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The Composition of the Elijah–Elisha Stories and the Deuteronomistic History*

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Abstract

This article argues that the development of the text within 1 Kgs 16.29–2 Kgs 10.36 can be described in four major stages. First, the Deuteronomistic History—which was composed shortly after 562 BCE—contained only three of the Elijah–Elisha stories: the narratives about Naboth’s vineyard, Ahaziah’s death and the story of Jehu’s coup. By means of the epoch from Ahab to Jehu the Deuteronomists demonstrated the reliability of the word of God throughout history. Further, they embodied the theme ‘Baal worship—cultic reform’ in the history of the Northern Kingdom. Second, shortly after the narratives about the Omride wars were added and a new theme introduced: the attitude of the king towards the word of the prophets determines the fate of Israel. Third, in early post-exilic times, 1 Kings 17–18 was added to demonstrate the possibility of a new life in community with God after the time of judgment. Fourth, in the fifth century, 1 Kgs 19.1–18 and the remaining Elisha stories were inserted to give prophecy a legitimate foundation in the history of Israel.

1. Introduction

The stories of Elijah and Elisha are still a matter of controversy; in particular, no decision has been reached concerning the questions of development,

* This article is a summary of my doctoral dissertation, published as *Jehu, Elia und Elisa. Die Erzählung von der Jehu-Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa-Erzählungen* (BWANT, 152; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2001), and an extended version of a paper that was presented under the same title at the SBL International Meeting in Rome in July 2001.

composition and editing of the stories in regard to the Deuteronomistic History. The common opinion that pre-Deuteronomistic narrative cycles about Elijah and Elisha were integrated by a Deuteronomistic editor into his historical composition¹ leads into troubles: first, proceeding on this assumption, the Deuteronomistic outline of history contains several severe internal contradictions² which are not reconcileable with the generally ascertainable Deuteronomistic attempt to present a coherent historical account of Israel.³ Second, the thesis presupposes in almost every case a pre-exilic dating of the Elijah tradition which more and more turns out to be problematic.⁴ Therefore, a growing number of scholars come to the

1. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 3rd edn, 1967), pp. 79-85; J.A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC, 17; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951), pp. 38-41; J. Gray, *I and II Kings* (London: SCM Press, 3rd edn, 1977), pp. 29-35; G. Fohrer, *Elia* (ATANT, 53; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 2nd edn, 1968), pp. 33-54; O.H. Steck, *Überlieferung und Zeitgeschichte in den Elia-Erzählungen* (WMANT, 26; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968); W. Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte* (FRLANT, 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 48-51, 120-27; G. Hentschel, *Die Eliaerzählungen* (Erfurter theologische Studien, 33; Leipzig: St Benno, 1977), pp. 228-37; A.D.H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 106-32; A.F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings* (CBQMS, 17; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1986); N. Na'aman, 'Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides', *Bib* 78 (1997), pp. 153-73.

2. See below, pp. 494-97.

3. Against Na'aman, 'Prophetic Stories'. Of course it is possible that the Deuteronomists may have tolerated *minor* 'internal differences' between their sources (Na'aman, 'Prophetic Stories', p. 172) or that they made an 'exception' or a 'mistake' (p. 168). But especially in the case of 1 Kgs 22.1-38 and 22.40 these assumptions are quite improbable. Because of the oracle of Elijah against Ahab in 1 Kgs 21.17-20b α , the death of Ahab became a matter of great importance for the Deuteronomists (compare the Deuteronomistic additions in 21.20b β -26) who lay particular emphasis on the pattern of prophecy and fulfilment. Therefore, Deuteronomistic inaccuracies concerning 1 Kgs 22.40 should be excluded. Further, if there had been an account concerning Ahab's violent death available to the Deuteronomists, their explanation of the unfulfilled prophecy against Ahab (1 Kgs 21.19) in 1 Kgs 21.27-29—which matches well with 22.40—would not be necessary. For details see Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 124-29, 151-52.

4. Compare, e.g., H.-Chr. Schmitt, *Elisa* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Gerd Mohn, 1972), pp. 119-26; E. Würthwein, 'Zur Opferprobe Elias IReg 18,21-39', in V. Fritz, K.-F. Pohlmann and H.-Chr. Schmitt (eds.), *Prophet und Prophetenbuch* (BZAW, 185; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989), pp. 277-84; E. Blum, 'Der Prophet und das

position that at least parts of the prophetic narratives were added to the Deuteronomistic History by a later editor.⁵ But neither a consensus concerning the contour of the original Deuteronomistic History⁶ nor a convincing model for the process of the integration of the Elijah–Elisha stories has been achieved so far. The immediate spectrum of research reaches from the approach of S.L. McKenzie,⁷ who states that the narratives 1 Kgs 17–19; 20; 22.1–38; 2 Kgs 1.2–17aα; 2; 3.4–8.15; 13.14–21 (+ 13.22–25) were inserted into the Deuteronomistic History as one group of prophetic, post-Deuteronomistic additions, to the complex solution of H.-J. Stipp,⁸ which assumes multiple stages of growth of the original Deuteronomistic History but which does not lead to insights about the respective editorial intentions.⁹ The purpose of the present investigation is to examine the problem from a new perspective and to present a differentiated model describing the development of the Deuteronomistic History within 1 Kgs 16.29–2 Kgs 10.36.

Verderben Israels', *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 277–92; Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 151–96, 211–19, 252–53.

5. G. Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige, seine Quellen und seine Redaktion', in H. Schmidt (ed.), *Εὐχαριστήριον* (FRLANT, 36.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), pp. 184–86; J.M. Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars', *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 441–54; Schmitt, *Elisa*; H. Seebass, 'Elisa', *TRE* 9 (1982), pp. 506–509; J. Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 305–306; E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige. 1 Kön 17–2 Kön 25* (ATD, 11.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), pp. 269–72, 366–68; H.-J. Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner* (ATSAT, 24; St Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1987); S.L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings* (VTSup, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 90–98; M. Beck, *Elia und die Monolatrie* (BZAW, 281; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 157–58.

6. Especially the incorporation of 1 Kgs 17–19 and 2 Kgs 1 remains disputed. Compare for example the solution for the outline of the Deuteronomistic History of Würthwein (*Die Bücher der Könige. 1 Kön 17–2 Kön 25*, pp. 269–72, 366–68), who includes 1 Kgs 17–19 but not 2 Kgs 1, with that of Stipp (*Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463–64), who counts 2 Kgs 1 but not 1 Kgs 17–19 as belonging to the Deuteronomistic History, and with the approach of McKenzie (*The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 90–98), who postulates that the Deuteronomistic History contained only 1 Kgs 21 and 2 Kgs 9–10, but not 1 Kgs 17–19 and 2 Kgs 1.

7. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 90–98.

8. Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463–80.

9. For a detailed description of the contemporary research see Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 11–25.

So far, scholars have not agreed upon the basic question of the Deuteronomistic History either,¹⁰ so it will be useful to first give a short sketch of the model of the Deuteronomists which underlies this study.

Investigating the widely accepted Deuteronomistic additions to the story of Jehu's coup and the Deuteronomists' statements about the Israelite Kings Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram and Jehu leads to fundamental insights about the Deuteronomistic conception of history and theology concerning the era from Ahab to Jehu. With that, the criteria for deciding which of the Elijah–Elisha stories belong to the original Deuteronomistic History are given.

Furthermore, an overview of the entire complex of Elijah–Elisha narratives will shed new light on the growth of the Deuteronomistic History.

2. *The Deuteronomistic History*

Although Martin Noth's thesis of the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy–Kings) as a solitary exilic work has been accepted by most scholars, it has respectively developed into modified, divergent directions. The model of R. Smend,¹¹ who postulates manifold editing in exile, and the thesis of F.M. Cross,¹² who supposes a pre-exilic composition and an exilic editing of the Deuteronomistic History, are mutually exclusive. Furthermore, there are approaches which return to the model of M. Noth again and consider the Deuteronomistic History as a largely unique work composed in times of exile. Yet, in contrast to Noth, these approaches do not understand this work as that of a single author but as that of a group of Deuteronomists. Therefore, minor differences within the Deuteronomistic History could be understood to be the result of a discourse between group members.¹³

10. See, e.g., H. Weippert, 'Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk', *Theologische Rundschau* 50 (1985), pp. 213–49; H.D. Preuss, 'Zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk', *Theologische Rundschau* 58 (1993), pp. 229–64, 341–95.

11. R. Smend, 'Das Gesetz und die Völker', in H.W. Wolff (ed.), *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971), pp. 494–509.

12. F.M. Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History', in *idem*, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274–89.

13. H.-D. Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen* (ATANT, 66; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), pp. 15–21; R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vols.; London: SCM Press, 1994), II, pp. 387–88; Van Seters, *In Search of History*, pp. 292–321; B.O. Long, *I Kings with an Introduction to Historical*

In my opinion, there is no evidence for the assumption that the Deuteronomistic History was composed before the last date mentioned in it, the rehabilitation of Jehoiachin (562 BCE).¹⁴ Moreover, the theories of both Smend and Cross render no comprehensive explanation for the development of the Deuteronomistic History that is suitable to replace Noth's model in principle.¹⁵ This is the reason why I refer to Noth's model in my investigation with the modification mentioned above.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to generate a clear picture of the Deuteronomists and to distinguish Deuteronomistic texts from others. Like W. Thiel, I define the Deuteronomists as those editors who compiled the chronological framework and embedded traditional narratives into their work, using a specific language, style and theology.¹⁶ But since the Deuteronomists' intention was to present a coherent historical account of Israel—from Settlement to Exile in order to explain the past and to open a door to the future—I think it is necessary to presuppose a further criterion: the supposed Deuteronomistic approach has to match the criterion of a consistent conception of history. Therefore the texts will be examined by the criteria of language, style, theology and a consistent conception of history. Those texts which do not meet these criteria will be defined as post-Deuteronomistic additions—otherwise the clear model of the Deuteronomists would be incoherent.

3. The Story of Jehu's Coup and the Deuteronomistic Statements on the Israelite Kings

The story of Jehu's coup itself surely derives from the Northern Kingdom, probably from the time of Jeroboam II,¹⁷ although it is well embedded in the Deuteronomistic History. It clearly shows the two main themes of the Deuteronomists for the era from Ahab to Jehu.

Literature (FOTL, 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 11-16; J.G. McConville, 'Narrative and Meaning in the Book of Kings', *Bib* 70 (1989), pp. 31-49.

14. See E. Zenger, 'Die deuteronomistische Interpretation der Rehabilitierung Jojachins', *BZ NF* 12 (1968), pp. 16-30; Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, II, pp. 387-88.

15. Compare Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, pp. 15-21; Long, *I Kings*, pp. 14-16.

16. W. Thiel, 'Deuteronomistische Redaktionsarbeit in den Elia-Erzählungen', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Leuven 1989* (VTSup, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 141-71.

17. Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 110-11.

The first theme is the pattern of prophecy and fulfilment of the word of God. For with the extension of the prophetic speech to Jehu in 2 Kgs 9.7-10a and the insertion of the fulfilment statements in 2 Kgs 9.36; 10.10-11, 17aßb, the Deuteronomists interpret Jehu's actions during his revolution as an execution of the will of God: the extermination of the house of Ahab, which was predicted by Elijah after Ahab killed Naboth (1 Kgs 21.17-29). When they invite their hearer to recognize 'that there shall not fall to the ground a single word of Yahweh which Yahweh has spoken against the house of Ahab, but Yahweh has done what he declared by his servant Elijah' (2 Kgs 10.10) and confirm in their concluding statement about Jehu in 2 Kgs 10.30 that he did everything to the house of Ahab that was in the heart of Yahweh, the whole story becomes a metaphor for the integration of God's word and history. The Deuteronomists testify that the word of Yahweh, spoken by the prophets to answer human doings, is behind historical events.

The second theme is 'Baal worship in the Northern Kingdom', which already had been part of the original story of Jehu's coup.¹⁸ The Deuteronomists used the possibility, which was given with the cultic component of the story, to set apart the era between Ahab and Jehu from the history of the Northern Kingdom as a uniquely evil one. It is striking that the name 'Baal' is not mentioned in the presentation of the history concerning the Northern Kingdom before Ahab nor—except in 2 Kgs 17.7-23—after Jehu. Starting with the announcement of the wedding of Ahab and Jezebel, the Phoenician princess, and—directly connected—of the inauguration of Baal in Israel in 1 Kgs 16.29-33, the Deuteronomists delineate an epoch of Baal worship in Israel. It ends when Jehu wipes out the Baal cult in Samaria during his revolt and the Deuteronomistic conclusion: 'So Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel' (2 Kgs 10.28).¹⁹

Also the Deuteronomistic statements about Ahaziah and Jehoram, the sons of Ahab, show that for this period the primary theme of the Deuteronomists deals with the worship of Baal: they testify that Ahaziah

18. See Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 71-72, 94-95, 104-11.

19. The introductory portrait of Ahab (1 Kgs 16.29-33) is directly connected with the story of Jehu's coup through the theme of cult insertion and cult destruction. Everything that Ahab did to reinforce the Baal cult has a counterpart in Jehu's cultic reform in 2 Kgs 10.25-28: Ahab established Baal in Israel, Jehu uprooted him; Ahab built a temple for Baal in Samaria, Jehu destroyed it; Ahab erected an altar for Baal and an asherah, Jehu ruined several cultic objects. Compare Hoffman, *Reform und Reformen*, pp. 97-101.

was just as bad as his parents by worshipping Baal (1 Kgs 22.52–54) and that Jehoram tried to reduce cultic activities around Baal (2 Kgs 3.2), but, as the story of Jehu's coup shows (2 Kgs 9.22), not efficiently enough.

4. *The Stories of Naboth's Vineyard and Ahaziah's Death as Part of the Deuteronomistic History*

Although the story of Naboth's vineyard is not at all a story about Baal worship, it is well embedded in the Deuteronomistic History. First, together with the story of Jehu's coup, it represents a perfect example of the reliability of the word of God throughout history, for during Jehu's revolt the word of God, which had been spoken by Elijah on the occasion of Naboth's violent death (1 Kgs 21.17–29), was fulfilled.

Furthermore, the Deuteronomistic additions to the story, which are to be found in 1 Kgs 21.20bβ–29,²⁰ are directly connected with the Deuteronomistic portrait painted of Ahab in 1 Kgs 16.29–33: compare the reproach of Elijah against Ahab that he had sold himself 'to do evil in the sight of Yahweh' in 1 Kgs 21.20bβ with the statement that Ahab 'did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh more than any who was before him' in 1 Kgs 16.30. Also the accusation of causing provocation in 1 Kgs 21.22bα has its counterpart in the introductory portrait of Ahab: for Ahab 'did even more to provoke Yahweh the God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him' (1 Kgs 16.33). Moreover, the final reproach in 1 Kgs 21.22bβ that Ahab led Israel into sin sums up the whole list of Ahab's misbehaviour in 1 Kgs 16.29–33.²¹

Now, with their additions to the story of Naboth's vineyard, the Deuteronomists explain that it is Ahab's Baal worship and not his murder of Naboth which sets him apart in a negative sense from the other kings of the Northern Kingdom and that the fall of the house of Ahab is only partially punishment for Ahab's murdering Naboth, but mainly the consequence of his cultic sins.²²

Yet not only the story of Naboth's vineyard can be shown as part of the Deuteronomistic History, the story about Ahaziah's death is well

20. See Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 120–37.

21. The accusation in 1 Kgs 21.22bβ is not aimed at Ahab's murder of Naboth: the statement 'he caused Israel to sin' is used by the Deuteronomists only when referring to cultic sins; compare 1 Kgs 14.16; 15.26, 30, 34; 16.13, 19, 26; 22.53; 2 Kgs 3.3; 10.29, 31; 13.2, 6, 11; 14.24; 15.9, 18, 24, 28; 23.15.

22. This interpretation corresponds with the missing note of the name 'Naboth' by the Deuteronomists in 1 Kgs 21.20bβ–29 and 2 Kgs 9.7–10a, 36; 10.10–11, 17aβb.

embedded in it too.²³ First, it represents the initial stage of the predicted fall of the house of Ahab (1 Kgs 21.20b β -29). Second, it also attests the Deuteronomistic report about the impact that Baal worship had in Israel during the era from Ahab to Jehu, as well as the Deuteronomistic statement about Ahaziah, who lived up to the bad standard of his father and his mother (1 Kgs 22.52-54). Further, the story testifies the role of Elijah as antagonist of the house of Ahab and its Baal worship, which is particularly emphasized by the Deuteronomists.²⁴ Moreover, corresponding to the Deuteronomistic concept of history and theology, the story drastically shows that only the wish to seek after foreign gods leads to disaster.

5. *The Elijah–Elisha Stories as Post-Deuteronomistic Additions to the Book of Kings*

The remaining stories of Elijah and Elisha seem to have no particular purpose within the Deuteronomists' conception of history and theology. On the contrary, several lead to different themes than the struggle against Baal, while others contradict their theological and historical assumptions.²⁵ The stories about Elijah's victory over Baal and his failure (1 Kgs 17–18; 19) in particular mark a deep break in the distinct Deuteronomistic representation of history.²⁶

It is striking that the Deuteronomists seem to pay no attention to the happenings in 1 Kings 17–19 at all, even though the story of Elijah's victory over Baal should have been of great theological importance to them. Why do they not mention Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal in cultic reports while going to the trouble of counting every single pillar which was erected or destroyed? Why do they not introduce the centre of cultic Baal worship on Mt Carmel as they do the temple in Samaria in 1 Kgs 16.29-33?

Now, there are further discrepancies between 1 Kings 17–19 and the Deuteronomistic picture of history sketched above: according to 1 Kings

23. Compare Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, p. 463; Beck, *Elia und die Monolatrie*, p. 149; Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 144–47; with, on the other hand, Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte*, pp. 126–27; Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 271; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 93–94.

24. Compare only the Deuteronomistic comments concerning the fall of the house of Ahab in 2 Kgs 9–10 and the additions to the story of Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kgs 21.20b β -29.

25. Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle', pp. 450–51.

26. See Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 151–58.

18 the cult of Baal in Israel suffered a devastating setback under the reign of Ahab. The people settled on Yahweh and not on Baal and the prophets of Baal were slaughtered; this indicates a discontinuity in the history of Baal worship in Israel. Yet the Deuteronomists postulate an uninhibited continuity when they certify that Ahaziah worshiped Baal like his father and his mother (1 Kgs 22.53-54). The story about Elijah's victory over Baal brings on the problem of the necessity of Jehu's cultic reform, for there is no report of a restoration of the cult of Baal afterwards, not even in 1 Kings 19!²⁷ Who worshipped Baal in Samaria after the people were converted? Who sustained the cult after Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal?

1 Kings 17–19 is inconsistent with regard to the Deuteronomistic description of Elijah too: according to the Deuteronomists, Elijah is the opponent of the Baal-worshipping Kings Ahab and Ahaziah, whereas 1 Kings 17–18 shows a more complex relationship between Ahab and Elijah, especially in 1 Kgs 18.19-46, where they are described as simply working hand in hand. Furthermore, the failure of Elijah (19.1-14), sealed by the task to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (19.16), does not fit in with his steadfast position against the king in 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 1.

The prevailing opinion that 1 Kings 17–19 was either a pre-Deuteronomistic composition, which was included in the Deuteronomistic History by the Deuteronomists, or an entirely Deuteronomistic work,²⁸ does not take the problems mentioned above into consideration. On the contrary, an editorial conception—proceeding on these assumptions—leads exactly to these discrepancies and contradictions within the assumed Deuteronomistic system.

Now, the thesis of the Deuteronomistic History is essentially based upon the supposition that the work itself—apart from its specific language, style and theology—is distinguished by the development of a consistent conception of history. Therefore, the suggestion of a Deuteronomistic insertion of

27. Indeed, 1 Kgs 19 tries to solve the problem of the double uprooting of Baal: the victory of Elijah is turned into a defeat (19.1-14), the destruction of the cult of Baal is defined as a future challenge (19.15-18). But the account turns out to be non-consistent since a revival of Baal worship in Israel is not mentioned! Instead, new themes are introduced: the persecution of the prophets of Yahweh by Jezebel (19.1-3) and Israel's battle against the cult of Yahweh (19.10, 14).

28. For exceptions see Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle', pp. 450-51; Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige', pp. 184-85; Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 477-78; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 81-87.

1 Kings 17–19, which would mean that the Deuteronomists destroy their own clear scheme of history, should be rejected. However, the dilemma is easily solved by the assumption of a post-Deuteronomistic incorporation of 1 Kings 17–19 into the Deuteronomistic History: without 1 Kings 17–19 the conception of history covering the era from Ahab to Jehu as well as the picture of Elijah is consistent. The missing Deuteronomistic references to 1 Kings 17–19 can be explained by the proposal that the stories about Elijah's victory and his failure were not available to them.

Also, the narratives about the Omride wars and the Elisha stories do not comply with the Deuteronomists' conception of history: they are not connected with their major themes nor do they confirm definite signs of a Deuteronomistic treatment; rather there are several, mostly well-known incompatibilities. I will here mention only the most important.

First, the stories about Elisha as successor of Elijah (2 Kgs 2) and about the last acts of Elisha (13.14–21) stand outside the Deuteronomistic chronological framework.²⁹

Second, the story about Ahab's death in Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kgs 22.1–38) contradicts the Deuteronomistic report of his peaceful death (22.40).³⁰

Third, the Deuteronomistic statement about Jehoram, Ahab's son, in 2 Kgs 3.2–3 coincides with his characterization in the story of Jehu's coup: he was not as bad as his father and mother. On the contrary, he was willing to work for cultic reforms but was too weak to hold his own against his mother. Yet, in the stories about his wars against Mesha of Moab (3.4–27), and against Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram (6.24–7.20), his wickedness equals that of his father: like his father and his mother, he trusts the false prophets (3.13). Further, he turns out to be the son of the murderer Ahab (1 Kgs 21.19) when he seeks Elisha's life (2 Kgs 6.31–32).

Fourth, according to the Deuteronomistic framework (1 Kgs 22.48; 2 Kgs 8.20), there was no king in Edom at the time of Jehoshaphat of Judah. On the other hand, in the story about the war against Moab (2 Kgs 3.4–27), he stands alongside Jehoshaphat.³¹

29. Compare Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle', pp. 450–51; Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige', pp. 184–87; Schmitt, *Elisa*, pp. 131–32; Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 367.

30. The formula 'And...slept with his fathers' (1 Kgs 22.40) is used by the Deuteronomists only with respect to a peaceful death; see, for example, Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige', p. 185. A further hint that 1 Kgs 22.1–38 was not part of the original Deuteronomistic History is the Deuteronomistic explanation of the unfulfilled prophecy against Ahab (1 Kgs 21.19) in 1 Kgs 21.27–29; see above n. 3.

31. Compare Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 72–76.

Therefore, with a growing number of scholars, I contend that the narratives about the Omride wars³² and the Elisha stories³³ should be accepted as post-Deuteronomistic additions as well.

With the supposition of a post-Deuteronomistic insertion of 1 Kings 17–19 as well as 1 Kgs 20; 22.1–38 and 2 Kgs 3.4–8.15; 13.14–21, the original Deuteronomistic History in the era from 1 Kgs 16.29 to 2 Kgs 10.36—apart from the chronological framework—contains only the narratives about Naboth's vineyard, Ahaziah's death and the story of Jehu's coup.³⁴ With that, as the following scheme illustrates, the Deuteronomistic conception of history for the time from Ahab to Jehu is concise and consistent.

The entire complex is placed within the Deuteronomistic setting, subsumed under the theme 'Baal worship'. Ahab, seduced by his wife Jezebel, introduced the Baal cult into Israel (1 Kgs 16.31–32) and Jehu wiped it out (2 Kgs 10.28). Within this range, the included narratives comprise a drama: supported by Jezebel, Ahab acted unjustly towards Naboth and caused his death. On this occasion and through the Deuteronomistic annex in 1 Kgs 21.20bβ–27, connected with the accession formula for Ahab and his cultic sins, Elijah announced disaster on Ahab, on his house and on Jezebel. However, due to his repentance (21.27–29), Ahab died a non-violent death (22.40) and the disaster was shifted to the 'days of his son'. So Ahab's first son, Ahaziah, who followed the ways of his father and his mother and worshipped Baal, died (2 Kgs 1.17) after losing much of his power (1.1) and falling ill (1.2). Although Jehoram kept his distance from the cult of Baal (3.2–3), the full measure of the announced disaster hit him because the influence of his mother Jezebel remained unbroken and the Baal cult still flourished in Samaria (9.22). In accordance with the word of God spoken by Elijah, he and his family were killed (9.24, 36; 10.10–11, 17).

32. Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle', p. 450; Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige', p. 185; Schmitt, *Elisa*, pp. 133–36; Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, pp. 236–44, 253–62; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 88–93; Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463–80.

33. Miller, 'The Elisha Cycle', pp. 450–51; Schmitt, *Elisa*, pp. 131–38; Van Seters, *In Search of History*, pp. 305–306; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 95–100; Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, pp. 366–68; Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463–80; Seebass, 'Elisa', pp. 506–507; M.A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis* (OBO, 92; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 26, 194–97.

34. Compare Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463–64.

As a result and with the destruction of the Samaritan cult (10.18-28), the epoch of extreme cultic wickedness ushered in by Ahab was brought to an end. From the reign of Jehu to the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel remained only in the sin of Jeroboam (2 Kgs 10.29, 31; 13.2, 6, 11; 14.24; 15.9, 18, 24, 28), just as it had done during the times before Ahab (1 Kgs 15.26, 30, 34; 16.19, 26).

Figure 1. *The Time from Ahab to Jehu*
According to the Deuteronomistic History

1 Kgs 16.29-33:	ACCESSION FORMULA FOR AHAB, DEUTERONOMISTIC STATEMENT ABOUT AHAB, CULTIC NOTES Ahab did evil in the sight of Yahweh and did even more to provoke Yahweh to anger than any who was before him: additional to the sin of Jeroboam he inaugurated Baal worship in Israel. He built a temple for Baal in Samaria and erected an altar for Baal and an asherah.
1 Kgs 21.1aβ-20bα:	INCORPORATED STORY OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD <i>Accusation: Murder and robbery—prophecy of judgment against Ahab.</i>
1 Kgs 21.20bβ-26:	CONDEMNATION OF AHAB, ORACLES AGAINST AHAB, THE HOUSE OF AHAB AND JEZEBEL Shifting the accusation from the social to the religious sphere: Ahab did evil, caused provocation, led Israel into sin.
1 Kgs 21.27-29:	REPENTANCE OF AHAB—MERCY OF YAHWEH Balance between the oracle against Ahab and his peaceful death: postponing the disaster in the days of his son.
1 Kgs 22.39-40:	CONCLUDING FORMULA ABOUT AHAB Peaceful death of Ahab.
1 Kgs 22.41-51:	JEHOSHAPHAT OF JUDAH
1 Kgs 22.52–2 Kgs 1.1:	ACCESSION FORMULA FOR AHAZIAH OF ISRAEL, DEUTERONOMISTIC STATEMENT, CULTIC NOTE, REPORT ABOUT THE LOSS OF LAND Ahaziah went in the way of his father and mother as he also worshipped Baal.
2 Kgs 1.2-17aα*:	INCORPORATED STORY ABOUT AHAZIAH'S DEATH <i>Cultic offence of Ahaziah—accusation and oracle against Ahaziah.</i> <i>Fulfilment of the oracle.</i>
2 Kgs 1.18:	(INCOMPLETE) CONCLUDING FORMULA ABOUT AHAZIAH OF ISRAEL

- 2 Kgs 3.1-3: ACCESSION FORMULA FOR JEHOAM OF ISRAEL,
DEUTERONOMISTIC STATEMENT, CULTIC NOTE
Jehoram was not as bad as his father and mother,
for he removed the pillar of Baal which his father
had made.
- 2 Kgs 8.16-24: JEHOAM OF JUDAH
- 2 Kgs 8.25-29: ACCESSION FORMULA FOR AHAZIAH OF JUDAH,
DEUTERONOMISTIC STATEMENT, MILITARY REPORT
Ahaziah, the son of Athaliah, the daughter of Omri,
went in the way of Ahab and did that which was
evil in the eyes of Yahweh.
- 2 Kgs 9.1–10.25a*: *INCORPORATED STORY ABOUT JEHU’S COUP*
Anointing Jehu, Elisha initiates Jehu’s
revolution. Jehu strikes down the house of Ahab.
He kills Ahab’s Judean relatives and Jezebel
and destroys the Baal cult in Samaria.
- DEUTERONOMISTIC ADDITIONS
9.7-10a: Extension of the prophetic speech.
Elisha appoints Jehu to execute the oracles against
the house of Ahab and Jezebel, which were spoken
on the occasion of Naboth’s violent death.
- 2 Kgs 9.28: (INCOMPLETE) CONCLUDING FORMULA ABOUT
AHAZIAH OF JUDAH
9.36: Notice of fulfilment concerning the death of
Jezebel
(→ 1 Kgs 21.23; 2 Kgs 9.10a)
10.10-11, 17aβb: Notice of fulfilment concerning
the fall of the house of Ahab
(→ 1 Kgs 21.21b, 22; 2 Kgs 9.7a, 8-9)
- 2 Kgs 10.25b-27: CULTIC REFORM OF JEHU
Complete devastation of the temple of Baal.
- 2 Kgs 10.28-36: DEUTERONOMISTIC STATEMENT ABOUT JEHU, LIMITED
PROMISE OF A DYNASTY, MILITARY REPORT,
CONCLUDING FORMULA
Uprooting Baal from Israel.
Execution of the will of God: the extermination of
the house of Ahab.
Remaining in the sin of Jeroboam.

6. *The Additions to the Deuteronomistic History*

But what about the integration of the remaining stories? Were they inserted all at once as ‘prophetic additions’?³⁵ This thesis does not lead us

35. Compare McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 81-100.

further: the texts are too varied and criteria concerning the arrangement of the stories are so unrecognizable that no conclusions about intention, time and social background of the editor can be made. Instead, I wish to introduce an editorial model that is not too complicated,³⁶ but which takes intentional differences as well as the relationship between the narratives into account and discloses the new sense given to the Deuteronomistic History with every new stage of growth.³⁷

a. *The Insertion of the Narratives about the Omride Wars*

At first, the narratives about the Omride wars (1 Kgs 20.1-43; 22.1-38; 2 Kgs 3.4-27; 6.24-7.20) were inserted into the Deuteronomistic History.³⁸ The assumption of a separate addition of the war stories tallies, first with the fact that they were clearly distinguished from the remaining Elijah–Elisha stories: the main theme there is the prophetic action, while the narratives about the Omride wars focus on the attitude of the king of Israel towards the prophetic word. Unlike the ‘political’ part of the Elisha stories (2 Kgs 5; 6.8-23; 13.14-21) where the prophet acts as fatherly helper of the king (5.8; 6.21; 13.14), the narratives about the Omride wars show a disagreement between the prophet and the king.

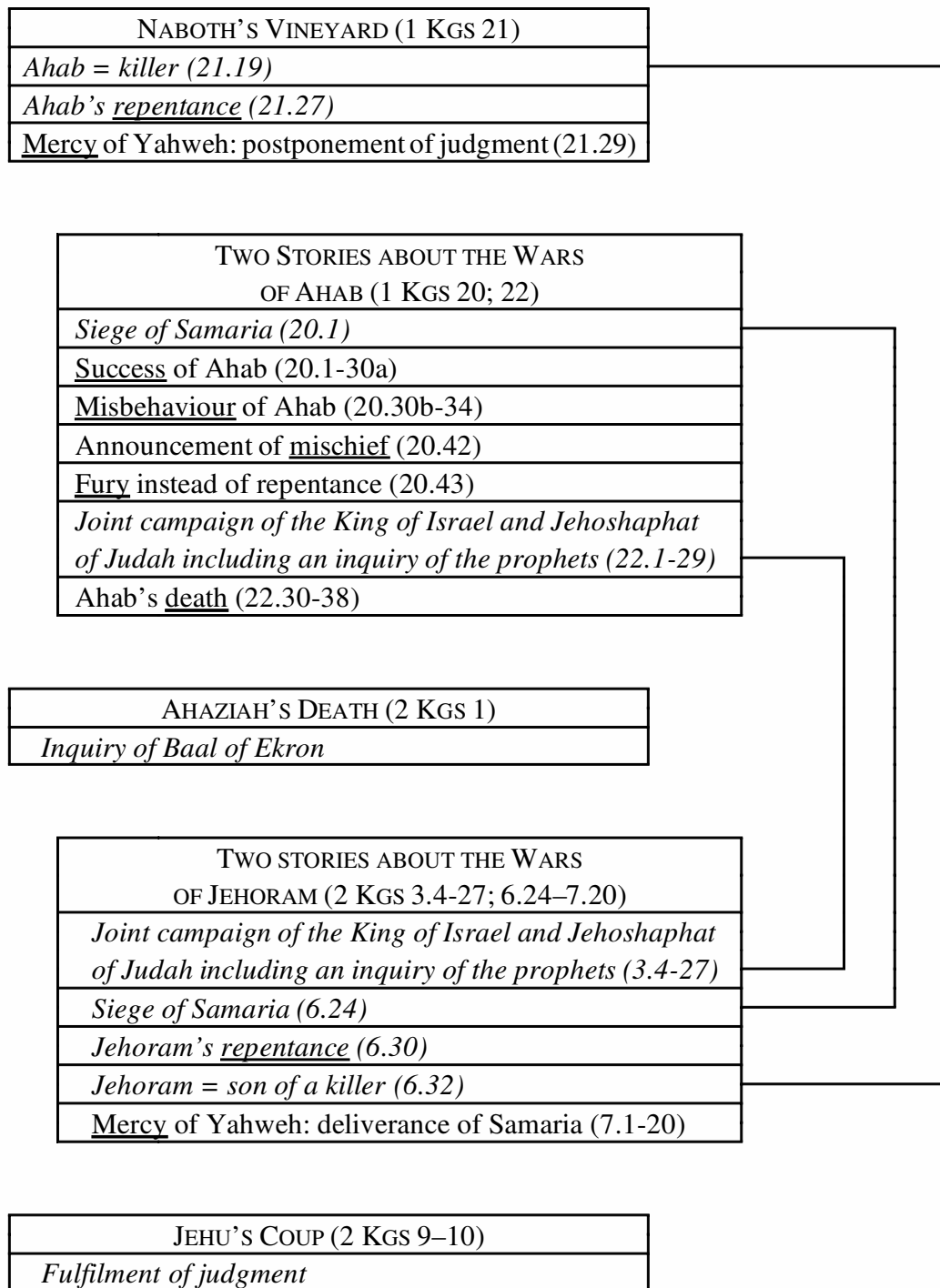
Viewing the narratives about the Omride wars within the Deuteronomistic History gives us a further clue that a systematic insertion of the war stories had been carried out in one separate step. A well-considered arrangement can be found:

36. Compare Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 463-80.

37. For the development of my thesis and a detailed analysis of the underlying traditions see Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 151-246.

38. The main argument for the beginning of the growth of the Deuteronomistic History with the insertion of the narratives about the Omride wars is that otherwise the position of the story about Elijah’s chariot ride (2 Kgs 2) outside the chronological frame would not be explainable. If the Elisha stories were inserted first, there would be no reason to set 2 Kgs 2 apart from the other stories outside the frame. But if the story about the war against Moab (3.4-27), in which Elisha acts as a prophet for the first time, had already been connected with the accession formula for Jehoram of Judah (3.1-3), then the editor, who added the Elisha stories, was forced to place the story about the prophetic succession of Elijah and Elisha between the last account of Elijah, 2 Kgs 1, and the first story about Elisha as prophet—that means outside the frame.

Figure 2. *The Narratives about the Omride Wars within the Deuteronomistic History—Framework and Conception*



Following the order of chapters of the LXX,³⁹ the stories are arranged in three frames around 2 Kings 1 between 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 9–10. The outer frame can be characterized by the keywords ‘repentance’ and ‘killer’ (1 Kgs 21.19, 27; 2 Kgs 6.30, 32). It emphasizes the similarity of the Omride Kings Ahab and Jehoram. The middle frame consists of stories about a siege of Samaria through Ben-Hadad, the King of Aram (1 Kgs 20; 2 Kgs 6.24–7.20). The inner frame is comprised of stories that speak about joint campaigns of the God-fearing King of Judah, Jehoshaphat, and the King of Israel, who trusts the wrong prophets.

Reading the stories in chronological order, a conception of history is perceptible that bridges the time from Elijah’s announcement of disaster and Jehu’s coup. It shows that pious behaviour of the king (1 Kgs 21.27–29) leads to support and military success even in hopeless situations (20.1–30a), whereas misbehaviour (1 Kgs 20.30b–43; 22.5–28; 2 Kgs 3.13; 6.32) leads to failure, threat (2 Kgs 3.4–27; 6.24–7.20) and death (1 Kgs 22.29–38; 2 Kgs 9–10). Yet, the king is able to free himself from the close association between action and consequence: even if disaster is still announced by the prophets, he can repent (1 Kgs 21.27–29; 2 Kgs 6.30) and Yahweh will have mercy. But if he gives in to his own scheming (1 Kgs 22.29–32), if he does not listen to the words of the true prophets (22.13–28) but is hostile to them (1 Kgs 22.27; 2 Kgs 6.31), then disaster is inevitable despite his previous repentance (1 Kgs 22.33–38; 2 Kgs 9.24).

According to his/her conception of history, the editor who inserted the war stories is to be found in theological vicinity to the Deuteronomists, but—as shown above—there is no identity! Compared with the Deuteronomistic History the prophetic element is emphasized: it is decisive for the welfare of Israel to seek Yahweh through the true prophets. Furthermore, the circle of prophets is extended. Apart from Elijah and Elisha, Micaiah ben Jimla, Zedekiah and others now step in. Therefore, it is likely that the aforesaid editor belonged to prophetic circles.

Yet, the vicinity to Deuteronomistic thought leads to the assumption that the insertion of the narratives about the Omride wars followed soon after the composition of the Deuteronomistic History in the middle of the sixth century.

39. For the priority of the order of chapters in the LXX (‘Elijah’s Victory Over Baal and his Failure’ [1 Kgs 17–19]; ‘Naboth’s Vineyard’ [1 Kgs 21]; ‘Two Stories About the Wars of Ahab’ [1 Kgs 20; 22]) see Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 432–39; S. Timm, *Die Dynastie Omri* (FRLANT, 124; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), p. 112; Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 159–60 n. 53.

b. *The Addition of 1 Kings 17–18*

Next followed the addition of the story about Elijah's victory over Baal (1 Kgs 17–18). The supposition that 1 Kings 17–18 was composed for the Deuteronomistic History and inserted without its continuation, the story about Elijah's journey to Horeb, results from the observation that it is connected with the Deuteronomistic context at both ends: 1 Kgs 17.1 refers directly to the accession formula for Ahab (1 Kgs 16.29–33),⁴⁰ for it does not repeat the introduction of Ahab, while Elijah, who is not mentioned in the Deuteronomistic History previously, is now introduced. The cause for Elijah's announcement, the cult of Baal in Israel and the place of Ahab's and Elijah's meeting, from which Elijah is sent into hiding, is also to be gathered from the formula for Ahab.⁴¹ The remark about Ahab's and Elijah's journey to Jezreel (1 Kgs 18.45b–46) at the end of the story leads directly to the story of Naboth's vineyard.⁴² The actors are marching to their next scene, Jezreel, the place of the Naboth incidence.⁴³ On the other hand, the note makes no sense in connection with 1 Kings 19: nothing in the story about Elijah's journey to Horeb justifies the suggestion that Ahab and Jezebel can be found in Jezreel. Together with the accession formula for Ahab, everything points to Samaria as the location of the actions of Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kgs 19.1–2.

The author of 1 Kings 17–18 refers to several older traditions: first, through the connection of Elijah's announcement of the absence of rain and dew (17.1), with the accession formula for Ahab he or she shows that the drought is directly caused by the apostasy of Ahab to the cult of Baal. Following, he/she points out that everybody who lives in conformity with the word of God like Elijah can be sure of divine support, even in times of distress. The power of Yahweh is certainly unlimited: it endures during seasons of drought (17.7–16) as in the countries of other gods, like that of the Baal of Sidon (17.9–24). Afterwards, the author returns to the main

40. 1 Kgs 16.34 breaks the association between 1 Kgs 16.29–33 and 17.1; see, e.g., Hölscher, 'Das Buch der Könige', pp. 184–85. 1 Kgs 16.34 can be described as a later addition, which connects the books of Kings with the book of Joshua (Josh. 6.26). The absence of the remark in LXX^L provides further evidence for this assumption. Compare also Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte*, p. 136; Timm, *Die Dynastie Omri*, p. 55; Ch. Conroy, 'Hiel between Ahab and Elijah–Elisha', *Bib* 77 (1996), pp. 210–18.

41. See also Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 176–77.

42. According to the LXX, the story about Naboth's vineyard follows directly after 1 Kgs 17–19!

43. Compare Stipp, *Elischa—Propheten—Gottesmänner*, pp. 432–35.

point, the discussion of ‘who is the troubler of Israel?’ (18.17-18). He or she clarifies that it is not the prophet who announces disaster, but the king who follows other gods who is responsible for the ruin of Israel. The attached composition about Elijah on Mt Carmel and the return of the rain (1 Kgs 18.19-46) leads to a conciliatory end and denotes the triumph of the prophetic work of Elijah: realizing his guilt, Ahab successfully works together with Elijah to convert the people, who are divided between Yahweh and Baal, and to bring on the magical manifestation of rain.

The insertion of the story about Elijah’s victory over Baal into the Deuteronomistic History fits well into the historical context of the late sixth century.⁴⁴ Full of hope for a new beginning after the national disaster of exile, the author of the composition demonstrates with the model of Elijah’s fight against the northern Baal worship that it was not the announcement of disaster by the prophets but the apostasy of the king and people that had caused the distress of the nation. The announcements of the prophets were aimed not at Israel’s destruction but at Israel’s conversion to Yahweh as the only God and its consequent salvation. The author shows that after the time of judgment, the way to live in peaceful communion with God is open for everybody—one needs only to give up the other gods and return to the way of Yahweh.

The position of the author of 1 Kings 17–18, who surely belonged to prophetic circles, also presupposes the public recognition of prophecy in exilic times as the possibility for a new beginning of Israel after 539 BCE. The high esteem for prophecy further points to the years before 518 BCE, when the hope for restoration, encouraged by the prophecy of Haggai and Zechariah, was minimized by the enforcement of the power of Darius.⁴⁵

c. The Insertion of 1 Kings 19.1-18 and the Elisha Stories

Decisive for the present format of the Elijah–Elisha cycle is the work of the author who composed the story of Elijah’s journey to Horeb (19.1-18) as a continuation of 1 Kings 17–18 and added it together with the remaining Elisha stories to the Deuteronomistic History.

44. The centre of the composition, the former single narrative ‘Elijah on Mount Carmel’ (18.21-39), itself arose during the later exile: it shows an advanced monotheistic view, which is surely comparable with that of Deutero-Isaiah. See Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 174-75; Würthwein, ‘Zur Opferprobe Elias I Reg 18,21-39’, pp. 282-83; Beck, *Elia und die Monolatrie*, pp. 153-56. For a late dating of chs. 17–18 and 19 of 1 Kings, compare also Schmitt, *Elisa*, pp. 119-26, and Blum, *Der Prophet und das Verderben Israels*, pp. 277-92.

45. Compare Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, II, pp. 454-57.

Although he or she refers in his/her opening scene, 1 Kgs 19.1-3a α , to the work of the author of 1 Kings 17–18, he/she gives the composition a new turn: the triumph of Elijah over the cult of Baal is changed into bitter defeat, the people's total apostasy takes the place of their conversion (compare 1 Kgs 18.36-40 with 1 Kgs 19.3a β -4, 10, 14). The relationship between Yahweh and Israel seems to have reached rock bottom. But Yahweh revives the history with his people at Mt Horeb: he commands Elijah to anoint Hazael, Jehu and his successor Elisha to execute the judgment to purify Israel. The Aramaean wars, Jehu's revolution and Elisha, who will be involved in Hazael's and Jehu's usurpations (2 Kgs 8.7-15; 9.1-14), will put an end to the Baal worship in Israel and that will provide the essential condition for the continuation of the community with God for the people who arise from purification (1 Kgs 19.15-18).

The author of the story about Elijah's journey to Horeb not only balances Elijah's victory over the cult of Baal on Mt Carmel and Jehu's uprooting of Baal, but furthermore he or she produces the decisive link between the Elijah and Elisha tradition by defining the relationship between the work of the two prophets. Both stand in the same line of prophets which is legitimated by the theophany of Yahweh on Mt Horeb. But both denote the incorporation of two different types of prophecy in different stages of Yahweh's fight for the loyalty of his people. While Elijah represents a warning and compelling prophecy (1 Kgs 17–18; 19.4), Elisha represents active engagement in politics in order to start the time of judgment and purification (19.17) when the conversion has failed and the covenant is broken.

The counterpart to the killing of Elisha (19.17) is formed by the greater part of the Elisha stories (1 Kgs 19.19-21; 2 Kgs 2.1-15, 19-25a; 4.1–6.23; [8.7-15;⁴⁶] 13.14-21), an older collection of miracle stories joined together by manifold editorial links.⁴⁷ It is opened by the stories about Elisha's rise

46. The stories in 2 Kgs 8.1-6 and 8.7-15 are not to be understood as part of the collection of miracle stories: they are neither comparable with the other miracle stories nor connected with them by editorial links. Nevertheless, it is likely that 2 Kgs 8.7-15 was inserted together with the collection into the Deuteronomistic History by the author of 1 Kgs 19.1-18, for he/she refers in 19.15-18 to the rise of Hazael and its implications for Israel: compare, for example, 1 Kgs 19.17 with 2 Kgs 8.12. 2 Kgs 8.1-6 was added at a later stage of growth which will be sketched below. For details see Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 233-35, 241-46.

47. Compare, for example, the use of the particular acclamation 'My father, my father, the chariotry of Israel and the horsemen thereof!' in 2 Kgs 2.12 and also 2 Kgs 13.14, as well as the notes about the wanderings of Elisha in 2 Kgs 2.23a, 25a; 4.38a α .

from being a rich farmer's son to a servant and later to becoming the successor of Elijah (1 Kgs 19.19-21; 2 Kgs 2.1-15), and closed by the stories about the last help given to Joash of Israel by the gravely ill Elisha and the resurrection of a deceased man who had merely touched the grave of Elisha (2 Kgs 13.14-19, 20-21). Here Elisha acts as the friend and helper of individuals as well as saviour of Israel.

Now, it is likely that this collection was inserted by the author of 1 Kgs 19.1-18:

1. The author of 1 Kgs 19.1-18 used motives which originate from the succession stories (1 Kgs 19.19-21; 2 Kgs 2.1-15) to establish a closer connection with the Elisha stories: the succession from Elijah to Elisha, the prophetic mantle of Elijah and the name Elisha ben Shaphat.
2. In this case, the division of the succession stories, which originally belonged together,⁴⁸ can easily be explained: the story about Elijah's chariot ride (2.1-15) could be inserted only after his last action within the story about Ahaziah's death. But the story about Elisha becoming Elijah's servant (1 Kgs 19.19-21) could be directly connected with the story about Elijah's journey to Horeb.⁴⁹ So, the call to anoint Elisha as prophet (19.16) is immediately followed by the first step of its fulfilment.

With the insertion of the Elisha stories, the author of 1 Kgs 19.1-18 first emphasizes the legitimacy of the prophet Elisha and postulates a direct succession and parallel between Elisha and the famous Elijah. Second, he or she increases the prestige of Elisha by highlighting his qualities: the miracle-working man of God and the saviour of Israel.

This does not denote inconsistency within his/her presentation as a whole. A simultaneity of both sides of Elisha—which corresponds with both sides of Yahweh—is possible and feasible: like Elijah, who worked hard for the life-saving conversion of Israel, Elisha aimed to benefit the people and the state. Regardless of all the efforts of Yahweh, Elijah and Elisha, Israel's lack of change forced the extermination of Israel initi-

A further editorial link is represented by the picture of Elisha drawn in 2 Kgs 6.15b-17: like Elijah in 2 Kgs 2.11 he is surrounded by horses and chariots of fire. See also Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 220-37.

48. Schmitt, *Elisa*, pp. 75-76, 102-107.

49. The story about Elisha becoming Elijah's servant lost its original opening sequence. Instead it is now linked with the story about Elijah's journey to Horeb.

ated by Yahweh. And although Elisha—like Yahweh—actually is to be regarded as a saviour of Israel, he becomes an agent of destruction: he launches the rise of Hazael, the mighty enemy of Israel, who will ‘send fire upon their strongholds, slay their young men with the sword, dash their little ones in pieces and rip up their pregnant women’ (2 Kgs 8.12). And he starts the revolt of Jehu, who slaughtered all the worshippers of Baal, so that there will only be a rest left in Israel: ‘all the knees which have not bowed to Baal and every mouth which has not kissed him’ (1 Kgs 19.18). Yet the final words of the editor are conciliatory: with the insertion of the two last Elisha stories he or she again emphasizes the life-saving side of Elisha. In particular, the last story shows that even a dead man regains life by merely touching the bones of Elisha (2 Kgs 13.20–21).

The work of the author of 1 Kgs 19.1–18 follows the addition of 1 Kings 17–18 within the Deuteronomistic History, which was dated to the late sixth century. And it fits well in early post-exilic times. With the establishment of the power of Darius I, the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah no longer applied and prophetic groups were pushed aside once more: prophecy was subordinated to the authority of Moses, respectively ignored in the composition of the Pentateuch. This brought about a steady and growing pressure on prophetic groups to justify themselves, especially in political matters.⁵⁰ By tracing back the prophetic work of Elijah and Elisha to Mt Horeb, by identifying Elijah with Moses and by demonstrating the life-saving acts of Elisha, the author of 1 Kgs 19.1–18 embodied the contested prophecy in the tradition of Israel and secured its theological foundation.⁵¹

d. *Further Additions*⁵²

An editor, probably deriving from the circles of the author of 1 Kgs 19.1–18, inserted the episode of the fruitless search of the sons of the prophets for Elijah (2 Kgs 2.16–18) and the digression about the inability of Gehazi (2 Kgs 4.29–30a, 31, 32b, 35): he or she depreciated the sons of the prophets and the servant of the prophet in comparison with their master and emphasized as well the veracity of the ascension of Elijah as the transmission of the prophetic authority to Elisha. Thus, the audience is exhorted

50. See Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, II, pp. 477–80.

51. Compare Blum, *Der Prophet und das Verderben Israels*, pp. 286–92; he describes the function of 1 Kgs 17–19 as an apology of the prophecy of judgment and comes to a comparable dating.

52. For details see Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa*, pp. 241–46.

to trust only in the true prophets who are legitimated through Yahweh, since only the true prophets are able to bring the dead back to life.

Then, 2 Kgs 1.9-14, 15b, 16; 4.13-15; 7.2, 17ab α ; 8.1-6 were added to accentuate the similarity between Elijah and Elisha. Thereby, the magical element of the work of Elijah and Elisha was placed in the foreground. 2 Kings 8.1-6 in particular shows that the 'great things that Elisha did' (8.4) are his miracles—especially the resurrection of the dead child—and not his engagement in politics!

Following this, 2 Kgs 1.3-4, 15a was inserted into the story about Ahaziah's death to show an allusion to 1 Kgs 19.1-18: the prophet is associated with the angels of Yahweh. They protect him in distress—even against the emissaries of the king.