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Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of Exodus¹

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The final three verses in the Book of Kings narrate Jehoiachin's release from prison and subsequent exaltation within the Babylonian court:

In the 37th year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, on the 27th day of the 12th month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon took up the case of (»lifted the head of«)² Jehoiachin king of Judah [and released him]³ from prison in the year Evil-Merodach began to reign. He [Evil-Merodach] spoke benevolently to him [Jehoiachin] and gave him a throne that was higher than all the other thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. He [Jehoiachin] changed out of his prison garments and ate bread daily before the king all the days of his life. His allowance was a perpetual allowance, given to him by the king all the days of his life (II Reg 25,27–30).

This brief account is a puzzling conclusion to the history of the monarchy. Were it found at an earlier point in the book, I doubt scholars would find it half as intriguing. But the fact that these verses constitute *the* ending to an expansive, theologically rich literary corpus, suggests that vv. 27–30 are more than just a bit of historical updating.

Verses 27–30 are an independent unit within a larger sequence of notices and narratives related to (1) the destruction of Jerusalem (II Reg 25,1–21), (2) the appointment and murder of Gedaliah (II Reg 25,22–25), (3) the subsequent flight

¹ I would like to thank Juha Pakkala, Thomas Römer, Hans-Christoph Schmitt, and Jacob L. Wright for providing feedback on earlier forms of this article. I am also grateful to the oversight committee of the SBL's Deuteronomistic History section for allowing me to present this paper at the 2012 Annual Meeting.

² For this definition of the idiom, *ns' rš*, see D. Marcus, »Lifting up the Head«: On the Trail of a Word Play in Genesis 40, *Prooftexts* 10 (1990), 17–27.

³ The phrase, *wys' wtw* (»and he released him«), probably dropped out of MT II Reg 25,27 and should be supplied based on Jer 52,31. For this reading, see M. Cogan / H. Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB 11, 1988, 328. For an alternative explanation of the text-critical evidence, that takes *wys' wtw* to be an interpretive expansion, see B. Becking, *Jehoiachin's Amnesty, Salvation for Israel? Notes on 2 Kings 25:27–30**, in: B. Becking (ed.), *From David to Gedaliah: The Book of Kings as Story and History*, 2007, 175.

to Egypt (v. 26), and (4) the imprisonment and release of Jehoiachin (vv. 27–30). Text-critically speaking, the final three verses of Kings are relatively stable across the versional evidence, even when the Jeremianic material is taken into consideration.⁴ The real issues arise when one tries to determine what kind of ending these verses actually provide.⁵ The various scholarly proposals are well known: Are they meant to stir up hope in the continuation of the Davidic dynasty, as Gerhard von Rad, Jon Levenson, and others argue?⁶ Or does this brief account simply demonstrate the editor's »usual scrupulous respect for historical fact«, to borrow a phrase from Noth?⁷ Hans Walter Wolff, as an alternative, suggests that the open-ended nature of these final verses subtly calls out for the people's repentance.⁸ Another option, suggested by Donald Murray and later modified by Jeremy Schipper, is that these verses support the notion that Jews can live tol-

4 For a synopsis of the text-critical evidence, see R. F. Person, Jr., *The Kings – Isaiah and Kings – Jeremiah Recensions*, BZAW 252, 1997, 81–94.

5 This article is exclusively concerned with the ending of Kings. How the same narrative functions at the end of Jeremiah (see Jer 52,31–34) is a related but different question. The most convincing interpretation of Jehoiachin's release in Jeremiah belongs to Thomas Römer, who argues that Deuteronomistic redactors of Jeremiah probably used the story of Jehoiachin's release to associate Jeremiah more closely with other deuteronomistically edited books: »Il est également apparu que deux de ces rédactions ont une grande proximité avec l'histoire dtr. On peut donc imaginer que le livre de Jr a été conçu dans le même milieu que l'histoire dtr, et qu'il faisait, dans un premier temps, partie d'une bibliothèque dtr. On peut imaginer une telle ›bibliothèque‹ dans le contexte de l'activité scribale du deuxième temple; parmi ces groupes, le milieu dtr ›administrait‹ les livres de Dt, Jos–R, ainsi que Jr; il préparait ainsi le canon prophétique qui regroupe les ›Prophètes antérieurs‹ et les ›Prophètes postérieurs‹.« T. Römer, *Du livre au prophète: Stratégies rédactionnelles dans le rouleau pré-massorétique de Jérémie*, in: J.-D. Macchi / C. Nihan / T. Römer / J. Rückl (eds.), *Les recueils prophétiques de la Bible. Origines, milieux, et contexte proche-oriental*, MdB 64, 2012, 255–282, 281.

6 G. von Rad, *Deuteronomium-Studien*, FRLANT 40, 1947, 52–64; *idem*, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, SBT 9 (1953), 74–91; J. Levenson, *The Last Four Verses in Kings**, JBL 103 (1984), 353–361. See also E. Zenger, *Die deuteronomistische Interpretation der Rehabilitierung Jojachins*, BZ 12 (1968), 16–30.

7 M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 15, 1981, 98. Cf. W. McKane, who writes, »The Deuteronomistic writer in Kings does not supply 2 Kgs 25:27–30 (from which vv. 31–34 are taken) in order to generate hope (Noth), only to convey soberly the last piece of knowledge which he had about the history of the Judaean monarchy.« See his *Jeremiah*, ICC, 1996, 1388.

8 Wolff is well known for his thesis that the kerygmatic message of the deuteronomistic historical work is one of repentance. See, e.g., H. W. Wolff, *The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work*, in: W. Brueggemann / H. W. Wolff (eds.), *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, 2d ed., 1982, 83–100. For the original German publication, see *idem*, *Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks*, ZAW 73 (1961), 171–186.

erable and even blessed lives in diasporic settings.⁹ Finally, Frank Moore Cross opines that these verses are nothing more than the low-quality work of a »less articulate Exilic editor«¹⁰ – a sort of second- or third-rate, Dtr.

This paper takes up II Reg 25,27–30 again and makes three arguments related to their interpretation and compositional history. First, following a number of other interpreters – including Konrad Schmid, Jan Granowski, John Harvey, etc. – this paper argues that the final three verses in II Reg 25 allude to the story of Joseph in Gen 40–41, and in particular to his release from prison and subsequent exaltation.¹¹ This allusion is established by underscoring generic, terminological, and thematic correspondences between the two texts. Second, if the allusion has been accurately identified, then a number of composition-historical issues arise, including but not limited to, the verses' possible relationship to a broader enneateuchal narrative. Third and finally, it is argued that the literary connection between Joseph and Jehoiachin has hermeneutical and theological implications. Just as Joseph's release from prison and his exaltation were a prelude to Israel's original exodus from Egypt, so Jehoiachin's own release and exaltation may be interpreted as a prelude to a new exodus – only this time, out of exile and back into Judah.

9 D. F. Murray, *Of all the Years and Hopes – or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon* (2 Kings 25:27–30), *JBL* 120 (2001), 245–265; Jeremy Schipper, *Significant Resonances with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25:27–30: A Response to Donald F. Murray*, *JBL* 124 (2005), 521–529.

10 F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, 1973, 286.

11 See, e.g., T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC 13, 1985, 368; J. J. Granowski, *Jehoiachin at the King's Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings*, in: D. N. Fewell (ed.), *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, *Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation*, 1992, 173–188; K. Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments*, *WMANT* 81, 1999, 142–143; J. E. Harvey, *Jehoiachin and Joseph: Hope at the Close of the Deuteronomistic History*, in: R. Heskett / B. Irwin (eds.), *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, *Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies* 469, 2010, 51–61; K. Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, 2012, 118. In his comments on Jer 52,31–34, McKane also draws attention to the similarities between Joseph and Jehoiachin. See his *Jeremiah*, 1386.

1 Do II Reg 25,27–30 Allude to Joseph's Release in Gen 40–41?

A cluster of literary features suggests that II Reg 25,27–30 allude to the Joseph story and especially to Gen 40–41. In this study, allusion is used in a technical sense to refer to an author's »deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual.«¹² To borrow an image from Allan Pasco, literary allusion is textual »grafting«.¹³ Allusion is different from, say, quotation, in that the referential elements present in the allusive text are often tacit and dense with cultural coding. The hide-and-go-seek nature of allusion, in fact, is part of its delight. In the words of Jean Paulhan, »[a]n allusion which is explained no longer has the charm of allusion... In divulging the mystery, you withdraw its virtue.«¹⁴ Ben Sommer, following the work of Ziva Ben-Porat, refers to these identifiable elements as »markers«.¹⁵ With these considerations in mind, the next few paragraphs discuss a number of allusive markers that make reference to specific aspects of the Joseph story.

Beginning on the level of genre, Thomas Römer has recently pointed out that II Reg 25,27–30 read like an abbreviated version of a Jewish court tale:

The Persian redactors of the Deuteronomistic History also added a new ending to the story, which clearly indicates the acceptance of a Diaspora situation. 2 Kgs 25.27–30 tells of a rehabilitation of the exiled king Jehoiachin who becomes a privileged host of the Babylonian king 'all the days of his life'. This short text shares literary conventions with the so-called 'Diaspora novels': the story of Esther and Mordechai, Joseph (Gen. 37–45), and the narratives in the first part of the book of Daniel (Dan. 2–6).¹⁶

Römer's observation about the genre of vv. 27–30 is perceptive. Its relevance for the interpretation of the end of Kings is conveniently illustrated in the following table:

¹² E. Miner, Allusion, in: A. Preminger / T. V. F. Brogan / F. J. Warnke / O. B. Hardison, Jr. / E. Miner (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 1993, 38–39.

¹³ A. H. Pasco, *Allusion: A Literary Graft*, 2002, 5–6.

¹⁴ J. Paulhan, *Braque le Patron*, 1952, 31.

¹⁵ B. D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 1998, 11.

¹⁶ Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 177. Cogan/Tadmor, similarly, write, »The motif of the elevation of a Judean to a position of influence at a foreign court was a popular one in exilic literature, e.g., the story of Daniel at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and that of Mordechai at the court of Ahasuerus.« Cogan / Tadmor, *II Kings*, 330, fn. 5.

Text	The king takes note of a prisoner/ reviews his case (<i>nš' r'š</i>) ¹⁷	The king releases a prisoner from prison	The protagonist is exalted to a position near the king's own	Status shift indicated by new clothing
Joseph: Genesis	Gen 40,13 (<i>yš' pr'h 't r'šk</i>)	Gen 41,14	Gen 41,40	Gen 41,42 (<i>wylbš 'tw bgdy šš</i>)
Jehoiachin: II Reg	II Reg 25,27 (<i>nš' ... 't r'š yhwkyyn</i>)	II Reg 25,27	II Reg 25,28	II Reg 25,29 (<i>wšn' 't bgdy kl'w</i>)
Mordechai: Est			Est 10,3	Est 6,10–11; 8,15
Daniel: Daniel		Dan 6,24	Dan 2,48	Dan 5,29

The most important observation for this study is that the Joseph and Jehoiachin tales alone contain all four motifs. The book of Daniel, when taken as a whole, displays three of four motifs, but each one comes from a different tale, all of which were no doubt originally independent of one another. Esther contains two of the four motifs. Only the Joseph and Jehoiachin narratives, however, share a common constellation of motifs. In my view, then, Römer is correct in hearing echoes of the court tale genre in Jehoiachin's release. But his observation can be pushed even further: vv. 27–30 allude to a very specific court tale, namely, the Joseph story in Gen 40–41.

The correspondences, however, go beyond this cluster of motifs. Specific terminological and even idiomatic similarities – as already hinted at in the chart above – suggest that Joseph and Jehoiachin are closely related to one another. In particular, as John Harvey points out, the phrase, »he lifted the head« (*nš' ... 't r'š*) in v. 27 (cf. Jer 52,31) is »an association trigger«¹⁸ that calls attention to the only other text in which the idiom is used to refer to the review of a legal situation, namely Gen 40,13, a scene in the Joseph story in which Pharaoh's cupbearer is released around the time of Pharaoh's birthday. The following chart details where and how *nš'* and *r'š* are used together in the Hebrew Bible and demonstrates the rarity of this idiomatic phrase.

¹⁷ See below for a more in-depth discussion of the idiom *nš' r'š*, and its implications for the present argument.

¹⁸ Harvey, Jehoiachin and Joseph, 54.

To take notice of (in a legal sense)/review the case of ¹⁹	With reference to the enumeration of people or goods	As a description of independence, confidence, or defiance	With reference to the literal carrying of Saul's head after his death on Mt. Gilboa	Verses in which both terms occur but have no syntactical relationship to one another. These uses constitute non-idiomatic combinations of the terms.
Gen 40,13 (cf. 40,19,20); II Reg 25,27 // Jer 52,31	Ex 30,12; Num 1,2,49; 4,2,22; 26,2; 31,26 (counting booty).49	Jdc 8,28; Hi 10,15 ²⁰ ; Ps 24,9; 83,3; Sach 2,4	I Chr 10,9	Lev 16,21–22; Dtn 3,27; II Sam 20,21; I Chr 29,11; II Chr 24,11; Est 5,2; Hi 2,12; Jes 2,2; 9,14: 42,11; Thr 2,19; Ez 8,3; Mi 4,1

As this chart indicates, in only three biblical texts is the idiom *nš' + rš'* ever used to describe the review of a legal case, not to mention a release from prison: Gen 40,13 [cf. vv. 19–20]; II Reg 25,27 // Jer 52,31.²¹ When the idiom is used elsewhere, it clearly takes on very different connotations. For these reasons, the idiomatic usage of *nš' + rš'* in II Reg 25,27 is probably a subtle marker that points back to how the terms are used in the Joseph story.

The immediate literary context of II Reg 25 provides further evidence to support the claim that vv. 27–30 allude to the story of Joseph. After Gedaliah's murder at the hand of Ishmael son of Nethaniah in v. 25, we read that »all the people – young and old and the officers of the troops – entered Egypt, for they were afraid of the Chaldeans«. It is no mere coincidence that the verses immediately preceding vv. 27–30 specifically refer to a flight to Egypt from Canaan. Just as Jacob and his family went down to Egypt to escape drought in Canaan, so some 6th century Judahites fled to Egypt in order to escape the terrors of the Babylonian

¹⁹ For this definition, see Marcus, 'Lifting up the head', 21.

²⁰ For this interpretation of *nš' + rš'* in Hi 10,15, see D. J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, WBC 17, 1989, 249–250.

²¹ For further discussion of this idiom, see W. A. M. Beuken, *rš'*, TDOT, 1974 ff., 251.

empire. This reference to the flight to Egypt, then, may have served as yet another allusive marker, pointing the reader back to an earlier point in Israel's history, when it was forced to flee to the bountiful land of the Pharaohs.

David Marcus has recently emphasized that the release of the baker and the cupbearer in Gen 40–41 and that of Jehoiachin in II Reg 25 occur around significant royal celebrations. In the case of Pharaoh, the release of the baker and the cupbearer occurs on his »birthday« (*ywm hldt*, Gen 40,20). Jehoiachin, similarly, was released on Evil Merodak's accession year, *bšnt mlkw* (II Reg 25,27). The former celebrates the first days of the king's life, and the latter the first days of his reign. Such events, as Bob Becking emphasizes, were often occasions during which amnesty was offered to former enemies.²²

Finally, both the story of Joseph and the story of Jehoiachin are largely devoid of divine action. In the case of vv. 27–30 – admittedly a very short narrative – God is entirely absent. The actions of the characters, *prima facie*, are their own, not the result of divine influence or initiative. Although some might use this bit of negative evidence to argue for the non-deuteronomistic origins of vv. 27–30, it is also possible that the anthropocentric focus of these verses is modeled on the Joseph story, which reflects a similar degree of divine absence.²³ Similar views of divine involvement, then, mark both stories.

No single piece of evidence clinches the argument that Jehoiachin's release in II Reg 25,27–30 alludes to the Joseph story. When all of the pieces are gathered together, however, and considered as a whole, the evidence strongly suggests that II Reg 25,27–30 do in fact allude to Joseph's release in Gen 40–41.

2 Composition-Historical and Hermeneutical Implications

The allusion to Gen 40–41 in II Reg 25,27–30 raises a number of composition-historical and hermeneutical issues. Concerning compositional history, two points can be made. First, a number of scholars, including Ernst Würthwein, Walter Dietrich, Mordechai Cogan, Hayim Tadmor among others, argue that II Reg 25,27–30 were added secondarily to an earlier deuteronomistic edition

²² Becking, Jehoiachin's Amnesty, Salvation for Israel?, 174–189. See also A. Phillips, Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue, 1970, 27; D. N. Freedman / J. C. Geoghegan, Martin Noth: Retrospect and Prospect, in: S. L. McKenzie / M. P. Graham (eds.), The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth, JSOTSup 182, 1994, 128–152, 146; G. H. Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, New Century Bible Commentary, 1984, 646.649.

²³ Thanks are due to Thomas Römer, who shared this interesting observation with me.

of Kings (see footnotes below for citations). This proposal is supported by the almost 20-year chronological gap between Jehoiachin's release in 560 B.C.E. (vv. 27–30) and the murder of Gedaliah and the flight to Egypt only a short time after Jerusalem's fall in 586 B.C.E. (vv. 25–26) – moreover, vv. 25–26 are probably also secondary. As Jacob Wright helpfully points out, these verses stand in considerable tension with the preceding ones, insofar as they present »a population of aristocrats and notables in the land«, whereas vv. 11–12 indicate that only the poorest were left behind. V. 21, then, which states that »Judah went into exile from its land«, probably constitutes an older ending to Kings, as recent scholarship has suggested.²⁴ Such a decisive conclusion is entirely appropriate if one assumes, as Römer argues, that the NB edition of the »so-called Deuteronomistic History« reflects the impulse to »objectivize the crisis by the construction of a history, which provides the reasons for the breakdown of societal structures«.²⁵ In this reading, v. 21 is nothing less than the exilic Deuteronomist's epitaph on the tombstone of Judahite statehood – in other words, a stone cold statement that provides a rationale for Judah's dire fate. The verses that follow v. 21 (vv. 22–26, 27–30), then, constitute additions. It is worth noting that these additions – and especially vv. 27–30 – significantly revise the older ending in v. 21, insofar as they affirm »royal-dynastic continuity«,²⁶ whereas v. 21 offers a definitive, closing statement on Judahite kingship and statehood.

²⁴ See, e.g., W. Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 108, 1972, 140–143; R. E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, HSM 33, 1981, 35–36; Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 646; E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25*, ATD 11/2, 1984, 482.484; Cogan/Tadmor, *II Kings*, 329; J. A. Montgomery / H. S. Gehman, *The Book of Kings*, ICC, 1986, 559.564; Freedman / J. C. Geoghegan, Martin Noth, 142; T. Römer / A. de Pury, *Deuteronomistic Historiography*, in: A. de Pury / T. Römer / J.-D. Macchi (eds.), *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, 2000, 35; T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 2005, 177. See also C. T. Begg, *The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: A New Proposal*, JSOT 36 (1986), 49–56; M. A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment*, OBO 92, 1989, 270–271; J. L. Wright, *The Deportation of Jerusalem's Wealth and the Demise of Native Sovereignty in the Book of Kings*, in: B. E. Kelle / F. R. Ames / J. L. Wright (eds.), *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, 2011, 105–134, 109–110. For the argument that v. 26 is the original ending point, see K. Schmid, *Das Deuteronomium innerhalb der »deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke« in Gen–2Kön*, in: E. Otto / R. Achenbach (eds.), *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und Deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 206, 2004, 193–211, 209.

²⁵ Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 112.

²⁶ Wright, *The Deportation of Jerusalem's Wealth*, 105–133. For the subtle commensal politics involved at royal tables, see J. L. Wright, *Commensal Politics in Ancient Western Asia. The Background to Nehemiah's Feasting (Part I)*, ZAW 122 (2010), 212–233; *idem*, *Commensal Politics in*

Second, the allusion to the Joseph story in vv. 27–30 seems to reflect an enneateuchal literary setting, and one that included the Joseph story.²⁷ But vv. 27–30 not only reflect an enneateuchal context; I would submit that they also serve a very specific editorial function within that literary setting. By alluding to the Joseph story, the brief account of Jehoiachin's release is set against two horizons. On the one hand, Jehoiachin's release deals directly with the wellbeing of Judah and especially of its former king in exile. Jehoiachin's release constitutes the final report on the state of Judahite kingship in the Book of Kings. On the other hand, the allusive bridge that is built to the Joseph story brings to mind the broader history of the people of Israel – Jacob's family – with which the Hexateuch is primarily concerned (Gen+Ex–Jos). Both the family of Jacob at the end of Genesis and Jehoiachin find themselves in similar situations – enjoying the benevolence and bounty of a foreign ruler. I would suggest, then, that this bifocal aspect of vv. 27–30 is meant to draw together the once independent history of the people (i.e., the Hexateuch) with the once independent history of kingship (i.e., Sam–Reg).²⁸ As such, vv. 27–30 fit snugly within a network of late inner-enneateuchal links that have been noticed throughout the years, and most recently in the work of scholars like Reinhard Kratz, Konrad Schmid, Hans-Christoph Schmitt, Bernhard Gosse, etc., to name just a few.²⁹

Western Asia. The Background to Nehemiah's Feasting (Part II), ZAW 122 (2010), 333–352; *idem* / M. J. Chan, Feasting: From Kings to Communities, in: The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology, forthcoming.

²⁷ T. Römer similarly writes, »Ceci implique, par conséquent, que l'auteur de 2 R 25,27–30 se situe dans la perspective d'un Ennéateuque, ce qui explique également qu'il construise l'épisode conclusif du livre des Rois en écho à l'histoire de Joseph. Bien que le thème de la vie dans le pays demeure une question centrale dans la Torah et dans l'histoire deutéronomiste, la diaspora babylonienne apparaît désormais comme un aboutissement possible de l'histoire du peuple de Yhwh.« T. Römer, *La fin du livre de la Genèse et la fin des livres des Rois: ouvertures vers la Diaspora. Quelques remarques sur le Pentateuque, l'Hexateuque et l'Ennéateuque*, in: D. Böhler / I. Himbaza / P. Hugo (eds.), *L'Écrit et l'Esprit: Etudes d'histoire du texte et de théologie biblique en hommage à Adrian Schenker*, OBO 214, 2005, 294. For similar comments, see Schmid, *Das Deuteronomium innerhalb der »deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke«*, 209–210. In fact, v. 26 may already have the Enneateuch in view, insofar as it envisions a return to Egypt. See R. Friedman, *From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr¹ and Dtr²*, in: B. Halpern / J. Levenson (eds.), *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith (Festschrift Cross)*, 1981, 167–192.

²⁸ For summary statements on DtrR (*Richter*), the redactor responsible for the bridging of the Hexateuch and Samuel-Kings, see R. G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, 2005, 209–210.218–221.

²⁹ See, e.g., H.-C. Schmitt, *Das spätdeuteronomistische Geschichtswerk Genesis 1–2 Regum xxv und seine theologische Intention*, in: J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume*, Cambridge 1995, VTSup 66, 1997, 261–279; B. Gosse, *L'inclusion de l'ensemble Genèse – II Rois, entre la perte*

Connecting the end of Kings with the Joseph story also has important implications for how one interprets II Reg 25,27–30. As I stated in my introductory paragraphs, scholars have long wondered about what kind of ending the Book of Kings actually has. That this verse carries no theological weight at all, and is nothing more than a »tangent«,³⁰ is to my mind a questionable conclusion – even if God is not directly mentioned in the final three verses. The real issue is not *whether* the ending carries theological weight, but *what kind of theological weight* it carries. The allusive glance back to the Joseph story in vv. 27–30 offers an intriguing and hopeful option. But in my view, the hope these verses attempt to stir is not in the revivification of the Davidic dynasty and Judahite statehood. Scholars rightly question the arguments of von Rad and others, that II Reg 25,27–30 hearkens back to the dynastic promises given in II Sam 7.³¹ As Murray argues, there is not after all »the faintest trace in our text of (...) a son and potential successor.«³² Jehoiachin spends all his days in Babylon, with no successor in sight, nor is he given any sort of authority in Judah. There is no hope to be found in the Judahite monarchy. Rather, hope lies in the fact that the Book of Kings ends as Genesis does – with some of Israel in Egypt and with an impending new exodus that is signaled by the benevolent treatment of Jehoiachin. Israel's story moves, to re-appropriate a phrase from Friedman, »from Egypt to Egypt.«³³ The Book of Kings achieves its denouement on a note of hope that, at some point in the future, Israel would again experience a second exodus and a new opportunity to live in the land. Similar open-ended endings, which not only lean into the future but also more specifically into a future that includes Israel's inhabitation in and inheritance of the land, are found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible – for instance, at the end of Genesis (Gen 50,25–26), the conclusion of the Pentateuch (Dtn 34,1–4), and the final verses of Chronicles (II Chr 36,22–23).³⁴ These forward-

du jardin d'Eden et celle de Jérusalem, ZAW 114 (2002), 189–211; Kratz, The Composition of the Narrative Books, 186–210, 216–221; E. Aurelius, Zukunft jenseits des Gerichts: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zum Enneateuch, BZAW 319, 2004; K. Schmid, Buchtechnische und sachliche Prolegomena zur Enneateuchfrage, in: M. Beck / U. Schorn (eds.), Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum, BZAW 370, 2006, 4–5.

³⁰ See T. M. Troftgruben, A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within its Literary Environment, WUNT (2. Reihe) 280, 2010, 106.

³¹ See, e.g., T. Veijola, Martin Noth's *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* and Old Testament Theology, in: McKenzie / Graham (eds.), *History* (see above n. 23), 101–127, 126.

³² Murray, *Of all the Years the Hopes – or Fears?*, 263.

³³ Friedman, *From Egypt to Egypt*, 191.

³⁴ For a brief, but particularly insightful, discussion of these features in the Pentateuch, see D. J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., JSOTSup 10, 2001, 27–29. Thanks are due to Ziony Zevit for drawing my attention to the relevance of Clines' study for the present article.

leaning endings are often secondary additions that were created as literary joins to hold together that which precedes and proceeds from them. The exodus from Egypt, of course, is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible as a prototype for other, often future, salvific events – the most notable examples being from Deutero-Isaiah (see, e.g., Jes 43,16–21; 51,9–10; 52,7–12), with other occurrences of the theme elsewhere (Am 9,7; Mi 7,15, etc.).³⁵ It comes as no surprise, then, that the Book of Kings would conclude with an echo of Israel's exodus.

From the perspective of social context, one may also interpret the final verses of Kings as legitimation for the idea that the *gôlāh* community was the true inheritor of the promise of land.³⁶ Verse 21b, of course, achieves this as well when it claims that »Judah went into exile«, which suggests that those left behind were not members of Judah.³⁷ Verses 27–30 continue along similar lines, by implying that the hopeful future suggested by the final episode of Kings is for the true Judahites – that is, those who were exiled.

Finally, interpreting vv. 27–30 as pointing toward a second exodus also provides an explanation for why II Reg 25 lacks an end-of-era speech. Put simply, it did not need one, since vv. 27–30 were not meant to describe the end of an era. In fact, quite the opposite is true: they open the possibility of a new one.

Abstract: The release and exaltation of Jehoiachin in II Reg 25,27–30 is a puzzling conclusion to the history of the monarchy. As a result, interpretive proposals have been plentiful. This article makes three arguments. (1) In agreement with a number of other scholars, it is argued that vv. 27–30 allude to the story of Joseph's release from prison in Gen 40–41. (2) The identification of this allusion raises a number of composition-historical issues, including but not limited to the verses'

³⁵ See, e.g., B. W. Anderson, *Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah*, in: *idem* and W. Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, 1962, 177–195; B. W. Anderson, *Exodus and Covenant in Second Isaiah and Prophetic Tradition*, in: F. M. Cross / W. E. Lemke / P. D. Miller, Jr. (eds.), *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*, 1976, 339–360; J. Blenkinsopp, *Scope and Depths of the Exodus Tradition in Deutero-Isaiah*, 40–55, in: P. Benoit (ed.), *The Dynamism of Biblical Tradition*, Concilium 20, 1967, 41–50; H. M. Barstad, *A Way in the Wilderness: The »Second Exodus« in the Message of Second Isaiah*, *Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph* 12, 1989; S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, 1992; D. W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, *WUANT* 130, 2000.

³⁶ T. Römer, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah as a Supplement to the So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, in: D. V. Edelman / E. Ben Zvi (eds.), *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, 2009, 168–183, 172.

³⁷ Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 122.

possible relationship to a broader enneateuchal narrative. (3) Additionally, this allusion has hermeneutical implications: Just as Joseph's release from prison and exaltation were a prelude to Israel's original exodus from Egypt, so Jehoiachin's own release and exaltation may be interpreted as a prelude to a new exodus.

Résumé: La libération et l'élévation de Yoyakîn en II Rois 25,27–30 est une conclusion énigmatique de l'histoire de la monarchie, dont de nombreuses interprétations ont été proposées. Cette étude présente à ce sujet trois arguments: (1) Selon un certain nombre de chercheurs, les vv. 27–30 font allusion à la libération de Joseph en Gen. 40–41; (2) ce constat soulève une série de questions quant à l'histoire de la composition, notamment quant au possible lien de cette péricope avec une narration de l'Ennéateuque plus complète; (3) à ces implications herméneutiques s'ajoute celle-ci: de même que la libération de Joseph et son élévation représentent le point de départ de l'Exode d'Israël hors d'Égypte, ainsi la libération et l'élévation de Yoyakîn pourraient marquer le point de départ d'un nouvel Exode.

Zusammenfassung: Die Befreiung und Erhebung Jojachins in II Reg 25,27–30 ist ein rätselhafter Abschluss der Geschichte des Königtums. Dementsprechend sind die Interpretationsvorschläge vielfältig. Dieser Artikel stellt drei Argumente heraus: (1) Im Anschluss an eine Reihe anderer Gelehrter wird argumentiert, dass V. 27–30 auf die Geschichte von Josephs Freilassung aus dem Gefängnis in Gen 40–41 verweisen. (2) Die Feststellung dieser Anspielung wirft eine Reihe von kompositionskritischen Fragen auf, unter anderem die nach einer möglichen Beziehung der Verse zu einer umfassenderen Enneateuch-Erzählung. (3) Darüber hinaus hat diese Anspielung hermeneutische Implikationen: So wie Josephs Befreiung aus dem Gefängnis und seine Erhebung den Auftakt zum ursprünglichen Exodus Israels aus Ägypten bilden, so könnte Jojachins eigene Befreiung und Erhöhung als Auftakt zu einem neuen Exodus interpretiert werden.



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