

## RECENT RESEARCH IN CHRONICLES

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That Cinderella of the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles, has at last emerged from years of obscurity and scorn. Early last century she was all the rage among scholars who used her quite shamelessly in their battles over the reconstruction of Israelite history. But then, when the conflict was over, Wellhausen turned on her in favour of her Deuteronomistic stepsister and sent her packing for her unfashionable love of ritual and family ties, and for allegedly playing fast and loose with the facts. How things have changed over the last decade! She may not yet be the belle of the academic hall, but she has, at least, been noticed in her own right once again and has received long overdue attention from the scholarly community.

Generally speaking, work on Chronicles in the English-speaking world has, over the last decade, been dominated by two scholars, Sara Japhet and Hugh Williamson. Even though they published some of their seminal studies earlier than that, the study of Chronicles has increasingly taken its bearings from them during this period of research, inaugurated by the appearance of Williamson's compact commentary in 1982 and concluded by the publication of Japhet's monumental commentary in 1993. It is therefore only right that these two commentaries mark out the extent of this survey.

As may be expected, the work on Chronicles reflects the general shift in scholarship from interest in origin and historicity to concern for literary shape and function. While the old questions continue to engage attention, so many new matters have been raised for discussion that it is hard to systematize the results, let alone the general trend of scholarship. Now indeed is not the time for summary but for sketching out the vistas opened up for further exploration.

### ***Introductory Matters***

#### ***The Extent of Chronicles***

The last decade *has* seen the gradual triumph of the view championed by Japhet (1968) and Williamson (1977: 5-70; 1982: 5-11) that Chronicles is a separate composition from Ezra-Nehemiah. They have effectively undermined the long-held belief in the unity of these works as a single continuous history which was later separated, as is now the case in the Hebrew Bible. This position is developed most succinctly by Williamson in the introduction to his commentary on Chronicles (1982:5-11).

Their case for the separation of Chronicles from Ezra-Nehemiah has been challenged by some scholars. Throntveit (1982) and Talshir (1988) have argued that the linguistic data are, at best, equivocal, with the result that the burden of proof must be established on other grounds. The main opposition to this hypothesis, however, has come from specialists in Ezra-Nehemiah: Clines (1984: 9-12), Gunneweg (1987: 21-28), Blenkinsopp (1988: 47-54) and Pohlmann (1991). In their defence of the traditional position they appeal mainly to the common ideological and theological concerns evident in both compositions. Yet these do not necessarily provide a strong case for common authorship, since they are clustered around the temple and its services which were obviously important for more than one party in post-exilic Judah.

The result of the debates over the last decade on the relationship between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah has been to shift the balance of probability in favour of their separation. Most recent studies of Chronicles therefore regard it as a discrete composition and deal with it in its own right. Yet the debate is by no means over. Ackroyd (1988) rightly warns against modern assumptions about authorship and reminds us how hypothetical all theories of origin are. It may well be that only after these works have been considered separately will scholars be able to account adequately for their similarities

## ***The Unity of Chronicles***

While there is now general agreement on the extent of Chronicles, no consensus has yet been reached on its unity. The notion that it went through a number of editions has fallen into some disfavour. Instead, most scholars have followed Noth (1987) in arguing for pro-levitical expansions and additions to the original text. An indication of his influence on scholarship over the last decade has been the welcome appearance of his seminal study in English translation with an introduction by Williamson.

Noth's hypothesis, however, has come under attack at two points. His judgment that the bulk of the genealogical material in 1 Chronicles 2-8 is secondary is no longer generally accepted by scholars, even though many still argue for secondary additions in certain cases (for example De Vries 1989: 12-13). The genealogies have therefore received considerable attention for their contribution to the literary structure and purpose of Chronicles as a whole.

More importantly, Noth's foundational literary-critical argument that 1 Chronicles 23-27 is a secondary addition has recently been challenged. The challenge first came from Williamson (1979) in an original and largely ignored article (see also 1982:157-78). He concludes that, whereas the core of these chapters come from the author, a pro-priestly reviser later included 23.13<sup>b</sup>-14, 25-32; 24; 25.7-31; 26.4-8, 12-18; 27. Kleinig (1993: 55) accepts his literary-critical analysis but rejects the theory of a later revision in favour of the combination of two bodies of source material by the Chronicler.

Williamson's challenge has been taken up by Wright (1991) with three sets of functional arguments. After his demonstration that the formal assembly of the whole cultic community in 1 Chron. 28.1 is not a repetition of the royal audience for the briefing of officials in 23.1-2, he maintains that the royal appointment of officials in 23-27 necessarily prepares for their public commissioning at the ceremony for the succession of Solomon in 28-29. He also argues that the references to the duties of the levites in 1 Chron. 6.31-32; 9.22; 2 Chron. 8.14-15; 23.18-19; 29.25 and 35.4, 15 presuppose 1 Chronicles 23-27, which lays the foundation for these developments. Lastly, by comparison with other material from the Persian period, he asserts that David's establishment of the clergy legitimates the reign of David as God's agent. Without any apparent interaction with Wright, Japhet (1993: 406-409) also argues against the interpolation of these chapters by denying any reduplication, by pointing to the dissimilarity in genre of this material and that from chs. 28-29, and by showing how they are integrated into their context.

This challenge to Noth's position may eventually be much more significant than it first appears. If it wins out, the status of the other levitical passages, long held to be secondary, will have to be reconsidered, all theories about later pro-levitical or pro-priestly redactions may have to be abandoned, the arrangement of the clergy may yet prove to be more important for Chronicles than is presently allowed, and the role of David and his successors in the organization of the clergy will need to be reassessed.

Apart from reactions to Noth's hypothesis, the present interest in the literary structure and function of Chronicles has led to a gradual shift away from literary criticism and redaction criticism to account for difficulties in the text. This shift is most evident in the difference between the commentaries of Williamson and Japhet. Whereas Williamson, despite his literary concerns, still argues for pro-priestly additions (1982: 14-15), Japhet treats Chronicles as 'one work, composed essentially by a single author' (1993: 7). She has recourse to the possibility of additions and revisions only as a last resort, after the exhaustion of all other exegetical options. Logically enough, the current ascendancy of literary analysis leads to the assumption of unity. But that, of course, is as much a matter of fashion as of proof.

## ***The Date and Setting of Chronicles***

The separation of Chronicles from Ezra-Nehemiah has opened up the possibility for an earlier dating of Chronicles. Hence both Braun (1986: xxix) and Throntveit (1987: 97-107) date the original draft of the work at about 515 BCE. Throntveit argues that this date explains the interest of Chronicles in the temple and its similarity with Zechariah 1-8. Yet to do so he needs to posit the addition of at least 1 Chron. 3.19-24 and 29.1-9 in a second stage of redaction at about 400 BCE (1987: 97-98).

This proposal has gained little support and is unlikely to do so. Since most scholars now hold to the unity of Chronicles, they date the book somewhere between 350-300 BCE (for example Williamson 1982: 16; De Vries 1989: 16-17; Japhet 1993: 27-28). This date is determined mainly by the extent of the Davidic genealogy in the MT of 1 Chron. 3.19-24, the mention of darics in 1 Chron. 29.7, the apparent borrowing of 2 Chron. 36.22-23 from Ezra 1.1-3<sup>a</sup> and of 1 Chron. 9.2-17 from Neh. 11.3-19, and the degree of complexity in the arrangement of the clergy.

Since this date has gained general acceptance, not much can be said with any certainty about the setting of Chronicles due to the paucity of relevant historical sources from the late Persian period. This has led to growing scepticism at attempts to explain its contents and concerns chiefly from its purported setting. The search for the historical setting as a key to understanding the text is being replaced by sociological analysis of the text itself. The most ambitious attempt to define the social world of the Chronicler has come from the Latvian scholar Weinberg in a series of studies, conveniently summarized by Kreissig (1984). The most important of these have now appeared in English (Weinberg 1992). With the aid of categories developed by Marxist scholars in Russia, he asserts that Chronicles represents the organization of the Jewish people in the Achaemenid empire as a citizen-temple community. His views have been assessed positively by Blenkinsopp and somewhat more critically by Bedford and Horsley in seminar papers on the sociology of the second temple period (Davies [ed.] 1991). Weinberg's studies are likely to stimulate additional research and debate in the next decade as scholars engage in further sociological analysis of Chronicles.

### ***The Nature and Use of Sources in Chronicles***

It is beyond dispute that Chronicles draws on a wide range of biblical sources. Most of the genealogical data in 1 Chronicles 1 comes from Genesis, and much of the ritual legislation is either cited or presupposed in passages dealing with the temple and its services (Shaver 1989). 1 Chron. 4.28-33 and 6.54-81 are borrowed from Judges, while portions of the Psalter are incorporated in 1 Chron. 16.8-36 and 2 Chron. 6.41-42. The conclusion of the work comes from the opening of *Ezra*, and 1 Chron. 9.2-17<sup>a</sup> is probably derived from Neh. 11.3-19. The author quotes Jeremiah in 2 Chron. 36.21-22 and alludes to the writings of other canonical prophets elsewhere. But, most obviously, Samuel-Kings is the main source of Chronicles.

There has been some debate over the last decade on which text of Samuel-Kings was followed by the Chronicler. Most scholars now agree with Lemke (1965) that the Chronicler did not follow the MT of Samuel but another text which was also used by the translators of the LXX and is attested in fragments from 4QSam. In a work which is characterized by much valuable text-critical analysis, McKenzie (1985: 119-58) has shown that the conclusion reached for the Chronicler's text of Samuel does not apply for Kings. Rather, the version of Kings used in 2 Chronicles seems to have greater affinity with the MT than with the LXX. As a result of these findings scholars have become rightly hesitant to use divergence from the MT as direct evidence for the editorial activity and theological bias of the Chronicler.

The focus of study has not been on the identification of the Chronicler's sources but on their use. As Japhet (1993: 15) and many other scholars have shown, this varies from case to case. On the one hand, a source may be cited almost verbatim with minor changes; on the other hand, the contents of an entire passage can be summed up succinctly in a brief comment or even a single adjective. In some cases a source is used as the

basis for the insertion of additional material or for further elaboration; in other cases the gist of a passage may be presented rather skilfully in condensed form. As a result of this study the criticism that sources have been incorporated rather crudely, or changed rather arbitrarily, has given way to growing admiration of the Chronicler's sophistication in employing and deploying sources. Many scholars would therefore agree with Na'aman's conclusion (1991: 110): 'In no case should the Chronicler be regarded simply as an editor, even in those cases in which he faithfully copied his sources, his hand may still be detected by the way in which he organized the old material within his carefully planned composition'.

Whereas the Chronicler's respect for and use of canonical sources is now generally acknowledged, there is still no agreement on the origin of the non-synoptic material in Chronicles. Some scholars have ascribed it largely to the inventiveness of the Chronicler; others claim that it has been taken from extrabiblical sources. The debate goes back to the last century and has not abated. It has, in fact, been vigorously revived in the last decade, but with a somewhat different focus. Previously, the question of extrabiblical sources was connected with discussion on the historicity of Chronicles; it has, however, now become part of the debate over the method and purpose of the Chronicler.

While some scholars still concede the use of material from extrabiblical sources in only a few cases (for example Strübind 1991: 14-21), a moderate consensus, as is best represented by Williamson (1982: 19-21) and Japhet (1993: 18-19), has emerged on the issue. They seem to agree on five points. First, the Chronicler had access to a range of extrabiblical sources, such as genealogies and military lists, the laments of Jeremiah mentioned in 2 Chron. 35.25 and the directives of David and Solomon mentioned in 2 Chron. 35.4. Secondly, the citation formulae of royal and prophetic records do not, in most cases, refer to extrabiblical sources but to Kings. Thirdly, the Chronicler uses extrabiblical sources much more freely and creatively than is the case with the biblical sources, which may indicate that he distinguishes them in their status and authority. Fourthly, the existence of a source does not guarantee the historicity of its contents. Lastly, the presence and origin of source material, whether as a fragment or as an extensive passage, must be determined from case to case. Any conclusions will, of course, be rather tentative and open to challenge, since we lack comparative data and must therefore base our judgment on what is distinctive in the Chronicler's terminology, methodology and theology.

The study of the employment by the Chronicler of both biblical and extrabiblical sources has begun to disclose the character of Chronicles as a piece of literature with its own integrity and unique conventions of composition. Further study may give us access to the mind of the author as an exegete and theologian and reveal the social world of his audience with its interest in tradition and delineations of authority.

### ***The Literary Features of Chronicles***

The most outstanding advance in the study of Chronicles has come from the appreciation of the Chronicler as 'a person of much greater literary skill than is usually attributed to him' (Braun 1986: xxv). This is in keeping with the concentration on literary analysis during the last decade of biblical scholarship. But even though many scholars have made incidental observations on the literary features of Chronicles, no one has, as yet, drawn them together in a comprehensive way.

Two studies have been devoted to Chronicles as a literary composition. Allen (1988) has produced an influential essay on the use of chiasm, inclusio and key words to structure units of narrative in Chronicles. Duke (1990) has analysed the book with the aid of rhetorical categories drawn from Aristotle. After classifying the work as a piece of deliberative rhetoric, he examines it according to the three basic modes of persuasion in Aristotle: the rational, the ethical and the emotional. The results of this analysis are not entirely convincing. Since Chronicles is not a speech but a scribal composition, the categories do not fit but are imposed on the data. His study,

then, does not do justice to the scribal conventions of the book and fails to provide an adequate framework for the genesis and synthesis of fresh insights into its literary character.

The skill of the Chronicler is apparent in the wide range of literary devices employed in Chronicles. A number of these have received some attention in recent works such as the commentary by Japhet (1993). On the most elementary level, Dillard (1987) has used the methods of discourse analysis to identify the various paragraphing devices which indicate the flow of the argument or narrative in a text. On a more sophisticated level, other scholars have shown how simple devices are employed to order the narrative in Chronicles. The commonest of these is repetition. A word or phrase may function as an *inclusio* to mark off the extent of a particular unit (Allen 1988: 23-26). Closely allied to this is the device of resumptive repetition to indicate a narrative parenthesis (Williamson 1982: 121-22, 179, 271-72). The same word can also recur to correlate material, as with use of *wayya'as'* in 2 Chron. 3.8-4.10 for the list of the temple's contents (Williamson 1982: 208). Lastly and perhaps most significantly, the author may repeat certain key words as an interpretive literary device in a passage of narrative and develop a particular theological point by wordplay (Allen 1988: 26-33). In fact, Gabriel argues that some key words are located and arranged quite deliberately within the narrative as a whole according to numerological and chiasmic patterns to make a rather telling theological commentary (1990: 168-72, 177, 179-80; cf. the footnotes on pp. 94, 138, 175).

Apart from such simple literary devices, the Chronicler uses a range of compositional techniques to arrange bodies of material within his narrative framework. The simplest of these is the juxtaposition of two units to imply connection. While sequence often implies consequence (Eslinger 1986), it may also indicate discontinuity and contrast. From simple juxtaposition the Chronicler can at times build up a complex pattern of correspondence and contrast, as is the case in the portrayal of Asa and Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 14-20 with the reversal of the sequence: victory through reliance on the Lord and defeat through reliance on aliens (Dillard 1987: 129-30; Kleinig 1993: 172-73). The most elaborate method of composition is the arrangement of a section of narrative chiasmically, as in 1 Chronicles 11-12 (Williamson 1982: 96-97) and 2 Chronicles 1-9 (Dillard 1984<sup>b</sup>, 1987: 5-7). Recognition of these and other compositional devices all help the reader discover the focus and purpose of units of narrative in Chronicles.

The identification of these literary and compositional conventions has served to highlight the craftsmanship of the Chronicler in the rearrangement of source material from Samuel-Kings. Scholars such as Japhet (1993) have shown how, when the Chronicler incorporates new material into a borrowed narrative framework, he reconstructs it in keeping with the given literary structure or else creates a new literary pattern more consistent with his own narrative purpose (cf. Eslinger 1986 for his analysis of such a reconstructed story in 2 Chron. 34.1-35.19). This applies to material taken from other biblical sources, such as the psalms found in 1 Chron. 16.8-36, which have been reworked to create a sophisticated new psalm (see Hill 1983; Kleinig 1993: 141-44). The skill of the Chronicler as an author is apparent both in his composition of new passages of narrative and in his rearrangement of material taken from his sources.

The recognition that the book of Chronicles is a deliberate composition by a skilful author has led to two noteworthy attempts to deduce the purpose of the book from its arrangement. De Vries (1989: 18-20, 96-101) argues that the culmination of Chronicles in the reference to the sabbatical for the land in 2 Chron. 36.21 points to its division into two parts: 1 Chron. 1.14.34, which tells how ideal Israel was formed as a nation on its land, and 1 Chron. 9.35-2 Chron. 36.21, which tells how the sanctity of the land, once established by the conquest of the land (1 Chron. 9.35-21.27) and the construction of the temple (1 Chron. 21.28-2 Chron. 9.31) and then violated by the faithlessness of the Judean kings (2 Chron. 10.1-35.27), was restored by the seventy sabbatical years of exile (36.1-23).

More radically, Walters (1991) has argued that the genealogies end with 1 Chron. 9.1<sup>a</sup>. By the use of the *term* *ma'al*, 1 Chron. 9.1<sup>b</sup> forms an *inclusio* with 1 Chron. 10.13-14 and 2 Chron. 36.14, so that both the reign of the first king Saul and the last king Zedekiah are characterized by sacrilegious offences against God leading to death and the loss of the land. The list of inhabitants in Jerusalem in 1 Chron. 9.3-34 anticipates the fulfilment of the command for the

return to the land given by Cyrus in 2 Chron. 36.23.

Whatever the merits of either case, it seems likely that the findings of literary analysis will be applied to the book as a whole and used to deduce its purpose from its structure.

### ***Resources for the Study of Chronicles***

A number of fine resources for scholarship have appeared over the last decade. Two handbooks merit special mention. The first of these is the synopsis of Chronicles compiled by Kegler and Augustin. It first appeared in 1984 and was reissued in 1991 with some revisions and additions. In addition to the synopsis, it has a helpful introduction with an overview of the book's structure, a list of genres used in Chronicles, some observations about its composition and redaction and a somewhat incomplete bibliography. The most original feature of the synopsis is the systematic definition and classification of the various genres found in Chronicles. In some cases this involved the identification of new genres and a refinement of previously identified genres. This handbook has quickly become an essential tool for the comparative analysis so essential for the close reading of Chronicles.

The second handbook is the erudite commentary by De Vries for the series *Forms of the Old Testament Literature* (1989). According to the basic format of the series, he handles each unit in terms of its structure, genre, setting and intention. A comprehensive bibliography is given for each section. This compendium is an impressive, balanced work of scholarship. It surveys previous research on the topics under discussion and engages in a close examination of the text which leads to many new insights and some valuable observations. Even though readers may not always agree with De Vries, his careful work should provoke them to reconsideration of received opinions and further refinement of their judgments on the composition and purpose of Chronicles.

Besides these handbooks, three significant surveys of the history of modern scholarship on Chronicles have been published over the last decade. Their value should not be underestimated, since orientation for current study and research is often determined as much by past conclusions as by present concerns. All three studies show how much we owe to the pioneering work done by German scholars, beginning with de Wette and culminating in Wellhausen's critical synthesis. Graham (1990) summarizes the controversy which raged over the historical reliability of Chronicles during the last century, first in connection with the date of P and then in its own right. Japhet (1985) covers the same ground more analytically and continues her survey to the present. The most discerning survey comes from Wright (1992). His focus is on the critical and apologetic use of 1 Chronicles 23-27 during the last century in the debate on the history of Israel's cult and the date of P. He shows how Chronicles moved from the centre to the periphery of scholarship over that period as the tools of literary criticism, which were first developed to defend the historicity of Chronicles, were redeployed to isolate these chapters as later additions with little or no historical worth.

A number of scholarly commentaries have been published over the last decade. They fall into three pairs. First, Becker's commentaries on 1 Chronicles (1986) and 2 Chronicles (1988) provide a rather cautious and brief summary of the status quo without making any significant advances and giving any new impetus to research. Secondly, the *Word Biblical Commentary* series has brought out a commentary by Braun on 1 Chronicles (1986) and by Dillard on 2 Chronicles (1987). They follow the same standard format and end with an explanation of the text which tends to be too perfunctory or general to be of much use to either the scholar or the preacher. While Braun's commentary is most useful for its careful attention to the genealogical introduction, Dillard provides many useful observations on the structure and literary conventions used by the author. Both, commendably, pick up and advance discussion on the main themes of Chronicles.

The third, and by far the most weighty, pair of commentaries are, appropriately enough, produced by Williamson (1982) and Japhet (1993). Williamson's commentary has rightly become the standard work on Chronicles in English. It is characterized by mastery of subject matter, balance in judgment, clarity in exposition, respect for previous scholarship and originality in

content. In it he shows how the Chronicler used his sources creatively in the development of clearly articulated theological themes and produced a carefully constructed literary composition. Williamson therefore pioneered the new literary approach to Chronicles without abandoning the conventional consideration of its origins and historical reliability.

This contribution by Williamson has been capped by the recent appearance of Japhet's massive commentary. It builds on his foundations and is likely to set the terms of study in the English-speaking world over the next decade and beyond. She champions the view that Chronicles is a skilfully constructed work by a single author who used his sources in an intellectually responsible and yet creative way. Her aim is to establish the message of the author by analysing the method of composition and exposition evident in the literary shape of the canonical text. Even though she disagrees with conventional views at many points and is rather wary of unverifiable hypotheses about the origin and setting of the work, she presents her case positively and courteously without polemical flourishes. Despite its monumental appearance, her commentary does not foreclose debate but rather reopens the discussion on many issues which had been prematurely regarded as resolved. That may prove to be its most lasting contribution to the ongoing study of Chronicles.

### ***Studies on Topics and Themes***

Modern readers find it difficult to read and understand, let alone appreciate Chronicles. Access to its contents is not only hindered by the scribal method of its composition but also by the mentality of the writer and his audience. This is highlighted most dramatically by the genealogical introduction, with its apparent obsession with ancestry and ritual. Appreciation of its contents therefore requires mental initiation into a different world with alien ways of thinking, an unfamiliar system of values and strange modes of communication.

Increasingly, over the last decade, scholars have produced a wide range of studies which have explored various aspects of the mental and cultural world of Chronicles. They each in their own way introduce and orient the reader into that world. They cover many topics. Some are more specific and others are more general, but taken together they make some significant advances in our understanding and appreciation of Chronicles.

In what follows, I shall first treat works on the theology of Chronicles as a whole and then examine the theological treatment of particular topics such as the genealogies, the law, the temple with its services, retribution, prophecy and kingship.

### ***The Theology of Chronicles***

The last decade has been marked by a growing recognition of the Chronicler as an able theologian who, for all his apparent conservatism, refashions the theological traditions of Israel in a surprisingly creative way. While most attention has been given to the identification of particular themes, such as those initially listed by Lemke (1965; cf. for example, Throntveit 1987: 77-88), two attempts have been made to present the theology of Chronicles more coherently and comprehensively.

The first, by Johnstone (1986), sketches out the theology of holiness in Chronicles in a brilliant and suggestive essay. His focus is on guilt from sacrilege and on sacrifice as the proper means for its atonement. The Chronicler, he claims, grappled with the mystery that, even though the return from exile was, historically speaking, long past, theologically speaking Israel had not yet returned from exile (p.114) From the start Israel's life in the land had been riddled with acts of sacrilege (*ma'al*), by which the nation and its leaders had misappropriated the holy things of God and had used them for their own gain. The penalty for sacrilege was sickness and death on a personal scale, and the devastation of the land by warfare and exile from it on a national scale. Such sacrilege could only be rectified by sacrificial atonement on the altar built by David

in Jerusalem. Through this God-given means Israel could regain its sanctity and maintain its status as a holy people; it could once again enjoy the fullness of divine blessing in the land. The return from exile both for those in diaspora and for those already resettled in the land would ultimately then be accomplished through an act of divine atonement

The chief merit of this proposal lies in its attempt to discover and explicate the theology of Chronicles in its own terms without imposing an alien conceptual and theological framework. It has the potential to do justice to many other aspects of Chronicles, such as its passion for orthodox worship according to the law of Moses, its interest in the holy vessels at the temple, its abhorrence of pollution, its conviction about sacrilege as the cause for retribution, its accent on prayer and praise and its belief in the mediation of peace and blessing via the sacrificial ritual. Yet for all that, Johnstone's essay provides us with a mere sketch, a rough map for further exploration to check out and fill in his rather general impressions. For example, the sacrificial ritual is indeed the means by which atonement is accomplished and impurity is dealt with. But the rite of atonement merely prepares for the even more important meeting of the Lord with his people in the public burnt offering for the preservation of their sanctity, the acceptance of them and their petitions and the bestowal of blessing upon them (Kleinig 1993: 101-108). Much more work needs to be done to test whether Johnstone provides an adequate framework for the synthesis of the Chronicler's theological position.

The second, much more conventional and elaborate work on the theology of Chronicles has been produced by Japhet. It was first published in Hebrew in 1977 and then came out in an English translation in 1989. It is in every way an accomplished and useful piece of scholarship. Its five chapters present a balanced and generally persuasive summary of the theology and thought world of Chronicles which not only looks back on its antecedents but also looks forward to the outworkings of its concerns in the rabbinical tradition. Japhet covers the Chronicler's treatment of God, his worship, the people of Israel, the monarchy and the hope for redemption. While she systematizes the insights of those who have gone before her, she also touches on much that is new and stimulates further reflection. Most notably, she explores the function of warning and repentance in the Chronicler's presentation of immediate retribution (pp. 176-91) and claims that the Chronicler emphasizes the uninterrupted settlement of Israel in the land by downplaying the significance of the exodus and the exile (pp. 363-86). She also notes the democratizing trend in Chronicles which frequently portrays the people as an active force together with the king both in cultic matters and in the affairs of state (pp. 417-23).

### ***The Theological Use of Genealogies***

The genealogical introduction presents the modern reader with the most formidable obstacle to any appreciation of Chronicles and its theology. Consequently, any advance in understanding the work as a whole should be accompanied by deeper insight into the nature and function of the genealogies. This has indeed occurred over the last decade, which has produced some major studies. All the recent commentaries have made significant contributions to this topic. Both Williamson (1982: 38-40) and Braun (1986: 1-12) give good summaries of the state of scholarship. As a result of the comparative study of genealogies in the ancient world and in tribal societies, scholars have increasingly concentrated on determining their function and use rather than on expiating their origin and historical value.

A number of articles have appeared on the genealogies in Chronicles. Aufrecht (1988) argues that the function of genealogies changed with the change of Israel from a tribal society to a monarchy and then to an imperial province in the Persian Empire. In each case they served to establish the social order and to validate the place of people in that order. Significant studies have also appeared on the origin and use of particular genealogies, the Ephathites by Demsky (1986), the Manassites by Edelman (1991), the Asherites by Edelman (1988) and Na'aman (1991: 100-105), and the Ephraimites by Na'aman (1991: 105-111). In addition to these Kartveit (1989) and Oeming (1990) have produced major monographs on the genealogical introduction to Chronicles.



After undertaking a literary-critical analysis to determine which parts of the first nine chapters formed the original draft of Chronicles, Kartveit (1989) identifies the geographical extent of the land given in the genealogies and lists. Through his genealogical introduction the Chronicler is said to legitimize the territorial realities and claims of Israel in his own day. Theologically speaking, the Chronicler draws a map of the world with the twelve tribes of Israel at its centre, and Jerusalem and Judah at the centre of Israel. The later addition of the levitical towns goes even further in interpreting the land theologically by spreading the invites throughout the land so as to connect all the main parts of it personally and representatively to Jerusalem and the temple there.

Oeming (1990) has published a comprehensive analysis of the genealogical introduction which draws together the various strands of scholarship over the last twenty-five years. Against the backdrop of the use of genealogies in the Chronicler's own time he sets out to establish their purpose in the book as whole. His basic thesis is that they serve to define the nature and extent of true Israel for a contemporary audience. Membership in Israel is determined by birth into families descended from Abraham and Israel. True Israel is defined geographically as a land centred on Judah and Jerusalem, ethnically as twelve tribes coordinated around the tribe of Levi, politically as a nation unified by David and his descendants, theologically as a people obedient to God's law, cultically as a liturgical community participating in the sacrificial ritual at the temple in Jerusalem, and sacrally as a holy people linked personally to the temple sanctuary via the levites scattered throughout its territory. The genealogies are therefore taken to encapsulate the main elements of the Chronicler's theology. The history of God's dealings with humankind culminates in the choice of Jerusalem; the centre of Jerusalem is the temple; the sacrificial ritual mediates between God and the human race through the combined efforts of priests, levites, singers and gatekeepers; and the northern tribes are welcome to return to true Israel by participation in common worship, as true Israel awaits the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.

Thus the book of Chronicles presents us with a theological genealogy of Israel as God's kinsfolk. It uses genealogy to affirm what is given theologically by virtue of membership in true Israel as a holy liturgical community in the Persian Empire.

### ***The Nature and Use of the Law in Chronicles***

One of the most striking features of Chronicles is the recurrent reference to the law of Moses as the benchmark for orthodoxy in worship. Recent study has shown that the law operates in three ways which are characteristic for Chronicles. First, McCarthy (1982) and Sperling (1989) show that the law was dissociated from the covenant and associated with the cult. In fact, most of the references to covenant-breaking have to do with ritual attestations of loyalty to the Lord by the performance of the sacrificial ritual as prescribed in the law of Moses. Secondly, Kellerman (1988) argues that for Chronicles the law consisted of ritual legislation. It regulated the cult and preserved the ritual purity of Israel. Thirdly, Kleinig (1993: 30-32) contends that the Chronicler held that the sacrificial ritual was divinely efficacious and beneficial only if it was conducted according to its divine institution. The law of Moses then not only instituted the sacrificial ritual but also empowered it, so that by it the Lord could mediate his gracious presence and blessing to his people. The law was therefore of paramount importance for Israel, since for the Chronicler Israel was basically a liturgical community whose existence and sanctity depended on faithfulness to God's law.

Now, even though the Chronicler often cites the law to justify a particular point of ritual, it is not always clear what exactly is meant by the term. Since last century there has therefore been some debate as to whether it referred to P or D or both or the Pentateuch or some other source. Most recently, Shaver (1989) has argued that, since some references in Chronicles cannot be derived directly from the legislation in the Pentateuch, the author must have had a collection of legal material which was more extensive than the canonized Pentateuch. The key to his argument is his contention that the term *kakkātûb* always refers to a direct quotation rather than to the gist of a passage or a number of passages in the Pentateuch.

This point of view runs counter to the trend of recent scholarship. In a study of inner-biblical exegesis, Fishbane (1985) claims that the Chronicler used a variety of exegetical techniques to harmonize, interpret and apply the ritual legislation from the Pentateuch. In doing this the Chronicler draws conclusions from a text which may go beyond that text but are still consistent with it. Fishbane takes the phrase *kakkātûb* to qualify the preceding context, with the result that it may refer to ritual practices, such as the role of the levites in slaughtering the pascal lamb in 2 Chron. 35.11, which have no warrant in the Pentateuch. Williamson, however, argues that the phrase qualifies only what immediately precedes it and provides Pentateuchal warrant for it (1988: 27-31). The Chronicler would therefore appear to work with the text of the Pentateuch as authoritative for ritual performance and its theological interpretation.

The importance of the Pentateuch for understanding the sacrificial ritual has been examined in two studies. De Vries (1988) claims that the Chronicler uses two different sets of formulae to distinguish the role of David as cult founder from the role of Moses as cult founder. By the use of 'the authorization formula' the Chronicler defines what is mandatory in worship as prescribed in the law of Moses; by the use of 'the regulation formula' he describes the legislation of David and his successors for the establishment and administration of worship at the temple in Jerusalem. David is therefore presented as the heir of Moses, since he implemented the law of Moses fully for the first time in Israel's history by the instructions given in 1 Chronicles 23-28.

Kleinig (1992) investigates how the Chronicler justified David's establishment of the choral rite as part of the public sacrificial ritual. Even though the choral rite was not explicitly instituted in the Pentateuch, its performance was held to fulfil the commands to commemorate the Lord, to minister in his name and to rejoice in his presence. In each case the obvious sense of the text is extended conceptually and applied theologically to a new ritual context. Ritual innovation was therefore legitimized by sophisticated exegesis of the law.

The emphasis on law in Chronicles coincides with its interest in the sacrificial ritual enacted at the temple and in Israel as a liturgical community. Both are established and preserved by the law and its proper observance.

### ***The Temple and its Services***

Over the last decade most scholars have come to agree on the centrality of worship in Chronicles. On the face of it, Chronicles provides us with a description of the foundation by David and his successors of the temple in Jerusalem, a history of its services as instituted by Moses and established by David and Solomon, an account of the organization by David of the clergy according to their classes and areas of responsibility, and a portrayal of Israel as a liturgical community. In fact, Kegler (1989: 64) goes so far as to assert that for the Chronicler David's organization of the temple services and arrangement of the clergy supplanted the exodus as the central saving event in Israel's history. Yet for all that, surprisingly few studies have examined the arrangement and significance of worship in Chronicles.

The most comprehensive treatment comes from Japhet (1989: 199-265). She concentrates on two aspects: the prohibition of idolatry as something incompatible with the requirement for the exclusive worship of the Lord, and the correct performance of the divinely instituted sacrificial ritual which involves the abolition of the illegitimate rituals practiced at the high places and entails whole-hearted devotion to the Lord.

Apart from this general summary, four other topics have received some attention: the significance of the temple, the function of choral music, the role of the gatekeepers at the temple and the status of the so-called levitical sermons.

Williamson has produced a paper on the temple and its significance for Chronicles as 'a focus for the reunification of the divided and scattered people of Israel' (1991:29). The site of the temple was associated with Abraham and its design was derived from Moses to establish the

continuity of post-exilic Israel in common worship with its ancestors. Williamson concludes that this account of the temple is all part of the Chronicler's unsuccessful programme for the reconciliation of disparate groups through their participation in temple worship.

Hausmann (1987) and Kleinig (1993) investigate the function and significance of sacred song as part of the sacrificial ritual in Chronicles. In her article on 1 Chron. 16.8-36 Hausmann claims that the singers praised the Lord for his saving deeds culminating in his gift of the cult and his work of atonement in it; they also sought to move him by their praises to save his people once again. Kleinig analyses the position and function of sacred song within the total sacrificial ritual at the temple in Jerusalem. The singers were appointed as the agents of David and his successors to perform the Lord's song twice daily on his behalf and to call all Israel and all nations to join the king in praising the Lord during the presentation of the burnt offering at the temple in Jerusalem. Kleinig concludes that by the singing of sacred song the temple musicians announced the Lord's appearance to his people in the daily burnt offering, declared his gracious acceptance of them and his availability to them for petitionary prayer, and proclaimed his deliverance of them from their enemies. Sacred music was therefore conceived of and justified by the Chronicler as an integral part of the sacrificial ritual established by David and Solomon.

As with the singers, the book of Chronicles is the only major canonical source of information about another class of minor clergy, the gatekeepers at the temple. Their role has recently been examined by Wright (1990). He maintains that they functioned as a 'paramilitary inner city security force' (p. 69). Yet they were much more than just the temple police force. By virtue of the association of the palace with the temple as a royal complex they controlled access to the king and so exercised considerable political power, they also managed the revenue and the finances of the temple, which was Israel's national 'bank', and maintained the temple precincts with all its buildings and furnishings. Wright's helpful study needs to be rounded off by consideration of the gatekeepers' ritual role in keeping the temple free from pollution, as hinted at in 1 Chron. 9.20 and noted in 2 Chron. 23.19 (cf. Oeming 1990:203-204).

Under the influence of von Rad, scholars have held that the speeches in Chronicles were shaped by the preaching of the levites. This has been examined in two studies. Mathias (1984) claims that, while they exhibit certain features in style common to their time of composition, they are in fact neither levitical nor sermonic in character. In a more comprehensive study Mason (1990: 13-144) analyses the form and contents of all the addresses in Chronicles. Most of them are royal and prophetic. Only one can clearly be classified as levitical in origin and character. They vary too much in setting, length, style and material to be grouped together as sermons. They do, however, echo some of the themes and rhetorical methods of preaching delivered and heard in the temple. In them we hear the voice of the preachers in the second temple with their assurance of God's presence with his people at the temple and their call to fidelity to God in their worship of him. The addresses themselves serve as a mouthpiece for the Chronicler and a résumé of his theology.

Further work needs to be done on the arrangement and significance of the services at the temple as well as on the role of the clergy as reflected in their organization and classification. Most of the preliminary work has been completed but in piecemeal fashion. It needs to be assessed and drawn together in a comprehensive synthesis before we can make full sense of Chronicles.

### ***Retribution***

It has long been noted that, whereas the Deuteronomist advocates the notion of delayed retribution with the accumulation of corporate guilt, the Chronicler holds that retribution is immediate and personal. Sin brings judgment and disaster, while obedience to God issues in blessing and prosperity. This concept of divine retribution seems to shape the pattern of narrative in Chronicles most decisively after the death of Solomon. Commentators

therefore rightly highlight its importance for the narrative shape and theology of Chronicles (Williamson 1982: 31-33; Dillard 1984<sup>a</sup>; Dillard 1987: 76-81; Braun 1986: xxxvii-xi; Japhet 1989: 150-98).

Two scholars have helped to correct the rather unbalanced, unnuanced understanding of retribution found in some earlier scholars. Japhet (1989: 176-91) stresses the importance of prophetic warnings before the onset of judgment. Whenever they were heeded, disaster was averted. The role of the prophet, then, was to call the people to repentance, so that God could exercise his mercy rather than his wrath. She also maintains that disaster is not always an act of divine retribution. While invasion and defeat in battle are interpreted as divine acts of punishment, they can also be understood in some instances as occasions of divine trial to test the faithfulness of a king and his people (pp. 191-98).

In addition to these points, Williamson (1982: 32, 225-26) calls attention to the significance of the divine promise in 2 Chron. 7.14, which is recalled a number of times after its first occurrence. In this passage, which is unique to Chronicles, the people are given four avenues for averting well-deserved disaster and obtaining forgiveness for their transgression through appropriate involvement in the sacrificial ritual at the temple in Jerusalem—self-humiliation, prayer, seeking God's face and turning from wickedness. Each of these is taken up at decisive points in the subsequent narrative, where their enactment ushers in an act of divine intervention and restoration. Thus the dedication of the temple ushers in a new phase in God's dealings with his people's sins. Through the God-given avenues of repentance Israel can escape the onset of retribution which had led to Saul's death and the exile in Babylon. Divine retribution is therefore neither inevitable nor absolute; it is tempered by the operation of divine mercy at the temple in the sacrificial ritual for those who repent and seek forgiveness.

Despite the apparent unanimity in speaking of retribution in Chronicles, one cannot but wonder whether the term is appropriate for the phenomena that it describes. It is striking that, apart from 2 Chron. 24.22, the common terminology for retribution in classical Hebrew is entirely absent from Chronicles. And why does the pattern of retribution apparently only come into operation after the dedication of Solomon's temple, which provides the means to avert it? To be sure, the Chronicler does give some evidence of reflection on the correlation of divine and human justice, but only in his portrayal of the judicial system in 2 Chron. 19.4-11. What has been categorized as retribution may make better sense when considered sacrally within the framework provided by a theology of holiness in Chronicles (Johnstone 1990:11). Respect for the holy things of God in the cult and the holy word of God as spoken by Moses and the prophets results in blessing and prosperity, whereas sacrilegious contempt for them brings wrath and disaster in its train. This is so because God's holiness is never neutral but always has either a positive or negative impact on those who come into contact with it. Such 'retribution' would therefore not stem from the disruption of the moral order but rather from violation of the divinely instituted sacral order. It would be a function of God's holiness in Israel rather than of his justice in the cosmos.

The theme of retribution is closely allied to the concepts of rest and peace. Weinberg (1985) argues that the Chronicler no longer understands war and peace mythologically but as human activities. Braun shows how Chronicles adopted the Deuteronomic concept of rest as the precondition for the building of the temple and modified it by presenting the temple as the Lord's place of rest with his people and as a source of rest for those kings who were faithful to the Lord (1986: 223-25).

In a fine study characterized by literary sensitivity, exegetical finesse and theological acumen Gabriel (1990) examines the concepts of peace, security and rest in Chronicles. These are all gifts from God who grants them to his people via the king and the temple. Peace is not achieved by the exercise of diplomacy or war but is based on the unity of the twelve tribes around the Davidic king and the temple in Jerusalem. As God's place of rest with his people, the temple is the centre of a peaceful world set at peace by God (p. 179). The Chronicler develops this

theology of peace in three stages with David as the creator of internal and external *peace* for Israel, Solomon as the man of peace during whose reign God's presence with his people established security, rest and peace for all Israel, and the post-Solomonic kings, who enjoyed security and rest as long as they were faithful in worship, but experienced unrest and war as soon as they lapsed into idolatry and relied on foreign alliances. Gabriel notes that after Solomon there was no further period of peace in Israel (p. 201). Solomon and his age are therefore promoted as the model for Israel at peace under a future restored monarchy.

### ***Prophecy***

It is widely acknowledged that the Chronicler was concerned with the nature and function of prophecy in Israel. Begg (1988<sup>a</sup>, 1988<sup>b</sup>) has considered why, in his desire to establish a succession of prophets in Judah, the Chronicler fails to mention more of the classical prophets, and plays down their importance when he does. Williamson (1988: 33-35) argues that, even though the writings of the prophets were regarded as authoritative by the Chronicler and his audience, they were not put on the same level as the law in determining religious practice. Kleinig (1993: 148-57) has investigated why the performance of sacred song was regarded as prophecy by the Chronicler. Like prophecy it proclaims God's grace and effects Israel's deliverance.

De Vries (1986; cf. Mason 1990: 13-144) has examined the various forms of prophetic address in Chronicles. He concludes that the Chronicler employs four basic genres: the prophetic commission report, the prophetic battle story, the report of an oracular inquiry and the report of a prophet word. The last of these is said to be unique to the Chronicler, who invents his own prophetic oracles as a means of speaking God's word and expressing the Chronicler's transcendental interpretation of historical events.

Two major monographs have also appeared dealing with prophecy in Chronicles. Micheel (1983) compares the Chronicler's treatment of the prophets mentioned in Samuel and Kings with his presentation of the non-synoptic prophets. She comes to five major conclusions. First, the Chronicler composed the prophetic speeches to interpret a passage of narrative and evaluate the behaviour of the actors in it. Secondly, he mentions only one prophet at one time in any reign and so establishes a kind of prophetic succession in Judah. Thirdly, the prophets condemn kings for their apostasy, their cooperation with the faithless northern kingdom, and their reliance on foreign alliances. Fourthly, in the regnal summaries the Chronicler gives prophetic authorization for the histories of those kings who made some substantial contribution to the monarchy or the cult. They are thereby given a prophetic stamp of approval. Lastly, the task of the prophet was to announce judgment and to strengthen faith in God. While there is little in this monograph that is new, it does give a convenient summary of scholarship on the topic.

Then (1990) has used data from Chronicles to challenge the rabbinic theory of the cessation of prophecy in the post-exilic period. He points to the Chronicler's conversion of ancient figures into prophets by the use of prophetic formulae and prophetic titles for them as well as by the redefinition as prophecy of such activities as the performance of sacred song in worship. His conclusion is that prophecy did not in fact end but was continued in other guises in the post-exilic period. One cannot but feel some unease at this treatment of the topic. It does not do full justice to the rabbinical teaching about Israel as a prophetic nation with the gift of God's spirit, nor does it consider why the distinction between the report of divine speech through a prophet and the teaching of Scripture by an authoritative person has been blurred in Chronicles.

### ***Kingship***

The importance of kingship for the Chronicler is evident in even the most fleeting reading of the work, which traces the history of the monarchy from Saul through to

Zedekiah. Yet despite the prominence of the kings in his scheme of things, his attitude to kingship is by no means self-evident. In fact, debate has continued over this issue, and it remains unresolved. Apart from studies by Weinberg (1989) on the secularization of kingship and by Throntveit (1987) on the nature and function of royal speech and prayer in Chronicles, scholars have sought to ascertain the Chronicler's attitude to the possible restoration of the monarchy, his definition of the king's role as God's regent and his assessment of particular kings.

According to Im (1985), the Chronicler presents David as the ideal for a future theocratic messiah. As the ideal ruler of Israel and the surrounding nations he is a model for the true reverence of the Lord; he not only founds a dynasty of kings but prepares for the building of the temple. Thus in Chronicles the Davidic kingship is connected inseparably with the cult in Jerusalem, for just as the monarchy promotes the worship of the Lord, so the existence of the monarchy depends on its reverence for the Lord.

Japhet (1989: 395-491) has provided us with a comprehensive summary of the portrayal of kingship in Chronicles. After a discussion on the nature of the monarchy as a reflection of the Lord's kingship, on the person and position of the monarch and on his role and activities, she turns to the Davidic dynasty with an analysis of the election of David, God's covenant with him, the dynastic promise given to him and the various Davidic monarchs. She calls into question the purported sinlessness of David and Solomon in Chronicles, plays down the practical and theological significance of God's covenant with David in Chronicles and claims that the Chronicler gives his readers no basis for hoping in the future restoration of the monarchy (pp. 466-67; 493-504).

This conviction that the Chronicler did not hold out hope for the restoration of the monarchy has been shared by an increasing number of scholars (Becker 1986: 8-9; Braun 1986: xxvii; De Vries 1988: 637-38; Riley 1993: 157-201). Murray (1993) argues that the texts that mention the exile have no place for the monarchy in their depiction of restoration but make the survival of the nation dependent on the temple and its services. The view that the monarchy fulfilled its mission with the establishment of the temple and its services under the supervision of the levitical clergy has been developed with some force by Riley (1993) in his monograph on the cultic vocation of David and his successors. He argues that the Davidic covenant and its associated dynastic promise had to do with the royal foundation, patronage and maintenance of the temple. While the dynasty may have come to an end because of its failure to fulfil the conditions of the covenant, the Davidic covenant itself persisted in the responsibility of the people for the performance of the divinely instituted sacrificial ritual and in their enjoyment of its benefits in terms of security and rest in the land. The Chronicler therefore did not look forward to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, since its mission had been fulfilled, and its vocation was continued by the people of Israel as a liturgical community.

Williamson (1982: 132-34; 1983) has championed the contrary view that the Chronicler held out hope for the restoration of the monarchy. He assesses Japhet's claim that the failure of David's successors to fulfil the terms of the covenant annulled the covenant. He argues, rather persuasively, that the covenant with David was in fact confirmed and established in perpetuity by Solomon's obedience in building the temple and in establishing its services under the direction of the levitical clergy. After the confirmation of the covenant by Solomon its promises applied unconditionally, therefore providing the basis for the expectation of future restoration.

Over the last century critical scholars have rightly made much of the king's role as the patron of the temple and its services in Chronicles. He had responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the temple, for the organization and duties of the clergy, for the eradication of idolatry and promotion of orthodox worship, for the provision of resources for the sacrificial ritual and the livelihood of the clergy, and for leadership in worship and its reformation as the head of the congregation. The cultic vocation of the king has been re-examined recently by Riley (1993), who concludes that the reason for the monarchy's existence lay in its commission to establish

the temple and its cultus. According to Kleinig (1993: 91-95), the king appointed the levitical musicians as his representatives to perform the Lord's song on his behalf during the presentation of the daily burnt offering. His unique task which he delegated to the musicians was to lead the congregation in the performance of praise.

Since the king played such a prominent part in the conduct of religious affairs, scholars have assumed that the Chronicler was not interested in the other duties of the king and have argued that the king functioned as a priest. Japhet (1989: 428-44) shows that the Chronicler also paid close attention to the role of the king in the administration of the kingdom and the supervision of public works, economic activities and the nation's defence. She also argues that despite his involvement in the cult, the king was excluded from the sanctuary and any direct part in the sacrificial ritual. Thus Chronicles distinguishes the liturgical role of the king from the role of the priests.

A number of recent studies discuss the Chronicler's assessment of particular kings. According to Zalewski (1989), the Chronicler's treatment of Saul's reign is meant to prove that the rise of David was legitimate and ordained by God. Knoppers (1990) argues that, since Jeroboam's kingdom and cultus were seditious from their inception, the Chronicler presents Rehoboam as a victim rather than a rebel. The Chronicler's qualified approval of Abijah is said by Deboys (1990) to bear witness to his flexibility and sophistication as a theologian. The account of Asa's reign is held by Dillard (1989) to have been reworked by the Chronicler according to his theology of retribution. Whereas Strübind (1991) examines the reign of Jehoshaphat to show how the Chronicler reworked his source and to assess scholarly claims about the general character and theology of Chronicles, Knoppers (1991) claims that this account is meant to demonstrate how alliance with the Northern Kingdom resulted in apostasy and disaster but reliance on the Lord led to victory and prosperity. The study of Jehoshaphat's victory in 2 Chron. 20.1-30 is understood sociologically by Davies (1992) as an attempt to define and defend the boundaries of the post-exilic community and homiletically by Beentjes (1993) as a reapplication by the Chronicler of the rescue at the Red Sea in Exodus 14 for the encouragement of an audience under threat from hostile powers. Begg (1989) investigates why the Chronicler made a monster out of Jehoram, and the account of the reign of Ahaz is considered by ben Zvi (1993) as a paradigm of the Chronicler's thought. According to Throntveit (1988), Hezekiah is described in Chronicles as a combination of David and Solomon. And the reworking of 2 Kgs 22.1-23:28 in 2 Chron 34.1-35.19 is said by Eslinger (1986) to show that Josiah's discovery of the law book, which in Kings had ushered in the purge of the land culminating in the Passover festival, led in Chronicles to the restoration of the sacrificial ritual at the temple. All these studies on the Chronicler's treatment of particular kings help to elucidate his world of thought as well as his view of the monarchy. It remains to be determined whether he expected its imminent restoration and what shape it would take, if it were restored.

### ***Conclusion***

Over the last decade the Chronicler's work has finally come into its own after a century of comparative neglect. Many factors have contributed to this, but three stand out as most significant: the shift from historical criticism to literary analysis, the shift from redactional criticism to canonical analysis and the shift from thematic analysis to theological synthesis.

For more than a hundred years scholarship in Chronicles has been preoccupied with the question of its historicity. In such a climate it was inevitable that Chronicles should either be devalued as of little historical worth or defended for the historical reliability of its non-canonical sources. The conflict between these opposing points of view has been softened, as confidence in the historicity of the Deuteronomist has waned, and as doubt has set in as regards our capacity to make certain historical judgments. The discussion of historicity has been replaced by the analysis of Chronicles as a piece of literature. As a result of this study scholars have come to appreciate the skill of the Chronicler in his use of sources and his sophistication as an author in the creation of a complex work of art. From an analysis of his methods of composition they have

sought, with some success, to determine the purpose of narrative units and of the book as a whole. This has been a most fruitful undertaking and is likely to result in further advances in the understanding of the work

The preoccupation of scholars with historicity has been coupled with a desire to identify the sources of Chronicles and their redaction by various editors. The assumption was that the Chronicler created a kind of literary montage from the combination of his sources with his own material, which promoted his own particular interests. His work was held to have then undergone a number of revisions by further editors who added material consistent with their own interests. Scholarship was therefore predisposed to search for discontinuity and incongruity as evidence for different levels of redaction and the concerns of the redactors. The meaning of the text was thought to lie in its original sources and in the intention of the author rather than in the final form of the text. Now, while some scholars still argue for minor revisions to Chronicles, the accent has shifted from Chronicles as a product of various editors to the canonical text of Chronicles as the work of a single author. This shift has resulted in a change in attitude to the use of source material in Chronicles. Whereas scholars had previously analysed the Chronicler's use of Samuel-Kings to discover his interest and bias, they now examine its use to discover his method of composition and the purpose of his narrative. And all this to make better sense of the canonical text.

The shift to literary and canonical analysis is by now well advanced, but the third shift, from thematic analysis to theological synthesis, has only begun. Major scholars, such as Williamson and Japhet, have explored the themes of Chronicles, but, as Johnstone (1990) rightly observes, their treatment has been unsystematic and relatively piecemeal. If Chronicles is the unified composition of a single author, then it would be expected that 'his work represents a highly organized and concerted theological statement' (p.10). The interrelationship of such themes as the people, kingship, the temple and its services, retribution and repentance needs to be discovered within their common theological frame of reference such as the theology of holiness. Work has begun on this task and remains to be completed.

The work of scholars on Chronicles over the last decade has therefore led to a new appreciation of Chronicles and its author. Chronicles seems to be a unified composition with its own literary integrity, purpose and message. And the Chronicler seems to have been a skilful author and well-versed theologian who reflected deeply on the authoritative traditions of Israel and created a remarkable theological synthesis for Israel as a liturgical community in the Persian Empire. The final position of Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible reflects its significance, which is best expressed by Johnstone (1990: 8):

So far from being regarded as merely bringing up the rear of the Writings, the lowest tier of the Hebrew Bible, the last gasp of waning powers, it may now be seen as summation, standing as the last part of the Hebrew Bible, so far as its normal canonical order is concerned, and by that very fact be recognized as the appropriate portal through which the study of the whole may confidently proceed.

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