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A RESPONSE TO A.G. AULD

H.G.M. Williamson
Faculty of Oriental Studies, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA

I am grateful to Dr Auld for asking me to respond to his paper, not least because it has given me the opportunity of reading it at leisure—and, indeed, the earlier paper to which he referred and which is essential for a full understanding of the position towards which he is moving. That he has presented us with suggestions of great interest is evident, and if they could be substantiated they would entail a considerable revision of the general consensus about the development of the historical books. Note at once that I do not include here the subject with which he ended, the development of the Jewish canon. This point seemed to me somewhat separate from the rest of the discussion and could probably stand without it purely as an exegesis of the closing verses of Deuteronomy; nor is it, in any case, the most novel part of the paper. I shall therefore concentrate my remarks rather on some of his earlier and more controversial points.

First, almost the whole of the previous paper and much of this one is based on a presentation of statistics, relevant in particular to *nābî'* and related verbal stems and, to a lesser extent, to other words referring to prophetic figures. The argument is that only quite late did *nābî'* come to be used of those whom we now generally regard as prophets. Broadly speaking, if we set the testimony of the latter prophets against the former prophets, then, judged by this criterion, the historical books have, at the very least, been subjected to a late 'prophetic' redaction.

Now, since the dangers of handling statistics are well known, one may hesitate to rush in here. Nevertheless, by the same token there are some obvious points which the uninitiated are likely to raise and against which Dr Auld will wish to protect himself.

(i) Since the pre-exilic Biblical prophets seem, generally speaking,

to have been 'loners', it does not occasion much surprise to find that there are not many positive references to *nābî'* in their oracles, for they would have had only themselves to refer to. Where one might expect such references would be in (prose) editorial references to them by their support groups. There is not a great deal of this for the earliest prophets; it comes to the fore particularly, of course, with Jeremiah, and here, as Dr Auld has observed, we find them. Must we assume, however, that Jeremiah himself would have rejected the designation?

(ii) By the same token, it is not surprising that when the pre-exilic prophets refer to other prophets they are critical of them, as has been shown. However, account should be taken here of the point that evidently better was expected of them. It is not that they are rejected because they are *nᵉbî'îm*, but because they are bad ones.

(iii) Again, it is not particularly surprising that 'the prophets' as a group gain positive appraisal only in the post-exilic period. Obviously, they could not be positively appraised until there was in fact such a group to be appraised! It could scarcely have happened, therefore, at the start of the tradition of written prophecy. It is generally recognized, however, that it was only with the vindication of their message of judgment in the exile itself that many came to realize that the prophets had been right all along. To put the point in other words, Zechariah 1.3-6 fits its historical context and could hardly have been written sooner.

(iv) I should like also to have seen some account taken of the results of recent sociological approaches to the study of the prophets. Now, in many people's opinion sociology is often as slippery as statistics, but it is at least of interest that the studies of Petersen[1] and Wilson,[2] though they approach the texts from quite different points of view, both independently agree that specifically in this area of terminology regional variation may have played a larger rôle than we are accustomed to acknowledge. If so, the richer usage of the exilic and post-exilic writers may be due in part to the merging of this earlier diversity.

(v) Finally, we should not underplay such hints at a positive evaluation of prophecy as do exist in the early sources. Amos 2.11 and 13 come particularly to mind, for there the prophets are raised up by God only to be silenced by antagonistic Israelites.

The other main area which the paper discussed and which, not surprisingly, I should like to probe, is the relationship between the

Deuteronomic History and Chronicles. In my own note on the subject (*VT* 32, 1982, 242-48), to which a kind reference was made, I suggested that there was evidence to suppose that the Chronicler's account of the death of Josiah did not come from some alternative source, but was actually a part of the version of the Deuteronomic History which the Chronicler was following. I hinted that alongside our canonical 'Kings', which took final shape in Babylon, the development of the history continued a little elsewhere—presumably in Palestine. Recent studies of the growth of Jeremiah have advanced similar suggestions, and it may also help account for the purely textual differences between the Massoretic Text of Samuel, 4QSam[a] and the form of text to which it seems the Chronicler had access.

Now, I think it possible that there may be another odd paragraph or two of this nature in Chronicles; for instance, I have wondered about part of the account of Hezekiah's reform at the start of 2 Chronicles 31. But of course the proposal of Dr Auld's paper would undercut my position entirely, first by arguing that both present texts are independently based on some other common source and, secondly, by postulating a much longer and far more substantial degree of later activity on the Deuteronomic History than my modest proposal envisaged. Let us, therefore, examine the principal arguments advanced in this section of the paper.

(i) First, it seems rather a large conclusion to draw from a fairly narrow base. This becomes particularly acute when it is remembered that the Chronicler certainly—and the Deuteronomist probably—had his own distinctive point to make about the nature of prophecy.[3] His ascription of prophetic terminology to the Levitical singers, coupled with his characteristic use of Levitical sermons in which the canonical prophets are quoted as 'texts', are sufficient to suggest that his concern is with the reapplication of written prophecy in his own day. If, as Seeligmann has argued in detail, this represents a development from the position in Kings, with the prose of Jeremiah holding the middle ground, then the terminology should be studied initially to see how it relates to that conceptual development, rather than in complete isolation.

(ii) The hypothesis that Kings and Chronicles both drew on an independent source was widely held by conservative scholars in the last century,[4] though of course on grounds rather different from those advanced here; only so could they harmonize a number of the discrepancies between the two texts. That belief eventually died out,

first because there was no evidence whatsoever for the existence of this 'phantom' source,[5] and, second, because so much of Chronicles explicitly presupposes knowledge of the earlier account in substantially its present form.

Auld's treatment of the source citation formulae rules out any attempt to counter in terms of the first point, but he also suggests explicitly that the Chronicler could have worked with a text of the Deuteronomic History which included neither the court history of David nor the Elijah/Elisha naratives. Does this not, therefore, fall foul of the second point referred to above, namely that Chronicles can only be explained on the basis of the present text of Samuel—Kings? Let me illustrate with regard to the court history.

(a) At 1 Chronicles 20.1-3 we have a brief account of Joab's and David's Ammonite campaign. In 2 Samuel 11-12 this is intertwined with the story of Bathsheba and Uriah. This is why it is there said at first that 'David tarried in Jerusalem' (11.1). This note, however, is retained by the Chronicler, at the expense, in fact, of strict consistency, because two verses later (1 Chronicles 20.3) he also includes the statement that 'David and all the people returned to Jerusalem' (cf. 2 Sam. 12.31). This is probably a case, then, where extracting from the fuller account has led to a slight redundancy and inconsistency rather than a case in which the latter have been made the peg on which to hang the longer account. It need hardly be said that good reasons have been advanced to explain why the Chronicler should have wished to omit the longer story but to include this and other accounts of David's wars and victories.

(b) Another allusion to the court history is probably to be found in 1 Chronicles 29.24, where the statement that 'and all the sons likewise of King David submitted themselves unto Solomon the king' seems rather pointless unless it alludes to the account of Adonijah's rebellion (1 Kings 1).

(c) There is a possibility—I put it no higher than that, though others are more convinced[6]—that it was reflection on the opening of 1 Kings 2 which triggered the whole of the Chronicler's presentation of the patterning of the accession of Solomon on that of Joshua, a patterning which is now generally recognized.[7]

(d) Finally, without the hypothesis that the Chronicler knew 2 Samuel in substantially its present shape, we are left with an odd method of composition by whomever was responsible for this part of the Deuteronomic History. For instance, 2 Samuel 21-24 is generally

agreed to have been added to a text of Samuel which already included the court history. It interrupts the latter in order to present miscellaneous material about David at the end of the account of his reign. Since the Chronicler drew on these chapters at several points in his narrative, the view under discussion has to follow the less plausible hypothesis that they stood in an earlier version of the continuous history and that the court history was wrapped around them by a subsequent editor.

(iii) I can now deal more briefly with the Elijah/Elisha stories (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 10).

(a) Nearly all these chapters relate to the northern kingdom of Israel alone. They thus fall into the category of material which, for reasons of his own, the Chronicler has consistently omitted. Their absence from his account is thus in no way remarkable.

(b) The exceptions to this, namely incidents in which kings of the southern kingdom of Judah are involved, neatly prove the rule. First, 1 Kings 22 is cited *in extenso*, prophets and all, in 2 Chronicles 18. Second, 2 Kings 3 is replaced by an alternative account in 2 Chronicles 20 because it served better the Chronicler's total presentation of the reign of Jehoshaphat.[8] Third, 2 Chronicles 22.7-9 (the death of Ahaziah) seems to be based on 2 Kings 9.1-28 with 10.12-14 and to presuppose knowledge of it. The differences, I have argued,[9] can all be explained on the basis of the Chronicler's well-attested principles of interpretation, familiar from other passages. Here we should note in particular, however, the passing reference to 'Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab' (2 Chron. 22.7). This undoubtedly betrays knowledge of part, at least, of the Elisha cycle.

(iv) Finally, I am not sure how much should be made of the lack in Chronicles of the fulfilment formulae in Kings to which von Rad drew our attention. While Auld clearly regards it as significant, it should be remembered that, with one important exception to which we shall return, they too all relate to the northern kingdom. Meanwhile, it may be noted in passing that instances of a looser connection between prophecy and fulfilment as noted by von Rad are included in Chronicles from Kings.

It is thus no use my trying to hide the fact that I find myself unable to accept a number of the conclusions of Dr Auld's paper as they relate to areas of particular interest to me. Of course, this does not rule out the possibility of a prophetic redaction of the Deuteronomic

History after the exile but before Chronicles[10] (unless we follow the growing fashion for dating Chronicles as early as 520-515 BC[11]); nevertheless, to adopt the analogy which was suggested with the New Testament synoptic problem, I still favour a two document hypothesis rather than a hunt for an elusive Q.

Let me end, however, on a positive note, for, amongst much else of interest, Dr Auld's paper has thrown up one possibility that could be well worth pursuing. Attention was drawn to references to prophets in the books of Kings which are omitted by Chronicles. These are not numerous, and for some (e.g. 1 Chron. 21.9) I favour more mechanical explanations. It is of interest to note, however, that two relate to Manasseh and his doleful effects on the history of Judah—and that in just the way that 1 Esdras 1 differs most from 2 Chronicles 35-36. Those who argue for a 'double redaction' view of Kings generally attribute the theme of blaming Manasseh for the exile to the latest phase. Meanwhile, as is well known, the Chronicler handles this theme quite differently because of his characteristic understanding of retribution. While this latter point adequately explains the omissions in Chronicles, the different approach adopted by 1 Esdras 1 may be sufficient to reopen the question of the status of that enigmatic document.[12] Perhaps we may ask whether in these instances we should not be talking so much of purely textual assimilation at a late, even translation, stage, but of an earlier contribution to the development of the definitive history and interpretation of the closing years of the Judean monarchy.

NOTES

1. D.L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel's Prophets* (JSOTS 17), Sheffield, 1981.

2. R.R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, Philadelphia, 1980.

3. As the evidence has been frequently rehearsed, it is not necessary to go into detail here; see, for instance, D.L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS 23), Missoula, 1977; I.L. Seeligmann, 'Die Auffassung von der Prophetie in der deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtsschreibung (mit einem Exkurs über das Buch Jeremia)', *SVT* 29 (1978), 254-84; T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (FRLANT 106), Göttingen, 1972, 216-29.

4. See, for instance, the summary of Keil's discussion of the Chronicler's sources in the introduction to his commentary: 'But our canonical books of Samuel and Kings are by no means to be reckoned among the sources

possibly used besides the writings which are quoted . . . The single plausible ground which is usually brought forward to prove the use of these writings, is the circumstance that the Chronicle contains many narratives corresponding to those found in Samuel and Kings, and often verbally identical with them. But that is fully accounted for by the fact that the Chronicler used the same more detailed writings as the authors of the books of Samuel and Kings'; C.F. Keil, *The Books of the Chronicles*, Edinburgh, 1872, 38 (translated from *Biblischer Commentar über die nachexilischen Geschichtsbücher: Chronik, Esra, Nehemia und Esther*, Leipzig, 1870).

5. This point was stressed particularly by C.C. Torrey, 'The Chronicler as Editor and as Independent Narrator', *AJSL* 25 (1908-9), 157-73 and 188-217, reprinted in *Ezra Studies*, Chicago, 1910, 208-51.

6. Cf. R.L. Braun, *JBL* 95 (1976), 587, n. 17 and *SVT* 30 (1979), 61-62, n. 32.

7. Cf. 'The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles', *VT* 26 (1976), 351-61.

8. See my commentary, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (New Century Bible), Grand Rapids and London, 1982, 277-80 and 291ff.

9. *Ibid.*, 311-12.

10. For a survey of opinions on this, cf. R.D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTS 18), Sheffield, 1981.

11. I have set out my reasons for rejecting this date in *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977), 123-6, and in *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 15-16.

12. For some preliminary orientation, cf. my *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*, Cambridge, 1977, 12-36.