WHO WAS THE DEUTERONOMIST? (WHO WAS NOT THE DEUTERONOMIST?): REFLECTIONS ON PAN-DEUTERONOMISM

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Some readers will already be familiar with the literary allusion in the title of this paper. It recalls some lines in the Sumerian King List, a remarkable document that traces the history of kingship from the time it was 'lowered from heaven' to reside in the city of Eridu (or the city of Kish in some editions) to the time it finally came to rest in the city of Isin, the place where the scribe who created the list obviously thought kingship properly belonged. As the scribe lists the succession of cities through which kingship passed, he also lists the succession of rulers who exercised kingship within each of those cities. Thus the text is based on the notion that kingship could reside legitimately in only one city at a time, and within a given city kingship could legitimately be exercised by only one king at a time. This ideology of kingship is unswervingly displayed in the list until the kingship reaches the city of Agade, where the real world of political upheaval finally forces the author to depart from the formulaic presentation of the list. According to Thorkild Jacobsen's translation, after listing the early kings of the dynasty of Agade, the apparently exasperated scribe describes the political instability in the dynasty with the following words:

> Who was king? Who was not king? Was Igigi king? Was Nanum king? Was Imi king? Was Elulu king? Their tetrad was king and reigned 3 years![1] (vii 1-7)

This description of a chaotic time when kingship seemed to be everywhere can also serve as an apt characterization of the situation that seems to be rapidly developing in the field of biblical studies with respect to the extent of Deuteronomistic influence in our present biblical

1. T. Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 112-15.

text. Traditionally scholars have seen the hand of the Deuteronomists in an impressive amount of biblical literature, but their influence was still confined to a relatively small portion of the biblical corpus. They were responsible for Deuteronomy, of course, and for most of the so-called Deuteronomistic History—Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Outside of these obviously Deuteronomistic books, the Deuteronomists were usually thought to be responsible primarily for the non-narrative prose in Jeremiah, for Isaiah 36–39 (paralleled almost verbatim in 2 Kgs 18–20), and for small units in Amos and Hosea.

In recent years, however, this situation has begun to change radically. Modern Pentateuchal studies seem to find the Deuteronomists represented in most of the books of the Torah, and some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the Deuteronomists were in fact the compilers, if not the authors, of the Torah as we now have it. In the Deuteronomistic History itself the Deuteronomists are being given credit for creating most of their material out of whole cloth, and, in some extreme circles, they are being credited with shaping virtually all of the prophetic books, not to mention a number of the Psalms. Indeed, even a casual reading of recent scholarly literature suggests that we are rapidly entering an era of pan-Deuteronomism. Whenever the authorship of a particular piece of biblical literature is investigated, the identity of the author(s) always turns out to be the same: the Deuteronomists. Thus the title of this paper: Who was the Deuteronomist? Who was *not* the Deuteronomist?

Because the Deuteronomists are appearing with increasing frequency in discussions of all sorts of biblical literature, it may be useful to attempt to chart the overall extent of this trend and to assess its implications. In the discussion that follows I will at least begin this task, although a full treatment of the topic would obviously require considerably more space than is available in a brief paper. My interest in the following survey is not to provide a comprehensive account of the scholarly discussion; nor will I give a critique of the various positions being advanced. Rather by citing representative examples of recent scholarly trends I wish to trace the general outlines of the growth of pan-Deuteronomism and then to suggest some of the implications of the phenomenon.

I

The Deuteronomists in the Torah

Since Wellhausen's development of the classical form of the Documentary Hypothesis, the Deuteronomistic contribution to the Torah has usually been thought to be restricted to the book of Deuteronomy itself. Even around the turn of the century, when the excesses of source criticism were so clearly visible in the scholarly world, particularly in Germany, scholars only rarely identified the hand of the Deuteronomist in the first four books, although from time to time they did notice similarities between the Deuteronomist and the work of the Elohist. It is difficult to determine precisely when this situation began to change, but a convenient benchmark is the influential work of Lothar Perlitt. In 1969, at a time when George Mendenhall's work on covenant had convinced most scholars of the centrality and antiquity of this central concept, Perlitt published a thoroughgoing revisionist treatment of the issue.[2] He focused his inquiry on the theology of covenant, rejecting from the start the relevance of the alleged parallels between biblical covenants and ancient Near Eastern treaties. After a survey of the uses of the word *b^{e}rît*, Perlitt concludes that the term refers to the notion of obligation and locates the most complete development of the concept in the work of the Deuteronomists, which he dates to the eighth and seventh centuries. Perhaps, under the influence of prophets such as Hosea, the Deuteronomists developed the idea of covenant and then imposed it on other biblical literature, including the central part of the Torah, the Sinai section (Exod. 19–24, 32–34). With this theory Perlitt set in place two of the cornerstones of much of later pan-Deuteronomism: (1) Deuteronomistic editing is much more pervasive than scholars have previously thought, particularly in the Torah; and (2) Deuteronomistic editorial activity was relatively late, certainly no earlier than Josiah and possibly later, perhaps much later.

Although scholars were quick to point out a number of problems in Perlitt's analysis (and I will return to some of these later), his work had an enormous impact on critical thought, particularly in Germany. While Perlitt confined his work to the study of covenant, it did not take long for scholars to expand on his concept of Deuteronomistic editing in the

2. L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT, 36; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969).

Torah. In 1976 H.H. Schmid published a major re-examination of Pentateuchal criticism that drew heavily on the work of Perlitt.[3] Focusing primarily on themes or motifs in the first four books (such as the promises of land, increase and blessing made to the ancestors), Schmid concludes that the traditional Yahwist source does not exist but that material usually attributed to J is in fact the work of much later editors writing at about the same time as the Deuteronomists and under their influence. Although few scholars have followed Schmid in the details of his argument, a number have accepted the suggestion that the Deuteronomists were responsible for shaping much of the Pentateuch and have then dated this editorial activity to the exile or even later.[4] Thus it is no longer unusual to see scholars identifying Deuteronomistic material in all of the first four books (including Gen. 1–11). The work of the Deuteronomists is even being detected in passages usually thought to contain archaic traditions and to be pre-Yahwistic. For example, a recent monograph by H. Hagelia[5] argues that Gen. 15.1-21 (the supposedly ancient 'covenant between the pieces') is linked through vocabulary, phraseology and theological content to crucial passages in the Deuteronomistic History, including 2 Samuel 7, 1 Kings 3, and 2 Kgs 17.1-23 (also Isa. 7.1-17). These connections, in the author's mind, demonstrate the Deuteronomistic origin of the Genesis passages (Gen. 15.1-6, 7-21) and point to thoroughgoing Deuteronomistic literary activity in the Torah outside of Deuteronomy during the exile or later. In a similar vein, Martin L. Brenner analyzes the Song of Moses in Exod. 15.1-21 and argues that it is by no means the ancient victory song that scholars have traditionally thought it to be.[6] Rather, the song is full of Deuteronomistic language and in addition shows influence

3. H.H. Schmid, *Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976).

4. R. Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup, 89; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984); *idem*, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW, 189; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990); W. Johnstone, 'The Deuteronomistic Cycle of "Signs" and "Wonders" in Exodus 1–13', in A.G. Auld (ed.), *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* (JSOTSup, 152; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 166-85.

5. H. Hagelia, *Numbering the Stars: A Phraseological Analysis of Genesis 15* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994).

6. M.L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex 15:1-21* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991).

from Second Isaiah, a fact that demonstrates that the song must be later than the exile. Brenner finally traces the authorship of the song to the Sons of Asaph, who composed it sometime after the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls by Nehemiah.

Carrying the argument one step farther, some scholars are now seeing the Deuteronomists, writing presumably in the exile or later, as the final editors or shapers or even authors of the present form of the Torah. David Noel Freedman, among others, has long advocated such a position and has claimed that the Bible's 'Primary History' (Genesis through Kings) was put together by Deuteronomists working in the exile not long after the last events recorded in Kings.[7] Taking another tack, Suzanne Boorer has detected the hand of the Deuteronomists in five Torah texts (Exod. 13.3-16; 32.7-14; 33.1-3; Num. 14.11b-23a; 32.7-11) and then has argued that all but one of these texts predate their parallels in Deuteronomy.[8] This suggests Deuteronomistic editorial activity in an extensive body of biblical literature over a fairly long period of time.

Deuteronomists in the Deuteronomistic History

It will come as no surprise that contemporary scholars see the Deuteronomists as the primary shapers of the Deuteronomistic History. This notion has been assumed since the beginning of critical scholarship, and whether one accepts the theory of Martin Noth that the History was essentially the work of a single creative mind or prefers to see in it two or more layers of editorial activity, the fact remains that the History, along with the book of Deuteronomy, remains the Bible's chief repository of Deuteronomistic language and thought. However, in recent years even here scholars have begun to see the Deuteronomist's contributions as more extensive than previously thought.

In modern times, the notion that the History is the work of a single creative genius has usually been associated with the name of Martin Noth, who argued strongly against the idea that it grew more slowly

7. D.N. Freedman, 'The Earliest Bible', in M.P. O'Connor and D.N. Freedman (eds.), *Backgrounds for the Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), pp. 29-37; cf. J. Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 322-53.

8. S. Boorer, *The Promise of the Land as Oath: A Key to the Formation of the Pentateuch* (BZAW, 205; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1992).

over time through the work of several editors.[9] However, even Noth conceded that the History's author made extensive use of earlier blocks of traditional materials, including written documents and archives. Some of these 'books' are mentioned explicitly in the text, where they seem to function as a sort of scholarly reference for the reader who desires additional information. In addition to these references, Noth accepted the common notion of traditional collections of stories, such as those of the judges, the throne succession narrative and the prophetic tales in Kings. Some of these materials contain relatively little in the way of Deuteronomistic language or theology and have simply been set by the Deuteronomists in a larger Deuteronomistic framework. Recently, however, even this rather traditional assumption has been challenged. John Van Seters, for example, in his study of historiography in Israel, concludes that the Deuteronomists were in fact the Bible's first historians and that they created much of the Deuteronomistic History out of whole cloth. They had in fact very few sources to work with, and Noth's pre-existing blocks of tradition on closer examination turn out to be either *post*-Deuteronomistic additions or free creations of the Deuteronomist. In keeping with the general trend of pan-Deuteronomism, Van Seters dates the Deuteronomist's work to the exile or later. He arrives at this conclusion by seeing in Deuteronomism heavy influence from the prophets and close parallels with the techniques of Greek historiography.[10]

The notion that the Deuteronomists were creative writers more than they were historians utilizing earlier sources has been generally adopted by scholars concerned to read the Bible as literature. A prime example is the work of Robert Polzin, who sees in the Deuteronomistic History the product of a literary genius responsible for virtually all of the text as we now have it.[11] Approaching the same idea from another direction, A. Graeme Auld has recently argued that the Chronicler did not base his work on the present text of the Deuteronomistic History but that both the Chronicler and the Deuteronomist creatively transformed an earlier history of Israel and Judah. Both works are therefore best seen as works of literature and theology offering competing visions of Israel's past,

9. M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

10. Van Seters, *In Search of History*.

11. R. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

and the Deuteronomistic History is certainly not to be considered a reliable historical record.[12]

The Deuteronomist in the Prophetic Books

Scholars have long seen Deuteronomistic influence in the prophetic books. Standard commentaries have often identified Deuteronomistic editing in Amos, primarily on the basis of vocabulary. This suggestion is usually traced to the work of Werner H. Schmidt[13] and his suggestions have been accepted and extended by a number of other scholars, including Hans Walter Wolff in his commentary on Joel and Amos.[14] What is new in the present debate is the extent and relative lateness of the Deuteronomistic editing. Among the more recent commentators, J. Jeremias falls in line with current trends by seeing the book as the product of the exile, and this dating of the material would place the Deuteronomistic editing of the book correspondingly late.[15]

Among the other prophets Micah has often been thought to contain Deuteronomistic layers, with some scholars assigning chs. 6 and 7 solely to a Deuteronomist. Hosea, of course, often reflects Deuteronomistic language and thought, although in this case the prophetic book is usually considered an early source of what later becomes the Deuteronomistic movement. An exception to this point of view is expressed in a recent monograph by Else Kragelund Holt, who has the book originating in the late exilic period.[16]

Isaiah actually contains chapters paralleled in Kings and thought by some scholars to be late Deuteronomistic additions (although the contrary case has also been argued[17]), and Deuteronomistic writing has been detected in various postexilic prophetic books, particularly Malachi. However, scholars have traditionally found the greatest amount of Deuteronomistic influence in the book of Jeremiah. Beginning in 1901

12. A.G. Auld, *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).

13. W.H. Schmidt, 'Die deuteronomistische Redaktion des Amosbuches', *ZAW* 77 (1965), pp. 168-93.

14. H.W. Wolff, *Joel, Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

15. J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); cf. D.U. Rottzoll, *Studien zur Redaktion und Komposition des Amosbuches* (BZAW, 243; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1996).

16. E.K. Holt, *Prophesying the Past: The Use of Israel's History in the Book of Hosea* (JSOTSup, 194; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

17. C.R. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

with the commentary of Bernhard Duhm,[18] scholars have noted particularly close affinities between the Deuteronomistic History and the non-biographical prose passages in Jeremiah. These passages received their classic treatment in the work of Sigmund Mowinckel, who argued that a number of passages in the book contained Deuteronomistic vocabulary and concepts and were therefore added by the Deuteronomists, probably during the exile.[19] Mowinckel's analysis, involving the prose passages in 3.6-13; 7.1–8.3; 11.1-5, 9-14; 18.1-12; 21.1-10; 22.1-5; 25.1-11a; 27.1-22; 29.1-23; 32.1-2, 6-16, 24-44; 34.1-7, 8-22; 35.1-19; 39.15-18; 44.1-14; and 45.1-5, has been accepted by most scholars as proof of a Deuteronomistic layer in Jeremiah, although there remains a great deal of debate concerning the relation of this material to the book's biographical prose and to the prophet's poetic oracles.

With all of this traditional discussion of Deuteronomistic material in the prophetic books, it would seem unlikely that much more Deuteronomistic influence could be uncovered. Such, however, is not the case. A quick survey of recent research on prophecy reveals that pan-Deuteronomism has in fact run rampant in the prophetic corpus in the past few years. To take Jeremiah as an example, Ronald Clements has recently argued that in addition to contributing Mowinckel's prose material, the Deuteronomists were also responsible for giving the final canonical shape to Jeremiah 1–25. He presses this argument by showing that motifs and themes from 2 Kings 17, the retrospective on the history of the northern kingdom, have governed the arrangement of the Jeremiah material.[20] This argument would make the Deuteronomists in fact the final editors of the book and would place their activities sometime in the exilic or postexilic period.

Clements's theories on the Deuteronomistic editing of Jeremiah seem to be heavily influenced by the work of Robert Carroll, who in his commentary on the book suggests that much of the material in Jeremiah comes to us through a thoroughly Deuteronomistic filter.[21] Going even further in other scattered publications, he also argues that almost noth-

18. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1901).

19. S. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Jacob Dybwad, 1914).

20. R. Clements, 'Jeremiah 1–25 and the Deuteronomistic History', in Auld (ed.), *Understanding Poets and Prophets*, pp. 93-113.

21. R.P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

ing in the prophetic corpus actually reflects the realities of pre-exilic Israel and that what we know as pre-exilic prophecy was actually created in the postexilic period by the Deuteronomists and then retrojected into an earlier period, a view which is shared, at least in part, by Auld.[22] This would seem to make the Deuteronomists responsible not only for the shaping of prophetic books but also for the creation of Israelite prophecy itself, a position that would seem to be the ultimate expression of pan-Deuteronomism.

The current trend toward Deuteronomizing Isaiah seems to have begun with a monograph by Hermann Barth.[23] Barth argued that many of the oracles attributed to the First Isaiah were in fact created or shaped by editors working in the time of Josiah and within the circles responsible for the Deuteronomistic movement. These editors were responsible for reviving interest in the earlier prophet, whose words were reformulated to fit the basically hopeful outlook of the Deuteronomists during Josiah's early reign. The argument for a basically Deuteronomistic presentation of Isaiah is based on the observation that many of Isaiah's oracles are 'congenial' to the characteristic Deuteronomic view of reality, although it must also be noted that traditional Deuteronomistic language is largely lacking in Isaiah. As shaky as this theory seems to be, it has had a major influence on commentaries on Isaiah, and the theory of a major Deuteronomistic editing of the First Isaiah is beginning to be presented in 'state-of-the-art' redaction histories.[24]

22. A.G. Auld, 'Prophets through the Looking Glass: Between Writings and Moses', *JSOT* 27 (1983), pp. 3-23; note also the immediate responses of R.P. Carroll, 'Poets not Prophets: A Response to "Prophets through the Looking Glass" ', *JSOT* 27 (1983), pp. 25-31, and H.G.M. Williamson, 'A Response to A.G. Auld', *JSOT* 27 (1983), pp. 33-39, and the later reactions of R.P. Carroll, 'Inventing the Prophets', *IBS* 10 (1988), pp. 24-36; T.W. Overholt, 'Prophecy in History: The Social Reality of Intermediation', *JSOT* 48 (1990), pp. 3-29, and 'It Is Difficult to Read', *JSOT* 48 (1990), pp. 51-54; R.P. Carroll, 'Whose Prophet? Whose History? Whose Social Reality? Troubling the Interpretative Community Again: Notes towards a Response to T.W. Overholt's Critique', *JSOT* 48 (1990), pp. 33-49; A.G. Auld, 'Prophecy in Books: A Rejoinder', *JSOT* 48 (1990), pp. 31-32; and H.M. Barstad, 'No Prophets? Recent Developments in Biblical Prophetic Research and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy', *JSOT* 57 (1993), pp. 39-60.

23. H. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977).

24. T. Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetical*

In the book of Ezekiel, Walther Zimmerli has noted the presence of Deuteronomistic themes, although characteristic Deuteronomistic language seems to be lacking.[25] These hints of Deuteronomistic activity have been analyzed in greater detail by Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, who sees in them the hand of editors favoring the exilic community.[26]

Finally, studies of the Book of the Twelve have begun to see much more Deuteronomistic editing in these books. I have already indicated something of the current state of thinking about Deuteronomistic editing in Amos, Hosea and Micah, but I should also note here a thoroughgoing attempt by Raymond F. Person, Jr, to demonstrate that Second Zechariah (Zech. 9–14) is the product of Deuteronomists working in the postexilic period.[27] Person makes his case primarily by comparing Second Zechariah with Deuteronomistic portions of Jeremiah, and in this way he also demonstrates that Deuteronomistic editing of the prophetic literature continued over a fairly long period of time.

Beyond the detection of Deuteronomistic influence in individual prophetic books, scholars have suggested that the organization of books within the Book of the Twelve also shows Deuteronomistic influence. The most comprehensive case for such overall Deuteronomistic editing has been mounted by James Nogalski, who argues that Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah once circulated together before they became part of the present Book of the Twelve. These four books formed a Deuteronomistic corpus that was compiled sometime after 586 in order to explain the exile and destruction of Jerusalem.[28] Although Nogalski mounts the most recent case for overall Deuteronomistic editing of the Book of the Twelve, the idea itself has been around for some time and has been advocated in a less thoroughly developed form by Joseph Blenkinsopp and Norman Gottwald, among others.[29] On a broader

Books (The Biblical Seminar, 20; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 37-58.

25. W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 44-46.

26. K.-F. Pohlmann, *Ezechielstudien* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1992).

27. R.F. Person, Jr, *Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomic School* (JSOTSup, 167; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

28. J. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 217; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993); *idem*, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993).

29. J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), pp. 96-123; N.K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Liter-*

scale, the most recent edition of Otto Kaiser's introductory textbook sees Deuteronomistic editing throughout the prophetic books wherever there are narratives describing prophetic activity.[30]

The Deuteronomists in the Writings

Although there have been relatively few attempts to detect Deuteronomistic influence in the Writings, there is one major exception: the book of Psalms. On the basis of linguistic and conceptual parallels between certain psalms and biblical literature usually thought to be of northern origin, a number of scholars have suggested that Psalms 9–10, 16, 29, 36, 45, 53, 58, 74, 116, 132, 133, 140, 141, the Korah Psalms and the Asaph Psalms also originated in the north. If one argues that Deuteronomistic literature is also of northern origin, then it might be possible to argue for the Deuteronomistic origin of these same Psalms. It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of Deuteronomistic editing in the Psalter is becoming more common in current psalms research and has begun to influence commentaries on the book.[31] However, a number of methodological problems are raised by these arguments, not the least of which is the question of the link between Deuteronomism and northern biblical Hebrew. On this point there is still no scholarly agreement, and thorough arguments have been mounted on both sides of the issue. So, for example, Gary A. Rendsburg argues on linguistic grounds for the northern origin of some of the psalms but then denies the northern origin of the Deuteronomistic literature.[32] On the other hand, Harry P. Nasuti finds linguistic and thematic links between the Psalms of Asaph and the Deuteronomistic literature and so concludes that the two are ultimately related to each other.[33]

When all of the pieces of this survey are pulled together, it appears that we are left with a picture of pan-Deuteronomism of epidemic pro-

ary Introduction (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 464-68.

30. O. Kaiser, *Grundriss der Einleitung in die kanonischen and deuterokanonischen Schriften des Alten Testament.* II. *Die prophetischen Werke* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1994).

31. F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Die Psalmen I* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993).

32. G.A. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

33. H.P. Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

portions. These individual studies, when taken together, suggest a picture of a Deuteronomistic group, working sometime in the exile or early postexilic period, that is responsible for much of the biblical material as we now have it. They either edited, collected or shaped much of what we have in the Torah and the prophets, or in some cases were actually responsible for writing it. It would seem, then, that we have a basically Deuteronomistic Bible, and the answer to Richard Friedman's question 'Who wrote the Bible?'[34] is absolutely clear: the Deuteronomists wrote the Bible. Who was the Deuteronomist? Who was *not* the Deuteronomist?

II

Now what is to be made of this picture of pervasive Deuteronomistic influence? What are the implications of the arguments that have been made, and what conclusions might be drawn from this recent explosion of pan-Deuteronomism? The answer to this question must obviously be based on a careful assessment of each individual case and argument. However, even on the basis of this broad survey it seems possible to make two general observations concerning the new pan-Deuteronomism.

First, although a growing number of scholars agree that much of the Hebrew Bible is Deuteronomistic, they do not agree on what makes it Deuteronomistic. A variety of criteria have been employed to identify Deuteronomistic influence, but to date there is no consensus on what makes a particular passage Deuteronomistic. This lack of commonly accepted criteria gives the impression that a number of scholars are playing the same game, but without a commonly agreed upon set of rules. It should come as no surprise, then, that there are often disputes among the players.

In spite of the fact that scholars have not yet agreed on how to identify Deuteronomistic material, it does seem clear that some criteria are more persuasive than others. Although I have not made a thorough or comprehensive study of the subject, I would suggest that the most persuasive case for Deuteronomistic influence can be made on linguistic grounds. The book of Deuteronomy and the acknowledged Deuteronomistic material in Joshua through Kings do have a distinctive

34. R.E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (London: Cape, 1988).

vocabulary and prose style, which has often been studied.[35] It would seem fair to assume, then, that wherever characteristic Deuteronomistic language appears, Deuteronomistic influence is present. However, it must be remembered that this method of identification is not without its limitations. To begin with, the number of characteristic Deuteronomistic vocabulary items is relatively small when compared with the vocabulary of biblical Hebrew as a whole. Furthermore, many of these items are not really peculiar to Deuteronomy but can often be found, although more rarely, in non-Deuteronomistic sources. This picture might change even more dramatically if we knew more about Hebrew in the biblical period outside of the Bible. Some scholars have suggested that the distinctive prose of the Deuteronomist is in fact simply a common dialect of the period. This would throw into question the identification of Deuteronomistic influence on purely linguistic grounds, but at the moment we simply do not have enough data to resolve the issue. Until we do, I would suggest that the use of linguistic criteria remains the most reliable way of identifying the hand of the Deuteronomists.

Less reliable than linguistic criteria, although more often employed in scholarly analysis, is the identification of Deuteronomistic influence through the use of characteristic ideas, concepts or themes. Although it is relatively simple to identify such phenomena in the undisputed Deuteronomistic corpus, it is much more difficult to argue successfully that they are exclusively the property of the Deuteronomists. To take a few obvious examples, Perlitt is undoubtedly correct in identifying the notion of covenant as a central Deuteronomistic concern, but he clearly goes too far when he suggests that only the Deuteronomists employed the concept. Extrabiblical parallels, however distant, and undoubtedly non-Deuteronomistic biblical material suggest that other groups and authors used the concept as well, although they may well have understood it differently. Similarly, a strong concept of retributive justice is certainly a hallmark of Deuteronomism, which holds rather simplistically that good behavior brings reward while disobedience brings punishment. However, it is far from certain that only the Deuteronomists held this view. As Bertil Albrektson pointed out some time ago, similar ideas appear in Near Eastern literature generally, and it would not be

35. S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 9th edn, 1913), pp. 99-102; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 320-65.

surprising to find them in the Bible outside of the Deuteronomistic corpus.[36] Even more improbable is the suggestion of Carroll and others that interest in prophecy is peculiarly Deuteronomistic. To be sure, the Deuteronomists *are* interested in prophecy. They give a good bit of attention to it in their literature, and they have their own characteristic understanding of the phenomenon. But the Near Eastern evidence and the studies that have been made by anthropologists suggest that prophecy was much too common in the ancient world to permit the claim that it was invented by the Deuteronomists.[37]

Even less persuasive than the citation of alleged Deuteronomistic concepts, motifs and themes are arguments for Deuteronomistic influence based on the discovery of concepts, motifs and themes that might have been 'congenial' to the Deuteronomists. Much of Schmid's argument for a Deuteronomistic Torah works in this way. For example, the promise motifs in the ancestral stories are said to be Deuteronomistic because they would have been congenial to Deuteronomists living in the time of Josiah or in the exile, or whenever. This may well be true, but one ought not to overlook the fact that undisputed Deuteronomistic literature makes very little of the promise theme (with the exception of 2 Sam. 7), and in spite of the efforts of Frank Moore Cross, I can find very few notes of hope in the Deuteronomistic History.[38] It is probably more plausible to believe that the promise motifs in the Torah, wherever they came from, survived because they had meaning to the later generations of Israelites who preserved, edited and copied these texts; it is unlikely that the promises found their way into the Torah because they were congenial to the Deuteronomists.

At the bottom of the list of plausible arguments for Deuteronomistic influence is the bizarre theory advanced by some Isaiah scholars that certain passages are Deuteronomistic because they can supposedly be dated to a time and place when Deuteronomists are *thought* to have been active.

In assessing the extent of pan-Deuteronomism, then, it is important to remember the lack of consistent criteria being employed in the discussion, and it is equally important to keep open the possibility that pan-Deuteronomism may be less pervasive than it first appears. However,

36. B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1967).

37. Barstad, 'No Prophets?', pp. 39-60.

38. F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274-89.

even if the claims of the pan-Deuteronomists are somewhat exaggerated, enough remains to make the claim of extensive Deuteronomistic literary activity worth taking seriously. It is therefore important to make a second observation concerning pan-Deuteronomistic scholarship. All of the work that I have surveyed, when taken together, provides no coherent account of Deuteronomism as a social, political or religious movement. On the basis of these scholarly hypotheses, it is difficult to see the activities of a specific group working at a specific time and place and having specific interests.

To be sure, individual scholars working on particular problems and texts are quite capable of giving a plausible picture of the Deuteronomists, but when all of this research is taken together, the picture begins to blur considerably. To begin with, there is no consensus on when this explosion of Deuteronomistic literary activity took place. A popular suggestion is that it began in the Josianic period, although recent research on the Deuteronomistic History has suggested dates as early as Hezekiah. Even more popular is the idea that Deuteronomists shaped the bulk of our literature sometime in the exile or in the early postexilic period. It seems impossible with our present knowledge to opt for one or another of these dates. Furthermore, it is always necessary to keep open the possibility that all of these suggestions may be correct and that the Deuteronomists were active over a very long period of time, a possibility that may find support in the textual history of books such as Jeremiah, where Deuteronomistic editing seems to have continued in the Hebrew text after it had stopped in the Greek.

Even more important, recent research on Deuteronomistic influence can provide no coherent account to indicate *why* the Deuteronomists engaged in this massive and thorough-going literary enterprise. In almost each case where Deuteronomistic literary activity can be detected, the authors seem to have been shaping earlier texts for different reasons. So, for example, the Deuteronomistic hand at work in the non-biographical prose of Jeremiah may have been concerned to provide interpretive clues to earlier Jeremiah oracles that immediately preceded the Deuteronomistic additions. But this interest is not at all the same as the interest of the alleged Deuteronomistic shaper of Jeremiah 1–25, who, according to Clements, was trying to illustrate the theology of 2 Kings 17. Different still were the intentions of the alleged Deuteronomistic shaper of Isaiah, who wanted to provide prophetic support for the Deuteronomic reforms during Josiah's reign. None of the above

seems to have had anything to do with the alleged Deuteronomists who shaped the Torah to provide comfort for the Babylonian exiles. In short, if the pan-Deuteronomists are correct in their arguments, then they are suggesting something much more pervasive and complex than the work of a single group, guided by a single rationale and working at a specific time and place.

These observations on pan-Deuteronomism, then, suggest one of two things. First, if Deuteronomistic literary activity was as extensive as the pan-Deuteronomists have suggested, then it may be necessary to alter our concept of Deuteronomism. Instead of thinking of the Deuteronomists as a small discrete group working at a particular time (whenever that may have been) and with particular interests in mind, it may be necessary to explore the possibility that Deuteronomism was a wide-ranging movement that was much more diverse than scholars commonly think and that was active over a very long period of time. There is, however, a second alternative. Recent research may in fact have demonstrated, unwittingly, that the concept of Deuteronomism has become so amorphous that it no longer has any analytical precision and so ought to be abandoned. At the moment I still lean toward the first alternative, but the second is becoming increasingly attractive. It is one that the ancient author of the Sumerian King List would have understood. If everybody is king, then in fact nobody is king. Current trends in Deuteronomistic research may thus force scholars to take seriously the possibility that if everybody is the Deuteronomist, then there may be no Deuteronomist at all.