

RBL 10/30/2000



**Graham, M. Patrick and Steven L. McKenzie, eds.**

***The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture***

JSOTSup 263

Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. Pp. 422, Cloth, \$85.00, ISBN 1841270571.

Mark McEntire  
Belmont University  
Nashville, TN 37212-3757

"This collection of 16 essays deals with Chronicles as literature, and is intended as a sequel to *The Chronicler as Historian*" (from the preface). The other title mentioned here is a collection produced by the same two editors, along with K. G. Hoglund in 1997. The Chronistic literature always seems to be one of the final stops along the route for new developments in the methods of biblical studies. Those hoping that the long train of contemporary literary approaches is finally pulling into the Chronistic station, which the subtitle leads us to believe, may be initially disappointed. But patience will prove that this advent is taking place. Graham and McKenzie have constructed this collection very carefully. They intend to connect the use of contemporary literary methods to the history of Chronicles scholarship, and homage must be paid to the past before the present and the future are brought into full view.

"Part I: Overviews of Chronicles" begins with a lengthy essay (with a lengthy title) by Kai Peltonin called "Function, Explanation and Literary Phenomena: Aspects of Source Criticism as Theory and Method in the History of Chronicles Research." As the title indicates, this is a historical survey. Peltonin attempts to make this complex history accessible by developing a scheme which includes three approaches. Within this scheme he delineates the movement from the assumption that the Chronicler's (Chr.) sources were unknown (Eichorn) to the conviction that the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) was the primary source and, because it is the only extant source, the only one which matters (de Wette). The other development is characterized by Peltonin as an increasing focus on source-criticism as method, rather than just as theory. Together these two developments move Chronicles research into the modern era, with its focus on careful synoptic reading with the DtrH. Peltonin's scheme is largely successful, and this essay fulfills its function at the head of the collection by bringing the reader from the beginnings of critical study of Chronicles up to the developments of recent decades.

McKenzie's "The Chronicler as Redactor" continues where Peltonin left off by examining closely various redaction theories. A. Graeme Auld's recent proposal of an unknown source shared by DtrH and Chr. receives the most attention. McKenzie presents a well illustrated critique of Auld's argument. It strikes me, after assessing McKenzie's points, that Auld's hypothetical source runs into many of the same difficulties as the hypothetical Q source now commonly used in study of the Synoptic Gospels. McKenzie finishes with a more favorable analysis of the recent work by Isaac Kalimi. The next essay is then a relatively brief rebuttal from Auld. Auld responds to McKenzie point by point then attempts to deny the charge that he has "invented" a hypothetical source. "Invented" may be too strong a term, but Auld's contention that he has merely "recognized" (p. 98) this source in the pages of DtrH and Chronicles can hardly be taken seriously.

The fourth essay continues the progress toward the present situation in Chronicles research. Rodney K. Duke's "A Rhetorical Approach to Appreciating the Books of Chronicles" is an updated synopsis of his important, earlier work *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis* (JSOTS 88, Sheffield Academic Press, 1990). Duke uses the categories of Aristotelian rhetoric to elucidate the structure, purpose, and potential impact of Chronicles. This essay brings the discussion of the Chronicler as author into the contemporary era where literary questions begin to rival historical ones. Part I is concluded by John W. Wright's "The Fabula of the Book of Chronicles. The two literary methods which dominated the 1980's and 1990's in biblical studies were rhetorical-criticism and narrative-criticism. After Duke's essay dealing with the former, Wright's discussion of the latter rounds out this first section of the collection and brings the state of Chronicles research to the end of the twentieth century. Wright's essay is not a full application of narrative-criticism to the book of Chronicles, of course, but an illustration of how the distinction between narrative order and chronology of fabula may effectively be applied to Chronicles. This is a difficult task because of the highly complex, non-chronological nature of Chronicles (irony!), especially I Chr 1-9. Wright has made a good beginning, but this issue, especially meaning and purpose of I Chr 9:2-34 needs more extensive attention.

With the stage set nicely by Part I, the collection moves on the sub-collections of thematic essays (Part II) and essays focusing on particular texts (Part III). Space does not allow an individual analysis of each of these. Part II is a collection of essays which addresses "Themes in Chronicles" using approaches such as redaction-criticism, narrative-criticism (particularly characterization), and inner-biblical exegesis. These are:

"The Chronicler as Interpreter of Scripture," by William M. Schniedewind.

"Treasures Won and Lost: Royal (Mis)appropriations in Kings and Chronicles," by Garry Knoppers.

"When the Foreign Monarch Speaks," by Ehud Ben Zvi.

"Foreigners, Warfare, and Judahite Identity in Chronicles," by Armin Siedlecki.  
"What Chronicles Has to Say About Psalms," by Howard N. Wallace.

Part III is a collection of essays addressing specific texts in Chronicles. The approaches to these texts are primarily literary, including reception theory, intertextuality, and ideological criticism. The essays are:

"Reading, Readers, and Reading Readers Reading the Account of Saul's Death in I Chronicles 10," by James M. Trotter.

"The Dialogism of Chronicles," by Christine Mitchell.

"Whose Song of Praise? Reflections on the Purpose of the Psalm in I Chronicles 16," by Kirsten Nielsen.

"David and God in I Chronicles 21: Edged with Mist," by Noel Bailey.

"Utopian Politics in II Chronicles 10-13," by Roland T. Boer.

"2 Chronicles 36:20-23 as Literary and Theological Interface," Magnar Kartveit.

This is a terrific collection presenting recent studies in the book of Chronicles which move toward more literary approaches and take the Chronicler seriously "as author." Unlike in many other similar volumes in Hebrew Bible studies, the editors of this book have taken great care to establish the context of the history and development of Chronicles scholarship into which these essays enter. The volume includes indexes of ancient references and modern authors. It is attractively produced, with a minimum of typographical errors. The price probably puts it beyond the reach of most individual collections, but everyone interested in the past, present, or future of Chronicles scholarship will want to find a way to have access to this volume.