

SHELLEY L. BIRDSONG

# The Last King(s) of Judah

*Forschungen  
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe*

89

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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2. Reihe

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Shelley L. Birdsong

# The Last King(s) of Judah

Zedekiah and Sedekias  
in the Hebrew and Old Greek Versions of  
Jeremiah 37(44):1–40(47):6

Mohr Siebeck

SHELLEY L. BIRDSONG, born 1982; 2004 BA in Biblical Studies; 2008 MA in Hebrew Bible and Philosophy of Religion; 2014 PhD in Hebrew Bible; 2014–15 Visiting Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Azusa Pacific University (CA); 2015–17 Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at North Central College (IL).

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For Joshua B. Long



## Preface

This volume is a revised doctoral dissertation presented to the faculty at Claremont Graduate University in February 2014. It began as a short research paper for a Jeremiah course taught by my advisor, Marvin Sweeney. It then became the basis for a major paper, one qualifying exam, and, finally, my dissertation. After so many years with Zedekiah and Sedekias, I am quite pleased that their stories are being published with Mohr Siebeck.

I could not have written or published this work without the endless encouragement and assistance from my mentors, colleagues, family, and friends. My debt begins with my teachers – the faculty at Azusa Pacific University, Claremont School of Theology, and Claremont Graduate University, where I was privileged to study over the years. Throughout my education, I was challenged and stretched by their wisdom. In particular, I have been honored to learn alongside Bill Yarchin, John Culp, Steve Wilkens, Matt Hauge, Bruce Baloiian, Chris Flannery, Jack Verheyden, Patrick Horn, and Ryan Carhart. But above all, I must pay homage to my advisor and dissertation committee. Marvin Sweeney cemented my feet in the foundation of historical criticism, rooted my mind in the depths of biblical theology, and turned my heart toward scholarship that makes a difference. He has been a true and dependable *Doktorvater*. Tammi Schneider made me fall in love with feminism and the history of the ancient Near East. Though I was not fortunate enough to utilize the former in my dissertation, the latter was invaluable to my theories regarding the development of the book of Jeremiah over time. Carleen Mandolfo has played a crucial role in my dialogic investigations of Zedekiah/Sedekias through the eyes of Bakhtin. Finally, Kristin De Troyer patiently guided me through the complexities of textual criticism and the Greek versions of the Bible. She was also a faithful mentor and scholarly guide.

This monograph also owes its completion to my fellow colleagues in Claremont. My research and writing have been substantially improved by their sharp minds, insightful feedback, and consistent encouragement. A special thanks to my dear classmates in the Hebrew Bible program – Nick Pumphrey, Nancy Meyer, Gavrielle Blank, Jacob Rennaker, Tyler Mayfield, Koog Hong, Lucas Schulte, Leah Rediger Schulte, Chris Clarke, Tricia Miller, Beau Harris, Soo Kim, Seongeun Jeong, Emmanuel Ukaegbu-Onuoha, Pam



Nourse, Nick Pappani, and Ben Laie. In addition, I could not have survived without my life-sustaining writing partner, Debbie Ahlberg, who reminded me of Anne Lamott's quirky mantras every week.

Next, I will forever be indebted to my family and circle of friends, whose prayers and support kept me afloat when I seemed to be drowning in my research. I must especially recognize my parents, Jeff and Brenda Birdsong, who instilled in me the love of reading and inquiry. My gratitude also goes to the Long family for their compassion and unremitting belief in me and God's faithfulness. Of course, I cannot forget my cheerleading section: the "Ideal" women of Cornerstone Bible Church; the women at APU including Marilyn Moore, Kelley Thomas, Laura Webb, Sheree Morgan, Kay Smith, Jacquelyn Winston, and Karen Winslow; Lisa Maldonado; and the Robison, Lazo, Bunn, and Fuller families. Lastly, and most importantly, I must thank Josh Long for his love and support over the last decade. I can never repay him for the sacrifices he's made to allow me to follow my dream.

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## Abbreviations

Biblical references are indicated first by the Hebrew versification with the Old Greek (via Joseph Ziegler) in parentheses. If the Hebrew or Old Greek is being discussed individually, its specific versification is used. Siglum used for the manuscript traditions follow the demarcation set forth in Ziegler's apparatus.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| AB           | Anchor Bible   |
| AnBib        | Analecta biblica   |
| AOTC         | Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries  |
| AThANT       | Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments  |
| BBB          | Bonner biblische Beiträge  |
| BDB          | Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Revised edition. Oxford, 2005  |
| BETL         | Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium   |
| <i>BHQ</i>   | <i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i>  |
| BIS          | Biblical Interpretation Series   |
| BLS          | Bible and Literature Series  |
| BS           | Biblisch-theologische Studien  |
| BST          | Basel Studies of Theology  |
| BWANT        | Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament  |
| BZAW         | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft  |
| <i>CBQ</i>   | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>   |
| ConBOT       | Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series  |
| CRINT        | Compendia rerum iudicarum ad Novum Testamentum   |
| CSML         | Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature   |
| <i>CurBS</i> | <i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>  |
| DJD          | Discoveries in the Judaean Desert  |
| EBib         | Etudes bibliques   |
| <i>ETL</i>   | <i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>   |
| <i>ExAud</i> | <i>Ex Auditu</i>   |
| FAT          | Forschungen zum Alten Testament  |
| FOTL         | The Forms of the Old Testament Literature  |
| FRLANT       | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments  |
| GBS          | Guides to Biblical Scholarship   |
| <i>HALOT</i> | <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999 |
| HBS          | Herders Biblische Studien  |
| HKAT         | Handkommentar zum Alten Testament  |

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <i>HS</i>   | <i>Hebrew Studies</i>  |
| HSM         | Harvard Semitic Monographs   |
| HTKAT       | Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament  |
| HUB         | Hebrew University Bible  |
| ICC         | International Critical Commentary  |
| IRT         | Issues in Religion and Theology  |
| <i>JBL</i>  | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>  |
| JBS         | Jerusalem Biblical Studies   |
| <i>JR</i>   | <i>Journal of Religion</i>   |
| <i>JSOT</i> | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>  |
| JSOTSup     | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series   |
| <i>JTS</i>  | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>  |
| KEHAT       | Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament  |
| LHBOTS      | Library of Hebrew Bible and Old Testament Studies  |
| LSJ         | Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> .<br>9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996 |
| MSU         | Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens  |
| NETS        | A New English Translation of the Septuagint  |
| <i>NIB</i>  | <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>   |
| <i>NIDB</i> | <i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>   |
| OBO         | Orbis biblicus et orientalis   |
| ÖBS         | Österreichische biblische Studien  |
| OTG         | Old Testament Guides   |
| OTL         | Old Testament Library  |
| PFS         | Publications of the Folk-Lore Society  |
| <i>RB</i>   | <i>Revue Biblique</i>  |
| <i>RBL</i>  | <i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>   |
| <i>ResQ</i> | <i>Restoration Quarterly</i>   |
| RRBS        | Recent Research in Biblical Studies  |
| SBB         | Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge   |
| SBLDS       | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series   |
| SBLSCS      | Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies  |
| SBLSS       | Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Series   |
| SBLTCS      | Society of Biblical Literature Text-Critical Studies   |
| SBLMS       | Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series  |
| SBLWAW      | Society of Biblical Literature Writings of the Ancient World   |
| <i>SEÅ</i>  | <i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i>   |
| SemeiaSt    | Semeia Studies   |
| SSN         | Studia semitica neerlandica  |
| SOTI        | Studies in Old Testament Interpretation  |
| SOTSMS      | Society for Old Testament Study Monographs   |
| SVTG        | Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum   |
| TECC        | Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"  |
| <i>TSK</i>  | <i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>   |
| <i>USQR</i> | <i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>   |
| UTPSS       | University of Texas Press Slavic Series  |
| <i>VT</i>   | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>   |
| VTSup       | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum   |
| WMANT       | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament   |
| <i>ZAW</i>  | <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>  |



## Raison d'Être

A few hours with a text critic and a handful of biblical manuscripts is all one needs to confirm that the Bible has changed over time. Granted, much has remained the same; Christians and Jews alike can find reassurance in such consistency. Yet this cannot negate the fact that the biblical texts were altered by redactors and translators who interpreted as they transcribed. Moreover, the Christian canon has been shaped and reshaped throughout church history. These changes have greatly impacted views on biblical inspiration and authority as well as contemporary dialogue between the Orthodox, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. A conversation on Judith or Esther amongst these groups would likely prove my point. How do we deal with books like these when we do not agree on their authority or have the same version?

I would like to propose that contemporary readers take their cue from the ancient readers, who were willing to let the text speak in new ways to different communities. They reinscribed the text and allowed multiple versions of it to stand side-by-side, as evidenced in the divergent manuscript tradition. If we can broaden our views of inspiration and biblical authority to include room for reinterpretation and multiple interpretations of the text, then we can reach across the aisle to those who have a different canon and listen to the various manuscript traditions that have spoken to Christians and Jews over the ages. This becomes particularly important when we consider the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible. It was originally created for a Jewish readership and then became the primary text for early Christians. Only later did Jews and Protestants abandon the Septuagint in favor of the Hebrew text. So while the Septuagint is no longer the authoritative text for Jews and Protestants, at one time it was, and it still remains the foundation of sacred scripture for the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. It is imperative that we do not turn a blind eye to this part of each tradition's heritage; the Greek Bible was and is sacred. Moreover, scholars and religious practitioners have so much potential to learn from the Septuagint and its similarities to and differences from its Hebrew counterpart. No matter what your background, reading the different traditions in dialogue can provide great insight into how the Bible has grown and changed. It can also help us reconsider the boundaries for inspiration and perhaps make room for variants and multiple perspectives within our respective religious traditions.

In the pages that follow, I will provide an example of such a dialogic reading by investigating the unique persona of King Zedekiah in two different versions of the book of Jeremiah. It is my hope that this inclusive type of reading – which allows for multiple methodologies and text traditions to have their say – will become more prevalent in the academy and in religious communities alike. Manuscripts and textual transmission need not be intimidating; in fact, they can be quite liberating and instructive to all who value the biblical texts. Such a hope is this project's *raison d'être*.

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

### A. Introduction to the Problem

Zedekiah ben Josiah plays a significant role in the book of Jeremiah and Israelite history. He was the last king of Judah when Jerusalem fell into the hands of Babylon, and the theologies of kingship and exile are interlaced with his characterization. But perhaps more interesting is his multiplicity. Like the book of Jeremiah, which scholars largely agree has two versions, Zedekiah has another “version” of himself – Sedekias, who can be found gracing the pages of the Greek text.<sup>1</sup> These two different personas of the king are important because they are emblematic of both the book of Jeremiah and the larger canonical traditions to which the Hebrew and Greek versions of Jeremiah belong. They are all singular but also polyphonic; they are unique but deeply related. As such, they call on readers to refrain from harmonizing or ignoring one part of their multidimensional nature. When one voice in the tradition is neglected, the whole is left wanting, and the truth is left incomplete. An analog that comes to my mind is the history of the American Civil War. What if one only read the North’s version of the war, or the South’s? What if the personal stories of African Americans and their struggles were never included? To better understand the past and its effects on the present, readers should assess the various versions of the story. Thus, whether it is American history or biblical history, it is imperative that every voice is taken seriously. In the case of the last king of Judah, we should give heed to the voice of Zedekiah and Sedekias as well as the cacophony of perspectives within the biblical manuscript tradition, which have been the foundation of the Jewish and Christian canons for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, previous scholarship on Zedekiah/Sedekias has often privileged one voice over another, whether it was the voice of literary or historical criticism over the other or the Hebrew text over the Greek.<sup>2</sup> In the

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<sup>1</sup> The English spellings of proper nouns in the biblical texts will follow the NRSV for renderings of the Hebrew and NETS for the renderings of the Greek.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth, when speaking of the king in general, his names will be combined; that is, I will refer to him as Zedekiah/Sedekias in order to reinforce the fact that he is singular and polyphonic in his biblical presentation.

twentieth century and even into the twenty-first century, historical and literary critics who have studied Jeremiah generally stayed within their own camps and rarely dialogued constructively with one another.<sup>3</sup> This has resulted in a fragmented, and often times contradictory, representation of Zedekiah/Sedekias. The problem is compounded by the fact that many scholars only focus on the Hebrew, or Masoretic, text<sup>4</sup> while effectively ignoring the Greek version(s) of the book.<sup>5</sup> As Septuagint scholar Kristin De Troyer rightly argues, “biblical exegesis can no longer be done without studying the other biblical texts, especially the Greek ones, and that books of an exegetical nature which only vaguely refer to the other texts are incomplete.”<sup>6</sup> Exegesis on Zedekiah/Sedekias is no exception. As the following history of scholarship will demonstrate, the task of interpreting Zedekiah/Sedekias in a comprehensive manner still remains – he is in need of being read equitably in the Hebrew *and* Old Greek texts<sup>7</sup> and then analyzed via literary *and* historical-critical methodologies in a way that is productive, symbiotic, and fair to all the texts and their voices within.

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<sup>3</sup> In recent decades, this has begun to change at a steady pace.

<sup>4</sup> Henceforth MT. Emanuel Tov correctly asserts that the designations MT and LXX (I will be using OG) are not of one manuscript but rather a whole group of manuscripts. See his *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). I have chosen to use the Hebrew text produced by the Hebrew University Bible Project to be representative for MT. See C. Rabin, S. Talmon, and E. Tov, *The Book of Jeremiah*, HUB (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997). Note that I have omitted the “raised point” that was added by Rabin, Talmon, and Tov to indicate where the scribe of Aleppo Codex only has a *silluq* at the end of a verse (xiv).

<sup>5</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Surplus Meaning and the Conflict of Interpretations: A Dodecade of Jeremiah Studies (1984–95),” *CurBS* 4 (1996): 115–160, esp. 125. While it is true that many historical-critical scholars are now engaging the Greek texts, often times their assessment of Sedekias is only secondary to the primary aim of making a textual growth argument. Both Richard Weis and Anneli Aejmelaeus have pointed out a large group of redaction critics in the field of Jeremiah studies that have ignored the evidence of OG. See Richard D. Weis, “The Textual Situation in the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Sôfer Mahîr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker Offered by the Editors of Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, eds. Yonahan A. P. Goldman, Arie van der Kooij, and Richard D. Weis, VTSup 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 269–293, esp. 273; Anneli Aejmelaeus, “Jeremiah at the Turning Point of History: The Function of Jer. XXV 1–14 in the Book of Jeremiah,” *VT* 52, no. 4 (2002): 459–482, esp. 460–461; 479–480. Literary critics almost always ignore the OG by claiming that they are working with the “final form” of the text, but such a statement is problematic when working with a book like Jeremiah; which form is the “final form”?

<sup>6</sup> Kristin De Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text: What the Old Greek Texts Tell Us about the Literary Growth of the Bible*, SBLTCS 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Henceforth OG. The Old Greek is taken from the Göttingen Septuaginta Series. See Joseph Ziegler, *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae*, SVTG 15 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

## B. Evidence of the Problem: A History of Research

For the purposes of this project, I will concentrate on past works that have explicitly engaged the character of Zedekiah/Sedekias during his final days described in Jer 37(44):1–40(47):6.<sup>8</sup> This will highlight the arguments of my main interlocutors while substantiating the problems outlined in the previous section. I will address the historical-critical and literary scholars in two separate sections. Each section will be preceded by a short summative overview of the research area at hand and then proceed quickly to the desired topic of discussion. Thereafter, I will briefly review scholarship that has bridged the gap between the literary and historical camps.

### I. Historical-Critical Scholarship on Zedekiah and Sedekias

In the first half of the twentieth century, much of modern critical scholarship on Jeremiah was preoccupied with the “historical” Jeremiah and finding the prophet’s “original” oracles. Thus, source and historical criticism dominated the field. The trailblazers in these areas included Bernard Duhm,<sup>9</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel,<sup>10</sup> Paul Volz,<sup>11</sup> John Skinner,<sup>12</sup> and Wilhelm Rudolph.<sup>13</sup> Scholars largely interested in the formation and reshaping of the book, which required the use of additional methodologies like redaction and form criticism, followed on their heels in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. Some of the most influential works in this conversation were written by

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<sup>8</sup> This section of text was chosen for two reasons. First, it is the heart of the biographical prose section and has undergone meaningful literary analysis in the Hebrew. Thus, I will be able to dialogue with the past scholarship while noting the significant differences in OG. Second, I am following the model of Andrew G. Shead, who suggests that scholars should investigate localized texts rather than samplings when asserting theories regarding the textual history of Jeremiah, which I plan to do at the end of this study (*The Open Book and the Sealed Book: Jeremiah 32 in its Hebrew and Greek Recensions*, JSOTSup 347 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002], 17–18).

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, HKAT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901). To read summative comments on Duhm and the other major scholars mentioned in this history of scholarship, see my dissertation, “The Last King(s) of Judah: Zedekiah and Sedekias in the Hebrew and Old Greek Versions of Jeremiah 37(44):1–40(47):6” (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Dybwad, 1914).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia*, KAT 10 (Leipzig: Deichert, 1928). Volz was one of the primary voices advocating for the idea that MT was edited in Babylonia, while the shorter form of LXX resulted from the translator’s efforts to shorten and edit MT.

<sup>12</sup> John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930).

<sup>13</sup> Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 3rd ed., HAT 12 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968).



Gunther Wanke,<sup>14</sup> Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann,<sup>15</sup> E. W. Nicholson,<sup>16</sup> Winfried Thiel,<sup>17</sup> Christopher Seitz,<sup>18</sup> and Carolyn Sharp.<sup>19</sup> Simultaneously, there was another circle of textual scholars – namely J. Gerald Janzen,<sup>20</sup> Dominique Barthélemy,<sup>21</sup> Emanuel Tov,<sup>22</sup> Hermann-Josef Stipp,<sup>23</sup> Andrew Shead,<sup>24</sup> and

<sup>14</sup> Gunther Wanke, *Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchsschrift*, BZAW 122 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971).

<sup>15</sup> Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches*, FRLANT 118 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978). Pohlmann was one of the first scholars to extensively use a redaction-critical method on chs. 37–44. He detected a *golah* redaction distinctly associated with the first exile in 597 BCE. See also *Die Ferne Gottes – Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, BZAW 179 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989).

<sup>16</sup> E. W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition of the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Schocken, 1970).

<sup>17</sup> Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25*, WMANT 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971); idem, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26–45: Mit einer Gesamtbeurteilung der deuteronomistischen Redaktion des Buches Jeremia*, WMANT 52 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981). The work of Helga Weippert served as an ideal conversation partner with Thiel. Weippert's perspective is clearly laid out in *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*, BZAW 132 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973).

<sup>18</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, "The Crisis of Interpretation over the Meaning and Purpose of the Exile: A Redactional Study of Jeremiah XXI–XLIII," *VT* 35, no. 1 (1985): 78–97; idem, *Theology in Conflict: Redactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah*, BZAW 176 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989).

<sup>19</sup> Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* (London: T&T Clark, 2003). Other important form and redaction-critical studies are listed in the appendix.

<sup>20</sup> J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, HSM 6 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). With support from 4QJer, Janzen demonstrated that OG represents an older, and thus more superior, text than MT, which he understood as recensional. Janzen's study has been widely received by the scholarly community and became the point of departure for most subsequent scholarship on the relationship between the Hebrew and Greek text types.

<sup>21</sup> Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de L'Ancien Testament 2: Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations*, OBO 50.2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986). For the text of Jeremiah, Barthélemy appears to agree with Tov (see below), and sides with the readings in OG as more pristine. As a result, the pluses in MT are left largely aside as relevant only to literary criticism rather than textual criticism.

<sup>22</sup> Emanuel Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch: A Discussion of an Early Revision of the LXX of Jeremiah 29–52 and Baruch 1:1–3:8*, HSM 8 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); idem, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX of Jeremiah 27 (34)," *ZAW* 91 (1979): 73–93; idem, "Jeremiah," in *Qumran Cave 4. X: The Prophets*, eds. Eugene Ulrich, et al., DJD 15 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 145–207; idem, *Textual Criticism*. Tov's works largely support Janzen's view that OG reflects an earlier version of Jeremiah, while MT is representative of an edited text.

<sup>23</sup> Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von*

Adrian Schenker<sup>25</sup> – who were primarily occupied with the genetic relationship between the Hebrew and Greek textual traditions of Jeremiah, a topic brought to the fore by Ferdinand Hitzig,<sup>26</sup> Friedrich Giesebrecht,<sup>27</sup> and H. St. J. Thackeray<sup>28</sup> decades earlier. By the end of the twentieth century, these major groups would begin to converge, recognizing the necessity to be in conversation about the development and transmission of Jeremiah's complicated corpus. The need and usefulness of such a convergence became evident in the expansive commentaries of William McKane<sup>29</sup> and William

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*Jer 26, 36–43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert*, BBB 82 (Frankfurt: Hain, 1992); idem, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches*, OBO 136 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); idem, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah: On the Formation of a Biblical Character,” *CBQ* 58 (1996): 627–648. Stipp holds the view that although both MT and OG originate with a common parent text, each version has its own unique transmission history, and MT was more heavily edited.

<sup>24</sup> Shead, *The Open Book and the Sealed Book*. Comparing, in detail, the Greek and Hebrew versions of Jer 32, Shead essentially comes to the same conclusion as Stipp – MT and OG Jeremiah have a common textual ancestry, but each has undergone development (MT to a larger degree than OG).

<sup>25</sup> Adrian Schenker, *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten: Jer 31 in der hebräischen und griechischen Bibel*, FRLANT 212 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). Schenker concurs with most textual scholars that OG is witness to an earlier version of Jeremiah and MT was edited at a later time. A list of other scholars who have addressed the relationship between MT and OG, or who have at least thoroughly engaged the Greek text, can be found in the appendix.

<sup>26</sup> Ferdinand Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jeremia*, KEHAT (Leipzig: Weidmannische Buchhandlung, 1841). Hitzig's commentary exemplifies the early belief that the Hebrew version of Jeremiah was more authentic than the Greek version, which was presumably altered via the translator.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia*, HKAT 3.2.1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894). Giesebrecht believed that the Greek Jeremiah had a nuanced relationship to MT in that the translator both added and deleted material.

<sup>28</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, “The Greek Translators of Jeremiah,” *JTS* 4 (1902–3): 245–266; idem, “The Greek Translators of the Prophetic Books,” *JTS* 4 (1902–3): 578–585; idem, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909). Thackeray held the reigning theory of multiple translators to explain the differences between MT and OG Jeremiah for a large portion of the early twentieth century.

<sup>29</sup> William McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986–1996). McKane's treatment of both the Hebrew and Greek texts allow him to come to a nuanced conclusion that there was an original core of the book associated with the original prophet, but the core was later supplemented and changed multiple times, creating a “rolling corpus” of material. McKane's hypothesis of a rolling corpus is similar to Michael Fishbane's concept of inner-biblical exegesis that he develops at length in *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1985).

Holladay<sup>30</sup> but were better realized in the volumes of Louis Stulman,<sup>31</sup> Yohanan Goldman,<sup>32</sup> Georg Fischer,<sup>33</sup> and Beat Huwlyer.<sup>34</sup> These authors allowed both textual and redactional perspectives to freely dialogue as they tried to understand the transmission and form of the books of Jeremiah.

Within the trajectory of historical-critical scholarship, comprehensive analysis of biblical characters seldom ensued. Instead, larger redactional themes or textual tendencies were highlighted. They generally centered on the question of Deuteronomistic influence and related subjects, such as kingship, exile, and the land. Nevertheless, within such discussions, the character of Zedekiah/Sedekias has occasionally arisen as a key component, and it is to these instances that I now turn.

Pohlmann (1978) was one of the first scholars to extensively use a redaction-critical method on Jer 37–44.<sup>35</sup> He saw the message of hope to Zedekiah, especially in chapter 38, as an earlier layer, which *golah*-oriented redactors corrected in the fourth century BCE.<sup>36</sup> Their goal was to depict Jeremiah as predicting unconditional doom for the king due to his outright rejection of God's word.<sup>37</sup> Pohlmann's proposition, which placed restorative hope with the exiles of 597 BCE, would later influence Christopher Seitz.

Although Pohlmann spends a great deal of time on Jer 37–44 and the changing fate of Zedekiah in these chapters, his discussion does not emphasize the character development of the king. Rather, Pohlmann is largely interested in the theological and political aims of the redactors, who dismiss Zedekiah in favor of Jehoiachin. Pohlmann's emphasis on Jehoiachin, and his potential heir Zerubbabel, averts his attention away from Zedekiah and toward a post-exilic date for the *golah* revision. Like so many other redaction

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<sup>30</sup> William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986–1989). Another extensive commentary that is similar in nature to Holladay's is that of Jack R. Lundbom (*Jeremiah*, 3 vols., AB 21A-C [New York: Doubleday, 1999–2004]). Lundbom maintains a view of the Septuagint text as largely deficient via haplography.

<sup>31</sup> Louis Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-critical Research*, SBLDS 83 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

<sup>32</sup> Yohanan Goldman, *Prophétie et royauté au retour de l'exil: Les origines littéraires de la forme massorétique du livre de Jérémie*, OBO 118 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> Georg Fischer, *Das Trostbüchlein: Text, Komposition und Theologie von Jer 30–31*, SBB 26 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Beat Huwlyer, *Jeremia und die Völker: Untersuchungen zu den Völkersprüchen in Jeremia 46–49*, FAT 20 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*.

<sup>36</sup> For Pohlmann's dating, see *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 190–191.

<sup>37</sup> According to Pohlmann, these same redactors also added Jer 21:1–10 and 24 to prepare for this redactional shift; thus, chs. 37–39 become the fulfilment of these oracles (*Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 19–47).

critics, Pohlmann presents a thought-provoking argument based on ideological tensions in Jeremiah but does not allow the Greek form of the text to enter the conversation. Such significant changes surrounding the character of Zedekiah would prove more convincing if the unique picture of Sedekias in OG was addressed in relationship to his proposed redaction.

Seitz (1985–1989), like Pohlmann, asserts that there are two main layers in the prose narrative of Jer 37–45.<sup>38</sup> The layers reveal a theological conflict regarding the exiles of 597 and 587 BCE. The first layer is that of the Scribal Chronicle, which he posits was written by a member of the community in Judah who survived the 597 exile.<sup>39</sup> It avows the possibility of continued life in the land. Later, an exilic (*golah*) redactor edited the Scribal Chronicle to eradicate any hope of life in the land; instead, the future of God's people was with those who were taken to Babylon – a view held by Ezekiel.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the final form – made up of several layers – presents a cohesive picture of judgment, exile, and YHWH's restoration.

For Seitz, these two layers have distinct understandings of King Zedekiah. Similar to Pohlmann, he believes that the earlier layer contains a more sympathetic view of the king, who still had an opportunity to survive (Jer 38:17–20). However, the exilic layer suppresses this view, particularly with the addition of the introduction in Jer 37:1–2 and the oracle in 38:21–23.<sup>41</sup> While Seitz's proposal is not unequivocally erroneous, it suffers from the neglect of OG, in which Sedekias is presented in a very negative light. For, if OG does in fact exemplify an earlier form of Jeremiah, this would innately contradict Seitz's and Pohlmann's trajectory for Zedekiah/Sedekias's character development, which they maintain moves chronologically from sympathetic to condemnatory. Now, it may be that Seitz has a counterpoint for this challenge, but it is not presented in his work, leaving a large, unsolved problem for his transmission argument.<sup>42</sup>

Of the great commentaries, particularly in the 80s and 90s, McKane stands out as one who genuinely engages Zedekiah. He only focuses on MT, but his thoughts are notable nevertheless. To begin, McKane takes issue with earlier views of Zedekiah as a “feeble figurehead” who, despite his “pious

<sup>38</sup> Seitz, “The Crisis of Interpretation;” idem, *Theology in Conflict*.

<sup>39</sup> Seitz takes the idea of a scribal document from Thiel.

<sup>40</sup> This is where Seitz differs from Pohlmann. He does not date the *golah*-oriented redaction later than Nehemiah. Rather, he believes that it is exilic.

<sup>41</sup> Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 245–273.

<sup>42</sup> Seitz could, in fact, be right about these changes to Zedekiah/Sedekias's character. One could say that VOG deviated after these changes and underwent its own redactional shifts creating the evil Sedekias. This is similar to what Stipp will argue. However, Seitz does not even attempt to address the issue – an oversight of most redaction critics of Jeremiah. Stipp also criticizes Seitz for this very problem among others; see *Jeremia in Parteienstreit*, 136–141.