Book-Endings in Joshua and the Question of the So-Called Deuteronomistic History

Thomas Römer

Richard Nelson has devoted several works to and written a seminal commentary on the book of Joshua.[1] In his view, this book provides compelling evidence for the existence of the Deuteronomistic History, a theory that is nowadays heavily disputed, even by one of his own students.[2] According to Nelson, Joshua is a forerunner of King Josiah, and Joshua's conquest of the land, which in the narrative parts is restricted to the territory of Benjamin, legitimates Josiah's expansionist politics of incorporating parts of the former Northern Kingdom. All this supports the variant of Noth's hypothesis proposed by Cross, the hypothesis of a first edition of the Deuteronomistic History in the time of Josiah.[3] In the early pages of his Joshua commentary, Nelson states that "this Deuteronomistic redactional presence is visible throughout much of Joshua, but noticeably absent from the description of land distribution. . . . However, unlike the situation in Judges or Kings, evidence is lacking in Joshua for a second Deuteronomist with a theological viewpoint different from DH or using a distinct vocabulary."[4] Nevertheless, the question of the Deuteronomistic edition of Joshua appears to be a somewhat more complex issue when one takes note of several potential conclusions to the Joshua scroll that are included in the book.

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1. See especially Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); "Josiah in the Book of Joshua," *JBL* 100 (1981) 531–40; "Ḥerem and the Deuteronomic Social Conscience," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans* (ed. Marc Vervenne and Johan Lust; BETL 133; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 39–54; *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

2. K. L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)," *JSOT* 31 (2007) 311–45.

3. See Richard D. Nelson, "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case Is Still Compelling," *JSOT* 29 (2005) 319–37.

4. Ibid., *Joshua*, 6.

Books with Multiple Conclusions in the
Christian and the Hebrew Bible

The most obvious case in which a biblical book has been updated with a new conclusion is the Gospel of Mark, which originally ended with Mark 16:8 as attested by the oldest manuscripts. To this somewhat strange ending (the flight of the frightened women from the empty grave), later redactors added a new conclusion telling the manifestation of the risen Jesus in order to make Mark fit better with the other biblical Gospels. In the Hebrew Bible, comparable cases can be detected. Most scholars agree that the book of Leviticus initially ended with chap. 26 and that chap. 27 is a later conclusion, the aim of which is still debated. The Septuagint of Jeremiah probably reflects a Hebrew Vorlage with a double conclusion, since the conditional promise to Baruch (which takes up motifs from Jeremiah 1) in Jer LXX 51:31–35[MT 45:1–5] is followed by the summary of the fall of Jerusalem and the events under Babylonian occupation (Jeremiah 52 // 2 Kings 24–25). This chapter was added in order to underline the relation between the book of Jeremiah and the books of Kings. Another example can be found at the end of Malachi (Mal 3:22–24), which was added (perhaps in two steps) to the original ending as a conclusion for the whole *corpus propheticum*.[5]

The end of the book of Joshua compares with these cases. In chaps. 23 and 24, Joshua holds two final discourses addressed to the people, and critical scholars agree that these speeches were written by different authors. But these two chapters are not the only possible conclusions to the book. Indeed, Joshua contains an impressive number of passages that look like attempts to conclude earlier versions of the book or parts of it.[6] Before discussing the relationship between Joshua 23 and 24, we need to have a look at these texts and locate them in the process of the book's formation.

Concluding Texts in the Book of Joshua

Joshua 10:42

> Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time because Yhwh, the god of Israel, fought for Israel.

According to Knauf, Josh 10:42 concludes (together with 10:40–42*) the oldest conquest account, which was part of an "exodus and conquest narrative," the beginning of which was probably in Exodus 2.[7] The statement "Yhwh

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5. Henning Graf Reventlow, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi* (ATD 25/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) 160–61.

6. See on this E. Axel Knauf, "Buchschlüsse im Josuabuch," in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l'Héxateuque et de l'Ennéateuque* (ed. Thomas Römer and Konrad Schmid; BETL 203; Leuven: Peeters, 2007) 217–24.

7. Idem, *Josua* (ZBKAT 6; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008) 17.

fought for Israel" has a parallel in Exod 14:14 indeed, but is this enough to postulate a narrative reaching from Moses to Joshua? The ideology of Yhwh's fighting for Israel and the delimitation of the conquered land from Kadesh-barnea to Gibeon in Benjamin (Josh 10:41) may well fit a seventh-century B.C.E. setting for the passage, probably under Josiah.[8] But 10:40–42 may also be considered the "summation of southern conquests" related in Josh 10:28–42, rather than a summary of all the conquest accounts in Joshua 3–10*.[9] As a matter of fact, the mention of the kings fits 10:28–39 better than the foregoing stories, which are not centered on foreign monarchs. Furthermore, in spite of 10:40a, 10:42 does not speak of the conquest of the "whole" land (contrary to 11:23 and 21:43) but of the land controlled by the kings mentioned in chap.10.

Joshua 11:23

> Joshua took the entire land according to all that Yhwh spoke to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments by their tribes. And the land was at rest from war.

This Deuteronomistic verse sounds very much like a conclusion; it refers to Yhwh's initial speech to Joshua in 1:1–9* with respect to the conquest of the land (1:2), the distribution of the land as a נחלה, and the former promises made to Moses (1:3). Josh 11:23 suggests that the distribution of the land has already taken place, whereas the description of the partition of the land to the tribes is related in chaps. 13–19. It is therefore possible that the concluding remark in 11:23 reflects a stage of the formation of Joshua in which the list material in 13–19 did not yet exist.[10] Kratz and Becker suggest that 11:23 was the original conclusion of the book followed by the report of Joshua's death in Judg 2:8–9 (or Josh 24:29–30).[11] If 11:23 is on the same literary level as 11:16–17, it would contain a description of the land that is broader than the description given in 10:41–42, covering more or less the borders of the biblical "United Kingdom."[12] In this case, 11:23 should be attributed to a later redactor than 10:41–42. The

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8. The mentions of the unidentifiable "land of Goshen" as well as of Gaza in Josh 10:41 may be later additions, as argued by most commentators.

9. Nelson, *Joshua*, 138.

10. Ibid., 164.

11. Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (UTB 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 207; ET: *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005); Uwe Becker, "Endredaktionelle Kontextvernetzungen des Josua-Buches," in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur "Deuteronomismus"-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (ed. Markus Witte et al.; BZAW 365; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006) 139–61 (esp. p. 151).

12. That 11:23 is on the same literary level as 11:16–17 is suggested by the probability that the intervening vv. 18–22 are later additions (Knauf, *Josua*, 116–19); the hardening of the enemies' heart in v. 20 reflects Priestly language, which is combined here with Deuter-

language of 11:23 is clearly Deuteronomistic. The last phrase, "and the land had rest from war," which is repeated in Josh 14:15b, is, however, very limited inside the Deuteronomistic History.[13] In the Former Prophets, the verb שקט with ארץ as subject only appears in the framing remarks of the book of Judges: 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28.[14] This fact could indicate that 11:23 presupposes the integration of the book of Judges into the Deuteronomistic History, which is nowadays often located at a quite late stage of the formation of the Former Prophets (to be discussed below). Contrary to Judg 2:20, Josh 11:23 expresses the idea that Joshua conquered the 'whole' (כל) land, and the same idea occurs in Josh 21:43–45. It cannot be excluded, however, that 11:16–23* preserves traces of an older ending that was later heavily reworked.

Joshua 18:1

> The whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them.

This verse is considered to be a conclusion by scholars who believe that the Priestly document or narrative constituted a conquest account and ended somewhere in Joshua. The proponents of this idea argue that the verb כבשׁ ('to subdue') also appears in P-text Gen 1:28, so that we have here an inclusio signifying that God's original order has now been fulfilled.[15] However, this view does not hold. First, the command in Gen 1:28 is addressed to humanity and defines its role in creation, whereas Josh 18:1 is about Israel and its land. Second, Genesis 1 depicts an ideal creation, not the world in which humanity lives. Humanity's current world is established after the Flood, where the order to subdue is no longer part of the divine order when it is newly given to Noah (Gen 9:1–5). Therefore Josh 18:1 should be considered neither the Priestly ending of Joshua nor the conclusion of the P-document.[16] More likely, this

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onomistic language (כאשר צוה משה חרם). This mixture of Priestly and Deuteronomistic language is typical of late redactions and may belong to a "hexateuchal redaction" of Joshua.

13. The function of Josh 14:5b is difficult to elucidate (see Nelson, *Joshua*, 155–56). It is probably later than 11:23.

14. With other subjects in Judg 18:7, 27 (עם) and 2 Kgs 11:20 (עיר). Its main occurrences are in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Chronicles.

Author: Please spell out *PrWCJewST*.
15. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 275–92 (esp. p. 290); E. Axel Knauf, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Thomas Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 101–18 (esp. pp. 114–15).

16. A. Graeme Auld, "Creation and Land: Sources and Exegesis," *PrWCJewST* 8A (1982) 7–13. For the current debate on the end of P and the possibility that it ended somewhere in Leviticus, see Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (FAT 2/25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 20–68.

verse belongs to late Priestly additions to the Deuteronomistic History.[17] Additions of this sort reach as far as the books of Kings.[18] Josh 18:1 takes up the post-Priestly text of Num 32:22–29.[19] It prepares for 2 Sam 8:11, where the root כבש reappears in the statement that all nations were subdued by David.

Joshua 21:43–45

Josh 21:43–45 clearly sounds like a conclusion; the verses emphasize that everything that Yhwh had promised has now been fulfilled (כל is used six times). Especially important is the idea that Yhwh has given the whole land to Israel and that all the former inhabitants and enemies are defeated according to the divine promise. This view contradicts Joshua's assertion in chap. 23 that there are still people remaining in the land with which Israel should not interact. Both Josh 21:43–45 and Joshua 23 display Deuteronomistic language. Blum has argued that Josh 21:43–45 should be considered the conclusion of the first Deuteronomistic redaction of the scroll followed by the death of its protagonist, whereas Joshua 23 should be attributed to a Deuteronomistic *Fortschreibung* (DtrG²).[20] This theory would give support to Lohfink's assumption of an originally independent "DtrL," consisting only of Moses' speech in Deuteronomy and the conquest accounts in Joshua 1–12* followed by a conclusion.[21] Josh 21:43–45 looks back to Deuteronomy and Joshua 1–12*, to be sure, but does not prepare the reader for the subsequent periods.[22] The case is different in Joshua 23, where Joshua foresees what will happen if addressees disobey the divine commandments. Since Joshua 23 also seems to adopt a

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17. As Richard Nelson rightly points out, the emphasis on Shiloh is not specifically a Priestly feature. In the Dtr History, "Shiloh was viewed as the legitimate forerunner to Jerusalem" (*Joshua*, 209).

18. Reinhard Achenbach, "Der Pentateuch, seine theokratischen Bearbeitungen und Josua–2 Könige," in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque* (BETL 203; Leuven: Peeters, 2007) 225–53.

19. Volkmar Fritz, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT 1/7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1994) 179–80.

20. Erhard Blum, "Der kompositionelle Knoten am Übergang von Josua zu Richter: Ein Entflechtungsvorschlag," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature* (BETL 133; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 181–212.

21. Norbert Lohfink, "Kerygmata des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift H. W. Wolff* (ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 87–100. DtrL stands for *deuteronomistische Landnahmeerzählung* ('the Deuteronomistic conquest narration'). Eckart Otto has picked up on the idea but locates DtrL, contrary to Lohfink, in the exilic period: Eckhart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmen* (FAT 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 240–46.

22. For details, see my *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO 99; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 358–63.

different perspective with respect to the "other people," one could reasonably postulate that a later Deuteronomist added this chapter. On the other hand, contrary to most commentators, one should take into account the possibility of a diachronic differentiation in Joshua 23. If such a differentiation applies, as I will argue in the following section, then Josh 21:43–45 and the first version of Joshua 23 could well belong to the same level.

There are an impressive number of parallels between 21:43–45 and certain parts of Joshua 23:

Joshua 21		*Joshua 23*	
ויתן יהוה לישראל כל הארץ	v. 43	הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לכם	v. 16
		הארץ הטובה הזאת אשר נתן יהוה אלהיכם	v. 15
וינח יהוה להם מסביב	v. 44	הניח יהוה לישראל מכל איביהם מסביב	v. 1
לא עמד איש בפניהם מכל איביהם		לא עמד איש בפניכם	v. 9
לא נפל דבר מכל הדבר הטוב אשר דבר יהוה אל בית ישראל הכל בא	v. 45	לא נפל דבר אחד מכל הדברים הטובים אשר דבר יהוה אלהיכם עליכם הכל באו	v. 14

These parallels allow for two conclusions: either a later author in chap. 23 picked up expressions from 21:43–45, or both texts are from the same hand.[23] In a Deuteronomistic edition of Joshua, these texts framed the return of the Transjordanian tribes in 22:1–6*, a Deuteronomistic topic that brings Josh 1:12–15 and 4:12 to an end.[24] The Deuteronomists had to reconcile the historical reality of Israelite settlements in Transjordan with the idea that the Jordan

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23. A third possibility would be to consider 21:43–45 to be later and inspired by Joshua 23 (so Fritz, *Josua*, 217). This is less plausible, since Joshua 23 in its present form does not insist on the total fulfillment of the promises.

24. Mark A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989) 75. The story about the altar of the Transjordanian tribes in 22:7–34 is an addition from the Persian period that tries to reconcile the Deuteronomistic ideology of centralization with the reality of cultic sites outside Jerusalem. For a late date of this text, see Cornelis G. den Hertog, "Der geschichtliche Hintergrund der Erzählung Jos 22," in *Saxa loquentur: Studien zur Archäologie Palästinas/Israels—Festschrift für Volkmar Fritz zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Cornelis G. den Hertog et al.; AOAT 302; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003) 61–83; Rainer Albertz, "The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 287–303 (esp. pp. 298–99).

River is the border of the promised land. Therefore, it seems reasonable to attribute 21:43–45 and the original version of Joshua 23 to the same author.

Joshua 23 and 24

There is no doubt that both of the speeches in Joshua 23 and 24 were conceived as a conclusion, either to the book of Joshua or to an even larger narrative unit. It is also clear that these two testaments of Joshua cannot be the work of one author (otherwise one should definitely give up the historical investigation of the Hebrew Bible!). The juxtaposition of these texts has always puzzled the commentators. Martin Noth changed his mind several times about the date and origin of these speeches. The proponents of Cross's model attributed Joshua 23 mostly to the Josianic Dtr[1] and Joshua 24 to the exilic Dtr[2], whereas Smend and the Göttingen school thought that Joshua 24 belonged to the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrG) and Joshua 23 to the subsequent Nomist redaction (DtrN).[25] Neither solution is satisfactory, for the following reasons. First, contrary to Joshua 23, chap. 24 displays a vocabulary and style that cannot be labeled "Deuteronomistic"; rather, it is closely related to the Priestly and non-Priestly texts in Genesis–Numbers, mixing this "Tetrateuch style" with some Deuteronomistic expressions.[26] Second, as shrewdly observed by Nelson, "chapter 23 works well as a summary of the book of Joshua, limiting its review to the occupation of the land. Chapter 24, in contrast, seems designed as a conclusion for the Hexateuch as a whole."[27]

In the next section, I would like to take up Nelson's insight and try to demonstrate that Joshua 23 contains two Deuteronomistic conclusions to the book, whereas Joshua 24 is a later addition and reflects the attempt to add the book of Joshua to the nascent Torah.[28]

To summarize this investigation of the various "concluding formulas" scattered throughout Joshua 10–21: it has been suggested that Josh 18:1 does not constitute the conclusion of "P" but is a late "Priestly" insertion in the book. Moreover, Josh 21:43–45 is not an independent conclusion but was created at the same time as Joshua 23*. Additionally, Josh 11:23 in its present form is not earlier than 21:43–45 and seems to prepare the audience for the time of the Judges. Furthermore, 11:16–23 may be the result of the redactional reworking of an older conclusion, such as Josh 10:42. The latter verse sounds like a conclusion to the conquest story in Joshua 1–10*, and one could therefore argue

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25. For more details and bibliographical references, see Nelson, *Joshua*, 265 n. 4; and Thomas Römer, "Das doppelte Ende des Josuabuches: Einige Anmerkungen zur aktuellen Diskussion um 'deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk' und 'Hexateuch,'" *ZAW* 118 (2006) 523–48 (esp. pp. 525–27).

26. This observation is common; see, for instance, Nelson, *Joshua*, 266.

27. Ibid., 268.

28. This discussion builds on my article "Das doppelte Ende."

that this verse represents the original ending of a smaller scroll containing only the conquest narrative.[29] However, such a theory tends to outstrip the available evidence.

Joshua 23 and the Double Deuteronomistic Conclusion to the Conquest of the Land

The language of Joshua 23 is clearly Deuteronomistic. However, the text shows several signs of having been reworked from an older version. After the introduction (v. 1), which picks up the ideas of 21:43–45 (Yhwh has given Israel rest from all its enemies), Joshua, who has become old, gathers the people (v. 2)[30] and begins his testament with a summation (v. 3) that concludes: יהוה אלהיכם הוא הנלחם לכם. This statement, which repeats 10:42, refers to Joshua 1–12 but also to the beginning of Deuteronomy (Deut 1:30, 3:24). The new introduction in v. 4 (ראו; compare ראיתם in v. 3) leads to the affirmation that there remain nations that Yhwh may chase later, if Israel respects the Law of Moses and does not enter into any cultic or political relations with them (vv. 4–8). These verses, which allude to future events, are in tension with vv. 3 and 9, which refer to the past and express the idea that the conquest has successfully come to an end. Therefore, 23:4–8 should be considered a later nomistic insertion into Joshua's final discourse.[31] Indeed, the verbal form ויורש in v. 9 fits better after v. 3 than after v. 8. Verse 9 brings the retrospective to an end and is followed by the exhortation in v. 11. Verse 10 interrupts this sequel and is probably an addition.[32] The admonition in 23:10 refers very clearly to Deut 6:5 (אהב את יהוה אלהיכם; נפש); this allusion continues in v. 14 with the expression בכל לבבכם וכל נפשכם.[33] Verses 12–13 (14a?) interrupt these allusions and take up the themes and terminology of 23:4–8. They belong, therefore, to the same

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29. Or, alternatively, a Moses-Joshua story, as argued by Knauf (see n. 7, above).

30. The long list of addressees that parallels 24:1 may be due to later reworking and harmonization.

31. The following observations foster this assumption. As Sicre pointed out, Josh 23:4 is the only text in which the nations (and not the land) are the object of the verb נחל (José Luis Sicre, *Josué* [Estella: Verbo divino, 2002] 466). Verse 6 parallels Josh 1:7–8, a unit generally considered a later insertion (see already Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* [JSOTSup 15; 2nd ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991] 62). The expression כאשר עשה at the end of v. 9 may be understood as resumption of אשר עשה in v. 3, a classical device of insertions (see also the doublet עד יום הזה in v. 8 and v. 9).

32. Josh 23:10 is related to 23:4–5 by the idea of a future war against the nations (compare also כאשר דבר in v. 5 and v. 10). It picks up on v. 9 (לא עמד איש) as well as v. 3 (יהוה אלהיכם הוא הנלחם) and transforms these statements into promises for the future.

33. According to Becker ("Kontextvernetzungen," 160), v. 14a is not part of the original text. This may well be the case since Joshua already mentioned in v. 2 that his end is about to come. Verse 14a could have been inserted as part of the resumption, together with vv. 12–13, that interrupts the exhortation in vv. 11 and 14b.

"nomistic" revision of the original speech.[34] The emphasis on the fact that all divine words have been fulfilled (v. 14b), which is referring again to 21:43–45, provides the transition to the announcement in vv. 15–16a of deportation in the event of Israel's disobedience to Yhwh's ברית (an allusion to Deuteronomy). Joshua's speech probably ended in v. 16a, since 16b is lacking in the LXX and is apparently a late gloss prompted by v. 15.[35]

The result of this diachronic investigation can be shown in the following presentation of the text of Joshua 23, in which the earlier stage (Dtr[1]) is presented unindented below, and the later additions (Dtr[2]) are indented:

Query: Where is the right quotation mark to match the left q.m. in v. 2? Should there be one (considering the mixture of 2 texts)?

1 A long time afterward, when Yhwh had given rest to Israel from all its enemies all around and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, 2 Joshua summoned all Israel, [their elders and heads, their judges and officers,] and said to them, "I am now old and well advanced in years, 3 and you have seen all that Yhwh your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is Yhwh your God who has fought for you.

> 4 Look, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes the nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. 5 Yhwh your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as Yhwh your God promised you. 6 Therefore, be very steadfast to observe and do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right nor to the left, 7 so that you may not be mixed with these nations left here among you or invoke the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow yourselves down to them, 8 but hold fast to Yhwh your God, as you have done to this day.

9 Yhwh has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, no one has been able to withstand you to this day.

> 10 One of you will put to flight a thousand, since it is Yhwh your God who fights for you, as he promised you.

11 Be very careful about yourselves, therefore, to love Yhwh your God.

> 12 For if you turn back and join the rest of these nations left here among you and intermarry with them, so that you marry their women and they yours, 13 know assuredly that Yhwh your God will not continue to drive out these nations before

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34. Further arguments for a late date of these verses can be added easily. The root חתן in the Hithpael (v. 12) appears only in Gen 34:9, Deut 7:3, and Ezra 9:15, texts that reflect the problem of mixed marriages in the Persian period. The description of the danger that the nations present in v. 13 has its closest parallel in Num 33:55, which is usually recognized as a very late text; see Gary N. Knoppers, "Establishing the Rule of Law? The Composition Num 33,50–56 and the Relationship among the Pentateuch, the Hexateuch and the Deuteronomistic History," in *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und Deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 206; ed. Eckart Otto and Reinhard Achenbach; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004) 135–52.

35. Nelson (*Joshua*, 255) prefers the MT and posits haplography from להם to לכם. Even if this is the case, there is no change in the meaning of vv. 15–16.

you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land that Yhwh your God has given you. 14 "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth,

and know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things that Yhwh your God promised concerning you; they all were fulfilled for you. Not one word of them has failed. 15 But just as every good thing that Yhwh your God promised concerning you has been fulfilled for you, so Yhwh will bring upon you all the bad things until he has destroyed you from this good land that Yhwh your God has given you 16 if you transgress the covenant of Yhwh your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them.

> The anger of the Lord will break out against you, and you will perish quickly from the good land that he has given to you."

The original version of the speech comprises approximately vv. 1–3*, 9, 11, 14b–16a. Here the conquest is presented as totally fulfilled, in accordance with Josh 21:43–45. It is certainly not by chance that the parallels between these two texts are limited to the first edition of Joshua 23 (see the synopsis above). This first edition also conforms to the literary form of an *Abschiedsrede* ('farewell speech') as established by von Nordheim.[36] It parallels *en miniature* Moses' speech in Deuteronomy and presents Joshua as his successor, at the same time underscoring the unity of the scrolls of Deuteronomy and Joshua. Through insistence on the total fulfillment of Yhwh's words, the time of Moses and Joshua appears to be a "golden age." At the conclusion of the speech, however, Joshua announces the deportation from the land (as does Moses in Deuteronomy 28).[37] Josh 23:15–16 prepares for 2 Kings 24–25 and apparently presupposes the Babylonian Exile. However, the idea that all enemies have disappeared from the land contradicts the assertion of nations remaining in the land in Judg 2:20–21. One may therefore wonder whether the older version of Joshua 23 was followed by the report of Joshua's death (in Josh 24:29–30* or Judg 2:8–9)[38] and then immediately by the beginning of the book of Samuel (Joshua is buried in the mountains of Ephraim, and this is where the book of Samuel begins). Several voices have recently argued for the possibility that

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36. Eckard von Nordheim, *Die Lehre der Alten, II: Das Testament als Literaturgattung im Alten Testament und im Alten Vorderen Orient* (Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums 18; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 149. He establishes the following elements, which are more appropriate as an original of Joshua's speech than the present text: gathering of the audience (vv. 1–2); statement of old age (v. 2); historical retrospective (vv. 3 and 9); exhortation (vv. 11 and 14b); prophetic announcement of future events (vv. 15–16a). These elements are basically the same as the verses belonging to my reconstructed original text.

37. The root שמד in Josh 23:15 appears frequently in Deuteronomy 28.

38. As Blum ("Knoten," 148 n. 10) rightly observes, it is difficult to decide which of the two accounts is the "original." Both may have undergone redactional harmonizing activity.

Judges was integrated between Joshua and Samuel only at quite a late stage.[39] This would explain the somewhat different (and scarce) Deuteronomistic style in this book.[40]

The reworking of Joshua 23 by a late Deuteronomist with its emphasis on the remaining nations should then be understood as a means to integrate the time of the Judges into the Deuteronomistic History. The warning against any contact with the "other nations" in the reworked testament of Joshua points to a date of composition in the Persian period.

Joshua 23 confirms the idea of a multi-layered Deuteronomistic History: the first edition of this text was apparently created in the Neo-Babylonian period, the second edition in Persian times. Both editions were probably preceded by a conquest account in the Neo-Assyrian period, a version now embedded in chaps. 1–10*, which perhaps ended at 10:42 or 11:16–23* originally.

The two stages of Joshua 23 are conceived in the context of the Deuteronomistic History, in which the book of Deuteronomy was closely linked to the Former Prophets. The case is different for Joshua 24, a text that manifests an attempt to interrupt the transition between Joshua and Judges and to create a Hexateuch of a sort.

Joshua 24 and the End of the Deuteronomistic History

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The second farewell speech of Joshua (24:1–15), which is followed by the commitment of the people with the aid of Joshua in Shechem (24:16–28),[41] is the work of a post-Deuteronomistic author or redactor.[42] There is no need for or evidence of reconstructing an older version of the account, which would not

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39. See, for instance, **Konrad Schmid**, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999) 220 (ET: *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* [Siphrut 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010]); Knauf, *Josua*, 22.

40. The scroll may be quite old, gathering folklore tales from the north; see my remarks in "Response to Richard Nelson, Steven McKenzie, Eckart Otto, and Yairah Amit," in "In Conversation with Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005)"; ed. Ray F. Person Jr., *Journal of Hebrew Studies* 9/19 (2009) 36–49 (esp. pp. 41–43), http://www.jhsonline.org.

41. Interestingly, the OG locates this speech in Shiloh in order to harmonize with 18:1 (Nelson, *Joshua*, 264) and to connect the account with the beginning of Samuel. Or should one read this variant as a later, anti-Samaritan correction, as argued by Moshé Anbar, *Josué et l'alliance de Sichem (Josué 24:1–28)* (Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 25; Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1992) 30?

42. As demonstrated already by **John Van Seters**, "Joshua 24 and the Problem of Tradition in the Old Testament," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (ed. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer; JSOTSup

have contained this speech or would have contained only parts of it and which would have predated Joshua 23.[43] Except for some glosses, there are very few indications of later insertions.[44] The most noteworthy insertion appears in 24:19–21. Joshua's negative statement that the addressees are unable to serve Yhwh contradicts his exhortation of the people to serve Yhwh and the solemn covenant ceremony, which manifests the people's engagement. Verses 19–21 also interrupt the sequel of the people's commitment to worship Yhwh (v. 18) and Joshua's confirmation of the addressees' choice (22a).[45] The people's answer in v. 22b ("They said: 'We are witnesses'") is lacking in the LXX and interrupts Joshua's speech. It is therefore also a later expansion.[46]

The idea expressed in Joshua 24 that Israel must choose between Yhwh and other gods is not Deuteronomistic at all. In Deuteronomy, Yhwh alone chooses Israel for himself (see Deuteronomy 7), and the only "choice" Israel has is to respect or to transgress the treaty that Yhwh has established with his people. The theme of Joshua 24 may relate to a situation in the Persian Empire

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31; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 139–58; Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984) 39–43; Anbar, *Josué*.

43. In older scholarly works, this reconstruction was triggered by the idea that Joshua 24 reflects an old, premonarchical ceremony. Today there is a trend in German-speaking biblical research to return (in a different way) to an idea that Noth had which was to date the first account of Joshua 24 before chap. 23 (both texts being considered no earlier than the sixth century b.c.e., however); see the recent works of Becker, "Kontextvernetzung," 144–51. Another view is that of Erik Aurelius, "Zur Entstehung von Josua 23–24," in *Houses Full of All Good Things: Essays in Memory of Timo Veijola* (ed. Juha Pakkala and Martti Nissinen; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 95; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 95–114 (esp. pp. 99–102), who claims that Josh 23:1–3* was originally followed by Josh 24:14–16*, 18b, and 22—a theory that raises more problems than its resolves. Knauf (*Josua*, 22–23, 189) dates the whole of chap. 24 earlier than Joshua 23. Nevertheless, he observes rightly that Joshua 23 is followed by Judg 2:6 and following, whereas Joshua 24 concludes the whole Hexateuch and is not interested in fostering a transition to the time of the Judges.

44. Especially "Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor" in v. 2 (this expression tends to explain the identity of the fathers "beyond the River"); "I sent Moses and Aaron" in v. 5 (lacking in the LXX and inspired by 1 Sam 12:8 or Ps 105:26); the list of the people in v. 11, which tries to explain the identity of the "masters of Jericho," "from the house of bondage and has done those mighty things in our sight" in v. 17 (missing in the LXX); for details, see my "Das doppelte Ende," 536–39.

45. Christoph Levin, *Die Verheissung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt* (FRLANT 137; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985) 114; Aurelius, "Entstehung," 100. Verses 19–21 were added by the technique of resumption, and organized in a chiasm according to "Seidel's law": v. 18b: נעבד את יהוה; v. 21b: את יהוה נעבד.

46. Nelson, *Joshua*, 265. If this is taken into account, both Levin's (*Verheißung*, 114–15) and Aurelius's ("Entstehung," 99–102) reconstructions of the Urtext in 24:14a, 15*, 16, 18b, 22 and 28 collapse.

or, more specifically, to the Jewish Diaspora, when the people were attracted to religious syncretism.[47]

Frequently it is observed that Joshua is depicted in chap. 24 as a second Moses: like Moses, he concludes a covenant; like Moses, he enacts laws and decrees (v. 25); like Moses, he raises a stone; and like Moses, he writes a scroll (v. 26: "and Joshua wrote all the words in the scroll of the law of God"). The rare expression ספר תורת אלהים (see also Neh 8:18) was possibly coined as an alternative to the term תורת משה, which in the Persian period became a name for the nascent Pentateuch. The aim of Joshua 24 was apparently to attach the book of Joshua to the Torah and to create a Hexateuch, as several scholars have recently argued.[48] There is no doubt that Joshua 24 (together with Judg 1:1–2:5)[49] interrupts the Deuteronomistic sequence of Joshua 23 (in its present form) to Judg 2:6–19* and tries to connect Joshua closely to the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. This is the case for all parts of Joshua 24. Joshua's speech, which ends up in a dialogue with the people, contains a recapitulation of events that covers the time from the patriarchs (or even before) to the conquest and the distribution of the land (24:2–13). The fact that Moses is not mentioned in the original form of this summary may be explained by the emphasis that the author wants to put on Joshua.[50] The same holds true for the absence of the law-giving on Sinai, since at the end of Joshua 24, Joshua promulgates the law. Joshua's exhortation to put aside the gods of the ancestors (vv. 14–15) refers back to the late text of Gen 35:1–7, which is also located in Shechem. In both cases, Shechem appears to be the place where one turns away from the foreign gods. The answer of the people (Josh 24:16–24) ends with the statement "we will serve Yhwh and listen to his voice." This affirmation alludes to Exod 19:5 and 8 and parallels Joshua's covenant (24:25) with the revelation on Mount Sinai. The statement that Joshua established a statute and ordinance for the people (חק ומשפט) parallels Joshua with Ezra (see Ezra 7:10) and offers an alternative to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.[51]

Finally Joshua's death at the age of 110 years (24:29) is evocative of Joseph's death at the end of Genesis (see also the burying of Joseph's bones in Josh 24:32, which refers back to Gen 50:25–26 and Exod 13:17).

Joshua 24 reflects a debate in the Persian period about the question whether the Torah should end with the book of Deuteronomy or if it should also com-

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47. The case of Elephantine is well known, where Yhwh was worshiped together with other divinities in an Egyptian-like triad. Josh 24:2 and 14 may well allude to a Diaspora context.

48. For details, see **Thomas Römer and Marc Z. Brettler, "Deuteronomy 34 and the Case for a Persian Hexateuch,"** *JBL* 119 (2000) 401–19.

49. Judges 1 (which gives an alternative conquest account) was perhaps composed at the same time. Judg 2:1–5 may be somewhat older and the work of late Deuteronomistic redactors.

50. Josh 24:5a is a gloss. Interestingly, the time in the wilderness is depicted without mentioning the people's rebellions (v. 7), in contradistinction to the book of Numbers.

51. Schmid, *Erzväter*, 228.

prise the book of Joshua.[52] Apparently a Deuteronomistic-Priestly minority co-
alesced to promote the publication of a Hexateuch and composed, among other
texts, Joshua 24. The very different ending to this chapter in the LXX, which
apparently was also known at Qumran, may reflect (even if the text was later
reworked) the original ending of the Hexateuch, because it emphasizes the role
of Joshua.[53] The location of this chapter in Shechem has often been explained
in reference to 1 Kings 12, the place of the division of "Israel" into two king-
doms.[54] The pan-Israelite perspective of Joshua 24 (v. 1 mentions "all tribes")
could then be understood as a counterprogram to the failed kingship: Israel's
unity does not depend on political institutions such as the monarchy but on a
Torah that integrates the Samaritan Yahwists.[55] The alternative "Pentateuch" or
"Hexateuch" nevertheless reflects different perspectives on Israel's identity. In
a Hexateuch, the Torah is linked with the conquest of the land, whereas in the
Pentateuch, Moses dies without entering the land. The Pentateuch better fits a
Diaspora perspective. It states explicitly that the land is part of the promise but
not as necessary as to listen and live according to the Torah. For this reason, the
"final cut" was made after the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua became a sort
of "deuterocanonical" book (see Josh 1:8). When the idea of a Hexateuch was
given up, vv. 19–21 and 22b were inserted into Joshua 24 so that the audience
is also prepared in the last chapter of Joshua for the time of the Judges, in which
Joshua's statement that the people are unable to serve Yhwh becomes reality.[56]

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52. The formation of the Torah should be understood as resulting from a compromise or
a consensus between Priestly and lay ("Deuteronomistic") groups. For an overview about the
current understanding of the promulgation of the Torah, see Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard
M. Levinson, eds., *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulga-
tion and Acceptance* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

53. On the LXX version, see Alexander Rofé, "The End of the Book of Joshua according
to the Septuagint," *Hen* 4 (1982) 17–36. For the Qumran data, see Birgit Lucassen, "Josua,
Richter und CD," *RevQ* 18 (1998) 373–96. See 24:31 LXX, where Joshua is buried together
with "the stone swords by which he circumcised the sons of Israel in Galgal, when he (!)
led them out from Egypt" (quoted from the English translation of A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua:
Jesus Son of Naué in Codex Vaticanus* [Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2005]
83). For the complex history of the transmission of the LXX conclusion of Joshua, see Mar-
tin Rösel, "The Septuagint-Version of the Book of Joshua," *SJOT* 16 (2002) 5–23.

54. Levin, *Verheißung*, 116–18; Anbar, *Josué*, 117. On the intertextual level, Shechem
also refers to the beginning of the Abraham story, since Abraham's first settlement in the land
takes place at Shechem (Gen 12:6).

55. Christophe Nihan, "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim
in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. G. N. Knoppers and B. M.
Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 187–223 (esp. pp. 197–99).

56. The closest text to Josh 24:19–21 in Judges is 6:7–10, also a very late insertion into
the book and lacking in a Qumran manuscript: Eugene Ulrich, "Deuteronomistically Inspired
Scribal Insertions into the Developing Biblical Texts: 4QJudgª and 4QJerª," in *Houses Full
of All Good Things* (ed. J. Pakkala and M. Nissinen; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical School /
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 489–506 (esp. pp. 490–94).

The promulgation of the Pentateuch was the end of the Deuteronomistic History, an end to which the addition of Joshua 24 with its attempt to create an (ephemeral) Hexateuch had also contributed.[57]

Concluding Remarks

The various "concluding formulas" in the book of Joshua foster the idea of a multi-layered Deuteronomistic History that was followed by a post-Deuteronomistic redaction. The oldest conquest account, from the seventh century B.C.E., may have comprised only the narratives in Joshua 1–11*. The original conclusion of this account is difficult to ascertain. It may have sounded like 10:42 or 11:16–23 in a shorter form. The conclusion of the "exilic" edition from the sixth century was 21:43–45 and 23:1–3*, 9, 11, 14b–16a. This conclusion insists on the total fulfillment of the divine promises and emphasizes that there are no other nations remaining in the land. This "absolute" conclusion was perhaps the ending of a scroll comprising the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua. Since the statement of the expulsion of all nations stands in tension with some Deuteronomistic texts in the book of Judges, it is possible that the latter was inserted at a later date into an older sequence running from the end of Joshua to the beginning of Samuel. The revision of Joshua 23, which dates to the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century B.C.E., introduces the idea that Yhwh did not expel all of Israel's enemies, preparing the transition to the book of Judges (Joshua 23 and Judg 2:6 and following). In the middle of the Persian period, when the Judean (and Samaritan?) intelligentsia decided to promulgate a Torah, Joshua 24 was composed as new conclusion to Joshua in order to attach this book to the Torah and to create a Hexateuch. Joshua 24 together with Judg 1:1–2:5 interrupted the Deuteronomistic transition, underlining the difference between "Joshua" and "Judges" (the latter is now preceded by an alternative conquest account). After the decision not to integrate the book of Joshua into the Torah, Josh 24:19–21 was added to reinforce anew the link with the time of the Judges.

I am delighted to offer these reflections to my esteemed colleague Richard Nelson, even though he might disagree with my emphasis on the Babylonian and Persian and Persian periods, an emphasis that, I believe, enables us to understand the formation and evolution of the Deuteronomistic History—as well as its end.

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57. When Deuteronomy was cut off from the following books, several chapters where added, especially Deuteronomy 27, in order to facilitate the acceptance of the Torah by the Samaritans (Nadav Naᵓaman, "The Law of the Altar in Deuteronomy and the Cultic Site near Shechem," in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible—Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* [ed. Steven L Mckenzie and Thomas Römer; BZAW 294; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000] 141–61) and Deuteronomy 32, which offers a poetic summary of the Deuteronomistic History (from the entrance to the land to the exile).