

bei aller notwendigen Gegensteuerung gegen eine Fülle derzeit grassierender Erfahrungstheologien (I,38)—der Gegensatz von Erfahrung und Glaube so stark auszuscharfen (vgl. aber auch I,114)?

‘Neues und Altes’: der Titel der drei Bände nimmt ausdrücklich Mt 13,52 auf, das Wort Jesu vom Schriftgelehrten, der ein Jünger des Himmelreichs geworden ist und aus seinem Schatz Neues und Altes herausgibt. Der Titel ist treffend gewählt, denn quer durch die verschiedenen Beiträge hindurch ist die Entschlossenheit des Verfassers sichtbar, sich durch die Heilige Schrift belehren zu lassen. Auch da, wo er sich zu einem klaren Nein gegenüber gegenwärtiger Lehre verpflichtet sieht, wird dieses Nein gesagt aus einem großen Ja zum Schatz der Kirche, dem Evangelium. Dieses Ja bewährt sich im sorgsamem Achten auf Identität der Kirche und ihrer Verkündigung durch die Jahrhunderte hindurch. Daß Slenczka im Ringen um klare theologische Urteile Lehre und Person behutsam zu unterscheiden vermag, wird etwa im Aufsatz ‘Christusbekenntnis und Christologie. Zum Lehrstreit um Edward Schillebeeckx und Hans Küng’ (1981) deutlich. Der Verfasser war dem ‘Gericht der Öffentlichkeit’ (II,274) mehr als einmal ausgesetzt. Aber manche kommen eben ins Gerede, weil sie etwas zu sagen haben.

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Israel in the Book of Kings; the Past as a Project of Social Identity

James Richard Linville

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur veut démontrer, contre la théorie dominante d'une composition deutéronomiste, que le livre des Rois est le produit de différentes communautés post-exiliques, s'efforçant de se comprendre en termes de traditions reçues. Il est influencé par la définition de l'histoire comme « connaissance intentionnelle » (Huizinga), et par l'idée d'une création de l'histoire d'Israël durant la période perse (P. R. Davies). Le cadre du récit des Rois est plus justement défini comme culturel et institu-

tionnel que comme l'œuvre d'un auteur. Au cours de la démonstration, l'auteur porte des coups sévères contre les acquis de la théorie deutéronomiste.

La thèse de cet ouvrage est que le livre des Rois est une recherche du sens d'« Israël ». Au cours de sa démonstration, Linville critique certains postulats comme l'origine Josianique du livre, ou même la primauté de l'histoire de Juda. Cependant, la thèse selon laquelle le livre des Rois proposerait une forme « exiliste » de Judaïsme est moins convaincante. La méthode sociologique n'est pas poussée jusqu'à son terme. Et le livre manque de réflexion théologique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch argumentiert gegen die vorherrschende Theorie deuteronomistischer Komposition, daß die Könige-Bücher das Produkt verschiedener nachexilischer Gemeinschaften sind, die versuchten, sich selbst im Lichte der überkommenen Traditionen zu verstehen. Es ist von Huizingas Definition von Geschichte als ‘zweckorientiertes Wissen’ beeinflusst, sowie von P. R. Davies’ Vorstellung von der Schaffung der Geschichte Israels in der persischen Zeit. Die Könige-Erzählung ist eher als kulturell und institutionell anzusehen denn als das Werk eines Autors. Im Verlauf der Argumentation kritisiert der Autor wirkungsvoll Axiome der deuteronomistischen Theorie.

Die These des Buches ist, dass die Könige-Bücher die Bedeutung von ‘Israel’ selbst untersuchen. Im Verlauf der Untermuerung dieser These greift Linville Axiome wie die josianische Herkunft der Bücher oder gar die Vorrangstellung der Geschichte Judas an. Der Rezensent ist allerdings weniger von der These überzeugt, die Könige-Bücher verträten eine ‘exilische’ Form des Judentums. Die soziologische Methode ist nicht durchgängig angewandt worden. Außerdem kommt der theologischen Reflektion zu wenig Gewicht zu.

The aim of this book is to explain the usage ‘Israel’ in Kings as a function of a quest or quests for identity in Jewish community(ies) in the Persian period. Questioning the dominant hypothesis of an exilic ‘deuteronomistic’ authorship of Kings, he argues that a new paradigm is needed, with a strong sociological flavour (though he insists that he is not adopting this exclusively, wanting to draw also from literary studies). In his view, the history books represent ways in which communities well after the exile (probably in the Persian period) attempt to understand

themselves in terms of the past. His premise, therefore, is that Kings is the product of the search for ways of self-understanding on the part of possibly quite diverse post-exilic communities, trying to express themselves in terms of received traditions.

The theory behind his thesis owes something to J. Huizinga's definition of history as 'purposive knowing' (77), and also to P. R. Davies, who has found the portrayal of Israel in the History Books to be the creation of Persian period Jews seeking to establish their identity (P. R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*, JSOTSup, 148, 2nd ed., 1992). Linville adopts a theory of narrative itself, according to which Kings is the product of society in a rather broad sense. Its narrative is cultural, institutional, public, setting up parameters within which people may understand themselves (81-82). On this view it is in principle difficult to describe the society of a presumed author.

In this context he offers a critique of the dominant deuteronomistic theory of the authorship of Kings, which has some cogency. For instance he argues, rightly, that the mere deployment of certain characteristic vocabulary is no sure guide to the location of a writing within a school of thought, a point that tells against a good deal of scholarly writing on Deuteronomy and the Historical Books. In his protest against undue scholarly certainty in locating narratives, in this case a tradition that has evolved from Martin Noth's single exilic Deuteronomist to the current dominant model of a Josianic edition, he hits a number of nails on the head.

The particular issue addressed is the usage Israel and Judah in Kings. This is certainly an area of possible confusion. Does 'Israel' refer, in any instance, to the northern kingdom following the division of the monarchy, or to Israel as a totality, including Judah? And what does it mean when communities that derive from Judah assimilate the name of Israel for their own sense of identity?

The meaning of the terms is then pursued exegetically, focusing on the united monarchy (and the term *nagid* in Samuel and Kings), the division of the kingdom, the dual kingdom, the fall of the two kingdoms, Josiah's 'purge' (this expression is preferred to 'reform'), the role of Egypt in Kings, and the understanding of the temple, with special reference to 1 Kings 8. In these sections there is much very useful exegetical work. The idea that Kings is exploring the notion of 'Israel' in a narrative in which the nation is divided, then

comes to separate violent ends, is interesting and fruitful. In connection with the promise of a 'dominion' for David (Hebrew *nir*, 1 Kgs 11:36 etc.), he suggests this means that David's rule can still be extended in principle to all Israel (163). In the story of the division of the kingdom he raises interesting questions. If Jeroboam was offered a genuine chance to rule not unlike that offered to David himself, how might he have proved faithful to the call? Should he have acknowledged the primacy of Jerusalem, and how could he have done so? In the confrontation at Shechem, was the rebellion against Solomon-Rehoboam confined to the north, or did it extend to Judah also, and if so how did Rehoboam enforce his rule there? And what is implied about the continuing relationship of the two kingdoms?

Linville shows that, contrary to the premise of the dominant critical view that Kings is essentially a pro-Josianic apologia, there is no clear preference for Judah here. Rather the narrative poses the question what 'Israel' ought to be. In fact, neither kingdom perfectly corresponds to such an ideal. 'Neither Israel nor Judah can really exist without the other'. . . 'While. . . greater Israel is reaffirmed in the midst of its political dissolution, it becomes a parody of itself, and as such, its new identity(ies) can hardly be stable' (p. 171). In the same vein, the reading of the account of Josiah's reform (2 Kgs 22-23) as naively pro-monarchical is rightly challenged, as incompatible with the unexpected early death of the king (226-41). Themes of exodus and prophetic preaching take their place alongside the Davidic motif (178), opening up more complex ways of reading the end of the stories of Israel and Judah. Judah's fall to Babylon is in an ironic way a new 'release' from Egypt (267). Finally, the temple-dedication narrative (1 Kgs 8) is rightly shown to put in question all symbols of permanence, and to recognize that all hope for the future resides in Yahweh alone (291). I am less convinced by his 'exilicist' interpretation of Kings. For example, his observation, correct in itself, that the close of the book (and 1 Kgs 8) harbours no hope of a return to the pre-exilic monarchical status quo, leads him to suppose that Kings legitimates and promotes an exilic form of Judaism. Even the account of Josiah's purge is understood in this light, for he sees it as forming a transition to exilic Israel (252). This seems to me to do insufficient justice to the perplexity in the book concerning the institutions of king and temple

and the underlying issue of land.

My chief reservation about the book, however, is what I think is a discrepancy between theory and practice. The sociological theory is expounded at some length, but in my view its validity is not demonstrated by the exegetical sections. In fact, in spite of the sociological theory proposed, what is actually offered is simply an alternative setting for the writing of Kings to the usual view of its composition in the exile. The execution of the thesis shows how difficult it is for works to free themselves completely from the critical quest of author and setting. For an author or authors in the exile Linville apparently substitutes an elite in Persian Judah, with Davies (95). While this must presumably be qualified by his understanding of processes of text production as intrinsically complex and irrecoverable (cf. 22), he resorts on occasion to terms such as 'the producers of Kings' (164, here with a clear implication of intentionality on their part), 'narrator/narratorial voice' (224), and he says in one place, 'the writer should be thought of as potentially more in control of the material' (242). And in general, in spite of his declared uncertainty about origins and intentions, he seems to have a good idea of what the text means!

In the end the two parts of the thesis are scarcely combined successfully. The exegetical parts are broadly convincing in their contention that Kings represents a way of understanding the exilic situation in the light of both Israelite and Judean heritage. But they

might have been offered more or less within the parameters of the usual critical view. The theory, elaborated initially at some length, hardly guides the exegesis. And the book ends abruptly with its final exegetical chapter, on the temple dedication, without an integrating conclusion beyond a page or so at the end of that chapter.

The sociological theory has also displaced theological reflection. It is noteworthy that in his opening explanation he says he will follow no single method, but will use insights from literary study as well as sociological, but omits theological interpretation as part of the whole. Theological ideas might well have helped in the attempt to understand the ambivalent usage of 'Israel' in Kings. Sociology no doubt has a place in interpreting texts from the past, but it should not be made to do everything. When he argues, for example, that 'the descriptions of Israel and its religion could be symbolic expressions of social boundary formation as opposed to ethnographic descriptions' (83), he overlooks the fact that Israel is never allowed to be a simple ethnographic term in the Old Testament's theology. It follows that there is no attempt here to take steps from exegesis to theological interpretation in any broader sense, whether as Old Testament theology or Biblical theology. This is a pity, as the author has uncovered much that is of use for it. I hope that some of his readers may take his cues.

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