

10 The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History

The Contemporary Discussion of the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History

The contemporary discussion of the structure of the Deuteronomistic¹ history was initiated by the brilliant essay of Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*.² Noth radically revised literary-critical views which asserted that the books of the Former Prophets, namely Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, grew into their present shape out of sources combined in a series of redactions. He viewed the whole, Joshua through Kings, as a single historical work, created by a highly original author during the Exile, about 550 B.C. Diverse sources, sometimes rewritten in the peculiar Deuteronomistic rhetoric, sometimes not, were selected and informed by a framework, into a unity expressing the theological and historical slant of the editor. An older form of Deuteronomy, supplied with a new Deuteronomistic introduction and conclusion,³ was prefixed to the historical work proper, together forming a great Deuteronomistic block of tradition. This work stands over against the Tetrateuch, Genesis through Numbers, or what is more appropriately called the Priestly work.⁴

The framework of the Deuteronomistic history is marked in particular by speeches in pure Deuteronomistic style patterned after Deuteronomy, the whole of which is cast as the last speech of Moses to Israel. These passages include the speeches of Joshua (Joshua 1: 11-15; and 23), the address of Samuel (1 Samuel 12: 1-24), and the prayer of Solomon (1

1. In M. Noth's usage "Deuteronomistic" (Dtr) identifies the hand of the Exilic author of the great work Joshua-Kings and the framework of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomic (Dt) is reserved for the old core of the book of Deuteronomy (Dtn), that is, the legal code and its immediate, framing passages. In our discussion, the above sigla are modified only by the use of Dtr¹ to designate the seventh-century author of the Deuteronomistic history, Dtr² to apply to the Exilic editor of the work. This involves a change in the terminology used in my lecture underlying the present essay published under the title, "The Structure of the Deuteronomistic [sic] History," *Perspectives in Jewish Learning*, Annual of the College of Jewish Studies, 3 (Chicago, 1968), 9-24.

2. The essay, hereafter designated *UGS* was first published in 1943; the second (unchanged) edition in Tübingen, 1957.

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Kings 8: 12-51). Oddly, Noth ignores the oracle of Nathan and the Prayer of David (2 Samuel 7: 1-16 and 7: 18-29) which surely belong to this series.⁵ Other major Deuteronomistic summaries include Judges 2: 11-22, and especially 2 Kings 17: 7-18, 20-23, the Deuteronomistic peroration on the fall of Samaria.

The theme running through the framework of the Deuteronomistic history, according to Noth, is a proclamation of unrelieved and irreversible doom. The story of Israel is a story of apostasy and idolatry. The inevitable result has been the visitation of God's judgment and the curses of the covenant: death, disease, captivity, destruction. In the era of the kings, the violation of the law of the central sanctuary comes to the fore. In the sin of Jeroboam (northern) Israel earned God's rejection, and in Manasseh's grave apostasy Judah was damned to irrevocable destruction. The Deuteronomistic author, according to Noth, thus addressed his work to the exiles. His theology of history, revealed in the framework of his great work, justified God's wrath and explained the exiles' plight.

Older literary critics, as well as their more recent followers, argued for two editions of the Deuteronomistic complex of traditions, one pre-Exilic, the basic promulgation of the Deuteronomistic history, and one Exilic, retouching the earlier edition to bring it up to date. We need not review here the variety of views nor their specific arguments.⁶ Some of their arguments are very strong, for example, the use of the expression "to this day," not merely in the sources but also in portions by the Deuteronomistic author, which presumes the existence of the Judaean state, notably 2 Kings 8: 22 and 16: 6.⁷ The increase in epigraphic material of the late seventh and early sixth century, including the extraordinary series from Tel 'Arad, has made clear that the complex syntactical style of the Deuteronomist (if not his peculiar archaizing forms)

5. See above, chapter 9, and D. J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL*, 84 (1965), 131-138.

6. The "orthodox" literary-critical viewpoint was framed by Kuenen and Wellhausen, in particular, and survives in such recent works as R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1941), pp. 277ff.; and John Gray, *I & II Kings, A Commentary* (London, S. C. M. Press, 1963), pp. 13ff. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen, Mohr, 1964), pp. 321-330; 376-404. A. Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches*, 2nd ed. (Halle, Niemeyer, 1956), while assuming two primary redactors in his complex analysis, is in basic agreement with M. Noth (though independent). He holds that the Exilic "prophetic" redactor gave to an earlier "priestly" history of the two kingdoms its essential framework and Deuterono-

characterized late pre-Exilic prose.⁸ It has been argued also that the availability of sources to the Deuteronomistic editor requires a pre-Exilic date.⁹ Nevertheless, from our point of view, the strongest arguments for the pre-Exilic date of the basic promulgation of the Deuteronomistic history have not yet entered into the discussion (see below). Yet the view of M. Noth has increasingly gained sway, especially in German circles, and much recent writing presumes his basic position as the foundation for further research.

Two important recent studies have attempted to bring modification to Noth's view of the essential purpose and teaching of the Deuteronomist. Gerhard von Rad in his *Studies in Deuteronomy* took up again the question of the Deuteronomistic theology of history in the Book of Kings.¹⁰ Von Rad was anxious to emphasize not only the motifs of lawsuit and judgment which follow upon the breach of covenant law (as stressed almost exclusively by Noth), but also to develop a counter-theme in the Deuteronomistic presentation of the history of the kingdom, that is, the theme of grace, God's promise to David which was eternal and hence the ground of hope. In the oracle of Nathan to David, and its persistent reiteration in later Judaeon reigns, Von Rad found a major Deuteronomistic theme. Moreover, it appears that the Deuteronomist never really repudiated this promise.¹¹ In 2 Samuel 7:13-16, Yahweh addressed David concerning his seed, "and I will establish the throne of his kingship forever. I will become his father and he my son; whenever he commits iniquity I will discipline him with the rod of men and the stripes of the children of men, but my faithfulness I will not turn aside from him . . . your dynasty shall be firm and your kingship forever before <me>; your throne shall be established forever." Von Rad speaks of this repeated theme as proving that in the day of the Deuteronomist¹² there remained a cycle of "messianic conceptions," a hope that the

8. It goes without saying that it persisted into the early Exilic age, or at least was imitated accurately in the later period.

9. See W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period* (Pittsburg, 1950) pp. 411, and n. 108.

10. Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, SBT, 9 (London, 1953), 74-79. Cf. his *Old Testament Theology* (New York, Harper, 1962), I, 334-347.

11. In certain passages, 1 Kings 9:6-9, for example, the eternal decree of kingship is followed by a specific reference to the Exile and the destruction of the temple. With Kuenen and most earlier commentators we should regard the passage as secondary, in direct conflict with 2 Samuel 7:18-29 and the Deuteronomistic theme to be discussed

Davidic house would be reestablished after the Exile. The final notice in 2 Kings 25:27-30, recording the release of Jehoiachin, was taken by Von Rad as having a special theological significance, alluding to the hope of salvation in the Davidic dynasty.

We must confess that Noth has the better of the argument when it comes to the interpretation of 2 Kings 25:27-30.¹³ That Jehoiachin was released from prison and lived off the bounty of the Babylonian crown—still in exile for the remainder of his days—is a thin thread upon which to hang the expectation of the fulfillment of the promises to David. Yet Von Rad has singled out a theme, the promise to the house of David, which must be dealt with systematically; the neglect of this theme is a serious failure in Noth's study.

H. W. Wolff recently has taken up again the Deuteronomist's future hope or, as he puts it, the Deuteronomist's *kērygma*.¹⁴ He finds Noth's analysis of the Deuteronomist's doctrine of history defective in its portrayal of the end of Israel as a monochromatic picture of unmitigated judgment. He cannot conceive of the Deuteronomist taking up the tedious task of composing a great theology of history as a labor devised and designed to teach only the message that the disaster of Israel is final. At the same time Wolff rejects Von Rad's position, noting the qualification of the eternal decree of Davidic kingship in 1 Kings 9:6-9, 2 Kings 24:2, and so on.¹⁵ Wolff seeks a note of grace, a modest future hope in certain Deuteronomistic passages which call for repentance and which promise that when Israel cries out to God and repudiates her apostate ways he will repent of his evil and listen to their prayers.¹⁶ Nothing is said of the restoration of the house of David. The only clear hope is that the Lord will restore a repentant people to his covenant.

13. Noth, *ÜG*, p. 108.

14. H. W. Wolff, "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes," *ZAW*, 73 (1961), 171-186. Incidentally, the importation of the term *kērygma* into the form criticism of the Hebrew Bible is to be deplored as an inelegant and presumptuous anachronism.

15. On the former passage, see above, n. 11. The cycle of passages attributing the fall of the Davidic house to the sin of Manasseh belong to a special Exilic group and will be dealt with below.

16. The chief passages are Judg. 2:18; 1 Sam. 12:1-24; and (dealing with repentance) 1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Kings 8:33, 35; 2 Kings 17:13; 23:25. A series more explicitly related to exile or captivity is 1 Kings 8:46-53; 13tn. 4:25-31; 30:1-10 (the latter two form a later

Wolff correctly discerns a theme of hope which comes from the hand of a Deuteronomistic editor in the Exile (our Dtr¹), especially in Deuteronomy 4: 25-31 and 30: 1-20 (framing the old Deuteronomistic work), and in the addition to Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8: 46-53. One may question, however, whether the alternating pattern of grace and judgment in the Deuteronomistic notices of the era of the Judges had as its original setting the Exilic situation. It is easier to understand it as exhortation to reform with the hope of national salvation.¹⁷ Here one listens with sympathy to Von Rad's plaintive comment that "it is difficult to think that the editing of the Book of Judges and that of the Book of Kings could have taken place as a single piece of work."¹⁸ At all events, Wolff has not given an adequate explanation of the persistent, and in many ways major, theme of the Book of Kings: the promises to David. If Von Rad's handling of this theme is unconvincing, we are not thereby justified in ignoring it. The persistence of the Deuteronomistic stress upon the eternal decree of Davidic kingship cannot be explained as a survival of royal ideology taken over mechanically from monarchist sources. It *must* be pertinent to the Deuteronomistic theology of history.

We are left unsatisfied by each of these attempts to analyze the themes of the Deuteronomistic history, especially in their treatment of Kings. Each seems too simple, incapable of handling the complexity of the theological lore in the great collection. In short, it appears that these fresh attempts to examine the history of the Deuteronomistic tradition, while casting much light on the Deuteronomistic corpus, leave many embarrassing contradictions and unsolved problems.

The Two Themes of the First Edition of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr¹)

We desire first to analyze the latter part of the Deuteronomistic history, especially the Book of Kings. Here we should find the climactic section of the history. As the historian draws closer to his own times, we expect him to express his intent most clearly both in specifically theological or parenthetic sections which would constitute his framework and in the shaping of special themes which unify his work.¹⁹

There are indeed two grand themes or bundles of themes running

17. See further below. Note that 1 Samuel 12:25 is to be taken as a secondary addi-

through the Book of Kings. In combination these themes must stem from a very specific setting having a specific social function. We shall argue that they belong properly to a Josianic edition of the Deuteronomistic history.

(1) One theme is summed up in the following saying:

This thing became the sin of the house of Jeroboam to crush (it) and to destroy (it) from the face of the earth.²⁰

The crucial event in the history of the Northern Kingdom was the sin of Jeroboam.

Earlier, Ahijah of the prophetic circle of Shiloh had prophesied that, if Jeroboam acted faithfully as did David, he would be given a sure house. This promise was not an eternal decree after the pattern of the oracle of Nathan to David. Ahijah added the qualification that while the seed of David would be chastised for a season, God would not afflict Judah forever.²¹ In this statement we must understand that the oracle presumes an ultimate reunion of the two kingdoms under a Davidid. In 1 Kings 12: 26-33, we read a strongly Deuteronomistic description of Jeroboam's archeime, namely the establishment of a countercultus in Bethel and Dan. The account assumes that Jeroboam's motivation is fear that traditions of the central sanctuary which David brought together and focused upon Zion would ultimately lure his people back to the Davidic house even as the national shrine of Jerusalem attracted them in the time of the pilgrimage feasts. Hence, he established new shrines at ancient holy places of the north, introducing an idolatrous iconography and a syncretistic cult.²² An account of the prophecy of "a man of God and of Judah," otherwise unidentified, follows. The prophet is made to give utterance to one of the most astonishing as well as rare instances of a *vaticinium post eventum* found in the Bible, obviously shaped by an overenthusiastic editor's hand: "He cried against the altar [of Bethel]. . . 'Altar, Altar, thus saith Yahweh; behold a son will be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he will sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones

20. 1 Kings 13: 31 (reading *hdbr* with G. Syr. et al.).

21. 1 Kings 11: 29-39, esp. v. 39.

22. We are not concerned here with reconstructing the actual, historical character

<he> will burn upon you.'"²³ The reform of Josiah is here anticipated, preparing the reader's mind for the coming climax.

Ahijah of Shiloh also proclaimed an oracle which would be repeated almost verbatim, like a refrain, pointing forward to the crescendo of this theme in Kings, the fall of the North. "Thus saith Yahweh, God of Israel: 'Because I exalted you from the midst of the people and made you commander (*nāgīd*) over my people Israel, tearing the kingdom from the house of David to give it to you, yet you have not been like my servant David . . . but have done evil . . . casting me behind your back, therefore I will bring evil on the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, whatever his status, and I shall consume the house of Jeroboam, as one burns up dung and it is gone. He of (the house of) Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall devour, and he who dies in the field the birds of the heaven shall eat.'"²⁴ The grisly fulfillment of Ahijah's prophecy is carefully noted in 1 Kings 15: 29.²⁵ "Jehu the son of Hanani proclaimed against Baasha, ' . . . behold I will consume Baasha and his house and I will make his house to be like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat. He (of the house) of Baasha who dies in the city the dogs shall devour, and his dead in the field the birds of the heaven shall eat.'"²⁶

Against each king of Israel in turn the judgment comes, "[he] did evil in the eyes of Yahweh; doing evil above all who were before him, and he walked in the way of Jeroboam."

Elijah the Tishbite prophesied against Ahab:

Thus saith Yahweh, "Have you murdered and also taken possession? . . . in the place where the dogs lapped the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lap your blood, even you . . . Behold I will bring on you evil and I will consume you and cut off from Ahab every male, whatever his status, in Israel, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha . . . and also concerning Jezebel Yahweh has spoken, saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the plot of Jezreel. He (of the house) of Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall devour, and he who dies in the field the birds of the heaven shall eat."²⁷

23. 1 Kings 13: 2-5.

24. 1 Kings 14: 7-11.

25. Cf. 2 Kings 17: 7-23.

The word of Yahweh was in part delayed (1 Kings 21: 29), in part fulfilled in Ahab's death (1 Kings 22: 37f.) and in Ahaziah's death. The prophecy was roundly fulfilled in the revolution of Jehu in which the king (Ahab's son Joram) together with the "seventy sons of Ahab" and Jezebel the queen mother were slaughtered in Jezreel and in Samaria.²⁸

Elijah's prophecy against the house of Ahab no doubt goes back to an old poetic oracle. The earlier oracles, in wording at least, were shaped to it by the Deuteronomist so that a refrain-like rhythm is given to the theme of prophetic decree and fulfillment.

The string of oracles and judgments which make up this theme in Kings is completed in the great peroration on the fall of Samaria in 2 Kings 17: 1-23. Here the Deuteronomist reached the first great climax of the last section of his work and rang the changes on his theme of Jeroboam's sin and Israel's judgment.

And Yahweh rejected the entire seed of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hands of spoilers until he had cast them out from his presence. For he tore Israel from the house of David and they made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king, and Jeroboam enticed Israel away from Yahweh and caused them to sin a great sin. The children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not turn aside from it until Yahweh turned Israel aside from his presence, as he had spoken through all his servants the prophets, and Israel was taken captive from off their land to Assyria until this day.²⁹

The lawsuit of Yahweh is complete. The verdict is rendered. The curses of the covenant are effected. In Jeroboam's monstrous sin, Israel's doom was sealed.

(2) The second theme we wish to analyze begins in 2 Samuel 7 and runs through the book of Kings. It may be tersely put in the refrain-like phrase:

for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.³⁰

An alloform is the expression "so that David my servant will have a fief always before me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen for myself to

28. 2 Kings 9: 1, 10-11.

put my name there."³¹ The crucial event in Judah, comparable to the sin of Jeroboam was the faithfulness of David. Through much of Kings this theme of grace and hope parallels the dark theme of judgment. David established Yahweh's sanctuary in Jerusalem, an eternal shrine on chosen Zion; Jeroboam established the rival shrine of Bethel, a cultus abhorrent to Yahweh, bringing eternal condemnation. David in Kings is the symbol of fidelity, Jeroboam the symbol of infidelity. In view of the antimonarchical elements surviving in Deuteronomistic (Dt) tradition, notably in the law of the king,³² and in certain sources in the books of Judges and Samuel, it is remarkable to discover that the Deuteronomist in 2 Samuel 7 and in Kings shares in unqualified form the ideology of the Judaean monarchy.³³

We have discussed at some length in the last chapter the Deuteronomistic character of both the so-called oracle of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7: 11b-16 and the prayer of David in 2 Samuel 7: 18-29. In promising an eternal throne to the Davidic dynasty the Deuteronomist appears to take up specific elements of the royal liturgy also found reflected in Psalm 89: 20-38.³⁴ The prayer of David, framed in wholly Deuteronomistic language, echoes similar hopes and expectations for the permanence of the Davidic house.³⁵

In 1 Kings 11 the Deuteronomist condemned Solomon for his apostasy and idolatry. The ten tribes were "torn away" from the Judaean king and given to Jeroboam. Solomon thus "did evil in the sight of Yahweh" and went not fully after Yahweh as did David his father. Yet even in the context of Solomon's sin we find the following formula: "Yet in your days I shall not do it [that is, rend away the northern tribes), for the sake of David your father."³⁶ A gain, it is said of Solomon by Ahijah: "But I shall not take the whole kingdom from his hand for I will make him a prince (*nāšîr*) all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant whom I have chosen, who has kept my commandments and statutes . . . to his son I will give one tribe in order that there may be a kief for David my servant always before me in Jerusalem the city which I have chosen for myself, to place my name

31. 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; 2 Chron. 21:7.

32. Dtn. 17:14-20.

33. See above chapter 9. Cf. G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, p. 89; *Old Testament Theology*, I, 344ff.

34. See above chapter 9 for a translation of Psalm 89.

there."³⁷ Even in the context of Ahijah's prophecy of the division of the Kingdom, however, we find the striking promise, "And I will afflict the seed of David on this account yet not always."³⁸

The refrain persists. Of Abijah we read: "but his heart was not perfect with Yahweh his god as the heart of David his father. Yet for the sake of David Yahweh his god gave him a kief in Jerusalem in setting up his son after him and in establishing Jerusalem because David did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh."³⁹

Jehoram of Judah "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel . . . and did that which was evil in the eyes of Yahweh. But Yahweh was unwilling to destroy Judah for the sake of David his servant as he promised him to give him a kief for his sons always."⁴⁰

Interwoven with these repeated formulae is another element belonging to this theme. While the kings of Israel were always condemned, each having done "that which was evil in the eyes of Yahweh," judgment does not come automatically upon the kings of Judah. Certain kings, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and above all Josiah "did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, as did David his father." Even King David and Hezekiah had peccadilloes. Josiah alone escaped all criticism. Josiah "did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in all the ways of David his father and did not turn aside to the right or to the left."⁴¹ "And like him there was no king before him turning to Yahweh with his whole mind and soul and strength according to all the law of Moses."⁴²

The second theme reaches its climax in the reform of Josiah, 2 Kings 22: 1-23: 25. We have been prepared for this climax. Josiah, as already predicted, becomes the protagonist of the drama, extirpating the counter-cultus of Jeroboam at Bethel. He attempted to restore the kingdom or empire of David in all detail. The cultus was centralized according to the ancient law of the sanctuary, and Passover was celebrated as it had not been "since the days of the Judges." The story of the renewal of the covenant and the resurrection of the Davidic empire by the reincorporation of the North is told at a length not given to the labors of other approved kings after David.

37. 1 Kings 11:34-36.

38. See above, n. 21.

39. 1 Kings 15:3-5a.

40. 2 Kings 8:18f.

The Deuteronomistic historian thus contrasted two themes, the sin of Jeroboam and the faithfulness of David and Josiah. Jeroboam led Israel into idolatry and ultimate destruction as all the prophets had warned. In Josiah who cleansed the sanctuary founded by David and brought a final end to the shrine founded by Jeroboam, in Josiah who sought Yahweh with all his heart, the promises to David were to be fulfilled. Punishment and salvation had indeed alternated in the history of Judah . . . as in the era of the Judges. Yahweh has afflicted Judah, but will not forever.

The two themes in the Deuteronomistic Book of Kings appear to reflect two theological stances, one stemming from the old Deuteronomic covenant theology which regarded destruction of dynasty and people as tied necessarily to apostasy, and a second, drawn from the royal ideology in Judah: the eternal promises to David. In the second instance, while chastisement has regularly come upon Judah in her seasons of apostasy, hope remains in the Davidic house to which Yahweh has sworn fidelity for David's sake, and for Jerusalem, the city of God. A righteous scion of David has sprung from Judah.

In fact, the juxtaposition of the two themes, of threat and promise, provide the platform of the Josianic reform. The Deuteronomistic history, insofar as these themes reflect its central concerns, may be described as a propaganda work of the Josianic reformation and imperial program. In particular, the document speaks to the North, calling Israel to return to Judah and to Yahweh's sole legitimate shrine in Jerusalem, asserting the claims of the ancient Davidic monarchy upon all Israel. Even the destruction of Bethel and the cults of the high places was predicted by the prophets, pointing to the centrality of Josiah's role for northern Israel. It speaks equally or more emphatically to Judah. Its restoration to ancient grandeur depends on the return of the nation to the covenant of Yahweh and on the wholehearted return of her king to the ways of David, the servant of Yahweh. In Josiah is centered the hope of a new Israel and the renewing of the "sure mercies" shown to David.⁴¹ Judah's idolatry has been its undoing again and again in the past. The days of the Judges, of Samuel and Saul reveal a pattern of alternating judgment and deliverance. But in David and in his son Josiah is salvation.

Before the pericope on Manasseh there is no hint in the Deuteronomistic history that hope in the Davidic house and in ultimate national

salvation is futile. The very persistence of this theme of hope in the promises to David and his house is proof that it was relevant to the original audience or readership of the Deuteronomistic historian. It is not enough that the faithfulness of God to David and Jerusalem merely delay the end, postpone disaster. The historian has combined his motifs of the old covenant forms of the league and of the north, with those taken from the royal theology of the Davidids to create a complex and eloquent program, or rather, one may say, he has written a great sermon to rally Israel to the new possibility of salvation, through obedience to the ancient covenant of Yahweh, and hope in the new David, King Josiah.

The Theme of the Exilic Edition of the History (Dtr²)

There is to be found in the Deuteronomistic history a subtheme which we have suppressed until now in the interest of clarifying the major motifs of the Josianic edition of Kings. We should attribute this subtheme to the Exilic editor (Dtr²) who retouched or overwrote the Deuteronomistic work to bring it up to date in the Exile, to record the fall of Jerusalem, and to reshape the history, with a minimum of reworking, into a document relevant to exiles for whom the bright expectations of the Josianic era were hopelessly past.

This subtheme is found articulated most clearly in the pericope dealing with Manasseh and the significance of his sins of syncretism and idolatry, in 2 Kings 21:2-15. The section is modeled almost exactly on the section treating the fall of Samaria.

He [Manasseh] set up the image of Asherah which he had made in the house of which Yahweh had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem which I chose of all the tribes of Israel, I will set my name forever, nor will I again cause Israel's foot to wander from the land which I have given to their fathers, only if they be careful to do according to all which I commanded them and to all the law which my servant Moses commanded them." But they did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray so that they did more evil than the nations which Yahweh destroyed before the children of Israel. And Yahweh spoke by his servant's the prophets saying, because Manasseh the king of Judah has done these abominations . . . and caused Israel to sin with his idols, therefore, thus saith Yahweh, God of Israel "Behold I shall bring such evil on Jerusalem

met of Ahab's house, and I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes out a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. I shall cast off the remnant of my possession and I will give them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become spoil and prey for looting to all their enemies."⁴⁴

One is struck by the weakness of the phrase, "Yahweh spoke by his servants the prophets, saying . . ." No specific prophet is named by name. Moreover, no prophecies concerning Manasseh's great sin, and the inevitable rejection it entailed, are to be found in the earlier parts of the Deuteronomistic history. Not one.⁴⁵ On the contrary, the hopes of the reader have been steadily titillated by the promises. All has pointed to a future salvation in virtue of the fidelity of Yahweh to the Davidic house and to Josiah, who called for a wholehearted return to the god of Israel's covenant. Moreover, we are driven to ask, why is the culprit not Solomon or even Rehoboam? In short, there are a number of reasons to suppose that the attribution of Judah's demise to the unforgivable sins of Manasseh is tacked on and not integral to the original structure of the history.

The same must be said for the content of the prophecy of Hulda which speaks of the delay of disaster owing to Josiah's piety and penitence.⁴⁶

Attached to the end of the account of Josiah's reforms we find the following significant addition: "and after [Josiah] none like him arose. Yet Yahweh did not turn back from the heat of his great wrath which was kindled against Judah on account of all the vexations with which Manasseh vexed him. And Yahweh said, 'Also Judah I will turn aside from my presence even as I turned aside Israel, and I will reject this city which I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, my name shall be there.'"⁴⁷ This is evidently from the hand of an Exilic editor.

44. 2 Kings 21:7-14.

45. We speak here of the Deuteronomist's work. Whether the Exilic editor had in mind prophecies of Micah, Zephaniah, and especially Jeremiah, we cannot tell. The absence of explicit allusion to Jeremiah's prophecies in the Deuteronomistic history is most extraordinary if we suppose the latter to be an Exilic work. The silence is far easier to explain if we suppose that the great history had its principal edition in the time of Josiah. The close ties between Jeremiah and the Deuteronomistic school, early and late, are well known, of course, as is the traditional attribution of the Book of Kings to Jeremiah himself (Falmud Babli, Baba Batra 15a).

46. 2 Kings 22:16-20. No doubt there is an old nucleus in Hulda's prophecy which

There are a sprinkling of passages in the Deuteronomistic work which threaten defeat and captivity. These need not necessarily stem from an Exilic editor. Captivity and exile were all too familiar fates in the Neo-Assyrian age. More important, the threat of exile or captivity was common in the curses of Ancient Near Eastern treaties and came naturally over into the curses attached to Israel's covenant.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, there are a limited number of passages which appear to be addressed to exiles and to call for their repentance, or in one case even promise restoration of the captives to their land. These latter are most naturally regarded as coming from the hand of an Exilic editor.

Such passages include Deuteronomy 4:27-31 which is addressed to captives "scattered among the nations whither Yahweh will lead you away," and gives to them the assurance that Yahweh will not "forget the covenant of your fathers." Deuteronomy 30:1-10, promising return from captivity, must be coupled with Deuteronomy 4:27-31 as an Exilic addition in a style distinct from the hand of the primary Deuteronomistic author (Dtr¹). Other passages which include short glosses can be listed: Deuteronomy 28:36f., 63-68; 29:27; Joshua 23:11-13, 15f.; 1 Samuel 12:25; 1 Kings 2:4; 6:11-13; 8:25b, 46-53; 9:4-9; 2 Kings 17:19; 20:17f.⁴⁹

The Two Editions of the Deuteronomistic History

We are pressed to the conclusion by these data that there were two editions of the Deuteronomistic history, one written in the era of Josiah as a programmatic document of his reform and of his revival of the Davidic state. In this edition the themes of judgment and hope interact to provide a powerful motivation both for the return to the austere and jealous god of old Israel, and for the reunion of the alienated half-kingdoms of Israel and Judah under the aegis of Josiah. The second edition, completed about 550 B.C., not only updated the history by adding a chronicle of events subsequent to Josiah's reign, it also attempted to transform the work into a sermon on history addressed to Judaeans exiles. In this revision the account of Manasseh's reign in

48. See D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), p. 34 and *passim*. Cf. J. Harvey, "Le 'Rib-pattern,' réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance," *Biblica*, 43 (1962), esp. 180, 189-196.

49. Obviously the end of the history, 2 Kings 23:26-25:30, belongs to the Exilic section. It may be described as suspect; e.g., Dtn. 30:11-20; and 1

particular was retouched, conforming Judah's fate to that of Samaria and Manasseh's role to that of Jeroboam. This new element does not exhaust the work of the Exilic Deuteronomist, but in general the retouching by his pen was light, not wholly obscuring the earlier framework.

When we examine the Exilic editor's account of the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah, we find that the story is told laconically. There is no peroration on the fall of Jerusalem, much less an elaborate one like that upon the destruction of Samaria. The events are recorded without comment, without theological reflection. This is remarkable, given the Deuteronomist's penchant for composing final addresses, edifying prayers, and theological exhortations on significant events. One might argue that the Deuteronomist has said his say, has said earlier all that is necessary to prepare the reader for an understanding of the fall of Jerusalem. However, it must be said that the Deuteronomistic historian never tires of repetition of his themes and clichés and is fond of bracketing events and periods with an explicit theological framework. The omission of a final, edifying discourse on the fall of chosen Zion and the Davidic crown is better explained by attributing these final terse paragraphs of the history to a less articulate Exilic editor.

In the light of our understanding of the two editions of the work and their different tendencies, the primary edition (Dtr¹) from the author of the era of Josiah, the second (Dtr²) from a late Deuteronomist of the Exile, a number of puzzles and apparent contradictions in the Deuteronomistic history are dissolved or explained. Little or no hint of inevitable disaster is found in the Deuteronomistic historian's framework and transitional passages in Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. Yet the Book of Kings and the Deuteronomistic history in its final form offer little hope to Judah, as Noth has correctly maintained. In the retouching of the original work by an Exilic hand, the original theme of hope is overwritten and contradicted, namely the expectation of the restoration of the state under a righteous Davidid to the remembered greatness of the golden age of David. Von Rad's instincts were correct in searching here for an element of grace and hope. The strange shape of the Exilic edition with its muted hope of repentance (as Wolff has described it) and possible return (Deuteronomy 30: 1-10) is best explained, we believe, by the relatively modest extent of the Exilic editor's work and his fidelity

anti-climax of Josiah's reign, falling as it does, in the present form of the history, after Judah's fate has been sealed by Manasseh. This explains the contrast between the Deuteronomistic history and the great works of the Exile with their lively hope of restoration; of the eternal covenant and return (the Priestly work), of a new Exodus and Conquest (Second Isaiah), and of a new allotment of the land, a new Temple, and a new Davidid (Ezekiel).⁵⁰ The failure of such a dominant theme of God's coming restoration can be explained best by removing the primary Deuteronomistic history from the setting of the Exile.

Our analysis of the themes of the Deuteronomistic history has led us to views which superficially resemble positions taken in the nineteenth century. At least we have opted for dating the fundamental composition of the Deuteronomistic history in the era of Josiah. At the same time, we must assert broad agreement with Noth's description of the primary Deuteronomistic historian (Noth's Dtr, our Dtr¹) as a creative author and historian and our full agreement with the sharp distinction made by Noth and the late Ivan Engnell between the Tetrateuch (or Priestly work) and the Deuteronomistic history. In our view, however, the Priestly work is the work par excellence of the mid-sixth century B.C.; essentially, the Deuteronomistic history is a work of the late Kingdom, suffering only minor modification by a member of the Deuteronomistic school in the Exile.

50. I hope to discuss elsewhere the date of the Priestly work and of Ezekiel 40-48; see also the work of M. Cross, "The Priestly Tabernacle," pp. 209-228; meanwhile,