

## Deuteronomistic History

def: name given to the books of Josh-2 Kings, seen as a unified historical presentation (sometimes includes Deut as well, with Dtr supplements)

many scholars early in 20th C saw evidence of Pentateuchal sources continuing in Joshua, creating a Hexateuch (von Rad)—Martin Noth (1943) first to see former prophets as real unified work, produced in exile, & based on Deuteronomic theology

acc. to Noth, Dtr divided history of Israel into five periods:

1. Mosaic period
2. conquest
3. judges
4. Saul, David, & Solomon (united monarchy)
5. divided monarchy

historical fortunes of Israel constantly explained by faithfulness/unfaithfulness to God—several speeches, prayers, & reflective comments indicate Dtr's perspective (Deut 1-4; Josh 23; Jdg 2:11-23; 1 Sam 12; 2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 8:22-53; 2 Kgs 17:7-23)

concepts of covenant, chosen people, centrality of Jerusalem for cult, exclusive worship of Yahweh common to Deut & Dtr

many scholars see 2 editions—first in time of Josiah, calling people to choose obedience, second early in exile, telling reasons for destruction, but ending in note of hope—Cross says earlier work stresses sin of Jeroboam & faithfulness of David, whereas second work blames fall on Manasseh's sins—some scholars see earlier edition in time of Hezekiah—certainly Hezekiah & Josiah two kings with highest praise

much use of earlier material without great alteration, thus resulting in several discrepancies (conquest of land, choosing of king, ...)

Dtr not just an editor, but an author, arranging, adapting, & creating material—specifically, a historiographer, or writer of history

began by writing an enclosing framework for Deut (1-3, 31, 34)—other material in final form of DtrH includes Josh 1-12, 23; Jdg 2-16; 1 Sam 1-2 Sam 20; 1-2 Kgs—likely that Josh 13-22, 24; Jdg 1, 17-21; 2 Sam 21-24 added after DtrH divided into five books (inc. Deut)—other material also added later (e.g., 1 Sam 17:12-31, 55-58; 18:1-5 MT)

central interpretive theme of first edition (Josianic) is that Israel's fate based on nation's obedience or disobedience to law of Moses as specified in Deut—largely optimistic about Israel's chances of survival in wake of Assyrian collapse, even with rise of Babylonia—generally positive view of institution of monarchy—repeated promise to David & his descendants (2 Sam 7:1-17; 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19)—high point is reformation of Josiah (2 Kgs 22-23), especially destruction of high places (cf. Deut 12) & destruction of temple in Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15-16)

purpose of second edition (exilic) to explain overthrow of nation as punishment for sin against God, particularly in days of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:10-15)—more pessimistic, with no certainty of deliverance from exile—more negative view of institution of monarchy

Dtr made use of many sources, often without much change (e.g., excerpts from Book of Jashar, Acts of Solomon, Annals of Kings of Israel, Annals of Kings of Judah, Ark Narrative, Rise of David, Throne Succession Narrative)

unifying techniques in DtrH include use of chronology, prophecy & fulfillment, reflective pauses & speeches

chronology: two different schemes, somewhat overlapping—first counts 480 years from exodus to building of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:1)—time largely filled out by taking reigns of judges consecutively (20, 40, 80 years), but also careers of Moses, Joshua, Saul, & David (all multiples of 10)—current form of DtrH doesn't add up to 480 years because of later additions (e.g., minor judges, Jdg 10 & 12) or disturbances to the text (e.g., length of Saul's reign, 1 Sam 13:1)—second scheme based on synchronized reigns of kings of Israel & Judah—some problems here as well, in both Hebrew text itself & in comparison of Hebrew with Greek text—overlap in chronologies around Solomon's construction of temple indicates importance of event to Dtr, for it fulfilled Deut's requirement of central sanctuary (Deut 12)

prophecy & fulfillment: common feature is announcement of prophecy in one passage & description of fulfillment later—for example:

- prophecy that new altar in Bethel will be destroyed (1 Kgs 13:2-3; 2 Kgs 23:16-18)
- curse on Jericho (Josh 6:26; 1 Kgs 16:34)
- new priestly family replaces Elides (1 Sam 2:27-36; 1 Kgs 2:27)
- David's son builds temple (2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 8:20)
- kingdom divided & part given to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:29-31; 12:15)
- ruling families of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:10-11; 15:29), Baasha (1 Kgs 16:2-4, 12), & Ahab (1 Kgs 21:21-24; 22:38; 2 Kgs 9:7-10, 36-37) eliminated

reflective pauses & speeches—editorial comments, often presented as actual speeches, at crucial moments in history of Israel or Judah—speeches composed for occasion (cf. Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.1):

With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.

examples:

- Moses reviews history prior to conquest (Deut 1-3)
- Yahweh promises Joshua success if he will be courageous & obedient (Josh 1:1-9)
- Joshua warns Israel about challenges before them (Josh 23)
- Nathan promises that Yahweh will grant David a dynasty in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7:5-16)
- Solomon prays at dedication of temple concerning its significance (1 Kgs 8:22-53)
- reasons for fall of Israel to Assyrians (2 Kgs 17:7-41)

most prominent theological theme in DtrH is divine punishment & reward—two main sins were worship of other gods (e.g., Baal, host of heaven [Assyrian deities], cf. 2 Kgs 23:3-5) & sacrifice at sites other than Jerusalem (e.g., high places, Bethel & Dan, cf. 1 Kgs 12:26-33)

other themes include:

- promised land (Josh 1:2-6; 23)
- importance of temple (1 Kgs 8)
- promise to David (1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4-5; 2 Kgs 8:19)
- importance of obedience to prophetic word
- positive example of David & Josiah, negative example of Jeroboam I, Ahab, & Manasseh

overall plot of DtrH:

1. Joshua takes over leadership of Israel from Moses & leads successful conquest of land
2. period of alternating obedience & disobedience during period of judges
3. people demand a king
4. inferior king Saul replaced by superior king David, the standard for future kings
5. Solomon builds temple
6. after Solomon's death, kingdom divides
7. Israel immediately falls into illegitimate worship & is eventually, inevitably led into exile in Assyria
8. Judah alternates between obedient & disobedient kings, with disobedience reaching its peak in Manasseh & obedience reaching its peak in Josiah, who also has greatest success

9. Josiah's premature death a tragedy for kingdom, which quickly descends into old ways of disobedience, which results in Babylonian exile