

THE ARRANGEMENT OF JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES

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Evangelicalism can find value in a clarification of its thinking about the arrangement of Jeremiah's prophecies. Improved understanding is to be desired, both for the guidance of our own constituency, who find the unelaborated order of the Book perplexing,¹ and for the answering of our contemporary critics, who reiterate the hopelessness of discovering consistency within Jeremiah's pages.² The following study therefore attempts (i) to specify certain basic assumptions which distinguish evangelicalism's approach to the organization of the prophecy; (ii) to analyze the types of evidence by which its chapters may be dated and from these to formulate a chronological picture of their sequence; and (iii) to postulate an explanation for the present arrangement of the Book.

I. Evangelical Presuppositions

Because of their belief in the inerrancy of Jeremiah, evangelical scholars accept at face value the title its compiler has assigned to it, namely that this prophecy is "the words of Jeremiah" (1:1): his intent, that is, is to teach a uniformly Jeremianic authenticity, right up to the final 52nd chapter. With this agrees his declaration in 51:64, "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah,"³ The effect of this presupposition is indeed pervasive in distinguishing conservative from liberal interpretation; for, as expressed over a quarter of a century ago in *The Princeton Theological Review*.

There is scarcely a passage in the Book the authenticity of which has been allowed to pass without some form of challenge; nor is it without significance that it is on some of the richest and loftiest portions of Jeremiah's message that this process of dissection has been put into most active operation.⁴

A modern critic such as James Muilenburg can thus propose extended oral circularization with resultant expansions of Jeremiah's prophecies;⁵ and J. Philip Hyatt is able to devote five columns in *The Interpreter's Bible* to "The 'D' edition of Jeremiah, made about 550 B.C." and to other, even later additions.⁶ Evangelicals, however, not simply agree with Edward J. Young's observation, "We cannot see that there is any real evidence of interpolation;"⁷ we assert that the obvious intent of the inspired compiler forbids even a hypothetical entertainment of theories of interpolation, other than for the expressly non-Jeremianic historical appendix that constitutes chapter 52.

An evangelical insists furthermore upon the authenticity of each specific statement of date or of circumstance of composition, as these originally appeared in the completed autograph of Jeremiah's prophecies. An extreme liberal, in contrast (Robert H. Pfeiffer), assigns them no more validity than the Psalm titles which he rejects as simply irrelevant.⁸ Because of such high-handed skepticism, much recent discussion on the formation or the chronology of Jeremiah's oracles — as by H. G. May,⁹ John Bright,¹⁰ or J. P. Hyatt¹¹ — has but limited value for a Bible-believing interpreter. In particular, evangelicals are convinced of the historicity of the termini of Jeremiah's ministry, as these are stated in the Bible, namely, from the 13th year of Josiah (Jer 1:2), 626 B.C.,¹² "unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive" in the 11th year of Zedekiah (1:3), or 586 B.C.,¹³ thus assigning the prophet a full 40 years of ministry.

II. Chronological Data

Turning to the evidences found within the Book of Jeremiah, upon which the chronological arrangement of its prophecies are to be established, one discovers considerable data; but it may be subsumed under the following six categories. These categories are listed in a descending order of definiteness, or value; each, moreover, develops from an explicit principle of interpretation. The writer's (non-exhaustive) aim is to apply these principles to certain significantly representative or debated passages that appear within Jeremiah and, on the basis of this approach, to suggest an overall sequence for the Book.

1. Date Expressly Stated. For those who, on principle, are willing to accept the reliability of the dates that formed a part of Jeremiah's original complete book, such dates, when explicit to the particular year of a king's reign, constitute the most definite basis for establishing the arrangement of the oracles or events concerned. Some (e.g., 28:1, 39:1-2) are precise even to the exact month and day. Eleven such references, dating ten portions of the Book, appear, as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1:2 (and 25:3) | Jeremiah's call, 626 B.C. |
| 25:1, 36:1, 36:9, and 45:1 | To various parts of 604 |
| 28:1 and 51:59 | 593 |
| 32:1 | 587 |
| 39:2 and 41:1 | 586 |

25:1, and the other 604 references, take on new significance in light of the recently published Babylonian Chronicle,¹⁴ which confirms this period as the time of Nebuchadrezzar's occupation of the formerly Egyptian empire of Palestine and Syria (II Kgs 24:7), including Jerusalem (Dan 1:1-2, II Chron 36:6-7). In 36:9, Greek MSS B, (Aleph) suggest Jehoiakim's 8th year, rather than his 5th, as found in MT and Greek A, Q. The latter, however, deserves the preference; for when Jeremiah ordered the reading of his scroll (presumably late) in the king's 4th year (36:6), Baruch might have awaited a suitable occasion for some three months (36:22), into his 5th year, but hardly for 3 years, 3 months, into his 8th. But in 28:1, the LXX seems superior to MT,¹⁵ which further defines Zedekiah's 4th year with the contradictory phrase, "the beginning of the reign"; and in 27:1, to read with most of the Hebrew, "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim," is simply incorrect: one must either follow three variant Hebrew MSS, the Syriac, and the Arabic and substitute Zedekiah for Jehoiakim (cf. 27:3, 12, which specify Zedekiah; and 28:1's reference to "the same year," of Zedekiah) or, better, omit with LXX the entire verse as an erroneous scribal duplication of 26:1, since both chapters 27 and 28 seem datable by content to the year 593.¹⁶ All the other expressly stated dates of Jeremiah are validated by LXX and appear to rest on solid textual grounds.

2. Historical Connection with Datable Events. A "second best" method is to employ Jeremiah's allusions to other identifiable occurrences for the dating of his own words and acts. These range from contemporaneous allusions to points as precise as Nebuchadrezzar's final siege of Jerusalem (21:4, 34:1), datable from Jan. 15, 588 B.C.¹⁷ (cf. 39:1, 52:4), down to oracles such as those concerning the exiled craftsmen of Jerusalem (24:1), the exact dates of which are unknown, but which still probably belong within the year 597. They would not include statements like 14:1, "The word of Yahweh that come to Jeremiah concerning the drought," since this last is an undatable phenomenon.¹⁸ But when 13:18 admonishes "the queen-mother" to humble herself, it presumably relates to the deportation of Jehoia-

ohin and his mother in 597 as described in 22:26 and II Kings 24:12;¹⁹ and when 34:22 and 37:5, 11 speak of Nebuchadrezzar's temporary abandonment of the siege of Jerusalem, these chapters may then be correlated with the period of the diverting attack of Pharaoh Hophra, later in the year 588.

The value, indeed, of such allusions may be limited by the indefiniteness, either of the point of reference or of Jeremiah's relation to it. Two highly debated examples of the former concern Jeremiah's allusions to "proclaiming the covenant" (11:6) and to the "evil out of the north" (1:15ff). About the covenant, Young "is not certain [that Jeremiah means Josiah's reformation] but it may be that he does";²⁰ Pfeiffer, on the other hand, expresses no doubt about its equation with the events of 621 B.C.²¹ As to the identity of the northern invaders — this "nation from far . . . mighty . . . ancient . . . a nation whose language thou knowest not" (5:15) — its mounted advance, rapaciousness, and general ability to inspire terror (5:16-18, 6:22-24) suggest the barbaric Scythian horseman whose incursion westward dates to 626, the very period of this early ministry of Jeremiah. Yet on the other hand his anticipations of chariots, siege operations, and the taking of Judah into captivity by those once her friends (4:13, 30; 5:18-19; 6:6) suggest the Babylonians.²² Liberal scholars generally connect these prophecies with Scythia, though claiming that they were later revised to fit Babylon.²³ Hyatt, however, goes so far in his pro-Babylonianism as to reject the whole overt structure of Jeremiah: to postpone by 20 years the prophet's call: and to assign his earliest ministry to the reign of Jehoiakim with its background of Babylonian ascendancy.²⁴ But Jeremiah 1-6, like so many other Biblical predictions, may simply illustrate "prophetic telescoping": parts of it alluding to the immediate Scythian terror, but other parts predicting a captivity, later explicitly defined as Babylonian (25:9).

An example of imprecise connection between the prophet and the datable event is Jeremiah's message against Egypt (46). 46:2 states that the Egyptian army had been at Carchemish, which was in 605 B.C., but at a time indefinitely before this chapter. It would seem unlikely, however, for his oracle to have been much more than a year after that event (see next section). But when the interval becomes specified, as in 42:7 — a revelation exactly ten days after 42:6, which in turn is closely dated to the autumn of 586 B.C. (40:1, 41:1) — the uncertainty ceases, though the method employed in such interpretation overlaps the next category:

3. *Logical Relationship to Other Portions of the Book.* This principle may be described as a working from the known to the unknown. Two major blocks of material that involve this approach are Jeremiah's prophecies to the nations, 604 B.C., and to Zedekiah, 588-586. The former are described in such a way as to belong, not simply to a period subsequent to the battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C. (46:2), but also to the prophetic summary of 25:17-26, which dates precisely to the following year, namely the 4th of Jehoiakim and the 1st of Nebuchadrezzar (25:1). 25:13 speaks, furthermore, of bringing upon Babylon "all that is written in this book," thus anticipating chapters 50-51. The LXX may hence be assumed to have preserved Jeremiah's original order, for it incorporates his oracles to the nations at this very point.²⁵ S. R. Driver wrote concerning chapters 46-48,

It is probable that all these prophecies belong to the 4th year of Jehoiakim, and reflect the profound impression which Nebuchadnezzar's victory at Carchemish produced upon the prophet;²⁶ and the same circumstances of composition may be concluded, even for the 50th and 51st chapters. Though often criticized as necessarily subsequent to 586 and to the destruction of the temple,²⁷ they now appear as wholly applicable to the known

situation of 604 B.C.²⁸: the temple is in need of vengeance (50:28, 51:11), having been entered by strangers (51:51); Judah is devoured (50:7), by Nebuchadrezzar (50:17, 51:34); and there already exists a captivity (50:33) that will some day leave Babylon (50:4, 28).²⁹

The interrelationship sustained between Jeremiah's various oracles to Zedekiah becomes apparent from simple tabulation:

- 34:1-10 Jeremiah initiates contact with Zedekiah (v.2), somewhat hopefully (v.4), and Zedekiah frees the slaves (v.9)
- 21 Zedekiah sends to Jeremiah; hopeless response (v.7)³⁰
- 34:11-22 Reenslavement (v.11) when the siege is temporarily lifted (v.22)
- 37 During the lifted siege (vv.7, 11), Jeremiah is imprisoned, first at Jonathan's (v.15), and then in the court or the guard (v.21)
- 32-33 In the court of the guard (32:2); a 2nd revelation in this court (33:1)
- 38 Final court of guard situation before the city's fall (v.28)
- 39:15-18 In the court: a response to 38:7-13
- 39:1-14 The city falls and Zedekiah is taken

4. *Dating within a Given Period.* Jeremiah's allusions to the reigns of named monarchs sometimes provides a degree of definiteness equal to his express dates, depending of course on the king and the duration of his power. 22:24 specifies Coniah, whose three month reign permits a dating range of only from December 598 to March 597.³¹ Yet 3:6 reads, "Yahwen said unto me in the days of Josiah the king . . .", which could, therefore, have occurred at any point in the 31 years of Josiah's rule. References in 26:1 and 49:34 to "the beginning of the reign"³² probably refer to the accession years of the monarchs concerned, namely 608 and 597,³³ though this is yet to be established. Again, the oracle 22:1-19 speaks not only of Jehoahaz as already in Egyptian exile (v.11) but also of Jehoiakim as his worthless successor (v.18); it cannot therefore be assigned to the reign of the former³⁴ but must rather be located at an early point in that of the latter.

5. *General Tone.* The principle is a valid one, that the circumstances of a passage's composition may be inferred on the basis of its overall suitability to some known historical context. This method has, of course, been abused by liberal scholars who would exalt it to a position of supreme importance and, by subjective feelings for general tone, overrule express statements of date and authorship, as these have appeared in Biblical texts. Employed, however, under the control of the more definite criteria already enumerated, it does assist in assigning chronological position, particularly for the first 20 chapters of Jeremiah's prophecy. As noted above, 3:6 places his earlier revelations within the total reign of Josiah; Laetsch then specifically relates the thought of 3:4. "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me," to the period of his reformation of 621 B.C.,³⁵ though it could with equal propriety, and with a closer relationship to chapter 1, be associated with his earlier reform which started in 627 (II Chron 34:3b).

Jeremiah's famed Temple Sermon follows in chapters 7-10. Liberal interpretation generally treats it as a doubly recorded story of the message of chapter 26, occurring under Jehoiakim in 608 B.C.³⁶ But while Young's *Introduction* at first proposes such an equation,³⁷ it subsequently endorses 7-10 as an independent composition, addressed to those who made but an outward show of adopting Josiah's religious reforms.³⁸ Specifically, in the light of such idolatries as it condemns in 7:18, 31, Jeremiah's Temple Sermon may have followed the king's reform of 627 but have preceded his great reformation of 621; for after this later event the chronicler could say of Josiah's subjects, "All his days they departed not from follow-

ing Yaweh" (II Chron 34:13), at least, Keil adds, with "no open idolatry."³⁹ Keil's qualification is significant, because it leaves the door open for Jeremiah's later disappointment and disillusionment in respect to Josiah's reforms. J. G. S. Thomson, while assigning chapters 1-20 to Josianic times,⁴⁰ yet suggests that "The prophet has left no reference to the last twelve years of Josiah's reign."⁴¹ But von Orelli's depreciation of Judah's repentance during this period as "on the surface, and outward, and done to please the king,"⁴² may well account for the bitter denunciations by Jeremiah that appear in 11:9—ch. 20.⁴³ At the same time, his allusions to Judah's general peace and prosperity (13:16, 14:13, 20:7-8) suggest the era of 620-608, the prophet's initial prediction of Babylonian captivity coming only at the close of this unit of his book (20:4).

Using a similar argument from general tone, Young makes the following assignment of two later chapters: "30 and 31 are not dated, but their content show that the deportation [of 597] had already occurred, hence they probably belong with the messages uttered during Zedekiah's reign."⁴⁴ But these examples lead into a final principle, namely that of

6. *Successiveness in the Text.* While it is true that deviations of Jeremiah from strict chronological order render this principle less operative than in almost any other portion of Scripture, temporal sequence yet remains as a distinctly observable feature within the Book (cf. Chs. 1-6 or 37-44). Both for major blocks of material and for smaller chapter units it may, lacking evidence to the contrary, be assumed as within the mind of the compiler. Among the former, occur Jeremiah's earlier prophecies. Thus 2:1 follows directly upon chapter 1, with the next clear break in Jeremiah's message occurring only at 7:1. Josianic dates, moreover, appear in 1:2 and 3:6 which, as Young observes, "form an integral part of the section."⁴⁵ Chapters 11 and 12 continue this sequence beyond 621, with 12:6 building directly on 11:21. The A.S.V. indeed commences new units at chapters 14, 16, 18, and 19; and many would transfer these to a later period, under Jehoia-kim.⁴⁶ Yet Young calls attention to the way in which 16-17 belongs with the previous two chapters;⁴⁷ and Keil brings together the whole of 2-20, as one Josianic unit: all the messages being stated in the same general terms, while "the tone and subject remain identical throughout"⁴⁸ (cf. Sec. 5, above).

Another such major block of successive prophecies appears in Jeremiah's oracles to the nations, 46-51. The LXX, confessedly, presents a widely divergent sequence of chapters and, occasionally, of paragraphs within these chapters. But most interpreters, even while preferring the LXX's position for the whole block (with ch. 25), yet acknowledge the Hebrew order within the six chapters as agreeing more closely with the prophetic summary which in is 25:26, and as probably original.⁴⁹ Yet it is this Hebrew order which is better organized, moving as Pfeiffer notes by ordered geography from west to north to east.⁵⁰ Likewise, in the smaller units, 23 belongs with 24 (23:2 referring to the same exile that is dated in 24:1 to 597); and 30-31 attaches directly to 29 (cf. the return from captivity described in 30:3 as the natural sequel to the deportation which is noted in 29:2). Jeremiah's great Messianic and New Testament passages (23:4-6; 30:31; 31:15, 31-34; and 33:15-22, cf. 32:1) all thus appear under the one and the same king, Zedekiah, last monarch of Judah, and perhaps even in compensation for him!

By applying, then, each of the six principles (where possible) to the Book of Jeremiah, one may obtain a chart such as the following for the:

CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES

| Date: | Jeremiah: | Criterion for assignment: | Notes: |
|---|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| I. JOSIAH (639-608 B.C.) | | | |
| 626 | 1 | #1, 1:2 and 25:3, 13th yr of Josiah | Oct. 627-Oct. 626 B.C. |
| | 2-6 | #2, 5:16-17a, 6:22-24; #4, 3:6, Josiah | Scythian raids, 628-626 |
| 626-621 | 7-10 | #5, 7:18, 31, heaven-goddess: #6 | Idolatry, pre-621 |
| 621 | 11:1-8 | #2, 11:3, 6, Josiah's reform | Covenant, II Kgs 23:2 |
| 620-608 | 11:9-13:17 | #3, 11:10, post-621 disillusionment; #6 | Josiah's reform cools, 11:9 |
| | 14-20 | #5, 14:13, 20:7-8, false assurance | Still peacetime, 14:13 |
| II. JEHOIAKIM (608-598) | | | |
| 608 | 22:1-19 | #2, 22:10; #4, v. 18; #5, v. 4 hopeful | Josiah dead, Jehoahaz |
| | 26 | #4, 26:1, beginning of the reign | exiled, Jehoiakim king |
| 604 | 36:1-8 | #1, 36:1, Baruch writes Jer, 1st ed. | The 21 chapters to date |
| | 25 | #1, 25:1, 1st of Nebu.-Apr. 604-3 | 4th of J.-Oct. 605-4 |
| | 46-51 (ex 49:34-9) | #2, 46:2, post-Carchemish, 605; #3: | LXX has at 25:13 |
| | 45 | #1, 45:1, after B's 1st writing, 4th yr | But before reading it, 36:9 |
| | 36:9-22 | #1, 36:9, 22, 5th yr, 9th mo.-Dec. 604 | 2nd ed. adds 9 chs. more |
| 600 | 35 | #2, 35:11, danger; #4, 35:1, J-kim | Syrians, II Kgs 24:2 |
| III. JEHOIACHIN (Dec. 598 - March 597) | | | |
| 598-597 | 22:20-30 | #4, 22:24, reign of Coniah | C=Jehoiachin |
| | 13:18-27 | #2, 13:18, queen mother=22:26 | 13:20 parallels 22:22 |
| IV. ZEDEKIAH (597-586) | | | |
| 597 | 23-24 | #2, 24:1; #5, 23:2, same exile as 24 | Soon after Jeconiah's |
| | 29-31 | #2, 29:2, same; #5-6, 30:3 follows | carrying away, March 97 |
| | 49:34-39 | #4, 49:34, beginning of the reign | Accession yr, pre-Oct. |
| 593 | 27-28 | #1, 28:1, #4, 27:3, 12 (vs. 27:1), Zed; #5 | LXX om 27:1 (MT crpt) |
| | 51:59-64 | #1, 51:59, 4th yr of Zedekiah | Supplement, on Babylon |
| 588 | 34:1-10 | #2, 34:7, siege, Jan. 15, 588, on | Dated 39:1, 52:4 |
| | 21 | #2, 21:4, siege; #3, Jer. still free | 34:4-5 before 21:5 |
| | 34:11-22 | #2, 34:22, Nebuchadrezzar leaves | Reenslavement, 34:10-11 |
| | 37 | #2, 37:5, N. leaves; #3, 37:15, 21 | Jer. 1st imprisoned |
| 587 | 32-33 | #1, 32:1, 18th yr of N. Apr. 587-6 | J in prison, 32:2, 33:1 |
| 586 | 38 | #3, 38:28, down to Jerusalem's fall | So near end of siege |
| | 39:15-18 | #3, 39:16, a response to Ebed-Melech | Result of 38:7-13 |
| | 39:1-14 | #1, 39:2, city fell July 19, 586 | Cf. 52:5-7 |
| V. GEDALIAH and after (July 586 B.C. and on) | | | |
| 586 | 40-43:6 | #1, 41:1, 7th month, Gedaliah dead | Month began Oct. 7 |
| | 43:7—ch. 44 | #3, 43:7, cf 42:7, 10 days later | In Egypt |
| Post-561 | 52 | #2, 52:30, after 582, v. 31, after 561 | 52 not by Jeremiah, 51:64 |

III. Present Arrangement

The above sequence of prophecies, however, is not the arrangement that appears in Jeremiah today, for which some account must be given. Liberalism possesses a facile explanation: namely, to attribute the Book's existing dislocations to its many, non-authentic additions and to post-Jeremianic redaction.⁵¹ Others would discern a certain topical distinction, especially between chapters 1-25, against the nation of Judah, and 26-45, concerning the personal affairs of Jeremiah,⁵² 46-51 then being either treated as a third division, on the foreign nations, or restored to its connection with chapter 25. Variations on the above scheme speak of 1-25 as oracles and of 26-45 as narratives;⁵³ of the former mainly as poetry, and the latter as prose;⁵⁴ or, of the words of Jeremiah, versus the Biography of Jeremiah, the latter presumably by Baruch and limited to 608-586 B.C.⁵⁵ Little, however, appears to be gained by such divisions (except to account for the position of Baruch's

private encouragement, standing by itself as chapter 45, at the end). To the contrary, biography shows up in chapter 20⁵⁶ within the supposedly oracular half of the book; and Jeremicanic words, in 27 and 30-31;⁵⁷ John Bright specifically notes that "prose sermons . . . are found interspersed among the poetic oracles of chs. 1-25, 30-31";⁵⁸ while the whole purportedly biographical section of Jeremiah has been explained away as consisting simply of introductions to, and consequences from, the sermonic words of the prophet.⁵⁹

More fruitful would appear to be an at-least-partially chronological explanation; it was even hinted at above, by Pfeiffer's limitation of 26-45 to the latter half of the prophet's ministry. In this vein, Davis defines 2-33 as "prediction of the approaching judgment" and 34-44 as "history of the infliction of the judgment"⁶⁰; and Raven distinguishes 1-38 as extending to the fall of Jerusalem and 39-45 (sic) as after it.⁶¹ These interpretations, however, must be combined with an appreciation for the purpose of the Book, as this is described within its own pages: namely, to lead God's people to repentance and to reconciliation with Him (36:3, 7). Such parenetic motivation would then seem to account for the repetitions (sometimes non-chronological), which Young proposes as a key to Jeremiah's arrangement,⁶² and, ultimately, for the stated, successive editions of the Book, upon the history of which it would appear that all explanations for the final order of its prophecies must be based.

The inscriptionation of Jeremiah proceeded through at least four known stages or editions. First, in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, God directed the prophet to write in a book-scroll (dictated to Baruch) "all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel . . . and all the nations . . . even unto this day" (36:2). On the basis of our previous chronological synthesis, this 1st edition would seem to have included Jeremiah 1-13:17 (except for the later superscription in 1:3), 14-20, 22:1-19, and 26, or approximately 21 chapters, and all in chronological order.⁶³ Possibly to be excluded are certain more comprehensive (non-condemnatory) statements, such as Jeremiah's "confessions."⁶⁴

The 2nd edition, made in the 5th year of Jehoiakim and datable to the close of 604 B.C. (36:9, 22) embraced "all the former words that were in the first roll" (v.28), plus "many like words" (v.32). These latter would have included the prophecies communicated to Jeremiah during the preceding year (25, with 46-51:58 (except 49:34-39), 36, and 45) along with such other messages (e.g., his confessions) as might seem to motivate Judah to "present their supplication before Yahweh, and return every one from his evil way" (36:7). Keil therefore writes, "We may say with perfect confidence that nothing of importance would be omitted from it."⁶⁵ the total, that is, of the approximately 29 chapters, out of the Book's eventual 52, that had been so far revealed to the prophet. The more personal additions to 1-20 would, naturally, have been inserted at their proper historical points; but among the 604 materials chapter 25 (with 46-51) would seem to have been inserted, non-chronologically, before chapter 26. Explanation may be found in the former's "more comprehensive" character,⁶⁶ its summarization of Jeremiah's disregarded preaching, which was then so forcefully illustrated by the concrete events of 608, four years before. Chapters 36 and 45 then function as a conclusion, to describe the writing of the prophet's scroll and to give further emphasis to Judah's impending judgment. This 2nd edition covered well over half of Jeremiah's ministry⁶⁷ and, unlike the 1st edition, which Jehoiakim had burned, survived to "form the basis of the collected edition of all Jeremiah's prophecies."⁶⁸

A 3rd edition would next have been produced, perhaps in stages, but more plausibly at one later point, near the close of Jeremiah's ministry. In any event, an extreme "piece-meal" theory of immediate composition and independent incorporation into the existing Book of Jeremiah appears unlikely: chapter 21 seems never to have stood between the two, chronologically separated halves of 34; nor 32-33, between 37 and 38. Furthermore, if the Book's title and subscription mean what they say, namely, "The words of Jeremiah" (1:1, 51:64), then everything between these two references must not simply have come into being prior to Jeremiah's death, but also have been produced under his direct inspiration and guidance. Graybill properly notes the Book's oracles as Jeremianic; but his willingness to concede "that the narratives, if not dictated by the prophet (they are usually in the third person), were composed by Baruch,"⁶⁹ appears injudicious. Old Testament prophets not infrequently referred to themselves impersonally (cf. the alternation of the 1st and 3rd persons in ch. 32); and Raven's explanation seems closer to Jeremiah's own claim, "that the whole, with the exception of chapter 52 and possibly certain brief insertions, was the work of that prophet."⁷⁰ As directed by his master, Baruch might possibly have "collected and edited" the Book;⁷¹ but both the analogy of the known origin of the 1st and 2nd editions and the introductory statements that accompany Jeremiah's later chapters forbid the standard critical conclusion of independent composition by, rather than dictation to, Baruch.⁷³ Pfeiffer and Hyatt go so far as to posit an independent biography, written by Baruch, in chronological order.⁷⁴ Conservatives, however, have well observed that the portion concerned does not constitute a connected history and "does not seem to have been written for biographical purposes."⁷⁵ On the contrary, the very order in which the later prophecies now appear so suggests Jeremiah's own evangelistic purpose in respect to his people that Young concludes: "Even the arrangement of the prophecies may be due to the suggestion of Jeremiah, although actually carried out by Baruch."⁷⁶

Like its predecessors, the 3rd edition of Jeremiah stood in a generally chronological order (cf. 37-44),⁷⁷ though with considerable regard to subject matter.⁷⁸ Superfluous explanations, such as Hyatt's that chapter 21 was inserted between 20 and 22 because of the mention of "Passhur" in both 20:1 and 21:1⁷⁹ stand self-condemned: these Passhurs were different men, with different functions! Rather, as noted by Keil, 21 forms a unit with 22-24 in depicting the terrible corruption of Judah's leaders.⁸⁰ Similarly, chapter 26, on Jeremiah's initial persecution by Jehoiakim in 608, introduces a unit of eleven chapters (26-36) which Laetsch entitles, "The Prophet's Faithfulness in Spite of Opposition and Persecution."⁸¹ For further explanation, see the following chart.

Our own Book, the 4th edition, if it may be so entitled, consists simply of the above, with the addition of a final, 52nd chapter, not by Jeremiah. Its apologetic function (see below) serves to complete an:

EXPLANATION FOR THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT OF JEREMIAH

I. FIRST EDITION: All Jeremiah's prophecies against Israel and the nations before 604 B.C. (Jer. 36:1-2), but probably not including his "confessions":

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|------------|----------|
| 1-13:17 | Wholly chronological: | 1:4-19 | 17:14-18 |
| 14-20 | Josiah to | 10:23-24 | 18:18-12 |
| 22:1-19 | Jehoiakim's | 11:18—12:6 | 20:7-18 |
| 26 | 1st year | 15:10-21 | |
| | | 17:9-11 | |

II. SECOND EDITION: All the above (36:28) plus "many like words": the prophecies of 604 (cf 36:9), with other non-condemnatory messages (e.g., the confessions, inserted chronologically)

Resulting edition: 1-13:17
14-20

| | | |
|------------|---|--------------------|
| 25 | Placed before 26 as an introd to Jehoiakim | 22:1-19 |
| 46-51:58 | (except 49:34-39) Originally with 25 | 25 (with 46:51)-26 |
| 36:1-8: 45 | The personal word to Baruch put after history | 36 |
| 36:9-22 | Last public act under Jehoiakim; Jer. hides | 45 |

III. THIRD EDITION: the totality of Jeremiah's own work: the above, plus his prophecies that appeared after 604. Some, as logical supplements to previous oracles, were added to their respective chapters as follows:

22:20-30 On Coniah, as successor to Josiah, Jehoahaz, & Jehoiakim, preceding 49:34-39 Vs. Elam, like the 4 preceding similar short oracles vs. nations
51:59-64 Instructions about the previously revealed oracle vs. Babylon

Others, chs. 37-44, forming a historical survey of Jeremiah's acts under Zedekiah and after (cf 37:1), were inserted after 36, his last contact with Jehoiakim.

The remaining 8 sections, revealed in the following order, were inserted in their present positions because of subject matter, perhaps for reasons as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 35 | Faithful Rechabites, as introducing Judah's disregard for God (35:15) shown in 36, and in contrast to the faithless slavers of 34 (cf below) |
| 13:18-27 | Further words on pride (cf vv 15 and 18) causing captivity (17, with 19) |
| 23-24 | Fitting supplement to 22 (corrupt leaders & the house of David) and preamble to 25 (the 2 baskets of figs, 24, introducing Babylon) |
| 29-31 & } 27-28 } | Continuations on Jeremiah's persecution, ch. 26: first as opposed at home (27-28) and then by false prophets at Babylon (29) |
| 21 | Further data on the overthrow of Jerusalem (cf 21:17 with 20:4) and introductory to his condemnations of corrupt kings & leaders (22-23) |
| 34 | The next step after 27 (5 yrs before) in the opposition to Jeremiah |
| 32-33 | Placed after 31 (part of the 27-31 complex) as a symbolic action and message to illustrate the restoration predicted in 30-31. |

IV. THE BOOK COMPLETED, with a non-Jeremianic (51:64) supplement, ch. 52, confirming the fulfillment of the prophet's oracles against Jerusalem, and derived from II Kings and/or other historical sources, after 561 B.C. (52:27, cf II Kgs 25:27; some 25 yrs after Jeremiah)

FOOTNOTES

1. Popular study-guide statements such as J.G.S.S. Thomson's, "No principle is discernable . . . The disorderly arrangement might be evidence of primitivism," can hardly encourage the average reader; Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *The Biblical Expositor* (Philadelphia: Holman, 1962), II:165.
2. Thus the new Torch Bible Commentary commences with the words, "No one can pretend that the Book of Jeremiah is an orderly book," H. Cunliffe-Jones, *The Book of Jeremiah* (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 15.
3. Cf. Hyatt's acceptance of this clause for establishing the character of ch. 52, "The Book of Jeremiah, Introduction and Exegesis," G. A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon, c. 1956), V:1137. Its omission in LXX, immediately before ch. 52, may be due to parablepsis from εως ετραθηα . . . (cf. 31 [Heb. 48] :47, Qmg) to οντος . . . 52:l.
4. Alexander Stewart, "Jeremiah — the Man and his Message," 26 (1926), 37.
5. "Jeremiah the Prophet," G. A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1961), II:831.
6. *Op. cit.*, V:788-791, though note the sharp criticism of this approach in John Bright, "The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," *JBL* 70 (1951), 15-29.
7. *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1960), p. 245; cf. Merrill F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), p. 327: "The whole idea of a nucleus of tradition subsequently expanded is without foundation in fact. The critics have no valid substitute for Jeremianic authenticity of the prophecy."
8. *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Rev. ed.; New York, Harper 1948), pp. 504, 529.
9. "The Chronology of Jeremiah's Oracles," *JNES* 4 (1935), 217-227; "Toward an Objective Approach to the Book of Jeremiah: the Biographer," *JBL* 61 (1942), 139-155.
10. *Loc. cit.*
11. "The Deuteronomic Edition of Jeremiah," *Vanderbilt Studies in the Humanities* (1951), 71-95.
12. Technically, this could be any time after Oct. 627 B.C., following Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 157, and chart opp. p. 75.
13. Keil accounts for "no notice of his further labors among the ruins of the kingdom and in Egypt (ch. xl-xliv.), because these stood in a mere subordinate relation to his principal vocation," *Manual of Historico-Critical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884), I:351; cf. his further discussion, I:351-353, and his *Prophecy of Jeremiah* (*ibid.*, 1889), I:28.
14. Cf. the writer's article, *Bulletin of ETS* 1:1 (1958), 14-18.
15. And Qmg, sub * cf. Hyatt, *op. cit.*, V:1014.
16. So *ibid.*, V:1010.
17. Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology, 626 B.C. — A.D. 45* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 26.
18. Cf. Laetsch's listing of known droughts, *Bible Commentary, Jeremiah* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1952), p. 143.
19. John D. Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible* (4th rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1927), p. 366.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 246.
21. *Op. cit.*, p. 495.
22. Hence the preference of Young, *op. cit.*, p. 257, and other evangelicals for this identification.
23. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 494-495, 500; Muilenburg, *op. cit.*, II:826.
24. *Jeremiah, the Prophet of Courage and Hope* (New York: Abingdon, 1958), pp. 35-36.
25. Though Pfeiffer may be more correct in considering all of ch. 25 as an introduction to 46-51, *op. cit.*, p. 487; cf. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 264. Keil's criticism of the LXX as "willful alteration of the original order," *Introd.*, I:350, seems unfounded.
26. *Loc. cit.*
27. Cf. even Young's hesitancy in this regard, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255.
28. Cf. Keil, *Introd.*, I:345-348, and the aforementioned *Bulletin of ETS* 1:1 (1950)
29. This last prophecy indicates Jeremiah's ability to project himself into the future. So rather than relate the preceding reference to the Danielic deportation of 605, one may account for it similarly.
30. Pfeiffer would place 20 before 34, *op. cit.*, p. 498.
31. Young's description of 22:24-30 as "uttered during the reign of Zedekiah," *op. cit.*, p. 252,

- does not square with Jehoiachin's captivity as still future, v. 25. Hyatt also includes 22:20-23: "The date is probably 598, near the time of Jehoiachin's surrender, *IB* V:984.
32. LXX's omission of this phrase in 49:34 (except for MS Q) may be accounted for by the transposition of this section to its position immediately following 25:13. On the spurious character of the phrase in 27:1 and 28:1, see above, notes 15 and 16.
 33. Hyatt's observations, *IB* V:1003-1004, but with Thiele's dates, *loc. cit.*
 34. As implied by Young, *op. cit.*, p. 246, though corrected, p. 251; cf. Laetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
 36. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 484, 495-496; Muilenburg, *op. cit.*, II:826.
 37. Pp. 246-247.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 251; cf. p. 252, which speaks of 26's delivery in the temple as "like 7-10."
 39. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, The Books of the Chronicles* (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1950), p. 495.
 40. Except 12:7-13, 27, "Jeremiah," J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary* (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962), p. 610.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 606.
 42. C. von Orelli, "Jeremiah," James Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), III:1589.
 43. Except for 13:18-27, a later prophecy, see above, Sec. 2.
 44. *Op. cit.*, p. 253.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 250; cf. Keil, *Jeremiah*, I:21.
 46. Young would grant this as a possibility, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
 47. *Loc. cit.*
 48. *Jeremiah*, I:22; Davis, similarly, gives Josiah 2-6 and, probably, 7-12, 14-20, *op. cit.*, p. 366.
 49. E.g., Cunliffe-Jones, *op. cit.* p. 15.
 50. *Op. cit.*, p. 487.
 51. Hyatt, *IB*, V:787.
 52. Thus Muilenburg, *op. cit.*, II:832; or Young, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
 53. Thus F. Cawley, "Jeremiah," Francis Davidson, ed., *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 610; or John Graybill, "Jeremiah," Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison, ed., *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1962), p. 658.
 54. Cunliffe-Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
 55. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 484, 500, 502; cf. Muilenburg, *loc. cit.*
 56. Which Hyatt arbitrarily assigns to the Memoires of Baruch, *IB*, V:788.
 57. Cunliffe-Jones thus excinds 30-31 as a poetic intrusion in the biography, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
 58. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
 59. Von Orelli, *op. cit.*, III:1590.
 60. *Op. cit.*, p. 365.
 61. *Old Testament Introduction* (New York: Revell, c. 1910), p. 203.
 62. *Op. cit.*, p. 249.
 63. Von Orelli, *loc. cit.*
 64. Listed below on chart, cf. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 497; Graybill, *op. cit.*, p. 658. The result, however, would not have been unmanagable, vs. Hyatt's demand for a much shorter work *IB*, V:787. Keil too shows undue skepticism about recreating the contents of this 1st edition, *Introd.*, I:349-350.
 65. *Jeremiah*, I:27.
 66. Keil, *Introd.*, I:340; contrast Thomson's uncertainty as to its contents, *op. cit.*, 610.
 67. Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
 68. Keil, *Jer.*, I:26; so also von Orelli, *loc. cit.*, and S. R. Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), p. xlvii.
 69. *Op. cit.*, p. 412.
 70. *Op. cit.*, p. 200.
 71. Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
 72. E.g., 42:4, "Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them . . ." cf. 42:9; 43:1, 10.
 73. Cf. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 501.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 502; Hyatt, *IB*, V:788.
 75. Von Orelli, *loc. cit.*
 76. *Op. cit.*, p. 244.
 77. Keil, *Jer.*, I:25.
 78. *Loc. cit.*; cf. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 610.
 79. *IB*, V:976.
 80. *Introd.*, I:339; cf. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 365, and Young, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
 81. *Op. cit.* p. 217; cf. Hyatt, *IB*, V:1014 on 30-32 as a continuation of the preceding, and Laetsch's reference to 30-33 as the unified "Book of Consolation, *op. cit.*, p. 239; the two opening chapters being more general and comprehensive," Keil, *Introd.*, I:341.