appears with the Scythian invasion mentioned by Herodotus".

Scythians into Palestine is recorded, and it is securely known from Assyrian texts that Scythians were active within the Assyrian empire at this time. It would not seem convincing to reject the incursion that is recorded, without offering some more plausible suggestion as to how the name arose.¹

Further, it must be remembered that Herodotus is supported by the book of Jeremiah in setting some crisis in Palestine, due to external invasion, at this time. Herodotus does not specify precisely when this invasion fell, save that it occurred in the reign of Psammetichus some time before the destruction of Nineveh by Cyaxares. Since Egypt marched to the assistance of Assyria in 616 B.C.,² it must have been some time before this, and it is generally thought likely that it preceded the reform of Josiah. This would bring us close to the date given in the book of Jeremiah for the call of the prophet, though scholars differ somewhat as to the more precise dating.³ To reject the story of Herodotus as

¹ Of improbable suggestions we may note that of Reland (*Palaestina*, ii (1714), 992 ff.), that it is derived from the name of Succoth (Gen. xxxiii. 17), and that of E. Robinson (*Biblical Researches in Palestine*, 2nd edn., iii (1856), 330), that Scythopolis simply means "the town of uncultured people". Reland's view is curtly dismissed by Schürer (loc. cit.). Succoth stood on the opposite side of the Jordan to Bethshan, and it would be surprising for the name of the less important site to be transferred across the Jordan to the more important (cf. A. Legendre, in Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, i (1895), 1738), to be formed into a hybrid Hebrew-Greek name and then corrupted into Scythopolis. Robinson's suggestion could only claim a measure of plausibility if the Scythians had passed through Palestine leaving a tradition of their barbarity behind.

² Cf. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*, p. 6.

³ Duhm (op. cit. p. 48), J. A. Selbie (*D.B.* iv (1902), 975), and Lods (*Histoire de la litt. héb. et juive*, p. 405) date the incursion in 626 B.C., while Bewer (*Lit. of the Old Test.*, p. 143) says it was threatening in 626 B.C., Robinson (*History of Israel*, i. 413) says it occurred "about 626 B.C.", and Skinner (op. cit. p. 40) shortly after 626 B.C. Erbt (*Jeremia und seine Zeit*, 1902, pp. 208 f.) dates it between 625 and 620 B.C., and Cornill (*Das Buch Jeremia*, 1905, p. 83) in 623 or 622 B.C. Some authors would put it substantially earlier, and some substantially later. Thus A. George (*Michée, Sophonie, Nahum* [Bible de Jérusalem], 2nd edn., 1958, p. 53) dates it "vers 630", and Eichhorn, op. cit. ii. 9 "um 628"; F. Schwally (*Z.A.W.* x (1890), 216) dates it not earlier than 615 B.C. (though he does not connect it with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah); T. T. Rice (*The Scythians*, 1957, p. 45) in 611 B.C. These are very improbable dates, the first because it is known that from 616 B.C. Egypt was actively allied with Assyria and this could hardly have been so while the Scythians were marauding in Syria and Palestine, and the second because when Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. the Assyrian

groundless and the name of Scythopolis as irrelevant, and at the same time to dismiss the date given in the Bible for the call of Jeremiah, can be better described as the dismissal of evidence than its refutation.

The prophet Zephaniah is said to have prophesied in the reign of Josiah,¹ and the background of his prediction of woe has commonly been held to be the Scythian peril.² Apart from this no other known historical peril could have been in mind until the last years of Josiah.³ Before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., no one is likely to have thought of Babylon as a menace to the west,

capital was transferred to Harran, which fell in 610 B.C., when Egypt was still in a position to claim domination over the area from the Euphrates to her own border. Rice would apparently accept Gadd's equation of the Umman-manda who helped the Babylonians at Harran with the Scythians (see above p. 208), but the Syrian raid would not appear to fit well between the fall of Nineveh and the fall of Harran, and, as Welch points out (*Jeremiah*, p. 103), it would be difficult to understand why one ally of the Babylonians should attack Egypt, another ally, at such a time. J. Lewy (*Forschungen zur alten Geschichte Vorderasiens*, pp. 51 ff.) would place the Scythian raid much later still, in 592-591 B.C., following a pact with the Babylonians. P. Pezron (*Essai d'un Commentaire littéral et historique sur les douze Prophètes*, 1693), who is described by C. F. Cramer (*Skýthische Denkmähler in Palästina*, Einleitung p. 36) as "Pezron der Hypothesenmacher, der Grübler, der uncritische Historiker", held that there were two Scythian incursions, the first in the reign of Jeroboam II and the second in the tenth year of Josiah, in the time of Zephaniah (according to Cramer, *op. cit.* p. 22, which is my only access to Pezron's work). Cramer (*op. cit.* p. 23) pronounces the first of these alleged inroads "unerweislich" and the second "erweislich", and brought to this period both Joel and Zephaniah (his commentary on these two books is given on pp. 138 ff.).

¹ Zeph. i. 1.

² So W. Nowack, *Die Kleinen Propheten* (H.K.), 1897, p. 278; J. A. Selbie, in *D.B.* iv (1902), 975b; K. Marti, *Dodekapropheton* (K.H.C.), 1904, pp. 359 f.; S. R. Driver, *Minor Prophets* (Cent. B.), ii. 119; A. van Hoonacker, *Les douze petits Prophètes* (E. Bib.), 1908, p. 500; J. M. Powis Smith, *Zephaniah* (I.C.C.), 1912, pp. 162 f.; C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung*, p. 636; A. B. Davidson and H. C. O. Lanchester, *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (Camb. B.), 1920, pp. 105 f.; G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, 2nd edn., ii (1928), 39 f.; E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (K.A.T.), 1929, p. 415; G. G. V. Stonehouse, *Zephaniah* (West. C.), 1929, pp. 3, 8 f.; O. Eissfeldt (in *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* [H.A.T.], ii, 2nd edn., 1954, pp. 188 f., and *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 2nd edn., 1956, p. 521. This view is rejected by F. Horst, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (H.A.T.), ii, 2nd edn., p. 195; G. Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 1942, p. 126; J. P. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* vii (1948), pp. 25 ff.

³ König (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1893, pp. 352 ff.) and Hyatt (*loc. cit.*) would transfer the ministry of Zephaniah to the reign of Jehoiakim.

and even after the fall of Nineveh no imminent danger to Palestine from that quarter is likely to have been felt. Egypt occupied the area west of the Euphrates, through Syria and Palestine, and while Josiah lost his life in a vain attempt to oppose her,¹ it is improbable that Zephaniah thought of Egypt as the instrument of the devastation he predicted. The fact that neither he nor Jeremiah names the destroyer would well fit the rootless, roaming hordes of the Scythians. The conjecture that Jeremiah may well have named the Scythians in his oracles in their original form has not been unknown,² but this is idle speculation, and the absence of their name from the oracles of Zephaniah gives it no support.

It has been maintained by some that Jeremiah had no particular foe in mind,³ and that his early prophecies were vague eschatological predictions.⁴ Zephaniah approached even more nearly to general eschatological prediction. But neither prophet is likely to have uttered his prophecies without thinking of some human power that would be the instrument of the disaster God was about to bring on the world.⁵ Welch suggested that the destroyer of nations of whom Jeremiah spoke was "the first faint hint of the conception which gave rise to the figure of Anti-

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 28 ff.

² So G. A. Smith, *Jeremiah*, p. 111. Piotrowicz (*Eos*, xxxii (1929), 492) thinks the lack of precision in Jeremiah's references may arise from the fact that he had never seen the Scythians.

³ Cf. Nägelsbach, *Jeremiah*, Eng. trans., p. 24; J. F. McCurdy, *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, ii (1896), 395 f. F. Nötscher, *Jeremias* (H. S. A. Tes.), 1934, p. 79; A. Gelin, in *S.D.B.* iv (1949), 879; A. Weiser, *Jeremia* (A.T.D. i (1952), 44; E. A. Leslie, *Jeremiah*, 1954, p. 51; W. Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 2nd edn., 1958, p. 45. A. Aeschmann (*Le prophète Jérémie*, 1959, p. 63) thinks Jeremiah had no definite enemy in mind, but drew traits from both Babylonians and Scythians (cf. A. Gelin, in A. Robert and A. Feuillet, *Introduction à la Bible*, i (1957), 528, where it is suggested that the Scythians left traces on the language of the prophet). Cf. the view of van Hoonacker (*op. cit.* p. 500), that the Scythians were not the only cause of the apprehensions of Zephaniah.

⁴ So A. C. Welch, *Jeremiah*, 1928, pp. 97 ff.; cf. A. Lauha, *Zaphon*, 1943, pp. 62 ff., and W. Staerk, *Z.A.W.* li (1933), 9 ff.

⁵ Cf. J. P. Hyatt, *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 506 f.; "Welch is undoubtedly correct in insisting that with Jeremiah the ultimate source of the doom was Yahweh. So it probably was with the other prophets, but they generally thought of Yahweh as using a human agency to carry out his will. Apart from this, the description of the foe from the north is often sufficiently detailed to make it clear that the prophet had in mind a definite people."

christ".¹ But Antichrist is always the enemy of God and His people, whereas the foe whose ravages Jeremiah predicted was the instrument of God to discipline His people, and so far as Zephaniah was concerned, it was the Day of the Lord, and not the Day of Antichrist, of which he spoke.

A few recent writers still hold the view, which was current before the Scythian hypothesis became current, that while the call of Jeremiah fell in the year 626 B.C., the enemy he had in mind from the start was the Chaldaeans.² At that time the Chaldaeans were but launching their revolt against Assyria, and were just striking for independence and not even menacing Assyria, let alone countries in the west.³ A century earlier, Isaiah had warned Hezekiah against alliance with the Chaldaeans when they made an earlier bid for independence, and had not hesitated to name them.⁴ There would seem no reason why Jeremiah should not name them in 626 B.C., if he really had them in mind. Besides, in his second inaugural vision the message that came to him was "I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north".⁵ This would more naturally describe hordes which poured from the southern steppes of Russia than the Chaldaeans, even though the approach of either to Palestine would be from the north.⁶

¹ Op. cit. p. 126.

² So E. J. Young, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1949, p. 225.

³ Piotrowicz (*Eos*, xxxii (1929), 491) observes that it is impossible to believe that Jeremiah or Zephaniah could have thought of the Babylonians, and that the only foe that could have been in mind was the Scythians.

⁴ 2 Kings xx. 12 ff.; Isa. xxxix.

⁵ Jer. i. 15.

⁶ Condamin (op. cit. p. 63) presses the consideration that the approach to Palestine would in any case be from the north, and compares Isa. xiv. 31 and Jer. xiii. 20. But these passages are not really to be compared. They refer merely to the route of approach, and not to the source of the enemy armies. As Welch says (op. cit. p. 121), Jeremiah's expression would be a remarkable description of a people whom every man in his audience knew to live in the east. Condamin (loc. cit.) further cites Jer. xxv. 9, where "all the tribes of the north" are mentioned along with Nebuchadnezzar. Here, however, we should remember that allied with the Chaldaeans in their attack on Assyria were the Umman-manda. Whether these are to be equated with the Scythians or not (see above, p. 208), they were certainly a kindred people. Throughout the seventh century wave after wave of these invading hordes had poured over the Assyrian frontiers, and for Jeremiah to refer to them as "all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north" would be more easily understandable than so to refer to the Chaldaeans or

The initial call of Jeremiah, as expressed in the second inaugural vision, was not merely to announce disaster from the northern invader, but also judgement on the people of Judah for their idolatry and wickedness.¹ In his early prophecies we find many references to their unfaithfulness to God and the idolatry that flourished throughout the land,² as well as to the breaches of the moral law which were common amongst all classes in Jerusalem.³ If these early prophecies fell before the reform of Josiah, they belonged to the time when the country shrines were still functioning. But with the reform of Josiah the country shrines were closed. It is sometimes thought that later in the reign of Josiah the reform had lost its impetus, and the old practices may have appeared afresh.⁴ But there is no evidence that the country shrines were reopened during the reign of Josiah.⁵ It is for this reason that those who reject the Biblical date for the call of the prophet are constrained to transfer that call to the reign of Jehoiakim. For there can be no doubt that religious conditions in the reign of Jehoiakim were as little satisfying to the prophet as those which prevailed before the reform of Josiah.⁶ Early in the reign of Jehoiakim Jeremiah delivered the Temple address recorded in Jeremiah xxvi. It is usually thought that the Temple address given in Jeremiah vii is

Babylonians. That Jeremiah should give the same description to Scythians in 626 B.C. and to the barbarian allies of Nebuchadnezzar at a later time would be easily intelligible, since they were of a common South Russian origin. Gadd justifies his use of "Scythians" for the Umman-manda by saying they are both generic terms which may be applied indiscriminately to all the various northern Aryan tribes which overran Asia Minor and the adjoining lands at this period, though he recognizes that the actual term "Scythians" is nowhere used of the Umman-manda (*Fall of Nineveh*, p. 14 n.).

¹ Jer. i. 16.

² Jer. ii f.

³ Jer. v.

⁴ Cf. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 161.

⁵ Cf. C. C. Torrey, *J.B.L.* lvi (1937), 203 f.: "Neither Josiah nor his powerful supporters would have permitted any defection from the covenant while he lived". H. G. May (*J.N.E.S.* iv (1945), 226 n.) rejects the view of Hyatt, and asks if Jeremiah could have described Josiah in the terms of Jer. xxii. 15 f. if his view were right.

⁶ Cf. Jer. xxii. 12-23. Nevertheless, as A. S. Peake (*Jeremiah*, i. 150) says: "Jehoiakim was a worthless king, and probably quite out of sympathy with his father's religious policy. Yet we have no explicit evidence to convict him of reinstating, or even permitting, the re-introduction of idolatry."

a duplicate report of the same incident, though no date is there given.¹ Torrey thinks this is unlikely,² and sees no reason why Jeremiah should not repeat essentially the same message at different points in his career.³ Here, however, we have to remember that after the address of Jeremiah xxvi the prophet's life was in danger⁴ and he was only spared when attention was drawn to the fact that Micah had not suffered when he prophesied the destruction of the Temple in the time of Hezekiah.⁵ If Jeremiah had uttered a similar prophecy in the reign of Josiah without being punished for it, we should have expected this more recent precedent to be cited. It would seem likely, therefore, that we should accept the common view that chapters vii and xxvi refer to the same Temple address.

This does not mean that the whole of Jeremiah vii refers to events that fell in the reign of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah vii. 16–20 speak of the women of Judah making cakes in honour of the queen of heaven. These verses interrupt the Temple discourse of Jeremiah and contain a message from God to the prophet. They appear to be separate from their context and may not necessarily refer to the same time.⁶ We remember that after Jeremiah had been carried into Egypt he found the same practice of making cakes in honour of the queen of heaven.⁷ The people refused to listen to the prophet and referred to the misfortunes which had overtaken them since they had ceased to worship the queen of heaven, and boldly announced their intention of resuming that worship. This does not read as if the reform of Josiah had been completely reversed in the reign of Jehoiakim, and it would seem to imply that the worship of the queen of heaven had been interrupted from the time of the reform until after the fall of

¹ On the Temple sermon cf. G. Fohrer, *Th.Z.* v (1949), 401 ff. See also P. F. Stone, *A.J.S.L.* 1 (1934), 73 ff.

² Cf. *J.B.L.* lvi (1937), 194 ff. Torrey calls the view that the account of Jer. vii and that of chapter xxvi refer to the same Temple discourse "a strange theory".

³ Torrey assigns the discourse of chapter vii to the time before the finding of the Law Book (*ibid.* p. 199 n.). H. G. May (*J.N.E.S.* iv (1945), 223) holds that the account in Jer. vii is a much expanded version of that in chapter xxvi.

⁴ Jer. xxvi. 16 ff.

⁵ Jer. xxvi. 17 ff.

⁶ Cf. Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 149 f.

⁷ Jer. xlv. 15 ff.

Jerusalem.¹ In that case the only earlier point in the life of Jeremiah when he could have been confronted with the practice lay before the reform of Josiah. This brings some additional evidence for the placing of his call before that reform. It is true, of course, that in the reign of Jehoiakim the court is unlikely to have shown much interest in the enforcement of the Law Book, and older practices may have begun to appear.² But the women of the community in which Jeremiah was in Egypt do not seem to have been aware that this particular practice had reappeared. Yet at some earlier point in the ministry of Jeremiah it had been current.

There would seem, therefore, to be strong reason to accept the date given for the call of Jeremiah,³ the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, and to believe that there was some historical basis for the account of the Scythian incursion reported by Herodotus, and to find in this incursion the background of Jeremiah's prophecy of trouble from the north, as well as for the prophecies of Zephaniah. While the Scythians are not named in the books of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, this is more than an unsupported conjecture. It rests on the evidence of Herodotus and on that of the book of Jeremiah, and these are quite independent of one another.⁴ The alternative views rest not on evidence but on the explaining away of the only evidence we have.

It is certain that if Zephaniah had the Scythian peril in mind, his prophecies were not fulfilled.⁵ It is equally true that

¹ Cf. Peake, *loc. cit.*: "The impression we gain from xlv is that this form of worship had not been resumed after the reformation of Josiah, for in reply to Jeremiah's appeal that his hearers will not practise it, they retort that all their calamities are due to neglect of it." ² Cf. Jer. xxii. 20-33; vii. 8 ff.

³ J. Milgrom (*J.N.E.S.* xiv (1955), 65 ff.) argues that Jer. ii belongs to the period 627-622 B.C., and hence maintains that the date of the superscription of the book is to be accepted. He maintains (pp. 67 f.) that all the references to idolatry in Jeremiah belong to the period before the reform of Josiah. P. E. Broughton (*A.B.R.* vi (1958), 39 ff.) claims that the account of the call of Jeremiah in Jer. i. 4-10 reflects Deut. xviii. 9-22, and adds that this has some bearing on the relationship between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy. It is not clear, however, whether he means that this has a bearing on the date of the prophet's call, or on the date of the account of it.

⁴ Piotrowicz (*Eos*, xxxii (1929), 489) emphasizes the fact that the witness of Herodotus and that of Jeremiah and Zephaniah mutually confirm one another.

⁵ Piotrowicz (*Eos*, xxxii (1929), 493) suggests that the retreat of the Scythians is hailed in Zeph. iii. 14 f.

whatever he had in mind, his prophecy of universal desolation was not fulfilled in the seventh century B.C., though the prophecy of devastation for the cities of Philistia fits well into the story of Herodotus concerning Ashkelon. It may well be that there was a good deal more suffering for the people of Palestine and Syria than we should gather from the story of Herodotus, since he was not concerned to record all their doings. We should not, therefore, argue too much from silence. But it is certain that the Scythian peril did not bring upon Judah such miseries as the early prophecies of Jeremiah envisaged.¹ This was not unique in the experience of Jeremiah. If, as some suppose, these early prophecies followed a call after the rise of Babylon and had Babylon in mind, then it is equally true that they were not then fulfilled, and it was not until the disastrous rebellion that led to the destruction of Jerusalem that his prophecies found any real fulfilment.

Those who accept the Scythian hypothesis recognize that Jeremiah's prophecies were not fulfilled by that incursion, but many of them think it probable that, troubled though Jeremiah was, he relapsed into silence² until the new peril from the north in the form of the Chaldaean armies of Nebuchadnezzar led him to reissue the prophecies, retouched to meet the new situation.³

¹ Skinner (*op. cit.* p. 41 n.) observes that the silence of the Hebrew historians with regard to this incursion is remarkable. It would not be remarkable, however, if Judah did not suffer greatly and if her people were not seriously harried in the progress and withdrawal of the invaders. Cf. Erbt, *Jeremiah und seine Zeit*, 1902, pp. 208. J. F. McCurdy (*History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, ii (1896), 395) says the terror they inspired was their most serious infliction on the people of Judah.

² Cf. Peake, *op. cit.* i. 11. After his advocacy of the Josianic reform, and subsequent disillusionment (see below) he seems to have relapsed again into silence, and we have no datable evidence of his activity from then until the reign of Jehoiakim. Cf. Vittonatto, *Geremia*, 1955, p. 14b; A. Weiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eng. trans. by D. M. Barton, 1961, p. 210. J. M. Powis Smith, who holds that the reform of Josiah did not stir Jeremiah to utterance, thinks he lapsed into silence after the withdrawal of the Scythians for fourteen years (*The Prophets and their Times*, 1925, p. 118).

³ So, e.g. Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 117; S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, p. 21, and *L.O.T.*, 9th edn., p. 253; F. C. Jean, *Jérémie, sa politique, sa théologie*, 1913, p. 10; Streane, *op. cit.* p. 25; G. A. Smith, *Jeremiah*, pp. 110 f., 117, 122, 126, 382; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1941, p. 502; l.

Of this there can be no proof or disproof. That there are some things in the oracles which have been frequently called the "Scythian Songs", since Duhm coined the name,¹ more relevant to the Chaldaeans than to the Scythians is recognized, and that is why the oracles are believed to have been retouched.² Other things are thought to be more relevant to the Scythians than to the Chaldaeans, though this is disputed and the phrases are held to be paralleled elsewhere in the Old Testament, where the reference is clearly to the Assyrians or the Babylonians.³ It is just possible that the non-mention of the Chaldaeans by name is due to the fact that the original oracles did not mention the name of the foe. But even if it be true that everything in the oracles as they now stand could have relevance to the Chaldaeans, this cannot prove that they were originally uttered in relation to them. For it is precisely what we should expect if the theory is correct. After the oracles had been retouched to fit them to the new situation, it would be expected that they would fit it. The view that these

G. Matthews, *The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel*, 1947, p. 146 n.; J. A. Bewer, *The Prophets*, 1955, p. 185. H. Wheeler Robinson (*The Cross in the Old Testament*, 1955, p. 127) says: "It was natural that in 604, when the Babylonians . . . were first coming into the arena of Palestine, Jeremiah should make a new identification. The prophets stood for principles, not for the details of their application, and the principles of 626 received a new application in 604." L. Gautier (*Introduction*, 3rd edn., i. 390) expresses some caution about the retouching, and Skinner (op. cit. p. 43 n.) says it is possible that the poems were modified, but this assumption is hardly necessary.

¹ Cf. *Jeremia*, p. 48. On the "Scythian Songs", cf. T. L. W. van Ravesteijn, *Theologische Studiën*, xxxi (1913), 241 ff., xxxii (1914), 1 ff.

² Many writers have noted the inappropriateness to the Scythians of the description of the foe in Jer. v. 15 as "an ancient nation" (so, e.g. Hyatt, *I.B.* v. 779b; Aeschmann, op. cit. p. 63). T. T. Rice (*The Scythians*, 1957, p. 19) observes that many ancient Greek scholars mistakenly considered the Scythians the world's oldest race. According to Herodotus (*Hist.* iv. 5), they regarded themselves as the youngest of nations. It is improbable that Jeremiah really thought of them as especially ancient, unless he regarded barbarity as a sign of antiquity, though Peake (op. cit. i. 131) and Streane (op. cit. p. 39) see no difficulty in this. Binns (op. cit. p. 51) dismisses Peake's view as pure conjecture, and thinks the Scythians are definitely excluded here. It may be noted that the phrase is omitted from LXX.

³ Cf. Condamin, op. cit. pp. 63 ff.; Hyatt, *J.B.L.* lix (1940), 502. N. Schmidt (*E.B.* ii (1901), 2390) suggested that there was a Chaldaean contingent amongst the Scythians, but he later modified this view (iv (1907), 4333).

oracles have been retouched is born of the fact that Jeremiah's ministry is stated to have begun at approximately the time to which Herodotus assigns the Scythian invasion, and of the recognition that as they stand they are appropriate to the Chaldaeans, even though some things could equally well apply to the Scythians, and some things perhaps better to them.¹

We may next turn briefly to the question of the "Confessions of Jeremiah". These consist of a number of passages² in which the prophet addresses himself to God, lamenting his lot and the suffering it entailed, and in some passages complaining that the prophecies he had been driven to utter had been unfulfilled and had left him discredited. The best known of these stands in Jeremiah xx. 7 ff.,³ where the prophet complains that God has overpowered him and compelled him to prophesy and has then made him a laughing stock by the non-fulfilment of his word, until he vowed that he would never prophesy again, only to feel a fire burning in his bones and a constraint to speak that he could not resist.⁴

This passage is not necessarily to be assigned to the later part of Jeremiah's career, and connected with the night which the prophet spent in the stocks in the reign of Zedekiah, as recorded

¹ Cf. Skinner, *op. cit.* p. 42: "Jeremiah's descriptions of the unnamed foe agree *in the main* with what we know of the Scythians"; G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 383: "the oracles in question far more closely fit the Scythian than the Chaldaean invasion."

² Jer. xi. 18-xii. 6; xv. 10-21; xvii. 9 f., 14-18, xviii. 18-23, xx. 7-12, 14-18. On the "Confessions" cf. W. Baumgartner, *Die Klagegedichte des Jeremia*, 1917; Skinner, *op. cit.* pp. 201 ff.; G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 317 ff.; E. A. Leslie, *The Intimate Papers of Jeremiah*, 1953 and *Jeremiah*, 1954, pp. 137 ff.; L. Leclercq, in *Études sur les Prophètes d'Israël*, 1954, pp. 111 ff.; G.-M. Behler, *Les Confessions de Jérémie*, 1959.

³ Torrey (*J.B.L.* lvi (1937), 212 f.) suspects this passage to be of late date and not genuinely from Jeremiah, but elsewhere it is recognized to be the most poignant and moving revelation of the agony of spirit that the prophet endured. Peake (*op. cit.* i. 241) describes it as "one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of the prophetic consciousness". J. W. Rothstein (in E. Kautsch and A. Bertholet, *H.S.A.T.*, 4th edn., 1922, p. 781) says its authenticity is beyond doubt.

⁴ Skinner (*op. cit.* pp. 201 f.) says that without these "the devotion of the Jewish Church would have been immeasurably poorer in that strain of personal piety which saves its religion from degenerating into a soulless legalism."

earlier in the same chapter.¹ Skinner thinks it is more likely that the whole series of "Confessions" comes from the middle period of the prophet's ministry, in the latter part of the reign of Josiah.² The passage just referred to would seem to look back on a long series of unfulfilled prophecies and of consequent derision, and so would seem to be better placed towards the close of Jeremiah's career, when his sufferings were greatest and when the day of tragic fulfilment was nigh at hand.

It is improbable, however, that the whole series of "Confessions" should be brought closely together in time. The intimate communion with God which is expressed in these passages is something that was characteristic of Jeremiah's experience and likely to mark his dealings with God in all periods. In Jeremiah xi. 18-xii. 6 we have such a passage arising out of the plot against his life by his own family, and this, as I have already said, is usually connected with the time of Josiah's reform, quite early in the ministry of Jeremiah.³ Some of the "Confessions" may well have fallen either before or after this in the reign of Josiah.

To examine all of the "Confessions" today is impossible, and irrelevant to our subject of the early prophecies of Jeremiah if they were spread throughout his career. But there is one passage at which we should look, since it culminates in a renewal of the call of the prophet. This stands in Jeremiah xv. 10-20. Here the prophet complains that God has let him down like a wady that fails, and that he has suffered reproach and persecution because of his ministry. Then comes the renewed call, when the prophet has the assurance that if he will distinguish between the precious and the vile he shall be as the very mouth of God, and shall be made as a wall of bronze, immovable before the assaults of his enemies. This passage, which clearly belongs to a time after Jeremiah has been prophesying for some time, bears so much resemblance to the initial call of Jeremiah, when he was promised that the Lord's word would be put in his mouth⁴ and that he

¹ Peake (*op. cit.* p. 242) and Streane (*op. cit.* p. 124) attribute it to the early part of the reign of Jehoiakim, and Rothstein (*loc. cit.*) late in the same reign.

² *Op. cit.* p. 209.

³ Skinner (*op. cit.* p. 209) assigns it to the fifth or sixth year of Jeremiah's ministry.

⁴ Jer. i. 9.

would be delivered from his enemies if he fearlessly uttered that word,¹ and to the message that came to him in his second inaugural vision, promising him that he should be as an iron pillar and a brazen wall against the whole land,² that it is rightly regarded as a renewal of the call of Jeremiah. This would seem most probably to be placed at a fairly early point in his ministry. When he first received his call he was conscious of his youthfulness,³ and he was apparently of a timid nature. Many think that he could not have been more than twenty years of age when he had his call,⁴ and some think he may have been some years younger than this.⁵ Though he felt sure that God was calling him to prophesy and would be with him, it is likely that when the buffets he suffered through discredit and the scorn of men struck him, his timidity reasserted itself. If this could happen towards the end of his career, it is hard to suppose that it could not happen earlier, when the first failures of his prophecies exposed him to the derision of men. And the renewal of his call can most naturally be placed after his initial experience of failure. If his faith had survived the experience of failure for any considerable time, it would be surprising for doubts to begin to arise and then continue with him through the rest of his ministry. It is far

¹ Jer. i. 8, 19.

² Jer. i. 18.

³ Jer. i. 6.

⁴ G. Vittonatto, (*Geremia*, 1955, pp. 9, 87) suggests that he was 25–30 years old; Nötscher (*Echter Bibel*, iii (1958), 217) perhaps 20–30 years of age; A. Penna (*Geremia* [S.B.], 1952, p. 33) thinks the expression could describe one of 20–25 years of age (and so B. Mariani, *Introductio in libros sacros Veteris Testamenti*, 1958, p. 357 n.); C. H. Cornill (*Jeremia*, 1905, p. 6) suggests that Jeremiah was about 25. Cheyne (op. cit. p. 14 n.) says he was probably as much as 20, and so Orelli (*Jesaja und Jeremia*, 2nd edn., 1891, p. 228; Eng. trans. of 1st edn. of *Jeremiah*, 1889, pp. 29 f.), while J. Goettsberger (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1928, p. 295) suggests that he was not much more than 20; Skinner (op. cit. p. 24 n.) and Leslie (op. cit. p. 22) think he was probably under 20, and Pfeiffer (*Introduction*, p. 493) "not quite 20".

⁵ Hyatt (*I.B.* v. 798) suggests that he was but 17 or 18 years old. The same expression is used in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3 of Josiah when he was 16 years of age. It is also used in 2 Sam. xviii. 5 of Absalom at the time of his rebellion. Hence Binns (*Jeremiah*, p. 5) and Hyatt (*I.B.* v. 802) rightly say we cannot deduce the age of Jeremiah from this word. The fact that Jeremiah was unmarried, and that this was due to his prophetic vocation (Jer. xvi. 2), would seem to indicate that his call came when he was very young, since marriage commonly took place very early. M. D. Goldman (*A.B.R.* ii. Parts 1–2, 1952, 43 ff.) thinks this rests on a mistaken interpretation, and holds that Jeremiah did marry.

more natural to suppose that he became uncertain of his call and needed it to be renewed quite early in his career, even though to the end he was troubled by what he called God's deception of him. At the time of his call trouble threatened from the north,¹ and his call bore relation to that trouble and carried a message of disaster and devastation arising from it. One of the most brilliant and at the same time gloomy oracles came from that time :

I looked at the earth, and lo, chaos !
At the heaven, and it shed no light.
I looked at the mountains, and lo, they were quaking,
And all the hills moved to and fro.
I looked, and lo, there was no man,
And all the birds of the air had fled away.
I looked, and lo, the garden had become a wilderness,
And all its cities were in ruins.²

Here is a picture of desolation which one day would not seem extravagant after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem, but which went far beyond anything the Scythians may have been responsible for. The non-fulfilment of this prediction must have exposed Jeremiah to the taunts of men, and filled him with misgiving.

If the call of Jeremiah came towards the end of the reign of Josiah or early in the reign of Jehoiakim and had the Chaldeans in mind, they were not wholly fulfilled, but they were not so spectacularly falsified as to discredit him entirely. Josiah, who shared in a western attempt to secure independence from Assyria that synchronized with the rising of Nabopolassar in Babylon, opposed Pharaoh Necho when he marched to the aid of Assyria, and lost his life.³ This was such a blow to Judah that the tragic story was long remembered in song.⁴ If Jeremiah had already predicted that the Chaldeans were to bring disaster on Judah, the failure of this ill-omened attempt to play a part on the side of Babylon would not have discredited the prophet. And after the battle of Carchemish, when Nebuchadnezzar pursued the retreating forces of Necho, Jeremiah could well have uttered his prophecies of the approach of the conquering army from the

¹ Jer. i. 14.

² Jer. iv. 23 ff.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 29 f.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, where it is said that Jeremiah composed the song.

north. Though Judah suffered at that time far less than the "Scythian Songs" would suggest—assuming them to have been first uttered at this time and to have had reference to the Chaldaeans, and not to the Scythians—it should not be forgotten that Judah at this time came under the yoke of Babylon. There was not, therefore, the complete discrediting of Jeremiah that would make him the butt of taunts and lead him to doubt his very call, whereas if they were spoken first of the Scythians he would be so exposed when the Scythians withdrew, leaving Judah an independent country. Skinner observes that after the Scythians withdrew, "the country settled down to peaceful pursuits, with a fairer prospect of prosperity than it had known since the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam".¹ Such a situation would have appeared to belie Jeremiah's predictions far more completely than anything at a later date, and could most fully account for his need of a renewal of his call. In the reign of Zedekiah, his sufferings were due in part to the charge of disloyalty,² since he urged submission to the Chaldaeans,³ and not simply to the taunts of unfulfilled prophecy. But the "Scythian Songs" are not charged with calls to submission to the foe, but are associated simply with calls to submission to God.⁴

Hence, if the call of Jeremiah took place in 626 B.C., as is stated in Jeremiah i. 2, and if the danger from the north was linked with the Scythian incursion, and if Jeremiah uttered the "Scythian Songs" at that time, prophesying the devastation of the whole land, he must have been completely discredited⁵ and exposed to the contempt of men as the false prophet *par excellence* of his time. At such a time, as nowhere else in his career, he would stand in need of a renewal of his call, and an assurance that his word had really come from God.

¹ Op. cit. p. 89.

² Jer. xxxvii. 11 ff., xxxviii. 4.

³ Jer. xxxviii. 2.

⁴ As H. P. Smith (*Religion of Israel*, pp. 165 f.) observes, we here have not only a picture of the invader, but of the intense sympathy the prophet felt for his own people.

⁵ Cf. Peake, op. cit. i. 11: "He must have seemed to the people to have been discredited by the failure of his predictions. The foe from the north had come, but it had also gone, while Judah remained unshaken." Cf. J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophets and their Times*, 1925, p. 117; H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Cross in the Old Testament*, 1955, p. 144.

Let it not be forgotten that though Jeremiah's word, like that of other prophets, was related to a political and international situation, it was not simply born of that situation, and it was not an expression of his political acumen. It was a message from God, and it announced God's judgement on the nation^r that was flouting His will. That fundamental message was a true one, and it ultimately found its fulfilment in the disaster that came upon the nation in 586 B.C. The prophet at first mistook the time of the judgement, and more than once seems to have thought it was nearer than it actually was. But his message that the nation that forsook the will of God could only stumble forward to disaster was a true message from God, and in the end it was tragically fulfilled.

We must now turn to the question of Jeremiah's attitude to Josiah's reform. If he did not receive his call until some years after that reform had been carried through, he could have played no part in it. On the other hand, if he received his call some years before the Law Book was found in the Temple and made the basis of the reform, we should expect Jeremiah to adopt some attitude in relation to it. Attention is sometimes drawn to the fact that the king consulted the prophetess Huldah about the Law Book, and not Jeremiah.¹ We know nothing further about Huldah, and to some it would seem incredible that she should be consulted rather than Jeremiah,² if he were already active as a prophet, since we recognize his stature to have been far greater than Huldah's. But if Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the Scythians had been so completely falsified as we have seen reason to believe, his stature would not seem very great to people or court, and we can hardly wonder that this prophet, who was still but young and who seemed only a false prophet, should be ignored by the king.

In Jeremiah xi we read that Jeremiah felt called to proclaim

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 14.

² T. C. Gordon (*E.T.* xlv (1932-3), 563 f.) says the only way out of this dilemma is to recognize that Jeremiah was not yet on the stage of events. Cf. also A. F. Puukko, in *Alttestamentliche Studien R. Kittel dargebracht*, 1913, p. 134; Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 166. Torrey (*J.B.L.* lvi (1937), 119 n.) goes so far as to suggest that the compiler of 2 Kings did not know of Jeremiah.

in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the words of the covenant,¹ and to summon men to obedience to the words of this covenant.² The passage is full of Deuteronomic phraseology, and it has long seemed certain to most scholars that Jeremiah was here advocating the reform and its basis in the Deuteronomic law.³ Some of those who have placed Jeremiah's call later than the reform have held that the ascription of his call to the year 626 B.C. was deliberately designed to make him appear to be a supporter of the reform, and have held that passages such as the one we are now considering were the invention of the Deuteronomic editors of the book to support that impression.⁴ This at least recognizes that in the only record we have of the life and activity of Jeremiah, he is presented as a supporter of the reform. And once more it is pertinent to observe that we can only discuss his career in terms of the record that has come down to us, and we are not justified in removing without evidence whatever is

¹ Jer. xi. 6.

² Jer. xi. 3 ff.

³ So, e.g. Orelli, op. cit. p. 216 (Eng. trans., p. 3); K. Marti, *Z. Th. K.* ii (1892), 54 ff.; F. Giesebrecht, *Jeremia* (H.K.), 1894, p. 67; Cheyne, op. cit. pp. 55 ff.; W. W. von Baudissin, in *D.B.* iv (1902), 91a; V. Ryssel, *J.E.* vii. 96b; Peake, op. cit. i. 11 ff.; S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, p. 65, *L.O.T.*, 9th edn., p. 255; C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung*, p. 546; Streane, op. cit. pp. 75 ff.; H. Schmidt, *Die grossen Propheten* (S.A.T.), 2nd edn., 1923, p. 240; Skinner, op. cit. pp. 89 ff.; G. A. Smith, *Jeremiah*, pp. 134 ff.; E. Bruston, in Westphal's *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, i (1932), 605a; Condamin, op. cit. pp. 103 ff.; Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, pp. 493, 495; A. Robert, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, xxxi (1943), 5 ff.; J. Paterson, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets*, 1948, pp. 148 ff.; A. Gelin, *S.D.B.* iv. 864 ff. and *Jérémie* (Bible de Jérusalem), 2nd edn., 1959, p. 11; R. Augé, *Jeremias* (Montserrat Bible), 1950, pp. 17 f., 117; H. Cazelles, *Recherches de Science religieuse*, xxxix (1951), 5 ff.; G. Vittonatto, *Geremia*, 1955, pp. 12 ff.; B. W. Anderson, op. cit. p. 318. Binns (op. cit. p. 8) is doubtful. Cheyne (op. cit. p. 56) goes so far as to suggest that Jeremiah was present when the Law Book was read to the king. E. König (*Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion*, 1915, pp. 441 ff.) maintains that Jer. xi refers to Josiah's Law Book, but that this was not Deuteronomy. T. C. Gordon (*E.T.* xlv (1932-3), 564 n.) thinks Jer. xi. 3 refers to the ancient covenant in Egypt. Cf. Rudolph, op. cit. pp. 71 f.

⁴ Cf. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 158, *Vanderbilt Studies in the Humanities*, i (1951), 91 and *I.B.* v. 906. Cf. also A. Bentzen, *Introduction*, 2nd edn., ii. 118 f. Skinner (op. cit. p. 102) remarks that we know of no circumstances that called for the fictitious attribution to Jeremiah of support for Deuteronomy. C. Kuhl (*The Old Testament: its Origins and Composition*, Eng. trans. by C. T. M. Herriott, 1961, p. 188) thinks the passage was derived to a considerable extent from Jeremiah, but was revised, perhaps by disciples of Jeremiah who were very close to Deuteronomic circles.

inconvenient to a different view which we wish to impose on the record.

Various ways of avoiding the conclusion that Jeremiah at first favoured the reform have been proposed. Some have argued that the book of Deuteronomy was not composed until after the time of Jeremiah, and that it reflects the influence of this prophet.¹ It is unnecessary to examine this view today, partly because it would be hard to find scholars who hold it now, and partly because some years ago I examined this question in some detail and offered reasons for rejecting it.² That Josiah's Law Book was Deuteronomy in some form, though not wholly identical with the present book of Deuteronomy, seems to be one of the most firmly established results of Old Testament scholarship.³

¹ Cf. R. H. Kennett, *Deuteronomy and the Decalogue*, 1920 (reprinted in *The Church of Israel*, 1933, pp. 73 ff.), and *J.T.S.* vi (1905), 161 ff., vii (1906), 481 ff.; G. R. Berry, *J.B.L.* xxxix (1920), 44 ff., lix (1940), 133 ff.; G. Hölscher, *Z.A.W.* xl (1922), 161 ff.; F. Horst, *Z.A.W.* xli (1923), 94 ff., and *Z.D.M.G.* lxxvii (1923), 220 ff.; J. N. Schofield, in *Studies in History and Religion* (ed. by E. A. Payne), 1942, pp. 44 ff. Amongst older scholars who advocated a post-exilic date for Deuteronomy the following may be noted: C. W. P. Gramberg, *Kritische Geschichte der Religionsideen des Alten Testaments*, i (1829), pp. xxvi, 153 ff., 308 ff.; W. Vatke, *Die Religion des Alten Testaments nach den Kanonischen Büchern*, 1835, pp. 504-9 n.; G. d'Eichtal, *Mélanges de critique biblique*, 1886, pp. 81 ff. (see M. Vernes, *M. Gustave d'Eichtal et ses travaux sur l'Ancien Testament*, 1887, pp. 33 ff.); M. Vernes, *Précis d'Histoire juive*, 1889, pp. 468 ff., 795 n.; L. Horst, *R.H.R.* xvi (1887), 28 ff., xvii (1888), 1 ff., xviii (1888), 320 ff., xxiii (1891), 184 ff., xxvii (1893), 119 ff.

² Cf. *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (T. H. Robinson Festschrift), 1950, pp. 157 ff. On the question of the date of Deuteronomy, see the symposium by J. A. Bewer, L. B. Paton, and G. Dahl in *J.B.L.* xlvii (1928), 305 ff., 322 ff., 358 ff.; also H. Gressmann, *Z.A.W.* xlii (1924), 313 ff.; J. Battersby Harford, *Expositor*, 9th ser., iv (1925), 323 ff.; K. Budde, *Z.A.W.* xlv (1926), 117 ff.; W. C. Graham, *J.R.* vii (1927), 396 ff.; W. Baumgartner, *Th. R.*, N.F. i (1929), 7 ff. That there are links between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy is undoubted, but the direction of the influence is the point at issue. Cf. W. Gesenius, *De Pentateuchi Samaritani origine, indole et auctoritate*, 1815, p. 7; P. von Bohlen, *Historical and Critical Illustrations of the First Part of Genesis*, Eng. trans. by J. Heywood, i (1862), 270 ff.; S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, pp. xli-xliv. Hölscher (loc. cit.) and Horst (loc. cit.) deny the authenticity of all passages in Jeremiah which appear to show dependence on Deuteronomy, while Kennett (loc. cit.) and Schofield (loc. cit.) think Deuteronomy was influenced by Jeremiah.

³ Cf. J. P. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 158: "The date of Deuteronomy is one of the most assured results of modern criticism and an important keystone in the whole structure of modern views of the Old Testament."

That Jeremiah should advocate Josiah's reform has seemed to many antecedently improbable, and even incredible.¹ Jeremiah appears to have had so little use for the cultus² that they have felt he could not have been interested in the concentration of that cultus in Jerusalem or anywhere else. We know that in the time of Jehoiakim Jeremiah predicted the destruction of the Temple,³ as Micah had done a century earlier,⁴ and but for powerful advocacy he might have lost his life at that time.⁵ He asked whether God had commanded sacrifice in the wilderness period in terms that have led many to suppose that he disapproved of any sacrifice.⁶ This seems to me to be an overpressing of his words.⁷ It is true that he condemned trust in the Temple as a

¹ Cf. Kennett, *Deuteronomy and the Decalogue*, pp. 12 ff. (*Church of Israel*, pp. 81 ff.); Schofield, loc. cit. pp. 58 f.; Hyatt, loc. cit. p. 162. Hence many have rejected Jer. xi. 1-14 as a late addition; cf. e.g. Duhm, op. cit. pp. 106 ff.; Cornill, op. cit. pp. 143 ff.; Hyatt, loc. cit. pp. 168 ff. A. F. Puukko, in *Alttestamentliche Studien R. Kittel dargebracht*, 1913, pp. 127 ff. examines Jeremiah's attitude to Deuteronomy and concludes (p. 153) by saying that the prophet was from the beginning passive and then increasingly hostile, while A. B. Davidson (*D.B.* ii (1899), 570b) thought it improbable that Jeremiah advocated Deuteronomy, and A. Weiser (*Jeremia* [A.T.D.], i. 100 f.) thinks Jeremiah's attitude to the reform cannot be determined on the basis of chapter xi. G. G. Findlay (*E.T.* xviii (1906-7), 298 n.) says that if Jeremiah had been as hostile to the reform as Duhm supposes, we should have heard a great deal more about the matter than we do. L. Dennefeld, *Les grands Prophètes* (Pirot-Clamer's *Sainte Bible*), 1946, pp. 277 f. says Jeremiah xi is not concerned with Josiah's law, but belongs to the time of Jehoiakim (so, earlier, J. W. Rothstein (in Kautzsch-Bertholet, *H.S.A.T.*, 4th edn., i (1922), 755); Volz, *Jeremia*, p. 130; and Nötscher, *Jeremias*, pp. 106 f.; cf. P. F. Stone, *A.J.S.L.* 1 (1934), 74).

² Cf. Skinner, op. cit. p. 105: "The disinclination to admit even a temporary co-operation of Jeremiah with the Deuteronomists rests less on the exegesis of particular texts than on the broad ground that his insight into the nature of religion makes it inconceivable that he could ever have had any sympathy with an attempt to convert the nation by a forcible change in its forms of worship." Cf. also Peake, op. cit. i. 12. Most scholars, though in varying degree, recognize that Jeremiah was critical of the cultus. At the other extreme is A. Haldar (*Associations of Cult Prophets*, pp. 112 f., 121 f.), who holds that Jeremiah was a cultic prophet on the staff of the Temple.

³ Jer. xxvi. 6; cf. vii. 14.

⁴ Mic. iii. 12.

⁵ Jer. xxvi. 17 ff.

⁶ Jer. vii. 22.

⁷ Cf. what I have written elsewhere in *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953, pp. 31 ff., 40 f., and *B.J.R.L.* xxix (1945-6), 22 ff. J. Jocz (*The Spiritual History of Israel*, 1961, p. 71 n.) says I make every effort to deny any fundamental difference between prophet and priest. This is a complete misrepresentation of my position.

guarantee of security for the nation, and said it could as easily be destroyed as the shrine of Shiloh had been.¹ But it should not be forgotten that in the same speech he declared that if men would amend their ways and obey the will of God they could dwell in security in the land,² and it was only because they did not so obey Him that the Temple would be destroyed. This does not suggest that he disapproved of the Temple as such,³ but only of the Temple and its cultus as a substitute for obedience to the will of God in all the relationships of life. When he condemned sacrifices, the condemnation was always linked with the condemnation of the life of the people, and this would strongly suggest that in his view the sacrifices were vain because they were empty acts and not the expression of any true devotion to the will of God.

But even if these passages were to be interpreted as others interpret them and mean that Jeremiah was utterly opposed to all

I recognize a difference of function and emphasis between prophet and priest, but maintain that prophet and priest were not exponents of two totally different religions. Curiously enough, Jocz goes far beyond me when he says (p. 69), "The 'Law' is essentially prophetic and the cultic elements are used for prophetic ends." This would seem to obscure the difference between prophet and priest more than anything I would say. How Jocz reconciles this with his view expressed elsewhere in the same volume (pp. 82 ff.), that the preexilic canonical prophets were opposed to the whole institution of sacrifice, I am not able to see. How the Law could use for prophetic ends cultic elements which were diametrically opposed to those ends is not obvious. On Jeremiah's attitude to sacrifice and the Temple, cf. K. Marti, *Z. Th. K.* ii (1892), 64 f.: "Niemand kann bei dieser Rede meinen, dass er den Tempel als solchen verwerfen wollte; das lag nicht von ferne in seinem Sinn. Ebenso fiel es ihm nicht ein, jedes Opfer als ein Ungerechtigkeitsverbrechen zu verwerfen. . . . Jeremia achtete den Tempel viel höher als seine Zeitgenossen, er war ihm kein Amulett, kein Talisman, und die Opfer darin hatten keine magisch wirkende Kraft." A. Robert (*Recherches de Science Religieuse*, xxxi (1943), 1) refers to "le vieux préjugé protestant d'après lequel les prophètes auraient condamné le culte non seulement dans ses abus, mais pour lui-même". On Jeremiah's attitude to the cultus cf. further A. Strobel, *B.Z.*, N.F. i (1957), 214 ff.

¹ Jer. vii. 14, xxvi. 6.

² Jer. vii. 5 ff.; cf. xxvi. 4, where the prediction of destruction is conditional on the rejection of the prophet's word, which is introduced by the observation "It may be they will listen".

³ Meek (*Expositor*, 8th ser., xxv (1923), 218 f.) says that to Jeremiah the Temple was a hindrance to the religious life. In that case he should have desired its destruction anyhow, and not merely if the people refused to amend their ways.

sacrifice and to all the worship of the Temple and believed the Temple itself had no place in the purpose of God, it would not follow that he could not have supported the reform of Josiah. For the Temple discourse was uttered at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, some seventeen years after the finding of the Law Book. We have no right to assume that Jeremiah's teaching was static throughout his career.¹

The book of Deuteronomy was a Law Book, inculcating cultic acts. But it has long been recognized to rest also on the teachings of the eighth-century prophets, and to inculcate prophetic principles.² While it is hard to imagine Jeremiah writing the book of Deuteronomy—though even this improbable idea has found advocates³—it is not hard to see him welcoming the book as a great step forward.⁴ He had denounced the worship of the scattered shrines, and had stigmatized it as the worship of a multiplicity of gods,⁵ and hence as completely rejected by Yahweh. He would surely, therefore, welcome the suppression of these shrines and the Deuteronomic insistence on the oneness of God,⁶ and, as I have already said, this would well explain the

¹ Skinner (op. cit. p. 105) pertinently asks "Had Jeremiah nothing to learn?"

² J. Paterson (*The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets*, 1948, pp. 148) observes: "It represented an effort to codify the prophetic spirit, to write into the statute book of the realm the ideals of Israel's great religious leaders."

³ For references, cf. Puukko, loc. cit. pp. 126 f. See also Colenso, op. cit. vii. 12, 262. C. F. Volney (*Oeuvres Complètes*, 1838, p. 335) supposed that Jeremiah collaborated with Hilkiyah in the writing of Deuteronomy. The Talmud (*Baba Bathra*, 15a) ascribed to Jeremiah the authorship of the books of Kings, and so of the story of the finding of the Book of the Law and of Josiah's reform, and this has been accepted by many authors. Cf. R. Cornely and A. Merk, *Introductionis in S. Scripturae libros Compendium*, 10th edn., i (1929), 391 f.

⁴ On Jeremiah's attitude to Deuteronomy, cf. Puukko, loc. cit. pp. 94 ff.; Skinner, op. cit. pp. 89 ff.; G. A. Smith, op. cit. pp. 134 ff.; J. P. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 156 ff.; H. H. Rowley, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (T. H. Robinson Festschrift), 1950, pp. 157 ff.; A. Robert, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, xxxi (1943), 5 ff.; H. Cazelles, *ibid.* xxxix (1951), 5 ff.

⁵ Jer. ii f.

⁶ Peake (op. cit. i. 12 f.) thinks Jeremiah was never fully in harmony with the reform, but observes that there was much in the Law with which he would feel in full sympathy, and even the reform of the cultus would in many respects be pleasing to him. Cf. Streane, op. cit. p. 61: "With the moral tone of that Book he was in full sympathy, as is shown by his frequent use of its words and phrases, and persistent enforcement of its general teaching." G. A. Smith, op. cit. p. 140:

wrath of his own kinsfolk, and their plot to kill him.¹ He would welcome the purification of the Temple and the elimination of the abominations that had marked the reign of Manasseh. And he must have welcomed the emphasis on true devotion of spirit that marks Deuteronomy. While there were doubtless provisions in Deuteronomy which would not greatly appeal to him,² there was much which would, and, as Peake observes, "every reformer discovers that he has to be content with less than the second best, and to work with men whose motives and aims are other than his own".³

It is argued that Jeremiah could not have approved the political aspirations that were associated with the reform of Josiah.⁴ That the king's reform was associated with his bid for independence is beyond question. But what ground have we for assuming that Jeremiah disapproved of that? The Assyrian empire was tottering to its fall. After the death of Ashurbanipal the Assyrian hold on the west was completely relaxed. That within a few years Nineveh would be destroyed could not then be foreseen. But that Assyrian control of the west had collapsed was a fact of experience, and the Scythian incursion which Assyria had been powerless to interfere with was the

"That he was in sympathy with the temper and the general truths of Deuteronomy we need not doubt." It is curious that of those who would deny that Jeremiah at first supported the Deuteronomic reform, some excise from the book of Jeremiah all that suggests that he supported it and others find in these same passages evidence that Deuteronomy is later than Jeremiah and bears the marks of his influence. Needless to say, if the book of Jeremiah is re-edited to make it fit a theory, it is not surprising that it then fits it. But the theory is not supported by the surgery to which it leads. As for the other alternative, it is hard to see why Jeremiah must be presumed to have been in irreconcilable hostility to the Deuteronomic reform, if Deuteronomy is held to reflect his influence.

¹ E. Bruston, indeed, claims (in Westphal, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, i. 605a) that this incident suffices to demonstrate that Jeremiah was entirely favourable to the Deuteronomic reform. The present writer would not go so far as this, but finds in Jeremiah's support of the reform the most natural and likely reason for their anger against him.

² Skinner (op. cit. p. 94) observes: "The sacrificial and ceremonial legislation of Deuteronomy, which many modern critics find so obnoxious, is really a subordinate element, amounting to little more than a regulation of ancient usages too deeply bound up with the life and thought of the people to be swept away by legal enactment"

³ *Jeremiah*, i. 13.

⁴ Cf. Hyatt, *J.N.E.S.* i (1942), 159 f.

clearest evidence of this.¹ Egypt had not yet stepped in to claim the western part of what had been the Assyrian empire. Why, then, should Jeremiah disapprove of Josiah assuming independence? Indeed, what other alternative was there? Isaiah had disapproved of the revolt against Assyria in his day, and later Jeremiah condemned the revolt against Babylon. But now the position was quite different. To whom could Jeremiah have supposed that Josiah should yield allegiance in 621 B.C.? We have no right to transfer his attitude years later, after Judah had been annexed by Babylon, and when people vainly supposed that because the Temple was in Jerusalem they were secure, to an earlier day when conditions were totally different, when there was no menace to their security from without and the Temple was being cleansed and reformed instead of blindly trusted in.

That Jeremiah later perceived that the Deuteronomic reform did not go deep enough is no proof that he did not support it at first.² Attention is frequently directed to the passage in which he denounces those who put their confidence in the law, and who said "We are wise, and we have the law of the Lord".³ To them he said "Behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely".⁴ Some have supposed that this reference was to another compilation which was then in progress,⁵ and it has been suggested that this may have been the first draft of what became the Priestly law.⁶ Others hold that the reference here also is to

¹ S. A. Cook (*C.A.H.* iii. 394) thinks the Scythian invasion facilitated the bid for independence of the western states. Cf. T. H. Robinson, *History of Israel*, i. 413: "in the disturbed state of politics they exercised a decisive influence, for it was they especially who swept away the last remnants of the organized Assyrian empire." J. F. McCurdy (*History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, ii (1896), 392) describes them as "a great disintegrating factor—one of the most influential in all Oriental history".

² Cf. N. K. Gottwald, *A Light to the Nations*, 1959, p. 356: "Perhaps the most interesting argument for some connection with the Deuteronomists is the fact that the clique of noblemen who were nearest to Jeremiah in the last years seem to have been sons of Shaphan, scribe under Josiah and chief figure in the reform of 621."

³ Jer. viii. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ So V. Ryssel, *J.E.* vii. 96b.

⁶ So G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 155. Skinner (*op. cit.* p. 104) says it might be argued that the reference is to a multifarious literary activity rather than the production of a single document. Cf. Volz, *Jeremia*, pp. 77. Similarly Rudolph (*Jeremia*, 2nd edn., pp. 57 f.) says this passage is not directed against Deuteronomy.

the law of Deuteronomy,¹ and that by this time Jeremiah's attitude to the Law Book had changed because his hopes of it had not been realized.² If this view is correct—and it seems to me to be probable—it would seem that at this time men were putting their confidence in a book, just as later they put it in the Temple, and instead of treating it as a summons to right living were regarding it as a manual of correct ordinances. They were bringing to the reformed religion the spirit that the great prophets had always condemned, the belief that correct ritual could dispense with a life of obedience to the will of God. The hopes with which he had supported the reformation were disappointed, and it is not to be surprised at that Jeremiah should change his attitude towards it. It was because his fundamental attitude to God and understanding of the real nature of religion had not

but is much more general. Streane (op. cit. p. 61) thinks it is more likely that Jeremiah here refers to the traditional directions, already committed to writing, which the priesthood claimed to possess for guidance in ritual. Peake (op. cit. i. 160) says: "It is more probable that he is referring to regulations, now no longer extant, which had been concocted by the scribes as Divine ordinances; possibly falsified copies of the Torah had been put in circulation;" while Steinmann (op. cit. pp. 132 f.) thinks the reference is to written interpretations of Deuteronomy which contradicted its substance (cf. T. H. Robinson, *History of Israel*, i. 428).

¹ So, e.g. Duhm, op. cit. p. 88; Cornill, op. cit. p. 116; Skinner, op. cit. pp. 103 f.; E. Bruston, in *La Bible du Centenaire*, ii. 474; Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, p. 495; A. Gelin, *S.D.B.* iv (1949), 865 ("Jérémie attaque visiblement une exploitation faite par des commentateurs qui faussent le sens original du Deutéronome en mettant l'accent uniquement sur tel de ses aspects, vraisemblablement cultuel, ou qui pensent que sa possession matérielle suffira à sauver"). A. Aeschmann, *Le prophète Jérémie*, 1959, p. 84, notes that Jer. viii. 8 is an allusion to Deut. iv. 6, and thinks that if Jeremiah's reference is not to Josiah's law, then it is to sacerdotal deviations from it. Cf. G. Ricciotti, op. cit. i. 400: "Syncretism did not yield to the reform of Josias without a struggle, and even after the discovery of the codex it must have tried to justify syncretistic usages by various depositions of the codex itself."

² So Skinner, op. cit. pp. 106 f.; T. H. Robinson, op. cit. i. 428; Paterson, op. cit. pp. 149 f. N. Schmidt (*E.B.* ii. 2367) says: "Before the end of Josiah's reign Jeremiah seems to have recognised the futility of a reform carried out by the strong arm of the state." Cf. C. F. Kent, *The Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets*, 1910, p. 186: "It is evident that Jeremiah was by no means satisfied with the work of those who endeavoured to present the whole duty of the nation and individual in the form of written laws." Hyatt (*I.B.* v. 883) says that Jeremiah was here objecting to the idea that God's will can be crystallized into a book.

changed that his attitude to the reform had changed. We have no right to put the prophets in strait jackets of our making.

I therefore come back to the view with which we started. It is based on the evidence of the book that has come down to us, and this is the only evidence of the life and thought of Jeremiah which we have. So far as the identification of the foe from the north at the beginning of his ministry is concerned, since the foe is not named in the book of Jeremiah any identification must be conjectural. But the Scythian conjecture is based on the only evidence we have of the activity of any foreign invaders in Palestine at the time of the prophet's call as given in the Bible. The other interpretations are not only conjectural, but are forced to discard from the book whatever is intractable. The Biblical dating of his call has to be altered wherever it is found, and the story of his advocacy of the covenant has to be excised as an addition or interpreted unnaturally of some covenant other than the Deuteronomic, and the hostility of his own family is left without any explanation. Instead of the pieces fitting together and making a whole, they are scattered to the winds, and we are offered a doctrinaire figure instead of the most human and tragic prophet of all the Old Testament story. He becomes a man who objected to independence when there was no alternative, who could not support the closing of the shrines to which he objected because every form of worship was not suppressed at the same time. That Jeremiah could enjoy a rich fellowship with God in the privacy of his own situation, even when he was in the guard house or the foul cistern, does not mean that he eschewed every form of public worship, and the fact that he believed religion could function even if the Temple should be destroyed does not mean that he thought it could only function then. He could denounce the new abuses that followed the reform as well as the abuses that preceded it, but there is no evidence that he preferred the days that preceded it, or failed to support the reform. His mission cost him infinite suffering, and he deserves sympathetic understanding from us,