

Portrait of the Kings: The Davidic Prototype in Deuteronomistic Poetics

By Alison L. Joseph

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Much of the scholarship on the book of Kings has focused on questions of the historicity of the events described. Alison L. Joseph turns her attention instead to the literary characterization of Israel's kings. By examining the narrative techniques used in the Deuteronomistic History to portray Israel's kings, Joseph shows that the Deuteronomist in the days of the Josianic Reform constructed David as a model of adherence to the covenant, and Jeroboam, conversely, as the ideal opposite of David. The redactor further characterized other kings along one or the other of these two models. The resulting narrative functions didactically, as if instructing kings and the people of Judah regarding the consequences of disobedience. Attention to characterization through prototype also allows Joseph to identify differences between pre-exilic and exilic redactions in the Deuteronomistic History, bolstering and also revising the view advanced by Frank Moore Cross. The result is a deepened understanding of the worldview and theology of the Deuteronomistic historians.

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Editorial Review

Review
"This highly readable volume is written within the parameters of Cross's well-known approach to the Deuteronomistic History (i.e., Dtr1 and Dtr2). Instructors who teach top-undergraduate courses that emphasize this approach will find this book particularly useful, and the same holds true for the educated reader who would like to know more about this approach to the Deuteronomistic History." --Ehud Ben Zvi, University of Alberta

About the Author
Alison L. Joseph is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Towson University in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. She has been named a recipient of the 2016 Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise for her work in Portrait of the Kings. Dr. Joseph has previously taught at Villanova University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. She has also been a visiting professor at Haverford College. She holds a PhD in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

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