

VII CONCLUSION

IT only remains to gather up the results as to the composition and date of the book which have emerged from the preceding analysis of the work of the Chronicler.

There is then clear evidence that the books of Chronicles, in the form in which we possess them, are not homogeneous but reveal the presence of more than one hand. Some of the material which has been added is of minor importance and may be classed with the glosses which are common in old documents. But it has become increasingly apparent that two writers have been mainly responsible for the book, and that the conclusion which Von Rad and the present writer had already reached, viz. that there are two main *Schichten* or strands representing a difference of attitude on important questions, has been justified, so far as the section of Chronicles to which attention has here been confined is concerned.¹ All the sections into which this study has been divided, except the second, bear the same testimony, though in differing degree. It becomes possible to set the two strands alongside each other and to estimate their character as literary documents. When this is done a marked difference is apparent between them. In the one case we find a self-consistent narrative, which records the history of the kingdom in Judah from the accession of David, and which can be read continuously. Except that it omitted all mention of the kingdom in Israel, the account runs parallel to that in the books of Samuel and Kings, and can be compared with its predecessor. Though the author regarded the king-

¹ In my judgement the same clearly marked distinction into two strands does not appear in the opening nine chapters, and its absence there forms an additional reason for separating this material from what follows. Unless I have misunderstood Von Rad, he makes his conclusion about the duality of authorship and outlook run through the whole book.

dom from a different point of view, and used great freedom in dealing with his original source in order to adapt it to this point of view, he preserved the outward form of a historical narrative. He also added a considerable amount of new material, but he wove this into his record of events with such success that he has given his book a unity and an outward cohesion. The situation is different when we combine the passages which have been assigned to the second strand in Chronicles. These do not form a continuous narrative of the kingdom, since they are entirely absent from several of the reigns. Nor can they be read continuously, for they are dependent for their sense on the narrative in which they have been embedded. At times this strand consists of no more than a clause or a few verses: at other times it broadens into a longer statement. But whether the passages are longer or shorter, they remain fragments and disconnected fragments because, after they have been separated from their context, they present no coherent meaning. The cohesion between them consists in their inward unity, in the common attitude they present on certain important issues: but apart from this, they remain fragmentary in their character. The natural conclusion from this situation is that Chronicles is not composed of two independent documents, dealing with the same subject, which have afterwards been combined. The relation between the two strands in the book is that of an original narrative, covering the period of the kingdom, which has at a later date been subjected to a careful and thorough revision.

This revision, however, it must next be noted, did not extend to the whole of the original document. There are certain sections in which no evidence of its presence is apparent, and for that reason no reference has been made to these in the preceding study. Thus the history of the kings who followed Josiah has been treated in a perfunctory fashion. The author hurried over the story of their reigns, contenting himself with abbreviating the material in Kings and presenting no more than a summary. Nor has

he introduced any of his characteristic additions in the record, except in the case of Zedekiah, where he noted that the fall of the kingdom was due to the sin of the priests and the disobedience of the king to the message of Jeremiah. There is no sign of a later revision there. The same thing is true in connexion with the account of the life and activity of some of the minor kings. Again, the collection of prophetic messages, in which the original author conveyed his view of the relation of prophecy to the kingdom, as well as his conviction as to the cause of the kingdom's collapse, has been left practically untouched. There may be some few signs of the reviser's hand in the oracles themselves, but there are no such signs in the historical narratives which frame the messages, though these depart widely from the parallel accounts in Kings. Finally, the long account of David's life has been treated in a significant fashion. The account of his accession, his place as founder of the kingdom and of the Davidic dynasty, the record of his secular activities and of his success, his appointment of his successor are all left as in the original narrative. But so soon as the historian referred to the king's relation to the temple and the national worship, the annotator's work begins to appear. The first sign of his activity is present in the story of the transference of the ark to Jerusalem and, so long as the temple is only in preparation and has not yet come into existence, his notes are sporadic and consist of little more than changes in the text and short notes inserted in the story. When, however, we reach the instructions as to the future temple and its personnel which David delivered to his successor, and the later description of the way in which Solomon carried out these instructions, the evidence of the presence of a double strand becomes much more patent. In the same way, whenever the narrative dealt with the work of one of the reforming kings, the same phenomenon recurs: interpolations increase, annotations multiply, and we find duplications of incidents in connexion with the cult which betray a different point of view.

Again, the natural conclusion from this is that the annotator was no more a historian than the writer whom he annotated. He accepted the narrative of his predecessor, even where it diverged from the record in Kings, and neither added to it nor corrected anything in it. He agreed also with the verdict on the kingdom, and adopted the judgement that it had passed away because of the failure of the Davidic kings to obey the divine voice through the prophets. To him the enduring service which the dynasty had done for the nation lay in the fact that it had built and supported the temple. There he had nothing to add or to change. But the moment the record touched upon the temple, its origin, its history, its arrangements, its cult, and above all its personnel, his attention was awake. These, it will be noted, were precisely the subjects which his predecessor had introduced into his narrative and which find no parallel in the books of Kings. When, therefore, the annotator accompanied all this material with a series of notes and corrections and caveats, he was not attempting to plead for a more accurate reproduction of the practice of the past. We are in the presence of two men who held divergent views on the temple, its cult, and its personnel. The annotator profoundly disagreed with the attitude of the book he revised, and was diligent to correct its statements in order to bring them into line with his own convictions on the subject. The original narrative of the Chronicler was the earlier of the two strata in the book, and has been supplemented with the purpose of bringing it into agreement with a different view on the temple.

As soon as this relation between the two strata has been recognized it becomes necessary to define, so far as this is possible, the leading points of divergence between them. Here, if we ignore minor details, certain broad facts emerge from the preceding analysis. Thus the two writers held quite different views on the origin and the history of the temple. According to C, the first sanctuary in Jerusalem was the shrine which David prepared for the reception of

the ark, and which he set up entirely on his own initiative. Because its tent of curtains was unworthy of Him who was worshipped there, the king desired to replace it by a house of cedar. Such a structure had been unknown in the past: 'in all places wherein I have walked with all Israel, spake I ever a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people, saying, why have ye not built me a house of cedar?' Thus the temple had no predecessor, except the tent over the ark. Though David himself was not permitted to build, he received the promise that his son was to carry out the design, and the תבנית or plan of the new building was divinely revealed to him. Because the temple involved so novel a change in Israel's worship, it demanded and received the divine approval, and its structure must conform to the divine pattern. Therefore David received both the approval of his purpose and the plans after which it must be carried out. On the other hand to the reviser the temple was no novelty; it merely reproduced the tabernacle which had led the Israelites through the wilderness, and which had found a temporary resting-place at the high place in Gibeon. Nor was there need for a new plan of the future sanctuary, for the תבנית of the tabernacle had been revealed by God to Moses. The temple was the permanent substitute for the tabernacle in which God sojourned when He accompanied His people in their wanderings. Now that He had given them rest in their own land He took up His abode in the sanctuary chosen out of the tribes of Israel where He caused His name to dwell.

Of the same character is the norm to which appeal is made in the two strata of the book. As the Chronicler made David receive the plan of the sanctuary from divine revelation, so he stated that the king made all the arrangements for the future conduct of the worship and that in these matters he was also divinely guided. It was unnecessary to seek for higher authority in regard to his enactments. Therefore, when C described the conduct of the pious kings of the Davidic line in relation to the temple, he was satisfied to say

that they restored the conditions which had prevailed there during the time of their great predecessor. On the other hand, the final authority to which the reviser appealed was the law which the Lord delivered unto Moses, either at Horeb or in the wilderness. The arrangements made in all matters connected with the temple were no more novel to Israel in the time of David than the temple itself. They had been instituted for the service of the tabernacle, and were simply continued in the sanctuary which had taken the place of the tabernacle. Whenever, also, it is possible to trace the annotator's successive judgements on these matters, they are found to be in agreement with the legislation in Exodus and Numbers, and they reflect the situation which, according to the author of the book of Ezra, prevailed in the temple after the Return. This is especially true in all questions relating to the relative status of the priests and the levites, a subject on which the attitude of the authors of the two strata in the book is most markedly divergent.

Again, a similar wide divergence appears in the attitude which the two writers took to the ark. That sacred emblem was to the Chronicler an object of reverence in itself. One of the first acts of David's reign was to transfer it to Jerusalem, and to make it the centre of the first cult which was instituted in the capital: his final words were the charge he gave Solomon to bring it and the vessels employed in its service to its final resting-place. When the new sanctuary was completed the ark was brought into it, and as soon as sacrifices had been offered before it, the glory of the Lord filled the temple as a token of the divine approval. The ark was thus an essential element in the temple-cult according to the Chronicler since, although David had on his own initiative brought it up to the shrine which he prepared for it, he had been divinely guided in the arrangements he made for its deposition in the temple. The reverence C thus gave the sacred emblem was allied, on the one side, with his view of the temple, since he made the new sanctuary a surrogate for the tent at the older shrine, and it was, on the other,

linked with the status he assigned to the levites, for they alone possessed the privilege of acting as porters and servitors to the ark. The reviser had no similar estimate of the dignity of the emblem. According to him, the ark had no sooner reached the temple than it disappeared from the sight of the worshippers, and there its sole title of respect consisted in the fact that it contained the tablets of the law. The sacrifices which attended the dedication of the sanctuary were offered on the altar, and not till then did the glory of the Lord fill the house. In one place he made the ark no more than one of the vessels in the tabernacle. Here again he was in agreement with the law in Exodus, which made the tabernacle instead of the ark the guide of the nation through the desert, and which, though it never specified the purpose which it served, included the ark among the vessels of the tabernacle.¹

The annotator therefore belonged to the generation which followed the Return from Exile, and was a convinced supporter of the polity which was adopted at the time when the temple was rebuilt. Whether we believe this law to have been a creation of the priests in Babylonia, which was brought to Jerusalem by Ezra and imposed by him on his co-religionists, or whether we believe it to have been essentially the usage of the Solomonic temple, adapted and developed to meet the new conditions, the generation in which it became the norm for Jewish life and worship is not doubtful. There may have been later modifications of its terms, but the broad lines of the new polity were determined within that generation. The legislation was codified and placed under the authority of Moses in the combination of history and law which occupies most of the books of Exodus and Numbers: and the book of Ezra is practically the official record of the course of events which accompanied its

¹ For further proof of the degradation of the ark from its earlier position, cf. my *Post-Exilic Judaism*, pp. 230 f., 240 f. Rudolph has recently shown himself conscious of the situation in the book of Exodus, cf. *Der Elohist von Exodus bis Josua*, pp. 55 ff.

acceptance in the community. Since the reviser accepted and appealed to the authority of this law, and since his annotations practically form a running commentary intended to superimpose its decisions on the longer narrative in Chronicles, the work of the Chronicler must have predated the final settlement, and offers another proof that the difficult questions which attended its decision were not settled with the promptitude and ease which appear in the book of Ezra. Instead of his book being the latest material in the Old Testament, it must be set alongside the proposals in Ezekiel as one of the programmes which were put forward, before the final settlement was reached.

When this earlier date is assigned to his work, the dependence of C on Deuteronomy, which has always been recognized, admits of an easier explanation, since the later the material is placed in its date, the more difficult does it become to understand why its author showed so much interest in a law book which had been superseded in authority. So long as the evidence for this Deuteronomic element in the book was confined to the reproduction of the peculiar phraseology of the older code, or was chiefly drawn from the hortatory passages, it was possible to account for its appearance from the peculiar character of Deuteronomy itself, which was admirably adapted to remain a book of devotion even when its authority as a code had ceased. But the use C made of Deuteronomy was not confined to passages of this character. I have no desire to overpress, or even to base upon, the conclusions in chap. vi as to the relation between the use followed at Josiah's celebration of passover and the ritual prescribed in the Deuteronomic Code, though they at least offer an explanation of a peculiarly confused and puzzling passage. Those results are novel and must be further tested before they can form a basis for other conclusions. But enough remains to make it clear that the relation between C and Deuteronomy goes beyond the use of the language of the book, and implies a knowledge and acknowledgement of its peculiar legislation. Nor is this

all, for C's relation to Deuteronomy must be combined with two other factors which emerge from the analysis. On the one hand, every sign of dependence on Deuteronomy, whether in the use of its peculiar language or in a recognition of its authority as a law, is confined to the Chronicler's narrative. In no case does the reviser show any similar influence: his affinities are with Exodus, Numbers, and Ezra. On the other hand, the reviser appealed beyond the practices which C had assigned to David to the higher authority of the practices which God commanded to Moses in his law. C ignored the late law and recognized a certain authority in the Deuteronomic: the reviser appealed to the late law and ignored Deuteronomy. There can be only one conclusion from this situation, and it supports the earlier date for the Chronicler. At the time when the reviser wrote, Deuteronomy had passed into complete desuetude as a law: but the circle to which C belonged and for which he wrote had not yet adopted this attitude, but recognized a certain authority in the older code.

The Chronicler can only have belonged to the community which had never been in exile. These men, who comprised members of Israel and Judah, were not so negligible as the author of the book of Ezra represented. In his eyes the entire work of restoring the temple was undertaken and carried out by the returned exiles: and the men who had remained in Palestine meekly accepted the direction of their spiritual and intellectual superiors. But the remanent members of Israel were not so submissive to dictation from men who had for a generation been cut off from the means of grace and had lived among the pollution of heathenism. After the first captivity Jeremiah sharply rebuked their predecessors for spiritual pride, because they counted themselves to have been spared in the day of the divine anger which had swept away their fellows. Their successors could not fail to draw the same inference from the heavier chastisement which had visited the later exiles. Nor did the native population which escaped the Exile surrender

the faith of their fathers after they had recovered from the stunning effects of Nebuchadrezzar's victory. Since Torrey first broached the suggestion that the temple-site continued to be the centre of a cult, evidence has been accumulating in support of his contention. In my judgement the faithful remnant in Israel and Judah had combined to renew the sacrificial worship on its ancient site, and had taken steps to provide for its continuance. We possess in Neh. c. x the terms of the pact into which these men entered in order to guarantee that the house of God should not be forsaken.¹ They taxed themselves for its support, and pledged themselves to continue the offerings which were commanded by their law. The community which entered into this pact was composed of men drawn from both Judah and Israel, and therefore the servants of the altar were priests and levites, who appear alongside each other and who were equally supported from the sacred revenues. The Chronicler belonged to this little community, and his book was written to support their position. The men had taken courage after the crushing defeat which had befallen their nation, and had found a new centre for their national life. Though their independence had disappeared with their kingdom, they had solemnly resolved in their pact that they 'would not forsake the house of their God'. One of their number reviewed the history of the kingdom, and set it all in a new light. It had fallen because of the failure of its leaders to implement the divine conditions which alone could guarantee its continuance. But it had not fallen until it had created that house of God, through which the divine purpose with Israel was continued in force. God had not cast off His ancient people. The house of God was also one in which all Israel had their place by right. When Judah and Israel combined to maintain the sanctuary they renewed a unity which had only been interrupted for a time. When David had founded the first sanctuary in Jerusalem he summoned all Israel to assist in the transference of the ark.

¹ For the proof see *Post-Exilic Judaism*, pp. 67 ff.

It was the united nation which attended Solomon's dedication service, when the glory of the Lord filled the house. As soon as the northern kingdom had disappeared, Hezekiah sent messengers through all Israel to invite the people to join their brethren at their common sanctuary. What the first great reforming king planned Josiah continued. Finally, no other document except the pact and the work of the Chronicler set levite and priest on an equal footing as servants of the cult.

The return of the exiles saw the issue of another manifesto from a different quarter. The scheme which appears in Ezekiel was produced by an intransigent supporter of the old use of the temple. The only men who might approach the altar were the sons of Zadok, the only legitimate priests. As for the levites, they must be relegated to menial offices, as a penalty for their having been not only partakers in, but active agents in promoting the apostasy of Israel. The Chronicler did not leave the last charge without an answer. He stated that the first sanctuary in Jerusalem was the tent which housed the ark, and that there David left the levites to serve the sacred emblem, which they alone were privileged to carry. As for the apostasy of Israel, the levites were so far from supporting it that they forsook their livelihood in the north rather than have any share in the national sin. They had given signal proof of their faithfulness.

The final polity for Judaism accepted neither the extreme demands of the Legitimists among the returned exiles, nor the proposals which were put forward by the leaders of the remanent community in Palestine. Like most things in this world which have endured the test of time, it was a compromise which occupied a middle position and attempted to satisfy the more moderate elements on both sides. It refused to limit the priesthood to the men who had served the altar in Solomon's temple, and by widening the qualification to include all who could claim descent from Aaron it included the priests in Judah who had never been in exile.

It also refused to admit the levites to an equal status with the priests, but instead of degrading the men to the menial offices of the sanctuary, gave them an honoured, though strictly subordinate position beside the higher clergy.