

Raising Up
a Faithful Exegete

Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson

Edited by

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On the Term Deuteronomistic in Relation to Joshua–Kings in the Persian Period

EHUD BEN ZVI

The aim of this essay is to raise two related issues that have substantial bearing on our understanding of the intellectual discourse of the Persian period literati among whom the collection Joshua–Kings reached its more-or-less present form. Thus, it addresses two related questions: (a) to which attributes of the “classical” history of Israel shaped by the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings could the term *Deuteronomistic* be applied within the context and intellectual discourse of Persian period literati? and then (b) what were the communicative, ideological, and social functions of these “Deuteronomistic” attributes during the Persian period? To be sure, our modern word *Deuteronomistic* was not part of the discourse of the ancient literati, but people may have concepts for which they have no clear term.¹ Needless to say, if what we label “Deuteronomistic” would have been meaningless from the perspective of Persian period literati, then probably we should stop using the term for historical studies of their intellectual world.

In a recent essay, Richard Nelson suggests that a majority of scholars would agree on the following minimal description of the Deuteronomistic History:

The designation “Deuteronomistic History” communicates the conviction that a significant undertaking in authorship or redaction took place at some time either somewhat before or sometime after the debacles of 597 and 586. Using inherited sources to some extent, this literary undertaking generated a connected narrative in chronological order describing some portion of Israel’s history in the land. This was done on the basis of theological perspectives characteristic of the book of Deuteronomy. The narrative later underwent subsequent revisions and was eventually divided into individual books.²

1. See Gad Prudovsky, “Can We Ascribe to Past Thinkers Concepts They Had No Linguistic Means to Express?” *History and Theory* 36 (1997) 15–31. I illustrated this point with respect to ancient Israelite thought in my “Analogical Thinking and Ancient Israel Intellectual History: The Case for an ‘Entropy Model’ in the Study of Israelite Thought,” in *Relating to the Text: Interdisciplinary and Form-Critical Insights on the Bible* (ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Carleen Mandolfo; JSOTSup 384; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003) 321–32.

2. Richard D. Nelson’s response to Thomas C. Römer in “In Conversation with Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Raymond F. Person Jr.,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2009) article 17, p. 5; available at <http://www.jhsonline.org>.



It is not my intention to dispute here any of the claims that Nelson advanced but to note that, from the perspective of a Jerusalem-centered community of literati in Persian period Yehud, the particular emphases of his characterization possess minimal importance. Did repeated readings of these books by Persian era literati evoke, as a significant memory, the realization that “authorship or redaction took place at some time either somewhat before or sometime after the debacles of 597 and 586”? The answer is likely to be negative; these books asked their readers to focus primarily on their *narration*, which constructed the events of 597 and 586, the aftermath of these events, as well as matters of historical causality related to them; but the narration does not ask its readers to dwell on the act of *writing* the book of Kings, or a book of proto-Kings, or the (so-called) Deuteronomistic History (henceforth, DtrH).

Nelson’s reference to theological perspectives characteristic of the book of Deuteronomy (or a hypothetical Ur-Deuteronomium) may have been more relevant to Yehudite literati but raises the question whether these literati would have considered only Joshua–Kings to reflect the true meaning or theology of the Deuteronomy that they read. The point is particularly significant because the text that influences and shapes a community is the text as *reread*—the text as understood within the community—not as it existed in earlier forms that could have been read and understood by earlier communities of readers.³

In addition, one must keep in mind that Nelson cautiously phrased his words. He did not write “the theology of Deuteronomy” but “theological perspectives characteristic of Deuteronomy” and added that there were subsequent revisions to the books that may have influenced their theological profile. Of course, Joshua–Kings were not the only documents to undergo subsequent revisions; Deuteronomy was revised as well. Moreover, there is the whole issue of when and how Deuteronomy became part of the Pentateuch and whether it was considered, at least for a while, simultaneously part of the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy), the Hexateuch (Genesis–Joshua), DtrH (Deuteronomy–Kings), and even the Primary History (Genesis–Kings).⁴ To be sure, all these issues clearly affected the meaning of Deuteronomy for communities of

3. Even the same text may be read and understood differently by diverse communities, each within its own historical context and characteristic discourse. In all these cases, it is always the reread text, that is, the text as understood by the particular reading community that influences it.

4. On the question of when Deuteronomy became part of the Pentateuch see, for instance, Thomas C. Römer, “Israel’s Sojourn in the Wilderness and the Construction of the Book of Numbers,” in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, and W. Brian Aucker; VTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 419–45. One may consider the Pentateuch, the Hexateuch, the DtrH, and the Primary History as “mental shelves” in a library, with even the same Yehudite readers at different times or circumstances associating the book with one or another set of books in their repertoire—and perhaps redactors reworking the text, accordingly.



readers, as well as what it may have meant for these communities to be ideologically based on Deuteronomy.

But the quest for the historical referent of theological perspectives characteristic of and unique to Deuteronomy, as these perspectives were understood by Persian period Jerusalem-centered literati, becomes even more complicated: What exactly are the viewpoints that we usually tend to associate with the term *Deuteronomistic*? We need to take several considerations into account: (a) there are a multiplicity of viewpoints that we label Deuteronomistic that at times stand in clear tension; (b) books widely accepted as Deuteronomistic may communicate or reflect viewpoints that we often do not refer to as Deuteronomistic (for example, Joshua 20 or the Elijah/Elisha cycle) or include texts that contain relatively little Deuteronomistic material (such as Judges⁵); and (c) some Deuteronomistic texts in Kings may advance positions closer to Chronicles than to other Deuteronomistic sections in Kings.⁶

Finally, if the historical referent we propose for the term *Deuteronomistic* in the context of the Persian period is a set of theological themes that were widely and collectively shared among the Jerusalem-centered literati of Yehud, then the very usefulness of the term becomes problematic.⁷ It is worth noting that

5. See Thomas C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 137–39.

6. See Adrian Schenker, “The Division of the Kingdom in the Ancient Septuagint: LXX 3 Kingdoms 12.24 a–z, MT 2 Kings 11–12; 14 and the Deuteronomistic History,” in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert de Pury, Thomas Römer, and Jean-Daniel Macchi; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 214–57; and my “Are There Any Bridges Out There? How Wide Was the Conceptual Gap between the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles?” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009) 59–86.

7. To illustrate, it is often maintained and regularly taught to students in introductory classes that the DtrH is “Deuteronomistic” because it maintains that the only legitimate sanctuary for Y^{HWH} is the temple in Jerusalem, and therefore evaluates kings according to this principle (see, among many others, Christoph Levin, *The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005] 72–73). From a certain perspective, and particularly if one wishes to stress the origins of this position, these claims are reasonable. But at the same time, it must be stressed that, by this standard, namely that the Jerusalemite temple is the only legitimate sanctuary of Y^{HWH}, the entire discourse of the Jerusalem-centered literati of Persian Yehud, their ideologies, and literature would need to be considered “Deuteronomistic.” Not incidentally, the same consideration would hold true for most Jewish discourses and texts from the later Second Temple period and thereafter. If the term *Deuteronomistic* is used in such a wide sense, then it becomes minimally helpful as a scholarly tool. Most importantly for the present purpose, because what we would label “Deuteronomistic” (i.e., an ideological position on the unique character of the temple in Jerusalem) would serve at best as a pointer to a “concept” within the discourse of the Yehudite literati (or later Jewish groups), it carried no inner discerning, classifying, or characterizing meaning, since “everything” would be “Deuteronomistic” for them. Moreover, from the perspective of the



most of the themes commonly identified by scholarship as Deuteronomistic were widely and collectively shared among these literati. These themes include, for instance: (a) Jerusalem is the unique place that YHWH has chosen for the temple; (b) Jerusalem and the temple have an important place in the divine economy; (c) “all Israel” is construed to be Judah/Yehud/Jerusalem-centered; (d) a divine promise has been made to the House of David, and memories about the rule of this house are central; (e) a promise has been made for restoration after justified, divine punishment; (f) a written Torah/divine instruction is to be followed; (g) this Torah is associated with Moses; and (h) the memory of the exodus plays a central role, and this memory is also associated with Moses.

Thomas Römer reflected the opinion of many scholars when he wrote that “the only way to avoid arbitrary definitions [of a text as Deuteronomistic] is to combine stylistic and ideological criteria.”⁸ Very few scholars would doubt that there is a particular style and a certain phraseology that is and (most likely) was understood by Persian period literati to be reminiscent of the language of Deuteronomy.⁹ This Deuteronomistic language is certainly predominant in Kings (though not in every chapter) and appears in sections of Joshua, Judges,

Jerusalem-centered literati of the Persian period (and later Jewish groups), it is very unlikely that they saw the uniqueness of the Jerusalem temple as a concept exclusively based on Deuteronomy (and therefore, in our terms “Deuteronomistic”), since they “read” and understood many other books and texts as supporting the uniqueness of Jerusalem and its temple as well (note, for instance, the identification of Mt. Moriah with the Jerusalem temple in 2 Chr 3:1; and multiple claims about Zion in Psalms).

8. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 33–34. Also worth noting is his observation that “it is impossible to restrain the definition of ‘deuteronomistic’ to a purely linguistic level, because otherwise we would find very late texts up to the New Testament that could be labeled ‘deuteronomistic’” (Römer’s response to Richard Nelson, Steven McKenzie, Eckart Otto, and Yairah Amit in “In Conversation with Thomas Römer: The So-Called Deuteronomistic History,” 48). Römer is correct, of course, but this raises two issues: (a) remarks about what the term *Deuteronomistic* may mean must be clearly and explicitly associated with particular sociohistorical settings—this essay, for instance, explicitly focuses on a Persian period community/ies of readers consisting of literati; and (b) different groups may write in a similar style; or in other words, the idea of “one style = one social group” does not hold water. The importance of this observation will become clear later in this essay.

Christoph Levin (private communication) maintains that, before labeling a text Deuteronomistic, one should take into account not only language and theological meaning but also a study of innerbiblical quotations—which according to him were one of the main reasons that some linguistic patterns spread so much. A study of his approach to the term *Deuteronomistic* is outside the scope of this essay, but his comments reinforce the point made by Römer and others. (One may also compare Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt* [FRLANT 137; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985] 63–67, 167–68.)

9. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 320–65.



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Samuel, Jeremiah, here and there in tetrateuchal books (for example, Gen 26:5; compare Deut 11:1) and, of course, in Chronicles.

The presence of this language reminiscent of Deuteronomy in the so-called DtrH is usually explained as the style of the *original author* (the so-called Dtr) or subsequent creative reworkers who habitually are labeled *redactors*.¹⁰ These writers, it is maintained, contributed large or small Deuteronomistic additions/layers to other books outside the DtrH. The case of Chronicles, which displays significantly more Deuteronomistic language than most “Deuteronomistic books,” however, is explained in terms of its dependence on the DtrH. These explanations may well be correct but, significantly, they focus on authorship rather than processes of reading. In other words, they construct, emerge from, and suggest a reading strongly informed by a chronological sequence of evolving texts, beginning with precompositional sources, compositional layers, and subsequent editions/reworkings.

Even if the proposed sequence is correct, it is likely that ancient readers approached their texts synchronically, not diachronically, as favored by contemporary redaction critics. This is so because, from the perspective of the ancient readers, the *implied author* of a book/text was the communicator whose intention they needed to grasp.¹¹ The idea that these readers attempted to grasp and construe evolving messages advanced by a series of authors and redactors (including precompositional and postcompositional authors and redactors of embedded and resignified sources) is highly improbable. Thus, although diachronic analyses may help to explain how the relevant books reached their present form in the Persian (or early Hellenistic) period, they are not much help when exploring how these books were read. In sum, it is the text as it had been read—that is, the text as it had been understood in a community—that influenced the community and shaped its discourse. This read text was associated with its implied author (and not with the series of authors and redactors that contemporary scholars posit and reconstruct—again, the latter has a place in research but is not helpful to understand how ancient communities read the final compositional form of a book or text).

10. In my view, DtrH is a collection of books that are multivocal, complex, and do not show a tightly written, univocal, coherent unity. It is a “mental shelf” that includes different, though related books, not a single composition. For a similar view of Joshua–Kings, though derived from a different methodology, see K. L. Noll, “Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate? (A Thought Experiment),” *JSOT* 31 (2007) 311–45. For a critique of the use of the term *redactor*, see John Van Seters, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the “Editor” in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006); and previously, idem, “The Redactor in Biblical Studies: A Nineteenth Century Anachronism,” *JNSL* 29 (2003) 1–19. These authors and redactors are usually seen as part of a Deuteronomistic school/s (or group/s, movement/s, party/ies). But see below.

11. To be sure, as they “grasped” this intentional meaning, the readers construed their (implied) author.



Against this background, a good place to begin to explore what the referent of the term *Deuteronomistic* might have been in Persian Yehud is to focus on the distinctive language that characterizes Deuteronomistic passages and to ask the question which equally distinctive meaning this language may have communicated in this particular context. This is so because it is unlikely that the literati reading these texts would have missed or been oblivious to the consistent presence of Deuteronomistic language or to the fact that it was evocative of Deuteronomy. This possibility becomes even more improbable once one takes into consideration that distinctive language was a significant and widely present feature of many books that existed in the repertoire of Persian period Jerusalemite literati. In particular, each of the prophetic books carried its own distinctive flavor. To be sure, there was a difference; whereas there was, for instance, only one book that carried a clear Isaianic flavor, there were numerous books that carried the Deuteronomistic flavor (or, better, flavors, since Deuteronomistic Jeremiah has some unique features).

This situation raises the questions: Why would this be the case? And what kind of messages would the relatively widespread (as opposed to narrow and clearly demarcated) appearance of these Deuteronomistic linguistic flavors have communicated to the intended and primary rereaders of these books in the Persian period?

To begin with the second question, a linguistic flavor can create associations. The Persian period literati who read and reread these books probably noted that the voices of the implied authors of these books evoked each other. At times, the voices of main characters in these books (such as YHWH, Joshua, David, Samuel, Solomon, Josiah, Jeremiah) evoked each other as well. All these voices spoke, at least partially, in the tradition of Moses as he was portrayed in Deuteronomy. To a significant extent, Deuteronomy was construed in Persian Yehud as the “prophetic book” associated with Moses and thus as the book par excellence that carried his voice and in which YHWH’s voice evoked that of Moses and vice versa.¹² This being so, the presence of Deuteronomistic language connoted to the intended rereaders of Deuteronomistic books a sense that these books were related somehow to Deuteronomy’s distinctive tradition about Moses and, as such, partook (at least partially) in Deuteronomy’s legitimacy, authority, and evocative power.¹³ Conversely, the importance assigned to the Moses-like voice and to the memory of Moses within the discourse of

12. In the other prophetic books (e.g., Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea), the divine and prophetic voices (and their flavors) tend to merge. Thus, for instance, the book of Isaiah carries Isaiah’s voice, and in it YHWH’s voice evokes Isaiah’s and vice versa.

13. On this matter and the use of Deuteronomistic language as marker for a Mosaic-like voice, see my “Deuteronomistic Redaction in/among ‘The Twelve’: A Contribution from the Standpoint of the Books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah,” in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven



Yehud explains why there would be several books associated with this tradition but only one carrying an Ezekielian or Hoseanic voice. This explains also why this Mosaic voice would inject itself into several books, but other, non-Deuteronomistic voices rarely appear in Deuteronomy—that is, in Moses’ prophetic book.

This observation leads us to consider carefully both the extent and the limits of association evoked by the voice/s in the text: unlike the case in Deuteronomy, multiple voices appear saliently in Joshua–Kings. The readers were expected to read these works as related to one another but simultaneously to distinguish clearly between Deuteronomy and Joshua–Kings. Moreover, when some readers contributed to the ongoing textual development of these books as they doubled as authors (or “redactors”), they carefully maintained this sense of separation between, on the one hand, the prophetic book of Moses, a great individual, and, on the other hand, a prophetic, “national” history.

The Mosaic association conveyed by Deuteronomistic language may also explain the general pattern of its occurrence in the repertoire of Yehud. Although this language appears in many places, its main corpus indisputably consists of one prophetic book (Jeremiah) and the DtrH. The former likely characterizes Jeremiah as a particularly Moses-like personage, while the latter probably partially constructs “national” history as fulfilled prophecy in Yehud.¹⁴ From this perspective, the DtrH may be seen as a detailed elaboration of the fulfillment of Deut 30:1 and 31:16–22. Of course, this would suggest that, from the perspective of the readers of Joshua–Kings, the subsequent chapter in their history is pregnant with the fulfillment of Deut 30:2–10.¹⁵ In addition, a world in which history is seen also as prophecy fulfilled would tend to show a systemic preference for an association of the large-scale “national” history with the earliest and the greatest of all prophets rather than with important but still secondary prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Zechariah.

L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 232–61 (esp. pp. 258–61).

14. For a brief survey of research (with bibliography) on the potential link between the figures of Jeremiah and Moses, see Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem: A Study of Prophetic Narrative* (LHBOTS 423; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 20. The Former Prophets as a fulfilled prophecy in Yehud is an interpretation I have elaborated in “Observations on Lines of Thought concerning the Concepts of Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud, with an Emphasis on Deuteronomy–2 Kings and Chronicles,” forthcoming in a Festschrift to be announced.

15. This point is very important in terms of the general message of the DtrH. It bears much significance for the study of the relationship between prophetic literature, as usually understood, and the historical books. It may also have informed and contributed to the shaping of the ending of Chronicles, which stands in conversation with this expectation. This point goes well beyond the boundaries of the present essay, and I will return to it in a future publication.



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The appropriation of the figure of Moses that has been communicated by the Moses-like voice resonating through the DtrH played an additional role in the discourse of Yehud. Indirectly, but in a pervasive way, this appropriation shaped the image of Moses in a manner consistent with and supportive of the ideology of the Jerusalemite literati. The Pentateuch was a text shared by Samaria and Yehud. It could be shared by both communities because each understood it differently. The appropriation of Moses in Joshua–Kings is consistent with southern but not northern claims. This appropriation of a figure accepted by Samaria was central to the claims of legitimacy for Jerusalem/Judah and contributed to a systemic preference for a history of “Israel” that is both Moses-like and Jerusalem/Judah-centered—in other words, for a DtrH.¹⁶ To some extent, this represents a kind of prefiguration of the later association of the authority of Moses and David that is so important in Chronicles.¹⁷

As mentioned above, there was a significant spectrum of viewpoints within Deuteronomistic literature; furthermore, not every text or voice in Persian Yehud was Deuteronomistic. The latter phenomenon might be explained away if one were to assume that there existed a “pure” Deuteronomistic group that read and reread only their own works and wrote only in the Deuteronomistic style—a group that formed a socially, ideologically, and discursively separate subculture within the Jerusalem-centered literati of Persian Yehud, with its own library and the like. I have suggested elsewhere that the existence of such a subculture is unlikely, given the total population of Jerusalem/Yehud at the time, the possible number of bearers of high literacy, and the integrative character of much of the discourse in Yehud.¹⁸ Even if this had been the case, however, the features mentioned above must be explained by the present approach: a Deuteronomistic literary voice served to mark and construe a voice as Moses-like.

A combination of the centrality of Moses, his memory, and the related centrality of Deuteronomy within the discourse of Persian Yehud, on the one hand, and the range of world views and memories that characterized Yehud’s

16. [See the essays by Niels Peter Lemche and Philip R. Davies in this volume—ed.]

17. On this matter see, for instance, Simon J. De Vries, “Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles,” *JBL* 107 (1988) 619–39.

18. See, for instance, my “Towards an Integrative Study of the Production of Authoritative Books in Ancient Israel,” and idem, “The Concept of Prophetic Books and Its Historical Setting,” both in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009); idem, “The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (ed. Walter E. Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau, and Steven W. Gauley; JSOTSup 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 194–209; idem, “A Deuteronomistic Redaction in/among ‘The Twelve’”; idem, “Review of Raymond F. Person Jr., *The Deuteronomistic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature* (Studies in Biblical Literature 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002),” *CBQ* 66 (2004) 456–58.



(Jerusalem-centered) literati, on the other hand, explains also why Deuteronomistic voices had to be (a) multivocal and (b) able to coexist with rather than erase other voices. A few examples clarify this point.

The intended and primary readers of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings likely noted that their books included sections that carry a Deuteronomistic or Moses-like flavor but also others that did not. Scholars refer to the latter as either pre-Deuteronomistic sources or post- or non-Deuteronomistic additions, but from the perspective of a readership whose approach to the text was not informed by its history of redaction, a characterization of this sort was not particularly helpful. To understand the perspective of these Yehudite readers, it is better to refer to a combination of Moses-like and non-Moses-like voices, with the Moses-like, as expected, intertwining themselves with the others, commenting on the others, and at the same time and unavoidably being informed by the others. Of course, all these voices were integrated into one text, with one implied author/communicator. Reading and rereading this text communicated openness to a range of views within the discourse of Yehud, which contributed to social cohesion and to the necessary ability of this discourse to adapt to circumstances in the life of the community. It is not by chance that the presence of multiple viewpoints within each of the authoritative books in Yehud as well as across the entire repertoire of these books was so ubiquitous.¹⁹

Within this context, it is only to be expected that there was diversity within the realm of ideas that the literati of Yehud were asked to characterize as Mosaic. The most obvious cases involve well-noted tensions between the DtrH and Deuteronomy. Examples include tensions dealing with the role of the king in the polity (and perhaps the figure of Solomon; compare 1 Kgs 10:26–20 with Deut 17:14–20), royal cultic prerogatives (including the reference to the sons of David as priests in 2 Sam 8:18), and the role of prophets (for instance, Deuteronomy does not state that prophets are necessary to mediate divine legitimacy to kings or to take it away from them). Frequent examples occur within Kings itself in relation, for instance, to the reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem or the question whether Israelites should perform forced labor for the king (see 1 Kgs 5:27–32—compare also 1 Kgs 11:28—and contrast with 1 Kgs 9:20–22–2 Chr 2:16–17; 8:7–9). Additional examples can be noted between the Deuteronomistic voices of Kings and Jeremiah (such as the emphasis on social issues in the latter).²⁰

19. A point I explored further in “Towards an Integrative Study of the Production of Authoritative Books in Ancient Israel.”

20. Compare Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (OTL; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 2:382–87; Gary N. Knoppers, “Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings,” *CBQ* 63 (2001) 393–415; idem, “The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship,” *ZAW* 108 (1996) 329–46; Bernard



The thesis advanced in this essay may explain, as well, the logic behind the later expansion of the Moses-like literature to include what can be labeled non-Deuteronomistic texts. Toward the end of the Persian period, Chronicles (as an example) evoked the language of the DtrH and, indirectly, that of Deuteronomy. The result was a history that, to some extent, fit better into deuteronomistic modes of thinking than the DtrH but simultaneously suggested that Deuteronomy had now become a book whose meaning emerged from readings that were informed by other pentateuchal books.²¹ This example recalls my observation that it is not a text's historical evolution but the text as understood by a community of readers that influences the community. Because Deuteronomy was by this time informed by other pentateuchal books and vice versa, the Mosaic message was then construed as pentateuchal rather than strictly deuteronomistic.²² That is to say, Exodus–Numbers (Genesis–Numbers?) have been construed as Mosaic in addition to but not instead of Deuteronomy. This process was, of course, directly associated with the authority of Moses and Moses' memory in Persian Yehud, which not unexpectedly tended to associate with Moses the memories, voices, and texts that were foundationally authoritative for the community (and resulted, not unexpectedly, in the shaping and reshaping of the figure and memory of Moses himself).

This process by necessity blurred the association between Moses and a particular language and, most importantly for the present discussion, removed the need for particular Deuteronomistic linguistic markers to signal the Mosaic character of a book. As a result, new Deuteronomistic texts began to be written *only* as additions (“editorial” or “redactional” notes, as we tend to call them) to

Levinson, “The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History’s Transformation of Torah,” *VT* 51 (2001) 511–34.

21. As clearly demonstrated by the case of “boiling in fire.” On this matter, see my “Revisiting ‘Boiling in Fire’ in 2 Chron. 35.13 and Related Passover Questions: Text, Exegetical Needs and Concerns, and General Implications,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Isaac Kalimi and Peter J. Haas; LHBOTS 439; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006) 238–50 and bibliography cited there.

22. Compare Hecataeus of Abdera and his depiction of Judah and its traditions. On this text, see, among others, Doron Mendels, “Hecataeus of Abdera and a Jewish ‘patrios politeia’ of the Persian Period (Diodorus Siculus XL, 3),” *ZAW* 95 (1983) 96–110; Rainer Albertz, “An End to the Confusion? Why the Old Testament Cannot Be a Hellenistic Book,” in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; London: Continuum, 2001) 30–46 (esp. pp. 41–46); but see also the recent challenge to the widely accepted claim that the text in Diodorus Siculus 40.3 goes back, at least primarily to Hecataeus of Abdera: Daniel R. Schwartz, “Diodorus Siculus 40.3: Hecataeus or Pseudo-Hecataeus?” in *Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land in the Days of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud: A Collection of Articles* (ed. Menachem Mor et al.; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003) 181–98.



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existing texts, which had to be consistent with the style and phraseology of the text to which they were added.

The approach advanced here does not help explain the redactional history of the DtrH, nor does it advance the study of discourse in Judah during the Josianic era, but it may bring a new perspective that has much potential for the study of the roles that so-called Deuteronomistic features played in the discourse of pre-Chronicles Persian period Yehud. This thesis clarifies what encountering these features “did” to the readers of these texts at that time (that is, the ways in which these encounters affected them and their reading of the texts) and as such, it may help us to reconstruct the intellectual history of Israel during the Persian era. It also suggests an approach to the important question why Deuteronomistic books ceased to be composed by the late Persian period.²³

Simultaneously, this essay suggests a research model that focuses not on processes of replacement by social/intellectual elites but on long-term, continuous rather than discontinuous, integrative rather than supersessionist processes that were strongly influenced by the social and ideological necessities of the discourse of Yehud. This model is more likely from a historical perspective than its alternative, given the socioeconomic conditions in the province.²⁴

23. This does not mean that writers of much later times could not resort to some degree of “Deuteronomistic coloring” of their texts, indirectly co-opting Moses’ image or Moses’ messages for the writers’ own positions. In fact, some New Testament texts display this tendency. But these matters are well beyond the historical period covered in this essay, that is, the Persian period.

24. For an example of a conflict approach, see, for instance, Raymond F. Person Jr., *The Deuteronomistic School: History, Social Setting and Literature* (Studies in Biblical Literature 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), and Person’s essay in this volume.





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