The title of this essay, given to me by the conveners of the conference, suggests a simple task, namely to describe the nature, i.e., the structure, contents, and intention of specific prose texts in the book of Jeremiah. Formerly, such passages have often been called “Deuteronomistic,” a label that indicated their affinity to prose texts within Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. What is now called “Deutero-Jeremianic prose” by several scholars is a distinctive language in the sermon-like speeches (e.g. Jer 7; 11; 17; 22; 26; 34; 35; 44) but also in part of the narrative material (Jer 26–29; 36–43). Behind the name “Deutero-Jeremianic” looms the question of whether there was one or several Deuteronomic redactions of the book and, on a deeper level, a dispute between scholars who use source and redaction-critical approaches and those who analyze the texts’ rhetoric and structure synchronically.

In the following, a short review of the history of research aims at demonstrating why I use the term “Deutero-Jeremianic” for these texts (1). Secondly, I will discuss two distinctive rhetorical genres claimed to be indicative for a Deuteronomic redaction (2). After tracing Deutero-Jeremianic texts that were so far attributed to a pro-Golah redaction in a third section (3), I will try to assess the “nature” of these texts.

1 A Glance at the History of Research

Without recapitulating the century-long debate about the relationship between texts in Jeremiah and in the Deuteronomic History, I would like to review briefly some arguments in studies of the last decades. In the early 1970s, Winfried Thiel investigated all phrases and words in the book of Jeremiah that had close parallels in the Deuteronomic History and argued—mainly on the basis of this specific prose language but also on account of style—that there was one thorough Deuteronomic edition of the book around 550 BCE in Judah.1 Thiel further maintained that this redaction reworked Jeremiah’s

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1 His PhD thesis was completed in 1970, but published only later; see Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25* (WMANT 41; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen-Verlag, 1970).
words in two rhetorical forms. The first one is a sort of catechesis, i.e., a question-answer-scheme that would explain why God brought doom on Judah and Jerusalem (“Gerichtsbegründung im Frage-Antwort-Stil”); the second form is a homily that uses Jeremianic phrases but formulates an alternative to the message of doom (“Alternativ-Predigt”) by calling the audience to listen to God’s words sent through his servants, the prophets.2 What Thiel described as editing of tradition, Thomas Römer would call “the conversion of Jeremiah to the Deuteronomistic theology.”3

In the 1970s and 1980s, a German biblical scholar could build a career on finding a Deuteronomistic hand in any prophetic writing or establishing a specific Deuteronomistic redaction within the Deuteronomistic History, a phenomenon that Norbert Lohfink called “Pan-Deuteronomism.”4 This research trend eventually led to a broadening of Deuteronomistic topics and to the idea of a Deuteronomistic school that controlled the production of writings through several generations. Konrad Schmid named this indistinctive evidence of stereotypical language “Null-Deuteronomismus”5 and sought to explain it as a tradition-historical rather than a redactional development.

Already in 1951, however, John Bright assessed the phenomenon differently on the basis of dissimilarities between the prose in Jeremiah and in the

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2 The German terms are mentioned in Thiel, Redaktion I, 290 and 295.