

Knoppers, G N 1993 — Two nations under God. The deuteronomistic history of Solomon and the dual monarchies, Volume 1: The reign of Solomon and the rise of Jeroboam; Volume 2: The reign of Jeroboam, the fall of Israel, and the reign of Josiah. Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs

Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press. 302 & 349 pages. Price: US\$39.95 each

Reviewer: Prof L C Bezuidenhout

These two works bear testimony to meticulous scientific research. They take recent literature into account and succeed in dealing critically with research results. Volume 1 opens with a discussion of views on unity and disunity in the kingdom. Subsequently, characteristics of the text are considered. The connection between the Greek and Hebrew text is examined, also in the light of the Qumran text 40Sam(a). The texts of Amule, Kings and Chronicles are compared in order to try to penetrate to a pre-Masoretic text. These discussions are not detailed but trends in the current debate are highlighted.

Since the composition of the deuteronomistic history is of cardinal importance in this study, research results bearing on this topic are discussed. Various theories are weighed up against each other. The author succeeds in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of well-known approaches. He is sympathetic to the theory propounded by Cross, namely that an extensive edition of the deuteronomistic history dates back to the time of Josiah, and that there was a later redaction at the time of the exile, with the possibility of even later additions. Incidentally, Cross is also the editor of this series of publications.

The main purpose of these two volumes is to provide a critical discussion of the deuteronomistic handling of Solomon, Jeroboam and Josiah. The first part of Solomon's rule illustrates the ideal situation. The second part of his rule, as well as the rule of Jeroboam, anticipates the tragic events still to come, while the rule of Josiah stirs positive memories of the past. In the first volume Solomon is fully discussed, as well as the rise of Jeroboam. The second volume deals with the rest of Jeroboam's rule and also all of Josiah's. Each chapter is divided into two to four sub-sections. In each a number of chapters of the historical work are discussed according to a fixed scheme. First the text is examined (if problematical) and then the composition of the unit. Next the passage is interpreted and the presupposed ideology of the deuteronomist is revealed. It is an impressive piece of research. The author gives a comprehensive account of the views of other researchers, discussing them fully. At the end he gives his own opinion. Bibliographical reference are thorough and wide-ranging.

This publication is a welcome and substantial contribution to research in this area. In a time when popular and superficial publications are the order of the day, it is refreshing when a worthy, scientific work comes to hand. It is highly recommended.
