

Summary

BUILT FROM MANY STONES

*An Analysis of N. Winther-Nielsen and A.G. Auld on Joshua with
Focus on Joshua 5:1–6:26*

The present study is a methodological investigation into the research methodologies employed by Winther-Nielsen and Auld as applied to the book of Joshua. The central question is how the choice of data influences their method and analysis. This study also explores what ‘stones’ the methods provide to ‘build’ a reading of the text in church and society, such as a sermon. The research further explores the practical need for ministers to have some knowledge of the choice of data and resultant influences.

Winther-Nielsen’s functional discourse grammar concentrates on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (chapter 2). This research utilizes a computer-aided syntactical analysis. An informed examination and resultant interpretation of rhetorical structure follows. The method enriches the possibilities of computerized analysis of Biblical Hebrew. I argued that the linking pin between the syntactical and rhetorical analysis is weak. Grammatical analysis alone does not provide a consistent structure for labeling using rhetorical codes as Winther-Nielsen does. His functional discourse grammar ends with a thematic reading resulting in quite a few themes which result from existing theories as well and thus are not unique to his analysis. However, the observation that stones are central at peak moments in the stories throughout the whole book of Joshua, like at the crossing of the Jordan and in Jericho, is a new gain of Winther-Nielsen’s work.

The method of Winther-Nielsen can as such be adapted for the exegesis of other Biblical Hebrew texts, but not for texts in other languages, because the method rests on grammatical assumptions that are particular to Biblical Hebrew. The synchronic focus on only one set of data as well as the resulting computerized analysis determines the syntactical theory of Winther-Nielsen and his conclusions on the book of Joshua. The focus on only the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* creates an artificial coherence that ignores the existence of other data and the process that brought the data to their present form. By choosing to rely solely on the Masoretic Text, Winther-Nielsen takes a stand in favour of traditional interpretation, but he does not examine the consequences of this choice.

Auld found Noth too restricted in his adherence to Hebrew textual evidence for the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History (chapter 3). Auld traced with the help of the Septuagint influences of Numbers in Joshua, but also of Chronicles — both more and different from the ones Noth concluded. Auld searches for the better 'original' witness, a text that is closest to the original text. He does so by focusing on how the text was constructed and can be reconstructed. Auld himself is not interested in the sole reconstruction of a near-pure text, rather the goal of his constant reconstruction is to unearth the most reliable edition. He therefore comes to a preference for the Septuagint for the book of Joshua. This focused preference for the Septuagint of Joshua is not new, but Auld contributes largely to its prominence in subsequent research, including that addressed here.

Comparison of the Septuagint with other data is the core process at the heart of Auld's method, which is thus in essence diachronic. Irregularities and differences between data show Auld that the (shorter) Septuagint of Joshua often serves as the better text witness. Auld's ideas on Joshua and its exegesis rely largely on his priority use of the Septuagint, an approach which runs contrary to most common scholarship. Because of this contradiction, a comparison between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text is also necessary for Auld to 'defend' his ideas against those who prefer the Masoretic Text. The textual evidence for the book of Joshua, especially the Septuagint, brought Auld to doubt the idea

of a Deuteronomist not only for Joshua, but also for other books. It also brought him to doubt the idea of a Deuteronomistic History in general. He finally comes to a non-linear, non-chronological reading of the books of the Old Testament and explores the idea of a common source, the Book of Two Houses for the shared material in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. Auld adds a new perspective to existing theories on the Deuteronomistic History however, his work does not result in a new theory accepted by many, but rather in a revised, critical reading of existing theories by most scholars, such as Cortese and Na'aman. Auld's assumption that the line of influence of Genesis to Kings was running from back to front, however, is new. This research shows that it is difficult to detect Auld's underlying methodology for the idea of a Book of Two Houses as well as for the primacy of the Septuagint and that certain elements in his theory are weakly supported.

A problem in the theory of Winther-Nielsen is the minimalisation of the focus on material, using only the Masoretic Text. Also the display of his results is too complicated to provide simple illumination of the research method and its results. The rather recent publication and the minimal number of publications available for review are other reasons which this thesis assumes to contribute to the absence of Winther-Nielsen's method in other scholarly work, except for that of Hess and Howard (chapter 4).

Responses to Auld's theory by other scholars for Joshua mainly contradict his priority of the Septuagint and his related ideas on the development of the text. Auld's idea of a Book of Two Houses underlying Chronicles and Samuel-Kings is also opposed by other scholars such as McKenzie and Talshir.

Analysis and comparison of the methods of Winther-Nielsen and Auld for their respective reading of Josh 5–6 showed their individual strengths and weaknesses (chapter 5). The matrix of Talstra is a tool to situate both methods in the exegetical process, especially in the analytical phase. The matrix displays the interaction and the position of the main theoretical disciplines in the analytical phase of the exegetical process. The main oppositions are of general (material) to special

(composition) and that of language (system) to literature (design). On the left side of the matrix one finds general linguistics and general theory of literature. On the right side the disciplines that interact more with the special features of a text, philology and exegesis are situated.

Winther-Nielsen's method is to be situated on the left side of the matrix, where general theories on linguistics and literature are prevalent. The other phases in the exegetical and analytical process require diachronic interaction, whereas these do not necessarily. Only incidental steps to the right side, with philology and exegesis, are made by Winther-Nielsen. Auld's method is focused most on the right side of the matrix, on philology and toward exegesis. Where Winther-Nielsen's method lacks a diachronic progression, Auld's method centers too much on phraseology and content and could do with more grammatical, syntactical analysis, particularly of the Greek text.

Progression of Winther-Nielsen and Auld to the respective other sides of the matrix would thus benefit both. For Winther-Nielsen the interpretation of the text and its hermeneutics would become clearer. For Auld a verdict on the text, especially the Septuagint, would have a more solid base and would be better to grasp, for it values the texts more in their own position. Counterarguments like an unnatural 'predilection' for the Septuagint or too much focus on the product of the translator could then be (partly) rejected.

A combined reading of the methods of both Winther-Nielsen and Auld would benefit the exegete, as stones build a house together. Nevertheless, it is unlikely due to the amount of time such a reading consumes (chapter 6). The method of Winther-Nielsen is especially valuable for the attention it pays to the syntactical structure of the text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and its rhetorical power. The method of Auld makes the exegete aware of the position of the book of Joshua within the Bible and the history of the text. The hermeneutical step, that is in fact the goal of exegesis, needs to be taken after the use of their material by the exegete himself. Awareness of what set of data is used when exegeting a biblical text is necessary because the data influence the method and its results, as careful study of the methods used by Winther-Nielsen and Auld show.

The exegesis of Joshua is like a building. Winther-Nielsen and Auld analyze the many stones of its foundation, the book of Joshua, working from oft-revised blueprints detailing its evolving form and its original structure. Winther-Nielsen sees a historic design but does not bother to detect the reconstructions. Auld is interested in the history of the building and focuses more on its reconstruction in order to understand what is going on in the building's present day employ. The methods of both Winther-Nielsen and Auld thus focus on the foundation, the form of the construction and the elements this is built from. However, the hermeneutical elements built upon the foundation and the elements that make the building habitable for modern day people and give it the finishing touch, are not part of their methods. These 'stones' belong to a different method. Both Auld and Winther-Nielsen raise, from their different perspectives, the awareness that the construction and the stones that build the book of Joshua are far from simple and therefore remain worth a closer look, especially for those of us preparing the building to have meaning for the congregation of tomorrow.