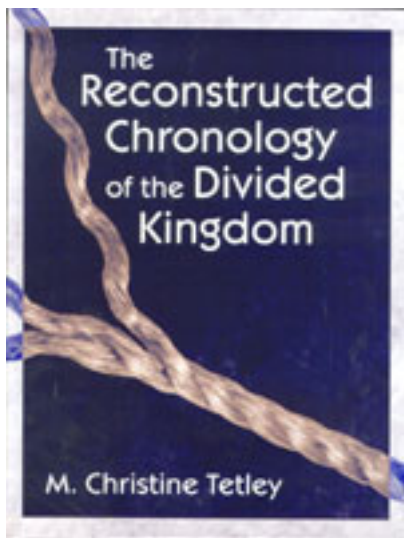


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Tetley, M. Christine

The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom

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The difficulties associated with the chronology presented by 1 and 2 Kings have attracted many scholars' attention and resulted in a variety of different theories on the accuracy of the books' history of the divided monarchy and the variant chronological data presented in the Greek versions of 1 and 2 Kings. Tetley's book, largely building upon the work of James D. Shenkel, is a new analysis of the data of the MT and the Greek versions. This work represents the first attempt to utilize Shenkel's theory for the recensional development of the Greek versions of Kings to actually construct a complete chronology of the entire divided kingdom.

The book is composed of nine chapters, beginning with an introduction to the significance and major problems of divided kingdom chronology and its importance for archeological dating and other chronologies (especially Assyrian and Egyptian). In this chapter Tetley also discusses the "conventional" approach to divided kingdom chronology. Following Shenkel's forceful argument for the value of the Greek textual evidence, Tetley asserts, "[t]he conventional approach, by uncritically preferring data of the Hebrew text over that of the Greek text, displays a flawed method of textual analysis and leaves a considerable amount of chronological data inadequately considered" (5). Further, she also disparages methodologies, such as Thiele's and McFall's, that depend on antedating, postdating, variant calendars, or coregencies. She argues that "[t]hese systems are not supported by the text itself and are dubious assumptions to make about a

text that intends to display chronological detail and synchronicity” (7). Instead Tetley proposes a dating system that does justice to the phrasing of the regnal formulas, which she analyzes in chapter 5.

The second chapter focuses on the transmission history of the text of Kings, with attention to both the Greek and Hebrew versions, as well as information gained from Qumran manuscripts. Tetley gives brief descriptions of the features of the major Greek versions: Old Greek, *kaige* Recension, and (Proto-)Lucianic. Concurring with Shenkel, Tetley agrees that the Greek texts may evidence data that are more original than found in the MT. However, she adds that the Greek texts must themselves be analyzed to determine whether the data they contain is original or secondary, since they were subject to possible cross-fertilization. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the first of a series of critiques of Thiele’s methodology, particularly his preference for MT data. Her criticism of Thiele’s work continues throughout the book as the main representative of “conventional” methodology and as an object of contrast to her own theories.

The next chapter begins Tetley’s analysis of the actual chronological data in the books of Kings. The initial problem she presents is the disparity between the total regnal years in the divided kingdom for Israel and Judah. This problem is present in all the major versions, with discrepancies varying from fourteen years in L to nineteen in MT/KR. She presents the hypothesis that proto-L and OG seem more likely to be older, and their data totals an equal one hundred years for Israel and Judah in the early divided kingdom, suggesting that Abijam’s regnal years and Asa’s accession synchronism are correct in L. According to Tetley, “OG/L appear to have a more consistent pattern than MT/KR” (44).

Chapter 4 is devoted to the data in manuscript c_2 , a manuscript that has generally been interpreted as secondary and highly contrived. Rather, Tetley argues that “the agreement between MT/KR/L and c_2 in Judah’s regnal years suggests that c_2 ’s figures should not be dismissed as late and artificial” (56). Also, and perhaps more important, Tetley’s proposal for the data for Israel is supported by c_2 . In chapter 5 Tetley addresses the phraseology and vocabulary of the regnal formulas. She finds two patterns of opening formulas and two main patterns of closing formulas. After charting the distribution of these patterns, Tetley concludes that the “predominance of pattern 1 over pattern 2 suggests that pattern 1 is more likely original” (71). Based on her observations concerning these patterns and the presence of supplementary notices, she argues that deviations in the original pattern demonstrate additions or reworking of the text.

Tetley’s methodology for reconstructing the chronology of the divided kingdom is the focus of chapter 6. By reckoning regnal years from the death of a king’s immediate predecessor, asserting the same dating system for both Israel and Judah, assuming that

kings' regnal years were rounded, refusing to consider interregnums or coregencies, and analyzing the regnal formulas for originality, Tetley attempts to avoid the pitfalls of the methodologies she critiques in the first few chapters. In addition, she proposes that the Assyrian Eponym Canon be reevaluated if it is to be used to establish an absolute chronology for the divided kingdom. Due to the possibility that names may have been omitted from Adad-nirari III's reign, Tetley argues, "the years afforded to the AEC prior to 763 B.C.E. cannot be confirmed as correct" (99). Thus, Tetley claims that the chronologies of the divided kingdom are actually more reliable than the AEC before 763 B.C.E.

Chapters 7 and 8 contain Tetley's proposal for the relative chronology of the early and late divided kingdom. Tetley claims that the OG/L data, with some adjustments, represent the original and most accurate chronology for the EDK. She proposes that certain anomalous data are the result of epigraphic or scribal errors and concludes that the OG/L data "produce a coherent chronology when divested of their extraneous data; the latter coming as it seems, from a pre-MT, the proto-MT, or the MT itself" (144). Her reconstruction of EDK chronology depends largely on her claim that the correct length of Abijam's reign is six years, not three. Tetley's reconstruction of LDK chronology is based on proposals for corrections to errors in the text that resulted from transmission errors and attempts to correct seemingly mistaken numbers. She is thus able to assert a chronology for the entire divided kingdom without recourse to "unattested dating systems, hypothetical coregencies, the distortion of regnal formulas, or the manipulation of associated narratives" (153).

The final chapter of the book proposes a new absolute chronology correlated to the Julian calendar. After establishing a date for the fall of Samaria (ch. 8), Tetley attempts to synchronize the Hebrew chronology she proposes with Assyrian, Tyrian, and Egyptian chronologies. She proposes new dates for Shalmaneser III, Shamshi-adad V, and Adad-nirari III. In addition, she identifies Pul with Shalmaneser IV and argues that Shoshenq I's accession should be dated to 997. Tetley thus prioritizes the Hebrew data over the AEC in order to reconcile her proposals with other ancient Near Eastern chronologies.

Tetley's work is a valuable contribution to the resolution of the numerous problems associated with divided kingdom chronology. Most important, her work represents an attempt to wrestle with both the MT data and the Greek variants. However, just as Thiele gives the MT data preference over the Greek versions and Shenkel argues for the superiority of the Greek data over the MT, Tetley heavily prioritizes the biblical data over other documents, such as the AEC. Her drastic restructuring of Assyrian chronology and her proposals for new dates for several Assyrian kings are weakly argued, as they are posited solely on the basis of her reconstruction of the data in Kings.

Also, Tetley overestimates the usefulness of the data in manuscript c_2 . Though it seems true enough that c_2 's data do not merely coincide with other data accidentally, it is not at all clear that the numbers it contains are any more reliable. In short, though Tetley argues that the fact that c_2 's data "work" and provide an internally consistent chronology for this period is proof of their value, these qualities can easily be viewed as proof of their secondary nature. The fact that it is the only system that is internally consistent is probably a result of conscious changes to the data, not of originality.

Another problem in Tetley's reconstruction involves her philological and epigraphical analyses, especially in the last three chapters. For example, the identification of the king referred to as paying tribute to Shalmaneser III in his eighteenth year is a controversial subject that has been discussed by several scholars. Weippert, Halpern, and Hughes all identify this king with Jehu and not Joram on philological grounds. Tetley's claim that it refers to Joram is based solely on her own reconstruction of the chronology of the period and requires further consideration. Tetley's proposals for changes in numbers based on scribal confusion between certain letters also seem to be argued mainly based on convenient correlations to her own argument rather than careful epigraphic analysis.

However, despite its inevitable problems and controversial claims, this work does provide a unique and thought-provoking solution to the chronology of the divided kingdom. Tetley's investigation of the variant numbers presented in the versions of Kings is an important contribution to resolving and clarifying the causes and meaning of the conflicting numbers in 1 and 2 Kings.