Chronicler's History

def: name given to the books Chronicles, Ezra, & Nehemiah by scholars who see some amount of common authorship or redaction

four theories of authorship:
1. Ezra author of all four (*Baba Batra* 15a, Albright)—assumes Ezra later than Nehemiah, final redaction early 4th C
2. Ezra & Nehemiah responsible for their books (R. K. Harrison)—doesn't allow for later editing
3. Chronicler final author of all four—2 Chr 36:22-23 presupposes Ezr 1:1-3a—could be individual or school
4. Chronicles & Ezra-Nehemiah separate, but linked together by later redactor—stages of development in Ezra-Nehemiah (addition of Nehemiah memorial)

similarities:
- focus on practices & personnel involved in Jerusalem temple worship
- prayers of heroes of the faith used to interpret events (2 Chr 20:5-12; Ezr 9:6-15)
- goal of community to remain an obedient and holy people

1 Esd directly dependent on 2 Chr 35-36; Ezr 1-10; Neh 8, so might suggest these books originally one

differences:
- Chr apparently used only Sam-Kgs as its primary source, but Ezr-Neh dependent on large number of sources, inc. official documents, demographic lists, & biographical materials, esp. Nehemiah memoir
- doctrine of retribution prominent in Chr, but absent in Ezr-Neh
- Chr has positive & inviting attitude toward citizens of N Kingdom who enter Judah after Fall of Israel, but Ezr-Neh has exclusivistic point of view regarding Jews and Samaritans & others who can't prove their ancestry

Chr linked to Ezr-Neh by overlap of 2 Chr 36:22-23 & Ezr 1:1-3, suggesting two originally joined—possible that earlier Ezr-Neh joined to later Chr by redactor, because of common theme of history of the temple & cultic community of Jerusalem, then later divided again

reasons for date before Greek period (333):
- Aramaic of Persian period
- Hebrew still a living language
- use of Persian words
- sixth generation of Zerubbabel (1 Chr 3:19-24) implies date ~350
- last Persian king mentioned Darius II (423-402)
Chronicles

Place in the Canon

end of canon (Writings) in many Hebrew mss: Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles—after books of
Kingdoms in LXX—out of order in Hebrew possibly because of order of acceptance by Jews
relegation to Writings may imply lesser status than Samuel & Kings, which are taken as
authoritative by writer (though apparently felt free to make changes), as are at least parts of
Pentateuch—as it stands at end of canon, OT ends with charge to every Jew: “may his God be
with him, and let him go up”
placement of Chr in History section of LXX puts it in supplementary role to Kgdms

Overview

Distinctives of Perspective

• late post-exilic perspective (Persian period)
• highly selective of events recorded
• strictly Judahistic interest
• omits faults of kings he considers good (esp. David & Solomon)
• stresses continuity from creation (salvation history)
• glorification of David & his family, with special emphasis on God's promise to David
• emphasis on religious & cultic rather than historical & political
• stress on direct activity of God
• corporate & individual retribution: precise correspondence between behavior & fate
• concern for temple & cult
• genealogies & lists
• evaluation of kings not on basis of attitude toward high places but on basis of obedience
to prophetic message
• interest in “all Israel”

Genealogies

reasons for compilation (in general):
1. identification for legal purposes (inheritance, etc.)
2. establishment of rights to social position (nobility, kinship, priesthood)
3. proof of racial purity
4. prideful demonstration of relation to famous persons
5. strengthening of position or authority by tracing origin back to important ancestral
   appointment to that post

extended personal genealogies (more than 3 or 4 generations) develop late & associated with
priestly writers (P) & Chr—insistence on racial purity in post-exilic period made pedigrees
important, esp. for priests & Levites
clan & geographical names often personified

Chr gives special emphasis to Levi, Judah, Simeon, & Benjamin, which constituted bulk of returning community

Perspectives

David presented as ideal king & organizer of cult

many emphases in Chr on Judahite kings’ reforms & political successes—more positive evaluation than Dtr

instructive to read Chr in light of Sam-Kgs

Comparison of Kings of Judah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King/Queen</th>
<th>Kings Evaluation</th>
<th>Chronicles Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>none (faults recorded)</td>
<td>good (no faults recorded except census, followed by quick repentance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>none (faults recorded)</td>
<td>good (no faults recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (loss of northern tribes, Shishak invasion, repentance blunted Shishak’s impact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam/Abijah</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>good (victory over Jeroboam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>good, then bad (diseased feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoshaphat</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>mostly good (wrecked ships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoram</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (loss of Edom, diseased bowels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (killed in Jehu’s revolt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athaliah</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (executed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joash</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>good, then bad (defeat in battle, assassinated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaziah</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>good, then bad (defeat in battle, assassinated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azariah/Uzziah</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>good, then bad (leprosy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham</td>
<td>good (-high places)</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaz</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (defeat in battle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good (pride, followed by quick repentance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad, then good (long reign)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amon</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (assassinated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good, then bad (died in battle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoiakim</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (taken into exile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoiachin</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad (taken into exile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>bad, along with leading priests &amp; people (taken into exile, temple &amp; Jerusalem destroyed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Three forces that shape the plot**

*divine promise*: concerning the dynasty the David & the Jerusalem temple—give the reader confident expectations about the future

*doctrine of retribution*: a moral cause & effect universe, where the righteous will prosper and the unrighteous will suffer as a matter of course

*temple*: plays a role in about 2/3 of the narrative material

using these forces, the Chronicler creates an ideological history, or history “as it ought to have been”—combines linear plot of the history of the temple with the cyclical plot of divine retribution

**Themes**

worship: high point of community life, ubiquitous in activities of faithful people (e.g., even in battle, 2 Chr 20:1-22)

temple holiness: Chr careful to maintain spatial holiness of temple by only allowing proper personnel to enter temple & grounds

Levites: play an important role, but subordinate to Aaronic priests

distinction between priests & prophets: unbroken string of prophets throughout period