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I & II KINGS

A Commentary

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To
The late Rev. Professor H. H. Rowley
in token of gratitude
for his continued help and encouragement as a colleague
and friend
for the stimulus of his many publications
for his loyal support of our present project
in his failing health
and as a parting tribute
this book is inscribed

UUÅ	*Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift*, Uppsala
V	Vulgate
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*, Leiden
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, Leipzig
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Giessen and Berlin
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, Leipzig
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Tübingen

QUMRAN SCROLLS

1QIs^a	Isaiah: First Scroll from Qumran Cave I
1QIs^b	Isaiah: Second Scroll from Qumran Cave I
4QSam^b	Samuel: Second Scroll from Qumran Cave IV
5QK	Fragments of a MS of Kings from Qumran Cave V
6QK	Fragments of a MS of Kings from Qumran Cave VI

II

INTRODUCTION

1. THE COMPOSITION OF KINGS

KINGS IN THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF KINGS were divided into two roughly even parts in G, probably for the sake of convenience when MS rolls were still in use. In Josephus and the Talmud, however, the original Hebrew version was visualized as one undivided book, and there is no indication of division in Hebrew until the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. In spite of the division, Kings was obviously regarded as a unity with Samuel in G, which classifies I and II Kings as III and IV *Basileiai* ('reigns' or 'dynasties'), certain MSS of G carrying II *Basileiai* (MT II Sam.) forward to MT I K. 2.11 (the death of David) and others to I K. 2.46 (the establishment of Solomon's throne). The same unity is indicated by the common source used in II Sam. 9–20 and I K. 1 and 2 in the story of the Davidic succession, and by the fact that the whole work is arranged and interpolated by the same compiler of the Deuteronomistic school.

In a larger context, Kings, with Samuel, is the culmination of the second division of the Jewish canon, the Former Prophets, including Joshua and Judges. The classification of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings as 'the Former Prophets' emphasizes their character as primarily the theological interpretation of the history of Israel from the settlement of Israel in Palestine until the Exile. The work is developed from the conviction of the operation of the word of God expressed in the adjurations with which the ritual and social implications of the covenant were accepted in, as we believe, the days of the judges in the covenant-sacrament at the central shrine of the sacral confederacy of Israel (Deut. 27.15–26) and presented in public proclamation in the same context (Deut. 28.15ff.). Deuteronomy is

properly the introduction to Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, aptly called by Noth, who first recognized the unity of this great work, the Deuteronomistic History.[a] Owing to the fact that large portions of the work are from original sources, there is no stylistic unity to indicate a single self-contained work. But the self-contained character is shown by the consistent theology which governed the choice and use of sources in all parts of the work. Stylistically, too, its unity is indicated by the punctuation of the history at significant crises with passages in familiar Deuteronomic style, reviewing the past and adumbrating the future, with all problems set in perspective and duly emphasized from the standpoint of Deuteronomic theology. These may be either in narrative form, as the summary of Joshua's conquests (Josh. 12), the programme of the book of Judges (Judg. 2.11–3.6) and the review of the tragic past of the Northern kingdom at its fall in 722 BC (II K. 17.7ff.), or in speeches from the protagonists, e.g. of Yahweh to Joshua on the eve of the occupation (Josh. 1.2–9), the address of Joshua on the completion of the occupation, which anticipates the problems of the next phase in Judges (Josh. 23f.), the speech of Samuel, which marks the end of the period of the judges (I Sam. 12), the divine oracle by Nathan, which heralds the hereditary monarchy under the house of David and the building of the Temple (II Sam. 7.18–29), and the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple (I K. 8.14ff.).

More particularly significant, in view of the development of the theme of this great historical work from the standpoint of the consequences of Israel's commitment as a sacral community in the context of the ancient covenant-sacrament expressed in Deut. 26.16–28.68, is the renewal of the covenant at significant junctures in the history, as in Josh. 24; I Sam. 7.3–9, which is also implied in the introductions to the deliverances by the great judges (Judg. 3.7–11, 12–15a, 30; 4.1a, 2a, 23f.; 5.31c; 6.1–2a, 7–10; 8.28, 33–35; 10.6–16; 11.33b; cf. I Sam. 7.3–9, which reflects God's contention with his people in a public fast with relation to the covenant-sacrament).[b] This central theme of the covenant is sustained in the divine covenant with the king of the house of David as representative of the people (II Sam. 7.8–16; I K. 2.2–4; 8.25f.), in the light of which the

[a] *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 1957.

[b] This has been recognized by W. Beyerlin, 'Gattung und Herkunft des Rahmens im Richterbuch', *Tradition und Situation*, ed. E. Würthwein and O. Kaiser, 1963, pp. 1–29.

Deuteronomistic historian explains God's forbearance with the nation under her kings and the ultimate fall of the house of David and the nation.

The unity of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, with Deuteronomy as an introduction, is further indicated by overlaps in subject-matter. Thus forty-five years span the time between Joshua's reconnaissance of Canaan, visualized as immediately after the Exodus, and his apportionment of the land, allowing five years for the conquest of the land East and West of the Jordan; Josh. 23f. anticipates the problems of the settlement in Judges; the Philistine oppression, stated in Judg. 13.1 to have lasted forty years, is still the theme of I Sam.; and I K. 1f. continues the theme of the establishment of a hereditary monarchy under the house of David, which is the subject of II Sam. 7ff.

Finally, this impression of the unity of this historical work seems to be confirmed by the schematic chronology which is so marked a feature of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and the reigns of David and Solomon in the beginning of Kings. The statement that the Temple was begun in Solomon's fourth year, 480 years after the Exodus (I K. 6.1) seems to be connected with the periods of forty, twenty and eighty years which recur in Judges, and Noth has used this as an argument for the unity of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings according to the following chronological scheme:[a]

The death of Moses 'in the 40th year', sc. after the Exodus (Deut. 1.3)	40
The completion of the conquest under Joshua forty-five years after his reconnaissance of Canaan, visualized as immediately after the Exodus (Josh. 14.10)	5
Eight years of oppression from which Othniel delivered the people (Judg. 3.8), followed by forty years' rest	48
Moabite oppression for eighteen years (Judg. 3.14) and eighty years' rest (Judg. 3.30)	98

[a] M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 18–27. We cite this chronology, not because of its historical probability, which has obvious limitations, though there is in the odd numbers a basis of historical fact, but simply to emphasize the schematic character of the whole as an element in Noth's argument for the unity of Joshua-Judges-Samuel-Kings. On the difficulties and problems of this chronology and our proposed solution see J. Gray, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, Century Bible, 1967, pp. 4–7. Beyond the relevance to the unity of the Deuteronomistic History, this schematic chronology concerns only the reigns of David and Solomon, and so does not demand further discussion here. See further, pp. 8f.

Oppression under Sisera for twenty years (Judg. 4.3) followed by forty years' rest	60
Midianite oppression for seven years (Judg. 6.1) followed by forty years' rest	47
Abimelech's reign: three years	3
Tola as judge: twenty-three years (Judg. 10.2)	23
Jair as judge: twenty-two years (Judg. 10.3)	22
Ammonite oppression for eighteen years (Judg. 10.8)	18
Jephthah as judge: six years (Judg. 12.7)	6
Ibzan as judge: seven years (Judg. 12.9)	7
Elon as judge: ten years (Judg. 12.11)	10
Abdon as judge: eight years (Judg. 12.14)	8
Philistine oppression for forty years (Judg. 13.1), including the latter part of Eli's forty-year office (I Sam. 4.18), Samson's leadership (Judg. 16.31) and Samuel's career until the elevation of Saul, or until his death (time unspecified)	40
Saul's reign: two years (I Sam. 13.1)	2
David's reign: forty years (I K. 2.11)	40
The foundation of the Temple in Solomon's fourth year (I K. 6.1), his first year perhaps coinciding with David's last (I K. 1)	3
Total	480

In this essentially theological work, the largely schematized presentation of Israel's occupation of Palestine serves the purpose of the Deuteronomistic historian to emphasize the success which followed when Moses' influence was still felt in holding Israel to obedience to her covenant commitment, as Josh. 1 emphasizes, in accordance with the promise of blessing in the public proclamation in the covenant-sacrament in Deut. 28.1–14, which we may regard as the text of which the book of Joshua is an amplification. In Judges, Samuel and Kings, phases in the history of Israel are adduced to illustrate the theme of Deut. 28.15ff., the disastrous consequences of disloyalty to the law of God. The books of Samuel lead up to the main theme, the establishment of the monarchy, which under David is visualized as a sacred trust, where the king represents the people as the sacral community, the people of God, expressed in the conception of the divine covenant with the house of David (II Sam. 7.8–16). Thus it is

that the books of Kings are not, as the Assyrian annals, full and detailed objective history, but an account of the vicissitudes of the kings of Israel and Judah, which involve those of their people, according as they notably exemplify the principles of reward and retribution following fidelity to, or flouting of, the covenant commitment.

In Kings, the fidelity of the kings to the covenant commitment is assessed by the somewhat mechanical criterion of cultic orthodoxy. Thus the various kings of Israel are condemned for their addiction to the cult established by Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and the kings of Judah are appraised according to their fidelity to the central shrine, the Temple in Jerusalem, all being stigmatized for their tolerance of the local 'high places' except Hezekiah and Josiah. Here the editor applies the principles of the Deuteronomic reformation under Josiah, though the circles which preserved that tradition flourished for a long time after the reform, continuing the work of editing the Deuteronomistic History at least to 561, the last event recorded being the favour shown to Jehoiachin by Evil-Merodach on his accession in that year. The hand of the Deuteronomist, though most obvious in the main framework of Kings in editorial introductions to, and conclusions of, the various reigns, is evident besides in characteristic stereotyped language, figures and norms of appraisal in commentaries on events in the particular reigns of the kings.

Again it must be emphasized that the record in Kings is not an objective history, nor is the interest centred in individual reigns. This part of the Deuteronomistic history is primarily concerned with the monarchy and its failure in large perspective, and might well be entitled 'The Hebrew Monarchy: its Rise, Decline and Fall'. Hence the materials for the history have been treated selectively according to theological principles. The result is a philosophy, or theological interpretation, of history, which Jewish tradition recognized by including Kings in that division of the canon of Scripture known as the Prophets.

THE CONTENT OF KINGS

The Books of Kings begin with an account of David's last days, the circumstances of Solomon's succession and his reign, continuing with the disruption of the kingdom at his death, and giving the parallel histories of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel until the collapse of the latter in 722 BC and of the former in 586. The last event referred to,

however, is the alleviation of the lot of the exiled king Jehoiachin on the accession of Evil-Merodach to the throne of Babylon in 561, this being, we believe, an exilic supplement by a redactor.

KINGS A COMPOSITE WORK

In the Deuteronomistic history, Kings is a composite work like the Pentateuch, though the indications of this are different in the case of Kings. Here we are not so much concerned with ill-edited parallel sources in the account of the same events, which betray their presence by doublets and discrepancies. The underlying sources may rather be detected by the different nature of their subject-matter and their style. Indeed there is explicit reference to various sources of information, all obviously written sources, e.g. the Book of the Acts of Solomon (I K. 11.41), the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, and the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. It is not difficult to conjecture with a fair degree of probability the amount of the content of Kings drawn from these respective sources, though the references to these sources indicate beyond doubt that they contained more matter than was actually incorporated in the Books of Kings.

PRE-EXILIC COMPILATION AND EXILIC REDACTION

The critical view of the Deuteronomistic Book of Kings is that it is a pre-exilic compilation with exilic redaction and expansion. This has been questioned, particularly by Hölscher,[a] who dates the whole of the compilation of Kings *c.* 500, mainly because he dates the Book of Deuteronomy and the work of the school that produced it in the post-exilic period, but before Nehemiah. This view that the Deuteronomistic compilation of Kings is an exilic work is supported by Noth (*op. cit.*). More recently A. Jepsen[b] has proposed a pre-exilic compilation on the basis of a synchronistic chronicle of Israel and Judah with excerpts from the annals of both kingdoms. This he terms R1, ascribing it to a priest towards the end of the monarchy.[c] Jepsen further proposes that the main redaction, which incorporated prophetic sources with traditions from Solomon's reign and the

[a] 'Das Buch der Könige, seine Quelle und seine Redaktion', *Eucharisterion* (Gunkel Festschrift) I, 1923, pp. 158ff.

[b] *Die Quellen des Königsbuches*, 1953, pp. 76ff.

[c] Priestly authorship is suggested by the fact that the characteristic feature is criticism of the cult in the monarchy and that generally the only persons named besides kings and queen-mothers are priests.

Story of the Davidic Succession (I K. 1–2), was exilic. This (R2) he terms the Nebiistic redaction, or the Deuteronomistic redaction proper with its distinctive theology, as distinct from the earlier priestly redaction (RI). Like Noth, Jepsen admits later adjustments, which he terms the Levitical redaction. While admitting such late hands in Kings, we question if this can be termed a full-scale redaction. The view that the extant Books of Kings are a pre-exilic work of the Deuteronomistic compiler with exilic redaction from the same circles is taken in Fohrer's revision of Sellin's *Introduction*.[a] Fohrer would date the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic compilation between 622 BC, the initiation of Josiah's reform, and the king's death in 609, on the grounds that the compiler is apparently unaware of the violent death of Josiah. This view is based, however, on the prediction of the prophetess Huldah (II K. 22.20), and strangely ignores the factual statement in II K. 23.29. So it may be doubted. Our own view is that the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic compilation ended between the outbreak of Jehoiakim's revolt against Nebuchadrezzar in 598 and his death in 597 (see below, p. 753.), from which point the history is continued, possibly by the exilic redactor.

There is no doubt that, whether we agree with Hölscher, Noth, and Jepsen, or regard Kings as a pre-exilic compilation with exilic redaction, there is a consistency in the main theme, that of Israel's sin and retribution. There are, however, in our opinion, clear signs that the body of the work was pre-exilic. In a study of this problem W. Nowack[b] conveniently summarized such evidence. After Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Temple (I K. 8.14ff.), for instance, the divine promise is naturally expected, and is in fact given to the king (9.1–5); this, however, is followed somewhat incongruously by a threat to the people, which foresees the Exile (vv. 6–9). Here the address to the king as representative of the Davidic house and also, presumably, as representative of the people is natural in the pre-exilic period, when the community was intact, whereas the abrupt change to the address to the people in the second person plural reflects a later period with the development of the consciousness of the individual, as Mowinckel has noticed in the case of psalms of lamentation.[c] In the note on the liquidation of the Northern kingdom as retribution for the sins of Jeroboam in II K. 17.18ff. this theme is

[a] E. Sellin-G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (ET 1968), p. 248.

[b] *Deuteronomium und Regum*, BZAW XLI (Marti Festschrift), 1925, pp. 221–31.

[c] *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I, 1962, p. 38.

rudely interrupted by vv. 19f., an obvious exilic note on the sin which brought about the final destruction of Judah, which is prompted by the statement in v. 18b that Judah survived the fall of Samaria. The suggestion is surely that the note on the fall of Samaria which continues at vv. 21ff. after the interruption is from an earlier compilation than vv. 19f., which are certainly from an exilic redactor. This is also the natural conclusion from the oracle on the disruption of Solomon's kingdom (I K. 11.29–39), where it is stated (vv. 32–35) that one tribe shall be left to the scion of David 'that David my servant may have a lamp always before me in Jerusalem . . .' (v. 36). The last evidence cited by Nowack, the reference to Edom in revolt from Judah 'to this day' (II K. 8.22), is less convincing. 'To this day' usually indicates the compiler or redactor, and if that were so in this case it would indicate the former rather than the latter and point to a time when Judah still stood as an independent state which remembered its claim on Edom. In this context, we are not convinced that the statement is from the Deuteronomist rather than from the original annalistic source he was handling, especially if this source was a literary one prepared from state archives, and so itself a compilation. This apart, however, there seems to us sufficient evidence for a pre-exilic compilation and an exilic redaction.

The *terminus post quem* for this redaction would most naturally be the note on the alleviation of the lot of the captive Jehoiachin in 561 (II K. 25.27).[a] The chronological system in the Deuteronomistic History, however, as is emphasized by Mowinckel,[b] in reckoning from Exodus, regards the foundation of Solomon's Temple as the middle point of its period, thus visualizing 537/6 as the end of that period, when, presumably, worship was resumed by the first group of exiles to return after the fall of the neo-Babylonian Empire. We think that the silence regarding this significant event, in which Zerubbabel, a prince of the royal house of Judah, was probably involved, is an insuperable obstacle to the view that the chronological scheme is an essential part of the main Deuteronomistic redaction. The

[a] This is the only thing that suggests a Mesopotamian origin for the Deuteronomistic history, which is urged by Sellin (*Einleitung*, ed. L. Rost, 1950, p. 77). Noth, on the contrary, takes the full and accurate topographical notes throughout to indicate that the compilation was done in Palestine, possibly about Bethel or Mizpah (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 1957, p. 110, n.1). Jepsen (*op. cit.*, pp. 95ff.) also regards the work as produced in Palestine, possibly at Mizpah.

[b] 'Die Chronologie der israelitischen und jüdischen Könige', *Acta Orientalia* X, 1932, pp. 168–70.

basis of the chronological scheme is the reference in I K. 6.1 to the foundation of the Temple 480 years after the Exodus. This, as an examination of the text shows, is certainly post-exilic, and is, we maintain, a post-redactional gloss certainly from after 537/6. Late redactional notes of a minor character, showing sensitivity to Levitical qualifications for the priesthood and the reflection of the sanctuary of Bethel on the status of the Temple in Jerusalem, reflect the standpoint of P and the Chronicler. This matter suggests to Jepsen a third redaction, called by him 'the Levitical redaction'.[a] He plausibly takes this to reflect the Levitical protest against the degradation of the order proposed by such programmes as that in Ezek. 44.9ff. We are less convinced by his view[b] that this redaction reflects antipathy to the renewed claims of a revived sanctuary at Bethel after 516, which is, of course, pure conjecture.

TREATMENT OF SOURCES

The Deuteronomistic compiler handled various older sources, generally most faithfully. His subject and his theology, however, determined his selection of sources. Some of these were admitted into his work virtually as they stood; others were used selectively. Deuteronomistic comment and interpretation is added, but in such a way as to leave little doubt as to what is source and what is editorial comment.

PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION AND TREATMENT OF SOURCES: CULTIC ORTHODOXY

The major interests of the Deuteronomistic compiler are at once obvious, namely, first, cultic orthodoxy according to principles familiar in the Book of Deuteronomy, centred in the Temple in Jerusalem, as the criterion of fidelity to the will of God for Israel, secondly, the fulfilment of the word of God in prophecy, and thirdly, divine retribution occasioned by infidelity to Deuteronomistic orthodoxy, foreshadowed by the curses in the sacrament of the renewal of the covenant in the ancient tribal amphictyony (Deut. 27–28) and later in prophecy. This dominating theme occasions the selection of material from the various sources, and dictates the length and detail in which certain elements are treated. This gives a definite

[a] *Die Quellen des Königsbuches*, pp. 102ff.

[b] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

unity to Kings, which is the culmination of the Deuteronomistic presentation of the history of Israel in Palestine.[a]

In contrast to scanty treatment of certain themes of major importance from the point of view of secular history and in his sporadic citations of annalistic sources in such matters, the Deuteronomist expatiates on other themes of less importance from a strictly historical point of view. He omits reference, for instance, to anything in the first ten years of Josiah's reign and proceeds straight to the reformation, which he dates from his 18th year (II K. 22.3–23.28). Important political events in the history of Western Asia involving Egypt and Babylon are mentioned in 23.29 simply because, incidentally, they involved the death of the reformer Josiah (vv. 29f.), whose motives, to be sure, in opposing Necho at Megiddo are not mentioned. Here we detect one of the main interests of the Deuteronomistic compiler. He is interested in cultic orthodoxy according to those principles which conditioned the reformation of Josiah and which the Book of Deuteronomy emphasizes. Notable instances of adherence to those principles occasion lengthy treatment, as in the case of Hezekiah (II K. 18–20), though the length at which his reign is treated is largely owing to the incorporation of sources on which the compiler of the traditions of Isaiah of Jerusalem also drew. On the other hand, notable instances of aberration from Deuteronomic orthodoxy occasion similar treatment at length, the most notable instance being the reign of Manasseh (II K. 21.1–18), where nothing at all is said of the most important political aspect of his reign, his personal involvement in Assyrian politics in Egypt, which we know only through Assyrian annals. It is this principle of retribution for aberration from Deuteronomic orthodoxy that conditioned the particular presentation of the reign of Solomon; the disorders of his reign, the revolts of Edom (I K. 11.14–22), Damascus (vv. 23–25), and Jeroboam (vv. 26–40), whatever their sources, being presented as the consequence of his tolerance of alien cults (ch. 11). The disruption of the kingdom (ch. 12) merits similar treatment at comparative length not merely because of its significance in the politics of Israel, but mainly because it emphasizes the principle of retribution on Solomon's defection from Deuteronomic principles and from the moral obligations of the Davidic covenant (II Sam. 7.12ff.), which is another recurrent theme in the Deuteronomistic compilation (I K. 11.32–39). The reign of Jeroboam, though such matters of

[a] So Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 100–10.

political significance as his actual relation with Egypt and his constitutional relationship to the various elements in Israel are entirely ignored, is dealt with at length (12.25–14.20) because of his violation of Deuteronomic principles in patronizing the cults at Dan and Bethel, a baneful legacy which, in the eyes of the Deuteronomist, he bequeathed to all his successors on the throne of Israel, whose disasters until the final calamity were regarded as its consequences. This conditions the comparatively lengthy treatment of the final collapse of the Northern kingdom (II K. 17.4–23), and the sequel (vv. 24–41), where the new cult at Bethel owes its place and prominence to the dominating ecclesiastical interest of the Deuteronomist.

The decline and fall of Judah, probably a matter of personal experience to the compiler, is presented also as retribution for infidelity to Deuteronomic principles of orthodoxy, being anticipated by the stigma which Judah shared with Israel in II K. 17.19f., though this passage is from the exilic redactor rather than from the pre-exilic compiler (see p. 8).

PROPHECY AND FULFILMENT

In the unusually lengthy treatment of the reign of Jeroboam I another guiding principle in the method of the Deuteronomistic compiler emerges, namely the interest in the fulfilment of the word of God in prophecy. The steady decline and final ruin of Israel is presented as according to the divine economy. No doubt the incident of Ahijah's acclamation of Jeroboam (I K. 11.29ff.), with its fulfilment in 12.1–20, was treated at length because the tradition was already found by the Deuteronomist in an independent prophetic source, and because it represented the extent of native Israelite opposition to Solomon, but the passage as it stands, with its peculiar style, language, and thought, emphasizing the moral obligations of the Davidic covenant, is indisputably Deuteronomistic. The incident, we feel, was elaborated by the Deuteronomist in anticipation of the defection and final ruin of Israel according to the word of God. This also plainly determines the Deuteronomist's selection and elaboration of the activity of Ahijah (I K. 14.1–18) and an unnamed prophet (13.1–10) in the sequel. This theme of prophecy and fulfilment gives coherence to the Deuteronomistic presentation of the history of Israel through the dynasties of Jeroboam I (especially I K. 15.27–30), Baasha (especially 16.1–14), and Omri, and it is significant for the standpoint of the Deuteronomist that it is only as subsidiary to this

theme that he condescends to introduce historical details in the various *coups d'état* of the usurpers, as Noth points out.[a] The disorders, decline, and final fall of the house of Omri are represented as the consequence of defection from Deuteronomic standards in the tolerance of the Baal-cult under the influence of Jezebel and her family (II K. 9), hence the prominence given to the famous trial by ordeal on Carmel (I K. 18) and to the dramatic extirpation of the Canaanite fertility cult by Jehu (II K. 10.18–28). Again the Deuteronomist, out of respect to the prophet as the representative of the native Israelite tradition over against the fertility cult, incorporates a substantial amount of the Elijah saga, some of it simply to enhance the authority of the prophet, e.g. I K. 17, as the final v. 24 indicates: 'Now do I know that you are a man of God and that the word of Yahweh in your mouth is truth.' Thus introduced, the prophet leads the attack on Baalism (ch. 18), and in the context of his protest against the absolution of Ahab in the affair of Naboth's vineyard, a corollary of his tolerance of the amoral cult of Baal, Elijah utters his famous oracle on Ahab and his house (21.19ff., with variation in vv. 23 and 24). This, with its fulfilment in the revolt of Jehu (II K. 9.7–10, 26, 30–37), gives coherence to the account of the dynasty of Omri, though the unity is disrupted by other variations on the theme of prophetic opposition to the house of Omri (e.g. I K. 20.35–43) and prophecy and fulfilment, e.g. the incident of Micaiah ben Imlah (I K. 22.2ff.). Other matter from prophetic saga, especially the passages concerning Elisha in II K. 2–7; 8.7–14; 9.1ff., which seems less relevant to the Deuteronomistic presentation of history, secured a place, possibly by mere attraction to the major prophetic theme, but possibly in order to enhance the authority of the prophet. The eclipse of Israelite power by Hazael (II K. 10.32; 13.3ff.), a decisive step to final ruin, is seen as the object of prophetic foresight (II K. 8.7–15), which is treated at the length we expect the Deuteronomist to treat such a theme, and the rally of Israel culminating in the glorious reign of Jeroboam II, regarded by the Deuteronomist as an interval of respite merely, is heralded by a word of God from the prophet Elisha (13.14–19), to which the Deuteronomist gives due prominence, together with an oracle by the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai (14.23–27). Another notable instance where the Deuteronomist expatiates is the reign of Hezekiah, where his treatment is conditioned partly by the tradition of the meritorious orthodoxy of Hezekiah

[a] *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 74f.

(II K. 18.4–7) and partly by his association with the prophet Isaiah, whose word of encouragement was fulfilled in the survival of Jerusalem. It is characteristic of the Deuteronomistic treatment, however, that of the various significant political incidents of Hezekiah's eventful reign, only one (possibly the telescoping of two) is selected for full treatment (II K. 18.13–19.34), being incorporated from a source shared with the Book of Isaiah. The incident of Hezekiah's sickness and that of the Babylonian embassy (20.1–19) have been incorporated with the previous passage, mainly owing to the prophecy of the exile to Babylon (vv. 17f).

INTEREST IN JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE

In this incident we discern another of the major themes of the Deuteronomist, which determines his selection of material from his sources and the length of his treatment of it, namely that of the significance of Jerusalem as the place chosen by God as the site of the Temple. Anything concerning the Temple and Jerusalem as the seat of Yahweh tends to be treated at a disproportionate length, to the exclusion of what seem to us more important political issues.

This is particularly marked in the Deuteronomist's arrangement and treatment of matter concerning the reign of Solomon, which begins properly with the legitimization of Solomon's succession in the dream of Gibeon (I K. 3.4–15). In the seven chapters devoted to Solomon's reign by far the most important single theme is his building of the Temple (6.1–38) and its furnishing (7.13–51) and dedication (ch. 8). In comparison with this single sustained theme other matter is introduced almost sporadically and dealt with comparatively briefly. Much of it, indeed, is presented as subsidiary to the description of the building and furnishing of the Temple. By contrast to 38 verses in which the building of the Temple is described (6.1–38), verses (7.1–12) suffice for the notice of all the other buildings of Solomon in Jerusalem; the metal-work in the Temple is described in detail (7.13–51), but though the other buildings and the palace were also no doubt filled with similar works and *objets d'art*, only passing notice is taken of the amount of gold in the shields in the House of the Forest of Lebanon (I K. 10.16f.), a general reference is made to the drinking vessels of gold (10.21), and three verses (10.18–20) describe the throne of ivory and gold. The relations between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre and the organization of forced labour in Israel occupy a chapter indeed (ch. 5), but not because of their in-

herent political significance in the reign of Solomon, but simply because of their relation to the major theme of the building of the Temple.

Again, in any matter derogatory to the status of the Temple as the sole seat of Yahweh we find the same tendency to expatiate, as in Jeroboam's adaptation of the cult of Yahweh at Bethel and Dan (II K. 12.28–33), the unforgivable sin for the Deuteronomist, and the prophetic denunciation of the Bethel-cult (13.1–10), with its sequel (vv. 11–32). The cultic innovations of Ahaz are noted at length (II K. 16.10–18). The appropriation of Temple treasure for war-indemnity never fails to be recorded, e.g. by Shishak (I K. 14.26–28), Asa (15.18), Jehoash (II K. 12.18), Amaziah (14.14), Hezekiah (18.16), and Nebuchadrezzar (24.13; 25.13–17). The same interest explains the length at which Jehoash's reform of Temple finance (II K. 12.4–16 [5–17]) is treated; we may contrast the scanty reference to Hazael's invasion of Judah (vv. 17[18]f.). For such matter a Temple history has been postulated, and there may well have been such a work based on Temple archives, on which the Deuteronomist drew. In view of the critical attitude to the priesthood in the account of Jehoash's reform of Temple finance (II K. 12.4–16 [5–17]) and the wider interest in the constitution (II K. 11.1–12, 18b–20; 22; 23), this probably belongs to a literary history of the kingdom of Judah, though from priestly hands, the critical attitude to the establishment in Jehoash's time reflecting the Deuteronomists or their precursors. In the passage just cited we appreciate the wider perspective in contrast to the dominating ecclesiastical interest in the accounts of the appropriation of Temple resources for war indemnities, where this detail is presented at the expense of matters of major political importance.

SOURCES: THE STORY OF THE DAVIDIC SUCCESSION

Kings opens with an account of David's last days and the circumstances of Solomon's succession by the agency of Nathan the prophet and Zadok, who now under royal patronage had supplanted the old Levitical priesthood formerly invested in the family of Abiathar. The note in I K. 2.46, 'So was the kingdom established in the hand of Solomon', suggests that this was the end of a certain self-contained block of tradition, and its obvious connection with the court history of David in II Sam. 9–20 suggests that it belongs to the source which is generally designated in studies of Samuel as the Court History.

This affinity, recognized on grounds of style and content by Klostermann in his commentary on Samuel and Kings, and more recently the subject of a penetrating study by Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids*, 1926, is now generally accepted. The theme of this work, implicit throughout, is almost certainly expressed in I K. 1.20 in the words of Bathsheba to David, 'The eyes of all Israel are upon you that you should tell them who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him.' To this question Rost sees the final answer in I K. 2.46, 'and the kingship was established in the hand of Solomon', which almost certainly marks the conclusion of the source.

This source, however, though one of those which the compiler of Kings allowed to stand virtually untouched, has received certain accretions. The most notable of these is the final charge of David to Solomon (I K. 2.1–4), with the practical injunctions to eliminate certain adversaries (vv. 5–9), and the notice of David's death and the accession of Solomon (vv. 10–12). In the first of these passages the language and the conception of a written law of Moses as the norm of the king's conduct are obviously from the Deuteronomistic compiler. This is clearly indicated when we examine the content of the oracle of Nathan (II Sam. 7.12–16) to which this passage refers. There the emphasis is laid on general obedience of the king to Yahweh as father to son; whereas in I K. 2.3 the king's conduct must be governed by 'that which is written in the law of Moses'. The obituary on David conforms to the regular style of the Deuteronomistic editor in Kings, while the notice of the succession of Solomon anticipates the statement of the establishment of Solomon as king in I K. 2.46, thus impairing the dramatic effect of this last statement in the context of the work. This is quite out of character with such an artistic production, one of the chief features of which is the suspense in which the author holds the reader concerning the final solution of the problem of the succession. The passages I K. 2.1–4 and 10–12 at least are thus certainly secondary. The practical testament of David (vv. 5–9) must also be suspect in such a context, and it does seem odd that David, who is obviously in his dotage in the intrigue of Nathan and Bathsheba in ch. 1, should now evince such shrewd political interest and insight. These practical injunctions concerning Joab and Shimei, his own contemporaries, may reflect the fixations of an old man, or they may have been fathered on David by the author of the source in order to justify the decisive and somewhat unscrupulous action of Solomon. In either case they may well belong

to the original source. There is more than a suspicion, however, that the passage has been worked over. The reason for the death of Joab (vv. 5, 31–33) seems rather specious, and does not really accord with the account of his death in vv. 28–30, where his action in seeking sanctuary indicated that he knew he was foredoomed for the part he had played in the abortive *coup* of Adonijah. The unity of I K. 2.5–46, moreover, is seriously impaired by the statement that 'Solomon's kingdom was firmly established' (2.12b), which ends vv. 5–9 on David's dying instructions, and by a summary after v. 35 of Solomon's wisdom and achievements in G (Swete, vv. 35a–o). 2.12b anticipates 2.46b, 'And the kingdom was firmly established in the hand of Solomon', which after Rost we regard as the dramatic conclusion of the Story of the Davidic Succession. So we agree with Noth[a] in regarding the passages on the elimination of Adonijah (I K. 2.13–25), Abiathar (vv. 26–35) and Shimei (vv. 36–46a) as a secondary elaboration of the Story of the Davidic Succession, probably by a younger contemporary and in the same style, and the passage on David's last instructions to Solomon (vv. 5–9) as secondary to that.

The question is raised by Rost[b] as to whether the work in II Sam. 9–20, I K. 1–2 is complete as it stands or is abbreviated by the compiler from a fuller work. Klostermann had already limited the work to the story of the elimination of Solomon's elder brothers, beginning in II Sam. 13, but had extended it to include the career of Solomon to I K. 9. We agree with Rost in seeing in I K. 2.46 the end of the work, the theme of which is not the career of Solomon but the question of the Davidic succession. Rost seems certainly right in carrying the source back to include the oracle of Nathan in II Sam. 7, and even further. The note on the barrenness of David's wife Michal the daughter of Saul in II Sam. 6.23, eliminating as it does any succession from Saul, agrees with the theme of this work and is possibly incorporated from the same source in the more extended form for which Rost argues. To this view von Rad has lent the weight of his support in his appraisal of this first and finest flowering of history-writing in Israel.[c] Rost's assumption, however, that the appropriation of the Nathan oracle of II Sam. 7.11b by Solomon as a personal revelation (I K. 2.24) indicates a part of the work omitted in Kings

[a] *Könige*, Biblischer Kommentar, 1964, *ad loc.*

[b] *Op. cit.*, pp. 104ff.

[c] 'Der Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung im alten Israel', *Gesammelte Studien*, 1958, pp. 148–88; ET in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 1966, pp. 166–204.

seems to us unwarranted, being readily explained on the grounds of the ancient Semitic conception of the solidarity of the family, which would make the oracle to David applicable to each and all of his descendants.[a] Actually we doubt if much of this work has been omitted by the compiler, particularly in Kings. The accretions to it are generally easily recognized, and the impression is that of a self-contained work of distinctive style, subject-matter and treatment, which is so convincingly authoritative as to invite speculation about the identity of the author with an eyewitness, a contemporary of David and Solomon.

The work has often been put in the category of the novel (Caspari, Gressmann, Eissfeldt), and there is no doubt that in the vivid depiction of character and episode, with the wealth of colourful, circumstantial detail, dramatic direct speech and striking imagery, there is the substance of the novel. There are also features of the epic with the leisurely unfolding of events and the emphasis gained through repetition. The *coup d'état* of Adonijah, for instance, is described four times over, once in the event (I K. 1.5–10), then in Nathan's instructions to Bathsheba (vv. 11–13), in Bathsheba's report to David (vv. 17–19), and finally in Nathan's confirmation of this (vv. 24–26). This is reminiscent of the epic style in the Ras Shamra texts. In the Baal-myth the question of a house for Baal is discussed several times over in the same language, and when it is decided to build the house details are mentioned which are similarly repeated in the description of the actual building. In the Krt legend the royal wooing is outlined in a dream before it is described in the same terms in the event, and similarly in the 'Aqht text the son the king desires is described three times: in supplication to El, in the birth of the son, and in the king's rejoicing. The author of our source in Kings was obviously familiar with this literary convention, probably through the art of the professional story-teller, who until recently was an age-long institution in the Near East. Rost has emphasized the significance of direct speech in this work. This lends life to characters, but it is further used specifically here to mark the culmination of episodes in the story, which, as scenes in a drama, are recapitulated in dialogue or report. That

[a] In this connection the divine authentication of Solomon's succession in his dream at Gibeon (I K. 3.4–15), based on the oracle of Nathan, may be considered as a possible extension of the Story of the Davidic Succession. We prefer, however, to regard this as the real introduction to the reign of Solomon and a reflection rather than an extension of the Story of the Davidic Succession, the oracle of Nathan here being really secondary. See further, pp 22f.

part of the work which is included in Kings, the report of Jonathan to Adonijah and his company at En Rogel (I K. 1.42–48), emphasizes the decisive nature of the step taken by Solomon, adds the information that it was by David's authority and hence was final, and so serves as the prelude to the account of the collapse of Adonijah's attempt. The author knows the value of suspense to heighten his dramatic effect, and the circumstantial detail of persons and places, while here probably indicating the eyewitness and contemporary, is also part of the equipment of the narrative artist. Indeed, all the dramatic technicalities of the work may be illustrated in the art of the Arab *rāwī*, or professional story-teller, as in ballad-literature in most languages. This being so, we are prepared to find historical detail rearranged with particular emphasis, or perhaps even omitted in the interest of dramatic effect. The fact, however, that the writer was a contemporary, and that through his association with the court he well appreciated the significance of the events he was describing means that the work was more than a novel; the sense of historical perspective is well preserved throughout. If facts are used selectively, they are selected according to their bearing on the major theme; the work is described by Rost[a] as that of a historian with artistic susceptibility, and, provided that it is understood as concerning a particular dynastic problem, it stands out as one of the finest examples of historical narrative in the Old Testament and, indeed, in the whole of antiquity.

The fact that it reveals no knowledge of the disruption of the kingdom almost certainly dates the work in the lifetime of Solomon, and the intimate detail strongly suggests a contemporary. More particularly the optimistic tone regarding the reign of Solomon and the complacency of the final statement that 'the kingship was established in the hand of Solomon' suggests that the work was completed in the early part of his reign before the disturbances in the latter part. The intimate account of the events and personalities suggests that the author was of the court circle, if not actually personally involved, and he has been the subject of conjecture. Duhm, followed more recently by Auerbach,[b] has suggested the priest Abiathar; but that is hardly likely in view of the obvious sympathy with Solomon, and the general humanistic, or secular, viewpoint of the work. We think it far more likely that Abiathar was the author, or at least the source,

[a] *Thronnachfolge Davids*, p. 127.
[b] *Wüste und gelobtes Land*, I, 1932, p. 34.

of the account of the adventures of David as an outlaw from Saul, in which Abiathar was personally involved as the bearer of the ephod, which plays such an important part in that tradition. The conjecture of Klostermann is much more probable that the author was Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, who was personally involved with David in his flight from Absalom (II Sam. 15.36; 18.19ff.), and was probably the same person as the prefect in the district of Naphtali in Solomon's administration, and who was a son-in-law of the king (I K. 4.15). He, however, was probably too young in the reign of Solomon, in view of the practical, didactic nature of the work. Nathan may have composed the work as a justification of the role he played in sponsoring the claims of the young Solomon, his protégé, over against those of his older brothers and, in portraying the life and character of David in his strength and weakness, to instruct Solomon in the perils and duties of a ruler. Only such as he could have used such freedom in the treatment of David, particularly in the origin of Solomon from the union of David and Bathsheba after the discreditable affair of Uriah the Hittite, for which Nathan castigated David, and the harem intrigue which set Solomon on the throne. The broad moral principle which unifies the whole work may be represented, as von Rad[a] maintains, after J. Hempel,[b] as that of natural retribution. David's immorality with Bathsheba brings its own nemesis, first in Amnon's rape of Tamar, then in Absalom's bloody vengeance for his sister, and then in Absalom's violation of the sanctity of the harem of David 'before the eyes of all Israel', a sin which, at least technically and in intention, was the final undoing of Adonijah. The criticism of David, which is thus implicit throughout, is natural from Nathan in view of the role he played in the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba, or at least from one of his age and authority at court.

The humanism of this work has often been emphasized. Action is not determined by *deus ex machina* through the medium of miracle or charismatic leaders, but by human propensities and character. This, standing in marked contrast to the tone of the J narrative in the Pentateuch, which, though not, to be sure, disregarding such motivation of events, emphasizes direct divine intervention, a feature also of the sagas of the judges, is surely a reflection of the wider cultural contacts and the secularization of Solomon's reign, in which the work must surely be dated. The humanistic tone of this not insub-

[a] *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 179ff.; *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, pp. 176ff.
[b] *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments*, BZAW LXVII, 1938, p. 51.

stantial part of Samuel and Kings is a potent argument against the view of Hölscher[a] that the J source of the Pentateuch is continued in Kings to the disruption of the kingdom at I K. 12.19. We admit that the sagas of Elijah and Elisha, in which Benzinger, Smend, and Hölscher find the E sources of the Pentateuch, were not uninfluenced by the contemporary literary crystallization of the E tradition, and we are disposed to admit similar influence of J in the Story of the Davidic Succession. The part of J and E in the Books of Kings is, however, in our opinion, limited to this general literary influence. While we should emphasize the humanistic tone of the story we should not forget that it is informed throughout by a deep faith in Providence, and is theologically much more mature and realistic than any other source in Kings, not excluding the Deuteronomistic compilation and redaction. Here the opinion of von Rad[b] is worth recording, that the great theological contribution of the author of the first literary history in the literature of the world was that he emphasized the working of God not through direct intervention, miracle, special agents, human or supernatural, nor through sacred institutions, but through ordinary personalities and their individual idiosyncrasies in the secular sphere, where every man has his part to play.

Owing to artistic embellishment, such as the private conversations with colourful figures which are a marked feature of the work, it is not altogether easy to assess the historical worth of its material, the more so as the events described are not attested elsewhere. R. N. Whybray[c] has in fact rightly emphasized that, with the exception of the passage on the Ammonite war in II Sam. 10.1–19; 11.1; 12.26–31, which is incidental to the episode of David and Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, there is practically no reference to the international affairs of the important reign of David, while the internal situation, which conditioned the vicissitudes of the house of David which the work describes, is left to be inferred rather than explicated. Nevertheless, the vivid portrayal of the *dramatis personae* in the critical junctures of the eventual establishment of David's dynasty under Solomon, e.g. in the revolt of Absalom, suggests a contemporary. This shrewd ability to assess character and motive is evidence of historical insight, and, if the work lacks the wider perspective of the

[a]'Das Buch der Könige, seine Quellen und seine Redaktion', *Eucharisterion* (Gunkel Festschrift), I, 1923, pp. 158ff.

[b]*Gesammelte Studien*, p. 188; *Problem*, p. 204.

[c]R. N. Whybray, *The Succession Narrative: A Study of II Sam. 9–20 and I Kings 1 and 2*, 1968, pp. 11–19.

international situation and important internal issues of David's eventful reign, this is less a defect than the natural consequence of the limited objective of the author, the question of the succession.

As to the purpose of the work, most engaging as it is, this is not mere entertainment, despite the essential features of a novel or drama. Its limited historical perspective relates it to the constitutional issue of dynastic succession as a crucial issue in Israel, where, as it proved, the majority still held to the tradition of the charismatic leadership of an individual designated by a prophet in the name of God and popularly acclaimed. The Succession Narrative in fact expresses the same concern in this vital issue as the oracle of Nathan in II Sam. 7.12ff. and, as S. Herrmann has suggested,[a] the tradition of Solomon's dream at Gibeon and the divine promise of wisdom, in which the successor of David, already appointed, is invested with the charisma in virtue of the evidence of his wisdom according to the tradition of leadership in Israel. The oracle of Nathan, however, probably reflects the creation of a mystique of dynastic authority, which was to be propagated in the official cult (cf. Pss. 89.28ff. [29ff.]; 132.11ff.); the dream at Gibeon (I K. 3.4–15) may be the adaptation of the Egyptian 'Königsnovelle', the narrative of a theophany to authenticate royal authority, often followed by a freely composed historical narrative by way of vindication. This we conceive to be a popular justification of the accession of Solomon. The psychological maturity and masterly art of the Story of the Davidic Succession, however, and the penetrating analysis of human character and motives and their consequences suggest that the work came from the hand of one interested in empirical morality studied and taught for practical purposes in the training of a ruling class[b] as in Egypt.

Such a work might have been written by a royal tutor of Solomon, designed for the instruction and admonition of the young ruler. It could conceivably have been the work of Nathan, who had a peculiar interest in Solomon, but it is more likely to have been the work of an official tutor of the royal family of wider cultural interest. The intimate picture of court life and particularly of the life of David may indicate a senior member of his family, but the psychological and

[a]S. Herrmann, 'Die Königsnovelle in Ägypten und Israel', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl Marx-Universität Leipzig* III, 1953–4, pp. 51–62.

[b]Whybray, *op. cit.*, pp. 56ff., supports this thesis by citing the emphasis on practical 'wisdom' (*ḥokmā*), the themes of sin and retribution and the ultimate divine control of human destiny, sometimes in accord with, and sometimes in despite of, human activity and intention.

literary maturity of the work stamps it as from a professional tutor well versed in moral philosophy and probably in the international wisdom tradition, particularly Egyptian, as Whybray suggests.[a] The great responsibility of the tutor's office as one who stood *in loco parentis* would explain the extraordinary frankness which does not spare David's delinquencies, though in this he may have been supported by the authority of the prophet Nathan.

THE LEGITIMIZATION OF SOLOMON'S SUCCESSION: THE DREAM AT GIBEON

The second section, describing the reign of Solomon, is prefaced by the account of his dream at the sanctuary of Gibeon (I K. 3.4–15). This seems at first sight to be no more than an introduction to the wisdom of Solomon, which, in its various aspects, is the theme of the sequel, at least until ch. 10. It probably has a greater significance as an independent source. Herrmann has noted the affinities of the thought-sequence in this passage with a definite literary type found in Egyptian inscriptions where the Pharaohs from the Middle Kingdom to the New Empire introduce accounts of their innovations and exploits by an account of special revelation, often in a dream, where the reign of the Pharaoh and his immediate policy are legitimized by the assurance of divine election before his birth or while he was still very young. By the same convention the extraordinary accession of Solomon is legitimized.[b] The judges in ancient Israel, Saul, and David had been raised to authority by general acclaim or consent inspired by their obvious possession of the *bᵉrākā* or divine blessing, manifested in their ability to govern (*šāpaṭ*). Similar ability to govern (*šāpaṭ*) and to make decisions and guide them to a successful issue (*ḥokmā*), of which Solomon had given no evidence, is here represented as being given by special divine assurance and grace. Within the framework of this divine authentication a further appeal is made to the divine covenant with David, which guaranteed the foundation of a dynasty, implemented in the accession of Solomon (I K. 2.46). The Story of the Davidic Succession, of which this is the theme, would have itself have been sufficient authentication of Solomon's succession.[c] Hence I K. 3.4–15, which authenticates Solomon's

[a] *Op. cit.*, pp. 96ff.

[b] So also G. Fohrer, 'Der Vertrag zwischen König und Volk in Israel', *ZAW* LXXI, 1959, p. 7.

[c] Noth, 'Die Gesetze im Pentateuch', *Gesammelte Studien*, 1957, pp. 27ff., ET *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays*, 1966, p. 16, emphasizes the legitimization of Solomon's accession through the Davidic covenant, without apparently appreciating this significance of the passage concerning the dream at Gibeon, though he comes very near to this in his note on p. 27.

accession by the convention of special endowment assured through the dream-revelation, though incorporating the conception of the Davidic covenant, seems an independent introduction to the reign of Solomon. This may have been the introduction to an independent account of the reign proper as distinct from the accession, which, as the conclusion of the Story of the Davidic Succession, where the conception of the Davidic covenant as sufficient legitimization of Solomon is properly at home, obviously terminates with the words 'thus was the kingship established in the hand of Solomon' in I K. 2.46. The conception of the Davidic covenant in I K. 3.4–15, though we regard it as secondary to the main theme, is complementary to that rather than contradictory.

OTHER SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

The sequel in I K. 3.16–11.43 describes the reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple and palace-complex in Jerusalem, and contains various traditions of his reign, the relevance of which to history, and particularly to the Deuteronomistic interpretation of history, is not always easy to determine. In virtue of the miscellaneous matter here it is unlikely that we are dealing with a self-contained work. Apart from the technical account of the building of the Temple, which bulks so large in the account of the reign of Solomon (I K. 6.2–7.51) and which is doubtless drawn ultimately from Temple archives, a source fuller than the others on which the compiler drew here was probably 'the Acts of Solomon' (I K. 11.41). This reference ought particularly to be noted, 'And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did, *and his wisdom*, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?' It may be that 'his wisdom' means the success which was the fruit of Solomon's practical administrative sagacity, for the Hebrew *ḥokmā* may have this connotation. In view of the content of the account of Solomon's reign in Kings, however, it is unlikely that this exhausts the meaning of 'wisdom'. The statement suggests that the source was more than an annalistic or strictly historical record of the reign of Solomon,[a] but

[a] This is further suggested by the absence of all dates of events in Solomon's reign except for the building of the Temple and palace, where an archival source is most probably used in I K. 6.1b.

included instances, both anecdotal and reported sayings, no doubt, of the reputed wisdom of Solomon, such as, for instance, the celebrated story of the judgement between the two women who claimed the same child (I K. 3.16–28). The fact that a similar instance occurs as an Indian folk-tale may indicate that here we have an instance of miscellaneous wisdom anecdotes collected by the authority of Solomon, whose trading ventures down the Red Sea brought so many foreign novelties to Jerusalem. There is much of this nature in this section, e.g. the visit of the Queen of Sheba (I K. 10.1–13), and the rest of ch. 10 describing the fabulous wealth and magnificence of the king. This reads less like annals or history than saga, and it may well be that there was a Solomon-saga; but it is uncertain how far this coincided with the Book of the Acts of Solomon cited in I K. 11.41. In view of the civil service of Solomon (I K. 4.2ff.), there must certainly have been state archives of his reign which recorded the administrative organization of the realm, as in I K. 4.2–19, 22f., 26–28 [5.2f., 6–8], but the extent to which these were incorporated, if at all, in the Acts of Solomon is uncertain. Such matters would come into the category of annals or *dibʿrē hayyāmîm*, and it may not be irrelevant to note here that the Book of the Acts of Solomon (*sēper dibʿrē Šelōmō*) seems wider in connotation, a saga of Solomon rather than an official 'daily record' or chronicle. Official archives of Solomon's reign would certainly contain a description of his building including the Temple, though the description of the Temple and its furnishing in I K. 6; 7.13–51 is possibly elaborated from a more detailed description from Temple archives.

In this section the hand of the Deuteronomist is more in evidence than in I K. 1–2. In describing Solomon's experience at Gibeon, which was a notable pre-Israelite sanctuary, for instance, the editor mentions that 'Solomon loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burned incense in high places', thereby asserting the well-known Deuteronomic principle that the only legitimate sanctuary was at Jerusalem. Solomon's speech at the dedication of the Temple is also heavily impregnated with Deuteronomic language and ideas (I K. 8.14ff.). The hand of the exilic redactor is particularly evident in this passage in vv. 44–51, where the Exile is visualized as the chastisement for national sin. The same is true of the divine response to Solomon in I K. 9.1–9, where the confirmation of the Nathan oracle (vv. 3–5) is from the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic compiler, and vv. 6–9, which visualize the

Exile, from the exilic Deuteronomistic redactor. The introduction to the disorders of Solomon's reign, which are presented as the consequence of his liberalism in religion and later apostasy (I K. 11.1–13), and the note on the Nathan oracle in the light of the disruption (I K. 11.32b–39), with the obituary on Solomon (vv. 41–43), are also from the Deuteronomistic compiler.

This section, which is mainly composed of the Acts of Solomon and annals of his reign selected and arranged with comment first by the Deuteronomistic compiler, and then retouched by the exilic redactor with the same viewpoint, with other sources to be considered in more detail in the critical introduction to individual sections in our commentary, presents a number of textual problems. In G^B the order varies from the MT at the following points: 4.17–5.18 [32]; 6; 7; 9.15–22; 10.23–29; 11.3–8; and after 12.24. In these variations, G is somewhat fuller than the MT. This points to a certain fluidity in the tradition, which was not yet finally fixed by the third or second century BC, when Ben Sirach attests the Prophets as canonical Scripture.

SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF THE HISTORY OF THE DIVIDED MONARCHY

The third section of the Books of Kings (I K. 12–II K. 17) describes the disruption of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, for which the ground is prepared in I K. 11, which is very critical of Solomon. In this section the framework of Kings is most obvious. The main pattern here is a description of such events as suited the purpose of the Deuteronomistic compiler from this history of the now divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The fortunes of Israel in a certain reign are thus followed, then the contemporary history of Judah is given in outline, always with a slight overlap. Stereotyped formulae give clear indication of the editing of the work. The reign of each king of Israel is introduced by a note of his accession according to the regnal year of his Judaean contemporary; the length of his reign is then noted, and finally judgement is passed on him, the norm being Deuteronomic orthodoxy. All the kings of Israel are roundly condemned for walking 'in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin'. Fuller information is given in corresponding formulae which introduce and conclude the reigns of the kings of Judah. In the introduction, beside the synchronism of his accession with the regnal year of his Israelite contemporary, the

length of his reign, and judgement on it, the king's age is given at his accession, or, as we believe, at his designation as heir-apparent,[a] and his mother's name and home is noted, which was, of course, of interest, in view of the status of the queen-mother as first lady in the realm and since the kings of Judah were polygamous. In the closing formula we are referred to other sources of information on the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah, a significant note, which clearly indicates that what we have before us does not pretend to be an exhaustive objective history. Further we are told of the king's burial and the name of his successor.[b] As on the kings of Israel, so judgement was summarily passed on the kings of Judah, the norm of judgement being their devotion to the central shrine of Jerusalem as the only legitimate sanctuary and their attitude to the provincial 'high places', a sure characteristic of the Deuteronomistic circle.

ANNALISTIC SOURCES

In this section there are certain clear traces of the sources which the Deuteronomistic compiler used so selectively. There are the Annals, or Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and of Judah, independent bodies of annals, or works based on these, and, of course, written sources. Eissfeldt thinks of these as literary compositions based on actual annals and circulated for private reading. They may, however, have been copies or digests of the actual annals, officially circulated to maintain the royal authority, as Darius's Behistun inscription was circulated in the provinces of the Persian Empire as far as Upper Egypt, as we know from an Aramaic copy in the Elephantine papyri. Jepsen[c] postulates a synchronistic chronicle which may be reconstructed almost completely from introductions to reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah to the time of Hezekiah, with short notices of main events in their reigns. This was, he supposes, a Judaean work designed to contrast the permanence of the Davidic dynasty with the instability of the dynasties in Northern Israel. Jepsen's main argument is unity of vocabulary, style, and

[a] See p. 57 below.

[b] Exceptions for obvious reasons are the lack of a concluding formula in the case of Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah, who were killed by Jehu (I K. 9.24, 27), and of Hoshea of Israel and Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah of Judah, who were removed by their suzerains. In the case of the usurping queen Athaliah, whose death is described at length in II K. 11, there is neither introductory nor concluding formula.

[c] *Die Quellen des Königsbuches*, 1953, pp. 30–40.

substance. This, however, may just as well be the mark of the Deuteronomistic compiler. The historical details, such as the names of the queen-mothers of Judah, which Jepsen rightly takes to point to a written source, and notes of the main historical events, are just as likely to be summarized by the compiler from the annals of both kingdoms as to be the work of Jepsen's assumed chronicler. It is true that the Babylonian Chronicle takes note of contemporary events and dates in neighbouring countries, but this analogy, far from supporting Jepsen's theory of a synchronistic chronicle in Judah, rather suggests that the synchronisms in Kings were a feature of the respective annals of Israel and Judah.

Fohrer[a] objects that a synchronistic chronicle of Judaean origin such as is assumed by Jepsen would not have been characterized by chronological discrepancy as Kings seems to be. If, however, we assume that Jepsen's synchronistic chronicle was itself a composite work composed from annalistic sources, from both kingdoms, where the kings of Judah generally acceded officially at the New Year Festival after the death of their predecessor and the kings of Israel generally immediately, and assume further 'partisan dating' (see below, p. 67) in the Israelite source, Fohrer's argument has less force. A more serious objection to Jepsen's theory of a Judaean synchronistic chronicle from the end of the eighth century BC is the author's occasional confusion of the annalistic note of a king's adoption as heir apparent and co-regent with his father and his accession as sole king (see below, p. 57). This mistake is most unlikely in the case of a compiler during the monarchy, when the convention of co-regency was familiar, and is much more likely after the fall of the monarchy.

Besides his synchronistic chronicle, Jepsen would see a composite annalistic work of a single author, who, he supposes, was a priest in the time of Manasseh. This he supposes to have been combined with the synchronistic chronicle by priestly redactors in Palestine about 580 BC. Here there is more substance in Fohrer's objection[b] that the specific mention of various historical sources fuller than the annals and their partial, but often extensive, incorporation in Kings militates against the theory of a self-contained annalistic source for which Jepsen contends. In view of the continuance of annalistic matter and historical narrative beyond the terminus of Jepsen's annalistic source to the end of the monarchy, it is difficult to subscribe

[a] Sellin-Fohrer, *Introduction*, p. 229. [b] *Ibid.*

to this theory. In our opinion, the summary references to historical events, drawn from the annals of both kingdoms, and the unity of subject-matter and vocabulary, are more probably due to the Deuteronomistic compiler. Jepsen's view, in fact, remains an interesting hypothesis, but nevertheless one which as yet wants conclusive proof, and the most probable view is that the general synchronism, as the introductions and epilogues to the several reigns indicate, was the work of the Deuteronomistic compiler.

There are indications that these annals, like those of Assyria and Babylon, were dry and factual, as is suggested by the abrupt way in which concise notes of certain events are introduced, e.g. the invasion of Tiglath-pileser III (II K. 15.19), often with dates, e.g. 'In the fifth year of King Rehoboam came Shishak King of Egypt' (I K. 14.25), etc. Such matter, communicated in a series of asyndetic clauses, is often introduced by the adverb 'then' (*'āz*), which Montgomery[a] has recognized as a feature of the annalistic style, or by 'in his days' or 'in that day', which generally introduces a specific event. Such events are frequently introduced asyndetically by the pronoun 'he' (*hū'*), 'he it was who . . .', which reflects the style of inscriptions of the type 'I am he who . . .', e.g. those of Mesha, Azitawadd, and various Aramaic inscriptions from Northern Syria. A. van den Born[b] suggests that one source of this matter was inscriptions. But nothing of the kind has so far been found in Palestine to bear this out. He argues that if historical inscriptions were found in small states like Moab it is much more likely that there were royal inscriptions of comparable length and content in Israel and Judah. That, in our opinion, does not follow, since in these more mature and stable states, particularly in Judah, written archives and annals for local circulation may well have taken the place of monumental inscriptions, though these are not excluded. Such fuller sources were likely to be used by the compiler of Kings rather than the hypothetical inscriptions.

SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF AHAB

In this section, in the account of the reign of Ahab, the Syrian wars during and after his reign, and the fall of his house in the revolt of Jehu, the narrative is suddenly expansive and circumstantial. The explanation is twofold.

[a] 'Archival Data in the Book of Kings', *JBL* LIII, 1934, pp. 46–52.
[b] *Koningen uit de grondtext vertaald en uitgelegd*, 1958, p. 9.

SAGAS OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA

First a large body of saga had gathered about two great prophetic figures, Elijah and Elisha, the former the contemporary of Ahab and the latter, according to a tradition (II K. 9.1ff.) which there is no reason to doubt, the inspiration of the revolt of Jehu. The involvement of both in affairs of state, especially in the case of Elijah, who opposed the king in a major religious and social crisis in the national history, accounts for the fullness in which the Deuteronomistic compiler cites such sources of prophetic tradition. In certain passages the prophets play a major role in historical and social crises, e.g. I K. 18 (the ordeal on Carmel), ch. 19 (Elijah at Horeb, anticipating the commissioning of Elisha and prophetic support for the forces of opposition to the house of Omri, which were to find a leader in Jehu), ch. 21 (Naboth's vineyard), perhaps II K. 8.7–15 (Elisha and the *coup d'état* of Hazael of Damascus), and 9.1–6 (Elisha and the *coup d'état* of Jehu). Such passages might well be part of a genuine historical work, though the role of the prophet and the bias against the monarchy indicates prophetic authority of sobriety and reliability. We shall deal with this matter much more fully in our commentary, but we may state our view meanwhile that the passages of this type concerning Elijah owe their character to the fact that they were transmitted by his contemporary Elisha, while such matter concerning Elisha as we have cited, together with II K. 6.24–7.20 (Elisha at the siege of Samaria), and 13.14–19 (Elisha's encouragement of the king of Israel on his deathbed), stem from a mature prophetic authority associated personally with Elisha, probably in Samaria.

HAGIOLOGY OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA

Together with this matter, which is of real historical value, there is included in the record of the times, solely on grounds of contemporaneity, a mass of prophetic tradition concerning Elijah and Elisha of quite a different order. These are reminiscences of a more personal nature, e.g. I K. 17 (Elijah miraculously (?) fed in famine), II K. 1 (Elijah calls down fire upon the emissaries of Ahaziah), 2.19–22 (Elisha and the water of Jericho), vv. 23–25 (Elisha and the children of Bethel), 4.1–7 (Elisha and the widow's oil), 4.8–37 (Elisha and the Shunammite's son), 4.38–41 (death in the pot), 4.42–44 (Elisha and the multiplication of food), 6.1–7 (Elisha and the floating axe), 6.8–23 (Elisha and the blinding of the Syrians), and perhaps ch. 5

(the healing of Naaman). Most of these incidents are quite trivial and indicate an authority of little discrimination. They are, in the case of Elisha, associated for the most part with prophetic, or dervish, communities of various localities, and it is possible to see a certain local rivalry in claiming association with the great prophet. This is the breeding-ground of miracle, and it is noteworthy that here, in contrast to the first group of traditions of the prophets, miracles abound. The conclusion is then suggested that in the second group of traditions concerning Elijah and particularly Elisha the source is a concatenation of local hagiology, or folk-lore of the prophets.

PROPHETIC ADAPTATION OF HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The second notable expansion of the narrative in this section of Kings concerns the Syrian wars in which the kings of Israel were engaged (I K. 20.1–34, ending with a prophetic anecdote, vv. 35–43, and 22.1–37), the Moabite campaign of Jehoram the son of Ahab, (II K. 3.4ff.), the famine in Samaria and the defeat of Benhadad (6.24–7.20), the *coup d'état* of Jehu (9.1–10.27), and the last meeting of Elisha and King Joash (13.14–19). In the first two passages, a special source, 'the Acts of Ahab', has been conjectured.[a] This, however, is very doubtful, partly because the anonymous 'king of Israel' in chs. 20 and 22 was probably not originally Ahab, and partly because those are not historical narrative *simpliciter*, but historical narrative adapted by prophetic circles, to whom Ahab, as the opponent of Elijah, was the classical opponent of the will of Yahweh through the prophets, like Pharaoh in the Exodus tradition or Herod in English mystery plays. The fact, however, that this expansive historical narrative is not limited to events which occurred in Ahab's reign, but extends to the reign of his son Jehoram, and in the account of Jehu's revolt adopts quite a different attitude to Ahab and his house, suggests that there was much more of this historical narrative than the hypothetical 'Acts of Ahab'. Here, in fact, we may have a substantial fragment of a narrative history of the kingdom of Israel. This would presumably be from a period of security when a dynasty was relatively established and may have been begun under Ahab. The full description of the revolt of Jehu, however, indicates that if there was such an historical work it was continued under the house of Jehu, probably

[a] Oesterley and Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament*, 1934, p. 97.

in the time of Jeroboam II. Whatever the origin of this matter, whether in historical narrative or in briefer annals, there may be other reasons for its fullness. First, it is noteworthy that I K. 20.1–34 leads up to the account of the prophetic rebuke of Ahab (vv. 35–43); the account of Ahab's campaign at Ramoth Gilead in ch. 22 may be regarded as an instance of prophecy and fulfilment; the account of Jehu's revolt may be regarded as an elaboration of the fulfilment of Elijah's prophecy on the doom of the house of Ahab and Jezebel, and the theme of prophecy and fulfilment in the famine and relief of Samaria (II K. 6.24–7.30) is dominant. Hence original historical or annalistic sources may well have been adapted and elaborated here by the more reputable prophetic authorities of the historical traditions of Elijah and Elisha and others. So adapted, this prophetic work probably comprised also the tradition of the encounter of Ahijah and Jeroboam in I K. 11.29ff.; 14.1ff., and that of the prophet Jehu and Baasha in I K. 16.1–4.

A significant feature of this historical narrative is the critical attitude to the kings of Israel from Jeroboam I to Jehoash maintained by prophets, and particularly the succession of oracles of doom on the successive dynasties. Those differ from the stereotyped and colourless Deuteronomistic condemnations of the various kings in their striking, and indeed coarse, imagery, declaring that none of the royal family who piss against the wall should be spared in the final reckoning (I K. 14.10; cf. 16.11; 21.21; II K. 9.8), and that whoever of them should die in the city would be eaten by dogs and whoever should die in the open country by the birds of the air (I K. 14.11; cf. 16.11; 21.24; II K. 9.10). Such an oracle of doom on the house of Baasha is attributed to the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani (I K. 16.1–4, 12), to whom II Chron. 20.34 ascribes a book which it associates with historical records of North Israel. This may be the prophetic adaptation of historical narrative on the vicissitudes of the short-lived dynasties of North Israel, reflecting prophetic opposition to hereditary monarchy as against the traditional ideal of charismatic authority of those so marked out by obvious signs of God's favour (*b'rākā*) and popularly acclaimed by the sacral community, such opposition to the monarchy in fact as was voiced in Israel by the prophet Hosea. This was a source which accorded so well with the view of the Deuteronomistic historian that it could be incorporated practically without modification and *in extenso*. Possibly the incident of Elijah and Naboth's vineyard, culminating with the distinctive imagery we have noted

(21.21), originally belonged to this source before it was incorporated in the Elijah cycle.

JUDAEAN HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The sources just considered are specifically North Israelite, though the role played by Jehoshaphat of Judah in the accounts of 'Ahab's' campaign at Ramoth Gilead (I K. 22) and of Jehoram's Moabite campaign (II K. 3) suggests that the sources have been reworked by a Judaean authority. There are in the same section of Kings two similar historical narratives of like detail and proportion which are Judaean in origin. These are the account of Athaliah's usurpation and her suppression, with the elevation of Joash (II K. 11) and Joash's reform of Temple finance (12.4–16 [5–17]). The latter, owing to its preoccupation with the Temple and its lack of wider historical perspective, probably comes from a priestly authority, as Wellhausen suggested, contending for a Temple history as a separate source, to which he assigned the account of Athaliah's usurpation and the elevation of Joash (11.1–12, 18b–20), the religious innovations of Ahaz in subservience to Assyria (16.10ff.), and Josiah's reformation (chs. 22 and 23 excluding Deuteronomistic expansions). The objection to the hypothesis of a priestly source of ch. 12 is the critical attitude to the priestly administration of Temple finance. Nevertheless, if we may suppose that the work came from a priest after the reformation of Josiah, this need not be an insuperable objection. To such a work certain statistics may have belonged, such as the amounts drawn from the Temple treasury to pay political indemnities at sundry times by Rehoboam (I K. 14.25–28) and Joash (II K. 12.17f. [18f.]), and the bribe sent by Asa to the king of Damascus (I K. 15.18). Such a composition would also have contained a description of the Temple, such as that in I K. 6f., and the baffling combination of detail and vagueness in that account would be admirably explained on the assumption that this account is a description in retrospect from a time late in the monarchy after the reformation of Josiah. To the same source the inventory of Temple furnishings destroyed by the Babylonians in II K. 25.13–17 may also belong. It is generally admitted on internal evidence that the suppression of Athaliah and the accession of Joash comprise two distinct sources, one a priestly account, represented in II K. 11.1–12 and 18b–20, which probably belongs to the Temple history we have just noted, and the other the popular or secular account of the same events (vv. 13–17). The real objection to

the assignment of II K. 11.1–12 and 18b–20 and chs. 22f. as they stand to a Temple history is that these passages are, constitutionally and politically, much wider in scope than a Temple history would be; hence our conclusion is that as they stand these passages are from a history of the house of David by a priestly authority who had access to Temple archives, from which he drew matter concerning events such as the death of Athaliah and the accession of Joash, which happened in the Temple, and in which the Temple personnel were involved.

The notable expansion of the narrative at such points as the *coup d'état* of Athaliah and her subsequent suppression (II K. 11) and the reign of Hezekiah (chs. 18–20) doubtless reflects the full citation of sources, such as secular historical narrative (e.g. II K. 11.13–18a) and a Temple record (e.g. II K. 11.1–12), prophetic legend (e.g. II K. 18.17–19.7, 36f.; 20.1–7, 9–11, 12–19), which is combined with the edifying legend of the good king Hezekiah (II K. 19.9b–35). But they probably owe their fullness in the Deuteronomistic compilation to the peculiar interest of the Deuteronomistic theologian, who thus, according to Noth,[a] emphasized his principle that the fidelity of such a man as Hezekiah to Deuteronomic ideals led on to success, while apostasy or religious liberalism like Athaliah's brought due retribution.

JUDAH ALONE: THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

After the collapse of Samaria, from II K. 18, the record of events in Judah is much fuller, though still not complete. From the reformation of Josiah in 622 the Deuteronomistic compiler, if not describing events which he had personally witnessed, was certainly dealing with history which his 'school' had helped to make. The Deuteronomic 'school' is generally and correctly associated with 622, but it must be remembered that this is but the date when the circle emerged articulate and effective. There is no reason to suppose that the Deuteronomic movement was newly born in 622. Indeed, the fact that the Deuteronomists already had a book and were sufficiently strong to oblige the king to carry through a reform not only of religion but of the constitution indicates that they had a not inconsiderable history behind them. In fact, a similar measure of reform, though on a much smaller scale, associated with Hezekiah a century before, may reflect the crystallization of opinion which is associated

[a] *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 85f.

with the Deuteronomic circle, the moment for this being the collapse of the Northern kingdom, which, as A. C. Welch[a] maintained, prompted a revival and reformation in Judah, where the rallying-point for refugees from North Israel was a new presentation of the best in their ancestral legal and religious tradition. If this is so, then the lengthy, but still not detailed, account of the reigns of Hezekiah (II K. 18–20), Manasseh and Amon (ch. 21), and Josiah (chs. 22–23.35), where the Deuteronomistic passages are long and continuous, e.g. 18.1–8, 12: 21.1–22, is a matter of personal reminiscence and interest within the Deuteronomic circle, and even to the compiler himself.

ANNALISTIC SOURCES AND PROPHETIC TRADITION

Here again, however, the compiler found sources ready to hand. Apart from the brief notices which recur throughout the account of the remaining period of the monarchy of Judah and are drawn from the annals of the kingdom, the source of the bulk of the account of the reign of Hezekiah (II K. 18.13–20.21) is suggested by its close verbal correspondence with Isa. 36–39. The first impression is that here the compiler of Kings drew on prophetic biography from the Isaiah tradition, but the matter is not quite so simple, as a detailed analysis will show.[b] From such an investigation it is apparent that one of these passages depends on the other, and there seems little doubt that that in Kings must have priority, except perhaps in the collection of oracles in 19.21–34 and 20.1–11, 12–19. Here there are ostensibly three episodes in which the prophet is involved, that of Sennacherib's menace to Jerusalem (18.17–19.37), Hezekiah's sickness and Isaiah's sign of the shadow (20.1–11), and the legation of Merodach-baladan and Isaiah's oracle of doom (20.12–19), which probably antedates the former episodes.[c] In the last two episodes the focus of interest is the prophet, and it is likely that the ultimate source was tradition regarding Isaiah, possibly on the periphery of the main Isaianic tradition, as its position as an appendix to the first section of the Book of Isaiah indicates. In the first of these episodes we would distinguish a prose account of Sennacherib's legation (18.17–19.7, 36). This is introduced by an annalistic digest (18.13–16) and culminates in a rather restrained oracle of Isaiah to the effect that Sennacherib will withdraw because of bad news from his own land and

[a] *Post-exilic Judaism*, 1935, pp. 17ff.
[b] See pp. 659f. below.
[c] See p. 668 below.

die a violent death (19.6f.), an oracle which is confirmed in 19.36f., the latter verses being perhaps a later gloss. This seems at first sight an excerpt from a history of the kingdom of Judah, where the prophet, as in the case of Elisha in the account of the Moabite campaign (II K. 3), does not dominate the scene, though his influence is admitted. This may be part of the history of Judah or of the Davidic house from a priest after the Josianic reformation, which we have already postulated as one of the sources of the narrative of the suppression of Athaliah and the accession of Joash (II K. 11), and his reform of Temple finance (II K. 12). The difference, however, in style and matter between the account of what is probably the same situation in 18.13–16 and 18.17–19.7,36 indicates that, despite the relation of the latter passage to historical facts, it is not of the literary category of history, but is part of a prophetic legend of Isaiah. 19.9b–35, on the other hand, belongs essentially to the popular edifying legend of the good king Hezekiah, whose exemplary piety was rewarded in relief from the Assyrian menace. Each passage, however, has influenced the other in the process of transmission and compilation. Thus both emphasize the humility and piety of Hezekiah, and the latter includes oracles traditionally ascribed to Isaiah (19.21–34). In this context, the theme of the inviolability of Zion as the seat of the Divine King reflects the theme of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Temple (cf. Ps. 46). The speech of the Assyrian officer (19.10–13) is a digest of the diplomatic arguments in 18.19–21, 22, 23–25, 31–32a and 30, 32b–35 and therefore later work. It expresses the conscious theological theme of God's vindication of his sovereignty which is the motive of the deliverance of Jerusalem. Thus the digest of the diplomatic arguments may be the contribution of the Deuteronomistic compiler, but it may equally well have belonged to his source, the legend of the good king Hezekiah.[a]

ANNALS OF JUDAH AND DEUTERONOMISTIC EXPANSION

The end of the kingdom of Judah from the time of Manasseh (ch.21) to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is composed mainly of excerpts from the annals of the kingdom liberally amplified by Deuteronomistic comment and expansion, which is natural considering the fact that the Deuteronomistic compiler, and after him the redactor, were writing of contemporary matters in which they were personally involved and hence were independent of other sources.

[a] For detailed analysis, see further pp. 662ff.

THE END OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC COMPILATION AND REDACTIONAL APPENDICES

In this section, as indeed throughout Kings, a distinction is to be observed between the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic compilation and the exilic Deuteronomistic redaction (see pp. 6–9). Of the two, only the latter visualizes the fall of the Davidic monarchy. The precise point at which the compilation ended, however, is uncertain. We believe, for the reasons stated below (pp. 753f.), that the work was concluded before the first capture of Jerusalem in March 597, and was continued by the redactor, first possibly to 25.21b, where the words, 'So Judah was carried away captive out of his land' have the appearance of a conclusion, and later to the alleviation of the lot of the captive king Jehoiachin in 561 (25.27–30), this passage and that on the fortunes of the remaining Jews under Gedaliah (vv. 22–26) being appendices. The latter passage shows a close verbal correspondence with the historical appendix in Jer. 40.7–41.18, but the fact that the passage in Jeremiah is so much fuller and more circumstantial suggests that the passage in Kings is a summary of this source.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF KINGS

With Kings that part of the Jewish canon known as 'the Former Prophets' is concluded. Though these are generally termed 'historical books', they have serious limitations as history, and this applies also to Kings. We expect a much more systematic presentation of the reign and administration of Solomon rather than laudatory passages and a somewhat trivial instance of his 'wisdom' and expatiation on the building and dedication of the Temple, which was but one event in his reign. We should have appreciated fuller information on the achievements of Omri and Ahab, who made their impression on the records of the greatest imperial power of their day, and of the campaigns of Jeroboam II, who rehabilitated Israel after Aramaean domination. Only sporadic incidents in the reign of Hezekiah are mentioned. The bulk of the space devoted to his reign ostensibly concerns but one incident in his 14th year, and his sickness and treatment with a fig-plaster is of no political significance. By contrast, his political intrigues and the resulting alliance which provoked the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 are entirely ignored, nor is anything said of the truncation of his realm, which the Assyrian records attest. In the account of the reign of Manasseh, too, we

should prefer to hear less of his ritual 'abominations' and more of his political relations with Assyria, which the Assyrian records attest. We might also have expected a detailed account of the various steps by which Josiah effected his reformation, and an indication of its political and constitutional significance. But the Deuteronomistic compilation of Kings does not purport to be an objective history. The objective records which a historian seeks lie behind the compilation, and what the Deuteronomist has given us is an interpretation of history from his own theological viewpoint, an indication of which is the selective use of material from the sources as much as the actual treatment of the material selected.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY IN KINGS

The general perspective in which the Deuteronomists present the history of the monarchy in Israel and Judah is taken from the point at which the school emerges into the light of history in the reign of Josiah. The superficial impression made upon the reader is that they were primarily interested in the cultic purity and centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and judge kings from the time of Solomon mechanically by a standard which came into actual force only late in the history of Judah, and which, consequently, was unknown to the predecessors of Josiah. Actually closer study of the vital passage describing the Josianic reformation and the whole Deuteronomistic history in the light of that passage reveals a much more penetrating philosophy of history, which is fully discerned when we study the kernel of the Book of Deuteronomy itself, particularly chs. 27f., in the complex of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte*.

From such a study it is apparent that the Deuteronomistic history of Israel is presented as the continuation of the history of the confederate tribes, who realized their essential status and destiny as the people of Yahweh in the covenant-sacrament at Shechem. The exclusive worship of Yahweh in its primitive austerity and the observance of the principles of social equity revealed in the law was demanded as the condition of the fulfilment of Israel's status as the people of his election, redeemed by his grace and power for a divinely appointed destiny. In this presentation of the law in the complex of the *Heilsgeschichte* Israel was given the opportunity of good or evil, peace or suffering, life or death (Deut. 30.15), of which she was made pointedly aware in the blessings and curses to which she said Amen (Deut. 27.15–26). This for the Deuteronomists was not ancient

history, an obsolete custom. The word of God, declared in those ancient blessings and curses, was active, the judgements of God were abroad in the earth, and von Rad is undoubtedly right in characterizing the theme of the Deuteronomistic history as 'the operation of the word of God in history'.[a] So the sufferings and degradation of Israel and Judah under the monarchy were appreciated as the operation of the curse upon a broken covenant-engagement, of which the addiction to the many local sanctuaries was only a symptom. This might be a simple philosophy of history, but it was sober and realistic, and even if it went no further, betokens a commendable self-discipline and moral vigour, which singles Israel out from her contemporaries in antiquity.

Despite the superficial impression of a rather sketchy history in which the Deuteronomist stigmatizes in a broad, mechanical, and somewhat offhand way the various kings of Israel and Judah, his judgement is not a mere particularist animadversion on individual delinquency. He accepts the institution of the monarchy and the unique significance of the king as representative of the people before God[b] and the custodian *par excellence* of the Mosaic tradition, e.g. II K. 23, where Josiah, as Moses and Joshua, dispenses the covenant.[c] The sins of the king, then, are the sins of the people, and in animadverting on those the Deuteronomist is but emphasizing his main theme of the tragedy of his people as the supreme example of divine retribution.

The day had long passed when the good and evil in consequence of the blessing and curse were put before Israel so pointedly as in the covenant-sacrament at the ancient amphictyonic assembly. But the word of God was still active in Israel, and in all but the most abandoned ages men were confronted by the prophets with the same pointed alternatives and their inevitable consequences. We find it strange that of the great canonical prophets who spoke and devoted themselves to the ministry of the word of God in Israel and Judah only part of the work and words of Isaiah have been noted by the Deuteronomist. The reason is probably twofold. It reflects the reserve

[a] *Studies in Deuteronomy*, 1953, pp. 89ff.

[b] So G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* I, 1962, p. 339: 'He does in fact ascribe to the monarchy the crucial key-position between Jahweh and Israel, since it was in the kings' hearts that the decision whether Israel was to be saved or rejected had to be taken.'

[c] Noth, 'Die Gesetze im Pentateuch', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 61ff.; *The Laws in the Pentateuch*, pp. 46ff.

which priests felt over against the fiery and less conventional prophet, and the Deuteronomist, with regard to his public, probably sought advisedly to make a more general impression of the operation of the word of God in history by selecting more obvious cases of prophecy and fulfilment which pertained directly to kings and dynasties, and using prophetic sagas such as those of Elijah and Elisha, which by their very nature were popularly known. A further explanation is suggested by Noth:[a] that the activity of the great prophets was naturally not the subject of the historical annals on which the Deuteronomist drew, and the literary compilation of the traditions of the canonical prophets had not yet begun. The general interest of the Deuteronomist in prophecy and fulfilment, however, is clearly apparent.

The interest of the Deuteronomist in the continuing activity of the word of God in history indicates that he was not a mere antiquarian. He was a man of his own generation, and his repeated reference to the Davidic covenant (II Sam. 7.12ff.), so assiduously propagated on regular cultic occasions in Jerusalem throughout the monarchy, had had its effect. He accepted the monarchy, and, as his opinion of Hezekiah and Josiah shows, was ready to welcome a king who fulfilled the ideal which David was regarded as embodying. This belief in the Davidic covenant as the guarantee of stability in Judah seems at first sight to accord ill with the critical attitude to the monarchy which characterizes the Deuteronomistic history, but the same ardent hope in the covenanted house of David is an element in the faith of the prophets of Judah, Isaiah (9.6ff.[5ff.]; 11.1ff.), Micah (5.2ff.[1ff.]), and towards the end of the monarchy and perhaps contemporary with the Deuteronomistic compiler, Jeremiah (33.21); yet not even the Deuteronomist was stauncher to the democratic tradition of Israel or more critical of the monarchy than the prophets. So for the Deuteronomist, David as the recipient of the covenant was a great ideal, to be realized in one of his line according to the oracle of Nathan (II Sam. 7.12ff.). Thus it is that the Deuteronomist is almost pathetically ready to acclaim this ideal in Hezekiah and Josiah and, even in his foreboding, holds the hope almost to the end of his compilation.

We may question von Rad's view,[b] however, that there is evidence

[a] *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 97f.

[b] *Old Testament Theology* I, p. 343. K. D. Fricke, in the Introduction to the posthumous commentary of J. Fichtner, takes a more sober view in referring to the

of the persistence of this hope, which he ventures to call, in a qualified sense, messianic, in the note on the alleviation of the lot of Jehoiachin in exile (II K. 25.27–30), with which the book ends. This isolated note on the amelioration of the lot of Jehoiachin without comment seems tenuous evidence for such a hope as von Rad assumes, especially in view of the opinion of the monarchy throughout the Deuteronomistic history from Deuteronomy to the end of Kings. In such passages as Josh. 23.15b–16, I Sam. 12.25, II K. 17.7ff. and 21.12ff. the fate of the old order, in which the monarchy was admitted as a temporary expedient, seems sealed, and we agree with Noth (*op. cit.*, pp. 107–10) that, whatever beliefs his contemporaries may have held, the Deuteronomistic redactor in the work he presents is preoccupied with the sins and retribution of Israel, which finds its consummation in the liquidation of state and crown, beyond which the chastened philosophy of the Deuteronomistic redaction does not penetrate. It is, of course, true that the hope of the realization of the covenanted grace of God to the House of David (*ḥasᵉdê dāwîd*) was not dead in the Exile, as appears from Isa. 55.3, from which the messianic hope develops. This, too, from circles who, like the Deuteronomists, had a keen sense of Israel's sin and due retribution (Isa. 40.2). But if this hope through the Davidic line was shared by the Deuteronomists, our opinion is that it finds no expression in their final redaction of Kings.

We look in vain in Kings for any consciousness of the positive destiny of Israel among the peoples of the earth. This is surprising in the Deuteronomistic compiler in view of his sympathy with the prophets, the negative aspect of whose message he certainly grasped. It is surprising, too, in the case of the redactor in view of the fact that his work dates from as late as 561 or soon after, when the Isaianic circle was already feeling the way to a solution of the problem of Israel's supreme suffering in the realization of her mission, expressed in the passages on the Suffering Servant. Even admitting that these passages are later than, and distinct from, the rest of Deutero-Isaiah, in which we do not find this positive sense of missionary purpose, it is still difficult to believe that this fair hope had no antecedents among responsible Jews contemporary with the Deuteronomistic redaction of Kings. There was at the same time, however, a deep sense of pessim-

release of Jehoiachin from close confinement as 'the first gleam of hope in a dark time' (J. Fichtner, *Das erste Buch von den Königen*, Die Botschaft des AT, ed. K. D. Fricke, 1964, p. 31).

ism and resignation to divine retribution, against which Ezekiel had to strive hard (Ezek. 33).

The Deuteronomistic History as a whole, however, does not share this extreme pessimism. It is a purposeful and positive work for Israel at the nadir of her fortunes, and this is reflected in the theme of the forgiveness and renewed grace of God throughout. Moses may only see the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, and his contemporaries who tried God in the desert never entered it; but their children did with Joshua and Caleb. In the period of the judges, God is always ready to hear Israel when she turns to him contritely in fast and penance, and to give her a deliverer and new courage in adversity. In spite of the suspicion of kingship and the failure of Saul, God had himself hallowed the status of David and his house by covenant as responsible representatives of his people, and at repeated junctures during the monarchy had shown mercy. The effect of this accumulation of mercy may be to emphasize the progressive decline in Israel's allegiance, which such grace deserved, as Fricke[a] maintains. We believe, however, that this recurrence of the theme of repentance and mercy has more significance than mere literary effect. The compiler of the Deuteronomistic History was the heir of the tradition of the sacral community which found its solidarity in the covenant-sacrament. He was probably from the class of priests or Levites familiar with the address to the covenant community on the subject of blessing or curse consequent upon fidelity to, or apostasy from, the principles of the covenant, e.g. Deut. 28.1–14, 15–68, and with the office of advocate for God in the indictment of the people in the fast liturgy, which we believe to be the origin of the distinctive office of the prophet in Israel.[b] It is most significant that this was the framework of what we believe to be the pre-Deuteronomistic collection of the narratives of the great judges,[c] which the Deuteronomist found so

[a] K. D. Fricke, Introduction to J. Fichtner, *Das erste Buch von den Königen*, Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments, pp. 30f.

[b] This view is based on the role of the prophet in the fast-liturgy in the introduction to the Gideon cycle in Judg. 6.6b–10, which W. Beyerlin, 'Geschichte und heilsgeschichtliche Traditionsbildung im Alten Testament', *VT* XIII, 1963, pp. 10ff., has demonstrated to be distinct from the Deuteronomistic introduction in 6.1, 2a, 6a.

[c] This work is taken to comprise Judg. 3.7–11.33, the story of Jephthah's daughter, excluding the notices of the 'minor judges' and the Samson cycle (chs. 13–16), in a framework reflecting the liturgy of the divine contention in public fast and penance in the context of the covenant-sacrament. See further, W. Beyerlin, 'Gattung und Herkunft des Rahmens im Richterbuch', *Tradition und Situation*, ed. E. Würthwein and O. Kaiser, 1963, pp. 1–29.

congruous with his purpose that he incorporated it in his great history. Thus the Deuteronomistic compiler could not be oblivious to the prospect of grace, and if as the work progresses the shadows darken, the fact that such a work was composed indicates a hope that it might achieve the purpose, if not of inspiring a sanguine hope in the revival of the kingdom, under the Davidic house, at least of stimulating a sober moral amendment and a steady faith that Israel's distress was not fortuitous or arbitrary, but was the evidence of the nature of her God, who in judgement and mercy was consistent with his self-revelation in the covenant.

H. W. Wolff,[a] who points to the recurrence of the verb *šūb*, denoting turning again to God with the purpose of renewed grace, as the key to the prospect and purpose of the Deuteronomistic History, adduces evidence from Kings in the ideal expressed in the case of Josiah (II K. 23.25) and particularly in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, in what is in our opinion an addition by the redactor at I K. 8.46–53, where provision is made for a merciful hearing of whoever would sincerely petition God, even in exile. Here we should emphasize the prospect of the grace of God available to 'his people'. We are directed back to the deliverance from Egypt (vv. 51, 53), and the experience of God's grace in election and covenant is implied in the conception of 'God's people'. God's people and the divine purpose for and through this community had by his grace survived the failures of the desert wandering and the lapses in the time of the judges; they should also survive the expedient of monarchy with its frequent abuses. The sins of the past, of which cultic aberrations were merely symptomatic, with their grim consequences, should serve as an admonition in the future, which lay with the people of God now independent of kings, of state, and even of Temple and traditional cult. The people of God would now be conserved by their fidelity to the Mosaic tradition, the fundamental social, ethical and religious demands of the covenant on which the Deuteronomistic historian repeatedly insists. We should agree with Wolff that in this sober prospect, the note on the alleviation of the lot of king Jehoiachin in captivity, though far from betokening a messianic hope, may be adduced to encourage the people of God that security with honour was still possible and that fidelity to ancestral principles of the people of God's election might still raise Israel, even

[a] H. W. Wolff, 'Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks', *ZAW* LXXII (1961), pp. 171–86, esp. pp. 179ff.

in political obscurity, above the ruck of peoples, as Jehoiachin was given preference above his fellows in captivity (II K. 25.28).[a] Thus God's initial grace in the election of Israel (Deut. 4.7–8) might find positive fulfilment.

2. THE TEXT

MASSORETIC TEXT

The text of Kings is reasonably well preserved, but there are notable exceptions. In the list of Solomon's fiscal officials in I K. 4.8—19 the mention of the officers by their fathers' names only in vv. 8–11 points to the use of an official document, the right edge of which was broken off. In the description of the Temple and its furnishings in I K. 6f. certain technical terms which have become obsolete by the time of the compiler and the scribes who transmitted the text have given rise to corruptions, not all of which may be restored. Kings presents, of course, the usual difficulties of texts which have been standardized after centuries of transmission by the hands of scribes, and the textual notes to this commentary will reveal corruptions in detail throughout the work, few of which, however, are beyond restoration by various aids which are ready to hand.

First there are parallel passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and in Chronicles. Here the parallels in Isaiah and Jeremiah are very close and are cases of passages from the Kings-compilation used directly in the compilations of the prophetic books or *vice versa* (see critical introduction to II K. 18–20, and II K. 24.18–25.26, pp. 657ff.; 767). The parallel accounts in Chronicles must be used with very great caution owing to the tendentious nature of that work, its particular ecclesiastical bias, and its anachronistic tendency to safeguard the sanctity of the Temple and priestly monopoly of sacral office. Nor is the text of Kings itself exempt from this tendency on the part of later redactors, who reflect the views of the priestly circle. These passages, however, which post-date the main Deuteronomistic recension of Kings, are easily recognized, and may often be corrected by the aid of the Greek versions, especially the Septuagint. A case in point

[a] Wolff suggests that the relief of Jehoiachin and the preferential treatment he received may indicate the Deuteronomist's sense of Israel's responsibility to give testimony to her distinctive calling in the world. We think of the responsibilities and prospects of a figure like Daniel. But, as Wolff is careful to state (*op. cit.*, p. 185), this is at the best implicit, rather than stated, in the books of Kings.