CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY TO CHRONICLES: WAS THE CHRONICLER A DEUTERONOMIST?

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The nature, breadth, and longevity of the Deuteronomistic tradition have been much debated in the past several years. Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History have become increasingly viewed as the Ur-documents of the Hebrew scriptures, credited with influencing almost every part of its composition (Schearing 1999, 13–19). Traditionally, most scholars have acknowledged that the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Jeremiah underwent Deuteronomistic redaction to a lesser or greater degree. More recently, some have argued that additional Pentateuchal texts, such as Exodus, were either partially composed or edited by Deuteronomists. This has led to new research on the possible connections between the editing of Deuteronomy as the conclusion of the Pentateuch and the editing of the Pentateuch as part of a larger Enneateuch.

Other scholars have contended that certain prophetic texts, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, and Second Zechariah, exhibit either major or minor Deuteronomistic editing. Yet other scholars have spoken of the Psalms and some wisdom writings as Deuteronomistically-edited. Commenting on this recent trend, Graeme Auld has quipped

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1 Or, possibly multiple Deuteronomistic redactions. So, for example, Albertz 2003, 271–345.
2 See, for example, Schmid 1999 (rev. and transl. 2010).
3 The bibliography on this topic has become quite extensive: Kratz 2000 (transl. 2005); Otto 2000; Achenbach 2003; Otto and Achenbach 2004; Schmid 2006; Römer and Schmid 2007.
4 The bibliography has become voluminous. References may be found in the various contributions to Schearing and McKenzie 1999 and Römer 2000.
5 In scholarship, the term “Deuteronomistic” has been used in a variety of ways, complicating discussions. Coggins (1999, 34–35) distinguishes among: 1) the authorship and redaction of a particular book and its immediately-related congeners; 2) the literary process through which books reached their final form; and 3) the ideological
that Deuteronomism be adopted as an internationally-traded currency (1995, 170).

We are faced, then, with one of the more difficult, intriguing, and complex developments in the recent study of the Hebrew scriptures—the ever-widening application of the Deuteronomistic hypothesis to a large variety of literary works. One clear implication of this trend is the prospect that the Deuteronomistic school or tradition was a long-lived, rather than a short-lived, scribal phenomenon. I wish to return to this issue later in this essay, but at the outset, it is important to say that discussions of long-range Deuteronomistic influence or of a continuing Deuteronomistic tradition are entirely justifiable. Some of the speeches and prayers in postexilic writings, such as Nehemiah’s prayer in Neh 1:4–11, the communal confession in Neh 9:6–37, and the prayer of Dan 9:4–19 contain Deuteronomistic language, style, and themes. If one looks at the text-critical variants found among the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, and the Dead Sea Scrolls of certain books, such as Jeremiah, it is clear that additions employing Deuteronomistic language and Deuteronomistic clichés were being made to the text even in late times. Surveying the transmission of biblical literature and its reception history in the Hellenistic, Maccabean, and Roman eras, it seems clear that the book of Deuteronomy, in particular, was a rather popular and influential work. Along with Isaiah and the Psalms, Deuteronomy is one of the best attested biblical writings at Qumran. Similarly, the book of Deuteronomy is one of the most quoted (or alluded to) Old Testament writings in the New Testament.

In short, there seems to be no question that Deuteronomy exerted significant literary influence in Second Temple times. The question is how? Should we think along the lines of citation, allusion, and influence or of a succession of texts associated with a long-enduring Deuteronomistic movement? Should we envisage the creative reuse, selective adaptation, and even subversion of Deuteronomistic tenets

movement, which played a major part in shaping the self-understanding of Judaism. Coggins urges that the term “Deuteronomistic” not be used for all three phenomena.

That is, a tradition extending a few centuries, rather than a few generations.


Recently, van der Toorn 2007, 102.

Lohfink (1995, 313–82) offers some probing questions and reflections on this matter. An abbreviated form of this piece was translated into English (1999, 36–66).