Ancient Israelite and
Early Jewish Literature
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE


The fact that both authors were already deceased at the time of translation, Vriezen in 1981 and van der Woude, who had continued and revised the latter’s work, in 2000, presented a number of challenges for the translator and burdened him with a greater degree of editorial responsibility than would have been the norm had the authors been available for consultation. Notwithstanding my endeavours to engage in mental conversation with Vriezen and van der Woude on the basis of the work provided here in translation and other relevant publications, frequent reference to Dutch native speakers with expertise in the field of biblical studies proved essential from time to time. I am thus grateful for the generous assistance provided by so many in this regard.

The New Revised Standard Version was used throughout for Scriptural quotations together with the most recent critical editions of relevant non-biblical texts where these were available.

All editorial decisions related to the present English translation were made in conjunction with F. García Martínez, who, after the death of van der Woude, edited the Dutch language version of the book. We take full responsibility for any potential misreading of the original Dutch text.

This translation was made possible in part by a generous subsidy provided by the Dutch Fund for Scientific Research (NWO). Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

Leuven, May 2004
Brian Doyle
Translator
A. ANCIENT ISRAELITE AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE
Modern text editions of the Hebrew Bible: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS), Stuttgart 1984 (a new text edition Quinta is in preparation). Translations of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) include the New Revised Standard Version (Oxford-New York 1989; employed for English quotations in the present volume unless otherwise stipulated); La Bible de Jérusalem (Paris 1973); Einheitsübersetzung (Stuttgart 1980); Traduction oecuménique de la Bible (TOB); Ancien Testament (Paris 1983); NBG (a new Dutch translation to be completed in 2004); KBS (second edition, Den Bosch 1995); Nije Fryske Bibeloersetting (Amsterdam-Boxtel 1978).

Hebrew inscriptions:

The primary source of our knowledge of Ancient Israelite literature is the Hebrew Bible, referred to in Christian circles as the Old Testament. The 39 books collected therein, however, constitute only

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1 For the Roman Catholic tradition, the Old Testament also includes the Apocryphal
a fraction of the literature produced by Ancient Israel. This fact is supported by the Old Testament itself, which frequently makes reference to literature that we no longer have at our disposal, details from which the biblical authors borrowed from time to time.

Among these lost works was the Book of the Righteous,\(^2\) which appears to have contained a number of ancient national songs. The document, which is quoted twice in the Old Testament, probably dates from the time of David and Solomon. The first quotation can be found in Josh. 10:12b–13a:

> “Sun, stand still at Gibeon,
> and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.”
> And the sun stood still,
> and the moon stopped,
> until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

The second quotation from the Book of the Righteous can be found in the context of David’s lament over Saul and Jonathan passed on to us in 2 Sam. 1:19–27:

> Your glory, O Israel lies slain upon your high places!
> How the mighty have fallen!
> Tell it not in Gath,
> Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
> Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
> the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult!
> You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor bounteous fields!
> For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
> the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more.
> From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
> the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
> nor the sword of Saul return empty.
> Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
> In life and in death they were not divided;
> they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.
> O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,

Books that are referred to as Deuterocanonical (see further the introduction to part III of the present volume). For our own purposes we will employ the concept Old Testament or Hebrew Bible in line with the Protestant tradition and its understanding of the contents thereof.

who clothed you with crimson, in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.
How the mighty have fallen, in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.
I am distressed for you, my brother, Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.
How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

If we are to believe the Septuagint (see chapter V for further infor-
mation on this Greek translation of the Old Testament), the words
spoken by Solomon on the occasion of the inauguration of the Temple
in Jerusalem quoted in 1 Kgs 8:12–13 also stem from the Book of
the Righteous:3

The Lord has said
that he would dwell in thick darkness.
I have built you an exalted house,
a place for you to dwell in forever.

An even older document, related to the Book of the Righteous, is the
no longer extant Book of the Wars of YHWH.4 The latter is quoted in
Num. 21:14–15, in a not altogether clear text that makes reference
to Wadi Arnon, which constituted the northern boundary of Moab
for many a year:

...Waheb in Suphah and the wadis.
The Arnon and the slopes of the wadis
that extend to the seat of Ar,
and lie along the border of Moab.

It is also possible that the so-called Song of the Springs in Num. 21:17–18
stems from the same source (see further below).

The well-known Song of Deborah,5 which has been transmitted to
us in Judges 5, may have belonged to this or a related collection of

3 The text is found in the Septuagint after 8:53 and speaks of “the book of the
song”. It would appear, however, that the translator incorrectly read the Hebrew
term ṣrō (“righteous”) as ṣywr (“song”).
4 Cf. W. H. Gispen, “Het boek van de oorlogen van Jahwe”, GTT 59 (1959),
129–137.
5 O. Grether, Das Deboralied, Gütersloh 1941; G. Gerleman, “The Song of Deborah
in the Light of Stylistics”, VT 1 (1951), 168–180; A. Weiser, “Das Deboralied—
eine gattungs- und traditionsgeschichtliche Studie”, JA 71 (1959), 67–97; H. P.
poetic works. This impressive poem is considered to be one of the earliest products of Ancient Israelite poetry dating most probably from the time of the judges or shortly thereafter. Next to David’s lament over Jonathan and Saul cited above, it constitutes a fine example of the high level of poetic artistry achieved by Ancient Israel in its earliest days. The conclusion of the poem offers an expressive portrayal of the way in which the mother of the battle general Sisera, who had been defeated by a few Israelite tribes, looks forward to the triumphant return of her son together with her ladies, not knowing that he has been killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite (cf. Judg. 4:17ff.):

Out of the window she peered, 
the mother of Sisera gazed through the lattice: 
“Why is his chariot so long in coming? 
Why tarry the hoof beats of his chariots”? 
The wisest ladies make answer, indeed, 
she answers the question herself: 
“Are they not finding and dividing the spoil? 
A girl or two for every man, 
spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera, 
spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered, 
two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil?”. 
(Judg. 5:28–30)

Besides poetic texts, Ancient Israel likewise possessed a number of historical works that have not been passed down to us. The Old Testament makes frequent reference, for example, to the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (cf., for example, 2 Kgs 15:31) and to the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (cf., for example, 2 Kgs 16:19), documents that were apparently composed in the form of an ongoing history of the northern and southern kingdoms respectively. Similar reference is made to the Book of the History of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:41), which may have taken the form of a biography intended to glorify the wisdom of the king. The story of Solomon’s wise judge-

ment passed on to us in 1 Kgs 3:16–28 and the description of the visit of the queen of Sheba in 1 Kgs 10:1–13 may have been borrowed from this document.

The author of Chronicles makes reference to the *Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel* (2 Chron. 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32) c.q. the *Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (2 Chron. 27:7; 35:27; 36:8), the *Book of the Kings of Israel* (1 Chron. 9:1; 2 Chron. 20:34), the *History of the Kings of Israel* (2 Chron. 33:18) and the *Explanation of the Book of Kings* (2 Chron. 24:27). While it is possible that these references apply to one and the same document, the latter should not be identified with the Old Testament books of 1–2 Kings.

The fact that prophetic legends circulated in written form in Ancient Israel is virtually beyond doubt. The narratives concerning Elijah and Elisha preserved in 1–2 Kings would appear, at least in part, to have been borrowed from such literature.

Independent documents are not being referred to, however, when the Chronicler speaks of the history of Samuel the seer (1 Chron. 29:29), the history of the prophet Nathan (1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29), the history of Gad the seer (1 Chron. 29:29), the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite (2 Chron. 9:29), the visions of Iddo the seer (2 Chron. 9:29), the history of Shemaiah the prophet (2 Chron. 12:15) etc. In each of these instances the author would appear to be referring to segments from the books of 1–2 Kings in which the aforementioned individuals feature.

It is also important to be aware of the fact that much of the Old Testament owes its existence to earlier material, even when no explicit mention is made thereof. The biblical authors regularly borrowed material from older sources, taking over what they considered to be of religious or other value from their *Vorlagen*. Given the aforementioned references to existing if no longer extant documents together with the literary traditions of the Ancient Near Eastern world, any suggestion that the biblical authors based themselves more or less exclusively on oral traditions is untenable.

What we have said so far should be sufficient to allow us to realise that the literature of Ancient Israel was much more extensive than that which has been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, the suggestion that the literature transmitted therein stems primarily from Judean authors and the stockpiling activities of Jerusalem based scholars, priests and sages, is also subject to serious doubt. Beside the temple in Jerusalem, the period of the kings also gave rise to two
state sanctuaries in the Northern Kingdom (Bethel and Dan), where there can be little doubt that literature was also produced over a period of several centuries. If one bears in mind, furthermore, that literature was also produced at the royal court and elsewhere, then one can imagine the true extent of Ancient Israel’s literary treasures and the fact that so much thereof has been lost to us.

As with much of the rest of the Ancient Near Eastern world, Israel committed a great deal of material to writing in the form of letters, lists of names, receipts, votive inscriptions etc. that cannot be considered literature in the narrow sense of the term. Archaeological discoveries have provided us with examples of such material which, given their cultural, historical and, on occasion, religious significance should not be left unmentioned.

The climate of Palestine is not conducive to the preservation of documents written on papyrus or leather. While it is true that we presently have papyri from the Persian period and the Ptolemaic kingdom (see further ch. XI) as well as leather or papyrus manuscripts from the beginning of the Common Era (the Dead Sea Scrolls: see further ch. XIV) at our disposal, such documents remain relatively late. With a few exceptions, the only texts that have survived from earlier periods are those that were written on durable material.

Dating from the twelfth century BCE, a potsherd inscribed with eighty or so letters was discovered at 'Izbet Sartah, near the ancient city of Apheq on the Saron plain. One of the lines of the inscription contains more or less the entire Hebrew alphabet. The text would appear to be a writing exercise.6

The so-called Agricultural Calendar of Gezer, written on white limestone, would appear to be similar in character. The text, which probably dates from the tenth century BCE and seems to have been copied by a schoolboy, makes reference to the annual sowing and harvesting seasons:7

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His two months are (olive) harvest,
His two months as planting (grain),
His two months are late planting;
His month is hoeing up the flax,
His month is harvest of barley,
His month is harvest and feasting;
His two months are vine-tending,
His month is summer fruit.

It is apparent from the text that the agricultural year commenced in September/October.

The Siloam Inscription,8 discovered by accident in 1880 six meters in front of the southern exit of the underground canal constructed between the waters of Gichon and the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem on the orders of King Hezekiah towards the end of the eighth century BCE (cf. 2 Chron. 32:30), contains the following:

[. . . when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: While [. . .] (were) still [. . .] axe(s), each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellow, for there was an overlap in the rock on the right [and on the left]. And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring towards the reservoir for 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head(s) of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.

Excavations conducted in 1967 at the trans-Jordanian Deir ‘Alla under the leadership of Dr. H. J. Franken produced numerous fragments of an Aramaic text inscribed in limestone plaster containing a prophetic narrative in which Bileam the son of Beor played a primary role (cf. Numbers 22–24). While the discovered text dates from the eighth century BCE, it would appear to be based on an earlier

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scroll. To give an impression of the content of this heavily damaged Bileam text\(^9\) we offer a segment thereof in translation:\(^{10}\)

(This is the writing (concerning Bile)am, (the son of Beo)r, the seer of the gods. The gods came to him by night (and they spoke to) him according to the declaration of [god] El. They spoke to (Bile)am, the son of Beor, as follows: ??... Then Bileam stood up in the morning... He was not able to eat; he fasted, as he wept bitterly. His people came to him and they spoke to Bileam, the son of Beor: Why do you fast? He spoke to them: Go and sit down! I shall tell you what the Shaddai(in . . .]. Well then, see what the gods are going to do. The god(s) came together and the Shaddai-gods held a meeting. They said to Sha(msh): May you break the bars of heaven, may there be darkness in your cloud and no glimmer of light, darkness (?) and not your shafts of light (?). May you ready terror (by) dark (clo)uds, but do not be wrathful forever! For the kestrel scoffs at the eagle, the vulture’s brood at the ostrich. The sto(r k . . .) the young of the falcon and the owl the heron’s chicks The swallow . . . the dove and the sparrow the . . . staff. Where the rod once strove to lead sheep, [now] hares devour the (g)ra... The (. . .) drink wine. The hyenas obey orders. The youth of . . . while (a . . .) laughs at the wise. A poor woman prepares myrrh ointment and a priestess . . .

The text is interesting for a variety of reasons. The Shaddai-gods who gave the sun god Shamsh permission to exercise judgement by allowing the waters of the heavenly ocean to have their freedom and to fall upon the earth, are reminiscent of the term El Shaddai, which is frequently used in the Old Testament for the God of the patriarchs (NRSV: “God, Almighty”). Bileam gives notice of the terrors about to overcome the people as the world is order thrown into reverse: interaction between the birds is completely confused, the


\(^{10}\) The translation (our own) is open to discussion at points on account of the extremely fragmentary character of the text.
grasslands have been handed over to the hares; the wise are the object of laughter and a poor woman prepares costly ointment!

While opinions differ as to the Israelite origin of the Bileam text, the Mesha Stone from the Moabite city of Dibon is clearly not Israelite.\(^{11}\) The latter text is inscribed on a stele of black basalt and contains a description of the victory of King Mesha, a contemporary of Ahab and his sons (cf. 2 Kgs 3:4ff), over Israel around the middle of the ninth century BCE. Up to the present, the inscription constitutes the most important textual source of our knowledge of the Moabite language, which is closely associated with Hebrew. It deserves special mention on account of its remarkably close agreement with Ancient Israelite historiography as will be evident from the following translation:

I am Mesha, the son of Chemosh-[. . .], king of Moab, the Dibonite—my father reigned over Moab for thirty years, and I reigned after my father,—(who) made this high place for Chemosh in Qarhoh [. . .] because he saved me from all the kings and caused me to triumph over all my adversaries. As for Omri, king of Israel, he humbled Moab many years (lit., days), for Chemosh was angry at his land. And his son followed him and he also said, “I will humble Moab.” In my time he spoke (thus), but I have triumphed over him and over his house, while Israel hath perished for ever! Omri had occupied the land of Medeba, and (Israel) had dwelt there in his time and half the time of his son (Ahab), forty years; but Chemosh dwelt there in my time [lines 1–9].

And Chemosh said to me, “Go, take Nebo from Israel!” So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Ashstar-Chemosh. And I took them from the [. . .] of Yahweh, dragging them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel had built Jahaz, and he dwelt there while he was fighting against me, but Chemosh drove him out before me. And I took from Moab two hundred men, all first class (warriors), and set them against Jahaz and took it in order to attach it to (the district of) Dibon [lines 14–21].

Fragments of the *Tel Dan Inscription*\(^ {12}\) discovered in 1993–1994 and dating from the second half of the twelfth century BCE are also of


\(^{12}\) W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, *The Context of Scripture. Monumental Inscriptions*
great significance. The inscription is associated with King Hazael of Damascus, mentioned in 2 Kgs 8:7–15, and recounts how he killed Joram the king of Israel and Ahaziah the king of Judah:


The content of the inscription only agrees in part with what we are told of Joram and Ahaziah in 2 Kgs 8:28–29 and 9:16–29, which maintains that Jehu was responsible for the death of both kings. It is not improbable, however, that Hazael wanted to take the credit for the definitive elimination of Joram and Ahaziah, based on the injuries he inflicted on Joram during the battle described in 2 Kgs 8:28. The inscription is evidently nothing more than a propagandist bluff.13

Archaeological excavations have provided us with a great many ostraca (potsherds) inscribed as a rule with ink (a few are engraved). Particular mention deserves to be made of the ostraca that stem from the royal palace of Samaria, the so-called Lachish Letters, the Arad Ostraca and the Complaint of Mesad Hashavyahu.

The more than one hundred Samaria Ostraca14 discovered in 1910 consist for the most part of receipts for the delivery of oil and wine
in the ninth, tenth, and fifteenth year of the reign of an unnamed
king who should probably be identified with Jeroboam II (786–746
BCE). The interpretation of the short texts they contain is difficult
and up to the present has not led to much agreement among schol-
ars (accounts of tithes that were delivered to the royal palace in
kind? Receipts for products from the royal domains intended for the
use of the court? Memoranda concerning palace supplies?). The
ostraca do not only provide valuable topographical information,they are also useful for the study of personal names.

The potsherds inscribed with a number of letters (and a few lists
of names) discovered during excavations at Lachish in 1935 are also
of interest. They contain, among other things, the correspondence
between Hoshaiah, the commandant of a military post in the neigh-
bourhood of Lachish, and Yaosh, apparently the city’s commanding
officer; the letters date from the period immediately prior to
Nebuchadnezzar’s expedition against Jerusalem in 588, which was
to lead to the fall of the city a year later in 587 BCE. They give
the impression that while the situation in Judah was tense, the
Babylonians had not yet entered the land: unhindered movement
between West Judean garrison towns and Jerusalem was still possi-
ble and a Judean army commander would be at liberty to travel to
Egypt. While some scholars maintain on the basis of a single ostra-
con that the remainder were written at a point in the campaign
when, beside Jerusalem, only the strongholds of Lachish and Azekah
continued to offer any resistance to the Babylonians (cf. Jer. 34:7),

An Early Witness to Hebrew Writing”, BiAr 45 (1982), 229–239; G. I. Davies,

15 M. Noth, “Der Beitrag der samaritanischen Ostraka zur Lösung topographi-
cher Fragen”, PJ 1932, pp. 54–67. The districts referred to in the ostraca have a
parallel in the Old Testament lists of the generations of Manasseh (cf. Num. 26:29–34

16 Side by side with names of Egyptian origin, the ostraca also contain personal
names in combination with Baal and (an abbreviated version of) יְהוָה.

17 ANET, 321–322; KAI II, 189–199; H. Torczyner, Lachish I, The Lachish Letters,
Phoenix 26 (1980), 6–47; K. A. D. Smelik, op. cit., 1984, pp. 112–126; J. Renz,
op. cit., I, 1995, pp. 405–440. The letters are numbered in scientific literature.
Numbers 10, 14, 15 and 21 are virtually illegible. Number 20 is an inscription on
a pot. Numbers 1, 11, 19 and 22 are lists of personal names.
the letter in question (nr. 4) would appear rather to refer to military preparations in view of an imminent Babylonian attack:

May Yahweh cause my lord to hear this very day tidings of good! And now according to everything that my lord hath written, so hath thy servant done; I have written on the door according to all that my lord hath written to me. And with respect to what my lords hath written about the matter of Beth-haraphid, there is no one there.

And as for Semachiah, Shemaiah hath taken him and hath brought him up to the city. And as for thy servant, I am not sending anyone thither [today (?), but I will send] tomorrow morning.

And let (my lord) know that we are watching for the signals of Lachish, according to all the indications which my lord hath given, for we cannot see Azekah.\(^{18}\)

Reference is made in another letter (nr. 3) to a written warning from a prophet. Whether this letter alludes (as is often thought) to Jeremiah or Uriah (cf. Jer. 26:20–23) remains unclear:

Thy servant Hoshaiah hath sent to inform my lord Yoash: May Yahweh cause my lord to hear tidings of peace! And now thou hast sent a letter, but my lord did not enlighten thy servant concerning the letter which thou didst send to thy servant yesterday evening, though the heart of thy servant hath been sick since thou didst write to thy servant. And as for what my lord said, “Dost thou not understand?—call a scribe!”, as Yahweh liveth no one hath ever undertaken to call a scribe for me; and as for any scribe who might have come to me, truly I did not call him nor would I give anything at all for him!

And it hath been reported to thy servant, saying, “The commander of the host, Coniah son of Elnathan, hath come down in order to go into Egypt; and unto Hodaviah son of Ahijah and his men hath he sent to obtain... for him.”

And as for the letter of Tobiah, servant of the king, which came to Shallum son of Jaddua through the prophet, saying, “Beware!”, thy servant hath sent it to my lord.

The roughly 170 ostraca discovered at Arad,\(^{19}\) a city in Southern Judah, between 1962 and 1967 (a few in later years) and written partly in

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\(^{18}\) If reference is being made here to the fall of Azekah (as is sometimes presumed), the text would probably have read: “we can no longer see Azekah”.

Aramaic and partly in Hebrew are likewise worthy of note. The Aramaic texts date from around 400 BCE, contain lists of goods and persons, and stem from the Persian garrisons encamped at Arad at that time. The Hebrew texts bring us to the pre-exilic period, during which time Arad was an important Judean stronghold. The so-called archives of Eliashib, who was commander of the stronghold around 600 BCE, speak of (the provision of rations for) “Kittites”, mercenaries of Greek origin, and of military ordinances to be observed with a view to potential incursions on the part of Edom.

Of a different nature in terms of its content, the Juridical Plea from Mesad Hashavyahu, discovered in 1960 one and a half kilometres south of Yavneh-Yam, is likewise written on an ostracon. The text dates from the seventh century BCE and contains the complaint of an agricultural labourer who apparently worked on one of the royal estates that served to supply provisions for a military fort. The labourer lodges his complaint against the foreman who, on a particular day, had taken his cloak from him and not returned it before nightfall (in breach of Exod. 22:26–27 [Hebr. 22:25–26] and Deut. 24:12–13, cf. Amos 2:8):

Let my lord commander hear the case of his servant! As for thy servant, thy servant was harvesting at Hazar-susrim (?). And thy servant was (still) harvesting as they finished the storage of grain, as usual before the Sabbath. While thy servant was finishing the storage of grain with the harvesters, Hoshaiah son of Shobai came and took thy servant’s mantle. (It was) while I was finishing with my harvesters (that) this one for no reason took thy servant’s mantle. And all my companions will testify on my behalf—those who were harvesting with me in the heat (?) [. . .] all my companions will testify on my behalf! If I am innocent of guilt, let him return my mantle, and if not, it is (still) the commander’s right to take [my case under advisement (?) and to send word] to him [(asking) that he return the] mantle to thy servant. And let not [the plea of his servant] be displeasing to him!

A further petition of unknown origin, although likewise dated by its publishers in the seventh century BCE, is of disputed authenticity. The text is written by a widow:

May יְהֹוָה bless you in peace. Well now, my lord, may the (supervisor) give ear to (his) maidservant. My husband is dead. There are no children. Let your hand be with me and may you give into the hand of your maidservant the inheritance you promised to Amasyahu. And the cornfield that is in Na‘ama, may you give to his brother.

The following text, the authenticity of which is similarly in doubt, is by the same hand:

As 'Ashyahu the king (has) commanded you to give in the hand of Zakaryahu silver of Tarshish for the house of Yahweh: three shekels.

A papyrus discovered at Saqqara (near Memphis) in 1942 and dating from around 600 BCE, contains a request on the part of the Philistine king Adon (possibly the ruler of Ekron) inviting the pharaoh to send military assistance against the advancing Babylonian army. The text of the Letter of Adon is only partly preserved and is written in Aramaic:

To the Lord of Kings, the Pharaoh, your servant 'Adon, the king of [Ashkelon. May X, the Lord of] the heavens and earth and Ba‘alsha-mayn, [the great] god, [seek the welfare of my lord at all times and make the throne] of Pharaoh (as) enduring as the days of heaven. Since

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23 King Josiah is probably intended here. An inscription stemming from Kuntillet 'Ajrud makes reference to King [8y]w and would appear to intend King Joash of Israel (see 2 Kgs 13:10–13). Here also (if the text reconstruction is correct) the consonants have been transposed.

24 Cf. 2 Chron. 24:20; 35:8.


the troops] of the king of Babylon have come (and) have arrived (at) Aphek, and have encamped [. . . .] and have taken [the Lord of Kings, the Pharaoh, knows that [your] servant [cannot withstand him. May my lord be pleased] to send an army to rescue me. May [the Lord of Kings, the Pharaoh], not forsake m[e, for] your servant has guarded [his oath] and his good relations.

Included among the documents found at Wadi Murabba‘at in the Judean desert (see further ch. XIV) is a palimpsest (a sheet of papyrus upon which a new text is written after the original text has been scratched away) dating from the seventh century BCE and containing the remains of a letter and a list of personal names together with a number of grain measures.\(^{27}\)

Two silver plates discovered in 1979 in a grave at the Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem and containing, almost word for word, an Old Hebrew text of the so-called Aaronic Blessing of Num. 6:24–26, can be dated according to the archaeological context to the seventh century BCE.\(^{28}\) It is extremely probable that the plates in question once served as amulets.

The text of a memorial inscription discovered at Khirbet el-Kôm, fourteen kilometers west of Hebron\(^{29}\) and dating from the eighth century BCE is exceedingly interesting on account of the fact that it makes reference not only to \(\text{y}h\text{w}h\) but also to his Asherah.\(^{30}\) In Ugarit (see further ch. II), Asherah was the wife of the god El and


the mother of the gods. In the Old Testament, however, the term not only refers to a goddess (cf. 1 Kgs 15:13; 2 Kgs 21:7, 23:7), it is also used to refer to a cultic symbol (stylised, cf. Deut. 16:21).\[31\] While the translation of the inscription in question is open to dispute, the following provides the gist of its content:

Uriyahu the rich wrote it. Blessed be Uriyahu by Yahweh. For from his enemies by his (YHWH’s) asherah he (YHWH) has saved him... by Oniyahu... and by his asherah... his a[sh]erah.

The use of the possessive pronoun (“his Asherah”) in this instance does not exclude the possibility of interpreting “Asherah” as a personal name.\[32\] The text conclusively reveals that at least in certain circles, Yahwism was not completely monotheistic in the period of the kings and that YHWH and Asherah were worshiped as a divine couple. The religion of El clearly continued to influence Yahwism for several centuries.

Reference is likewise made to YHWH and his Asherah in texts found on potsherds of storage jars discovered during an Israeli excavation at Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd\[33\] (“hill of the water source”), a stopping point in the Sinai desert roughly fifty kilometers south of Kades Barnea, in 1975–1976. The texts date from the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the eighth century BCE and contain a number of letter headings:

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\[31\] The first register on the cultic standard found in Tenak (illustrated in B. Becking and M. Dijkstra (eds.), *Eén God alleen...?*, Kampen 1998, p. 55) contains the figure of a naked woman (= Asherah) flanked by two lions. The third register contains a tree symbolising the goddess, likewise flanked by two lions, with he-goats grazing at either side.


Utterance of 'Ashyaw the king: “Say to Yehallel and to Yaw‘asah and to [. . .]: ‘I bless you by the name of Yahweh of Samariah and his asherah!’”.

Utterance of 'Amaryaw, “Say to my lord: ‘Is it well with you? I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and his asherah. May he bless you and keep you, and may he be with my lord!’”

In the same way as we speak of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Montserrat, Yahweh would appear to be associated with specific locations in these texts (cf. El-bethel in Gen. 35:7).

One of the texts inscribed in plaster and found at the same location also mentions Yahweh and his Asherah:

... length (?) of days and may they satisfy (him [?] with all the good things whereby) Yahweh (and) his Asherah have blessed (him)...

A further (poetic) text that has survived in fragmentary form makes reference to the Canaanite gods El and Baal:

... when El appears on the tops of the mountains..., 
... then the mountains melt and the hills are crushed
... and my god has uprooted...
... to bless Baal on the day of battle...
... to bless the name of El on the day of battle...

Alongside the aforementioned texts, we also possess ostraca from Tel Qasile, Hazor and the Ophel of Jerusalem as well as numerous inscriptions on stamps and seals, designation on weights and inscriptions on utensils together with graffiti and grave inscriptions. While it would be impossible in the present context to offer a broader treatment of such material, exception must be made of the seal of Shema, the courtier of King Jeroboam II, with its inscription “[property] of Shema, servant of Jeroboam”, and the embossed seals (bullae) published by Avigad and dating from the time of the prophet Jeremiah, one of which contains reference to the latter’s friend and secretary Baruch.

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Special mention ought also to be made of the graffiti discovered in 1961 in a grave near Khirbet Beit Lei, eight kilometers east of Lachish and dating from the seventh century BCE. The following are included among these short texts:

Yahweh is the god of the whole earth.
The highlands of Judah belong to the god of Jerusalem.
Intervene, O compassionate god!
Absolve, O Yahweh!

For the numerous Jewish texts stemming from the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods see chapters XI–XIV.

CHAPTER TWO

ANCIENT ISRAELITE LITERATURE IN ITS ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CONTEXT

The important archaeological discoveries that were made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Near East have shed significant new light on Ancient Israelite literature in general and on the Old Testament in particular. Where commentators in the past endeavoured to understand the Old Testament as an entirely unique document, archaeological discoveries have made it apparent that the literary genres encountered in the Hebrew bible exhibit, as a rule, various degrees of kinship with other Ancient Near Eastern literature. The characteristics that the documents of the Old Testament share with those stemming from the Mesopotamian, Hittite, Egyptian and Canaanite world are numerous indeed. For this reason we are obliged to admit that from the literary perspective the Old Testament is an Ancient Near Eastern book. This, of course, is hardly surprising. Ancient Israel did not exist in cultural isolation with its own typical and entirely unique civilisation. On the contrary, the mediation of Canaanite urban culture and the presence of merchants, diplomats, migrants
and soldiers of foreign origin saw to it that Israel did not remain untouched by the highly developed civilisations of its Umwelt.

Points of agreement between Ancient Israelite and remaining Ancient Near Eastern literature establish the latter as the pre-eminent commentary on Israel’s literary heritage. Impressive as this literary kinship may be, however, one must not lose sight of the fact that significant differences exist between the Old Testament and the remaining literature of the region. The study of the latter tends rather to focus our attention on the distinctive features of the Old Testament, especially the unique religious tradition to which it gives voice.

After George A. Smith (1840–1876) announced in the second half of the nineteenth century that the flood narrative from the eleventh song of the Gilgamesh Epic (see below) exhibited significant agreements with Genesis 6–9, much attention was not only drawn to study of Assyriology but the starting volleys were fired for what came to be known as the Babel-Bibel-Streit, a dispute that was to rage in Germany between 1902 and 1920. Those who engaged in the Babel-Bibel-Streit tended either to exaggerate the agreements between Assyrian-Babylonian texts and the Old Testament or to trivialise them. Renowned Assyriologists such as Peter Jensen (1861–1936) and Friedrich Delitzsch (1850–1922) concluded from the surprising discoveries in Mesopotamia that the literature of the Old Testament constituted a late layer of Ancient Near Eastern literature as a whole. The ideas proposed by these scholars were shared by the so-called pan-Babylonian school, to which names such as Hugo Winckler (1863–1913) and Alfred Jeremias (1864–1935) were to become associated.

Just as the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a not infrequent tendency to overestimate the value of Assyrian-Babylonian material for the interpretation of the Old Testament, so the discoveries of Ancient Canaanite texts at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) in northern Syria (since 1929) led to a similar tendency. Numerous exegetes of the Hebrew Bible have rightly warned against so-called pan-Ugaritism and the suggestion that Ugarit provided a unique key to our understanding of the Old Testament. The evident importance of the texts found at Ugarit for our understanding of the religious history and literature of Ancient Israel should likewise not blind us to the unique features of Ancient Israelite religion and the Old Testament.

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The fact that important archaeological discoveries, especially with respect to otherwise unknown texts, were cause for enthusiasm is quite understandable. It remains surprising, nevertheless, that initial excitement often led to an overvaluation of the significance of such finds. The unearthing of texts on clay tablets from Mesopotamia and Ugarit and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (see further ch. XIV) have taught us, however, that many of our initial conclusions often have to be abandoned on further inspection. It seems appropriate, therefore to temper initial enthusiasms by maintaining a degree of detachment in order to allow for the evaluation of the true value of new discoveries. The same caution will have to be observed with respect to the texts discovered (since 1969) at Ebla (Tell Mardich) in Northern Syria. The texts in question date from the third millennium BCE and are written for the most part in Sumerian, a west Semitic dialect akin, however, to (later) Hebrew.

In spite of the many points of agreement, it remains worthy of note that the Old Testament, which bears the hallmark of orthodox Yahwism, rarely if ever employs certain literary genres. Epic poems and myths, for example, are almost entirely absent, while self-aggrandizement inscriptions and omen literature are completely lacking.

Next to the epic and mythic literature, which is richly represented in Sumerian, Assyrian-Babylonian, Hittite and Ugaritic writings, the Old Testament has little to offer of a similar status. Epic literature in the strict sense of the word is lacking (as would also appear to be the case in the Egyptian literature we have at our disposal). Some scholars have maintained that this literary genre can be reconstructed on the basis of Old Testament transmission, but their hypotheses have remained unconvincing. While it is true that the Old Testament

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does contain a number of fragments (e.g. 2 Sam. 21:15–22; 23:8–23) that would appear to point in the direction of hero glorification, it is striking that even these text segments emphasise the fact that the victory they narrate is to be ascribed to יְהוָּה and not to some human agent (2 Sam. 23:10,12). Narratives likewise exist that exhibit elements of epic style, such as those concerning a number of judges (Gideon, Jephthah, Samson) and David (especially the narrative of his struggle with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17), but these, once again, do not constitute epic literature in the strict sense of the term. Indeed, the specific character of Israel's religion would appear to have impeded the development of this literary genre. Figures such as Gideon, Jephthah and Samson tend to be portrayed as emissaries sent and inspired by God rather than as heroes in their own right.

Myths have been similarly limited by the Yahwistic character of the Old Testament. In spite of the fact that the occasional echo of a mythical element can still be discerned (cf., for example, the paradise narrative of Genesis 2–3, Job 26:12; Ps. 89:11; Isa. 51:9; Ezek. 28:12ff), such material tends, for the most part, either to have been eliminated or historicized (cf. Gen. 6:1ff).

No single example of the copious self-aggrandisement inscriptions found in Mesopotamia and Egypt, which are written in the first person and tend to glorify the king and his heroic deeds, can be found in Ancient Israel. This fact can also be explained on the basis of Israel's spiritual awareness, which placed historiography in the light of an ethical and religious pragmatism and valued the monarchy in its particular way: Yahwism tended to perceive the ideal king as servant rather than son of God, more as servant of the people rather than absolute monarch.

The Old Testament similarly lacks examples of the omen literature richly represented in the Mesopotamian Empire and the countless incantation texts found throughout the Ancient Near Eastern world. Once again this absence can be ascribed to the specific character of Yahwistic religion that firmly abjured the use of magic and the consultation of the dead from its earliest beginnings (cf. Lev. 19:31 and 1 Sam. 28:3b).

Having confirmed the virtual or total absence of a number of Ancient Near Eastern literary genres in the Old Testament, however, our attention must also be drawn to the specific nature of those

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literary genres that Israel did have in common with its Umwelt. Besides its historiography, Old Testament prophetic literature also appears in many respects to have had its own unique character. Other Ancient Near Eastern peoples have passed on their numerous historical texts in the form of annals and inscriptions that portray the military operations, temple building and other major deeds ascribed to their respective monarchs. While the gods evidently had a role to play in such activities (cf. for example, the Mesa inscription referred to in the preceding chapter), sufficient latitude clearly remained for the personal glorification of the king and his reported deeds. In comparison, the historiography of the Old Testament, with its Yahwistic inspiration and prophetic spirit, is both critical and “democratic”. Indeed, the Old Testament does not only refer to the kings and their great deeds, it also focuses significant attention on the role of the prophets and men of God. Monarchs were placed under prophetic critique in a manner unique in the Ancient Near Eastern world. A familiar example of this tendency can be found in the prophet Nathan’s chastisement of David in 2 Sam. 12:1–14.

Counter to the thesis of Von Rad (Theologie des Alten Testaments I, Munich 1957, p. 112), which maintains that both the literature of the Old Testament and the faith of Israel are “grundsätzlich geschichtstheologisch fundiert”, Vriezen (Kerk en Theologie 16 (1965), 97–113, 210–218) proposed that the Ancient Israelite credo was more likely to be found in texts such as 1 Kgs 18:39, Exod. 34:6ff. and Deut. 6:4. Vriezen placed particular accent on the fact that the prophetic word in the Old Testament precedes God’s intervention in history, even although the latter confirms the former. In his study History and the Gods, Lund 1967, B. Albrektson insisted that other Ancient Near Eastern peoples besides Israel were also acquainted with genuine historiography. His thesis was countered by W. G. Lambert, Destiny and Divine Intervention in Babylon and Israel, OTS 17 (1972), 65–72, who maintained that the Babylonians (and others) lacked any theological perspective (cf. also A. L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, Chicago/London 1964, 19725, pp. 19–20). Israel was unique in attaining a continuous portrayal of human history because its faith in the one God made it possible to conceptualise creation, history and future in a single vision. While the Ancient Near Eastern world evidently possessed prophetic texts that may shed light on the phenomenon of prophecy in Ancient Israel, points of agreement between the two remain, nevertheless, of a primarily formal nature. We will return to this matter in our introduction to the classical prophetic literature of the Old Testament in ch. IX.

We conclude the present chapter with a brief survey of the most significant points of contact exhibited by the Old Testament with
the Ancient Near Eastern world. Attention will be drawn in this regard to literary as well as religious and historical data that are important for a better understanding of the Old Testament.

At the very beginning of the Hebrew Bible, the *proto-history* of Genesis 1–11 constitutes an important location for comparative literary and religio-historical research. The Babylonian epic *Enuma Elish* (“when the skies above . . .”), the first words of this creation narrative dedicated to the glorification of the god Marduk offers a prime illustration of the different way in which the Babylonian world and the Old Testament conceptualised and related the beginning of the world and of the human race. In the Babylonian epic, the birth of the gods and the polemic between them precedes the creation of the world and of humanity, a theme that is completely surpassed in Genesis. Monotheistic Yahwism had, per definition, no place for theogony or any form of battle between the gods.

The Babylonian *Gilgamesh Epic*, which has its roots in the Sumerian tradition, relates the adventures of Gilgamesh, the king of Erech and his friend Enkidu, who lives initially as primal human being with the animals of the field but later achieves wisdom (culture) through contact with a woman. After the death of Enkidu, Gilgamesh departs

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profoundly dismayed in search of the ‘food of life’ that “makes the aged young again”. While he initially succeeds in his search, he is later robbed of his discovery by a snake. He is directed to the ‘food of life’ by Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, to whom the gods had granted eternal life. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the flood that (as we noted above) exhibits striking parallels with Genesis 6–9 (eleventh song of the Gilgamesh Epic).

The Atrahasis Epic is of similar importance with respect to the primal history of the Old Testament. It narrates the creation of human beings, their task as servants of the gods, their enormous increase, the noise they made which irritated the gods (especially Enlil) and the flood sent to punish them. What is striking here is the fact that both creation and the flood are treated together. Only Atra-Hasis and his family survive, having been warned of the flood in advance by the god Enki who advised him to build a ship (Cf. Genesis 6–8).

The flood is also a prominent element in the “Sumerian King List”, dating from the second millennium BCE, which contains the names of 140 rulers who governed in succession in Mesopotamia before and after the flood. The reigns ascribed to the kings who lived prior to the flood are exorbitantly lengthy (some for tens of thousands of years). The list is illustrative of similar lists found in Genesis 5 (and 11), in which the patriarchs are ascribed similarly long years.

Of similar interest is the passage contained in the Sumerian epic “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, which speaks of a forthcoming “unscrewing” of languages in contrast to the (Babylonian) confusion of languages referred to Gen. 11:1–9. Through the intervention of Enki, the god of wisdom, the language of humanity will become one (cf. also Isa. 19:18): Sumerian.

We have also been brought a step closer to the Narratives of the Patriarchs by the so-called Mari Letters. Mari was a city located at

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the central section of the Euphrates, which experienced prosperity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries BCE. The thousands of clay tablets discovered at the Mari royal palace provide us with interesting information concerning the history of the period, its prevailing social structures and use of personal names. Rites for the establishment of covenants, which are reminiscent of Genesis 15, and theophoric names written, for example, in combination with Jaʿqub (Jacob), together with the mention of the “city of Nahor” (cf. Gen. 24:10) are evocative of the period of the patriarchs.13

The contents of the clay tablets discovered at Nuzi, a city located roughly thirteen kilometers south west of present day Kirkuk,14 have also been quoted by several scholars to help explain a variety of customs dating from the time of the patriarchs. Special mention of E. A. Speiser’s commentary on Genesis (AB 1, 1964) should be made in this regard. Recent publications, however, have increasingly tended to call the accepted parallels into doubt.15

The El Amarna Letters16 from the archives of the pharaohs Amenophis III and Amenophis IV/Ichnaton (around the beginning of the

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fourteenth century BCE), discovered in Egypt in 1887 and written in Akkadian, the language of international diplomacy of the day, stem for the most part from Egyptian vassals in Canaan. The letters provide us with material concerning the geographical, historical and cultural circumstances in Canaan prior to the arrival of the Israelites. Canaanite glosses in the letters, moreover, afford us interesting information concerning the language spoken in the land at that time.\(^\text{17}\)

Of special interest are the references that the texts contain concerning the Hapiru. In spite of the fact that scholars have frequently identified the Hapiru with the Hebrews, the term would appear rather to refer to fugitive outlaws who passed their days as bandits beyond the control of the city authorities. As such, therefore, the term does not apply to an ethnically defined group. The Hapiru are also referred to in Babylonia, Ugarit (‘pr) and Egypt (‘pr.w).\(^\text{18}\)

The texts unearthed since 1929 at the Northern Syrian site of Ugarit and dating from the period between 1400 and 1200 BCE\(^\text{19}\)


are also of interest, at least in part, for the study of the patriarchal period.\textsuperscript{20}

Special attention should be afforded in this regard to the \textit{Baal-Anat Cycle},\textsuperscript{21} in which El\textsuperscript{22} is referred to as the king of the gods and presented in the form of a bull as symbol of his enormous procreative capacities. The god Baal,\textsuperscript{23} the son of Dagon (Judg. 16:23; 1 Sam. 5:2ff), is similarly represented as having intercourse with the goddess Anat who is portrayed as a cow.\textsuperscript{24} Baal is the lord of fertility and identical to the west Semitic rain and storm god Hadad.
He defeated prince Sea (Nahar) and Lotan (Leviathan), the “twisting serpent” (cf. Ps. 74:14; Isa. 27:1). The god of fertility, however, was forced into albeit temporary defeat at the hands of Mot (Death) and his descent into the underworld heralded a period of drought on earth. After a period of time, Mot likewise tasted defeat and Baal was freed to resume his royal dominion. The text would appear for the most part to refer to a fertility myth representing the course of the seasons with their periods of rain and their summer droughts.25

The Legend of Aqhat26 is another interesting text from Ugarit. A son is promised to the wise and just but childless Daniel (cf. Ezek. 14:14, where he is mentioned together with Noah and Job) and the child born to him is named Aqhat. During a visit from Kothar wa-Khasis, the craftsman of the gods, Aqhat is given the gift of a magnificent bow with which he goes off hunting. In her desire to possess the bow, the goddess Anat promises Aqhat eternal life in exchange. Aqhat does not accept the goddess’s offer, however, and accuses her of lying since no human being can escape death. Incensed by his rejection Anat gets permission from El to kill Aqhat. Yatpan, one of Anat’s warriors, is transformed by the goddess into an eagle and he murders Aqhat. As a consequence thereof a drought engulfs the land for several years. When Daniel finally gets to know what happened he turns to Baal for help but the latter is unable to bring Aqhat back from the dead. At the end of the preserved text of the legend we find Daniel summoning the spirits of the dead in the hope that with their help he will once again be able to embrace his son. Beside the motifs of the promise of a son (cf. Gen. 15:4–6; 18:1–15) and the withering of the vegetation, the capriciousness of the gods constitutes a striking element of the legend.

The primary theme of the Ugaritic Legend of Keret (Kirtu)27 is the continuation of the dynasty. In addition to his brothers, King Keret loses no less than seven wives before they are able to grant him an heir. In the midst of his profound sadness at what has overcome

him, the god El appears to him in a dream thinking that Keret desires to possess divine kingship. The latter, however, is more interested in siring a multitude of sons. Following El’s instructions, an expedition is prepared with the intention of fetching Harriya from Udum (possible located in Bashan) as a bride for Keret. On the journey, Keret promises the goddess Asherah that he will grant her several times the weight of his intended bride in silver and gold if he is able to bring Harriya safely back to his palace. The latter does indeed become Keret’s bride and during the marriage feast, to which the gods are also invited, El promises Keret two sons and six daughters, the youngest daughter to be made a ‘firstborn’ by El. After the children are born, Keret is stricken with a serious illness because he did not fulfil his promise to Asherah. While he recovers from his illness upon El’s intervention, Keret then gets involved in a conflict with his eldest son who accuses him of no longer fulfilling his obligations as king. Intent on seizing the throne for himself, Keret’s son is cursed by his father. While the remaining tablet of the legend is lost to us, it probably reports how Keret was forced once again to relinquish his children to death with the exception of his youngest daughter who thus became ‘firstborn’ as El had indeed foretold. The narrative combines a number of motifs, including that of the sacred character of kingship and the status of a king who is unable to prove his authority on the basis of his many descendants. It is possible that the legend constitutes some form of protest against current ideas of divine governance: Keret is ultimately the victim of divine caprice!\(^{28}\)

The theme of childlessness, which has a significant role to play in the patriarchal narratives, is likewise a feature of the Babylonian Legend of Etana.\(^{29}\) Etana is predestined to provide humanity with the security that the monarchy can offer, but his life is embittered by the fact that he has no children. The only solution to his problem would appear to be a “fertility plant”, which he must fetch from heaven. Etana is able to secure the assistance of an eagle but the flight miscarries and he falls to the earth. Although he is miraculously saved and ultimately granted a son, it would appear that his much desired offspring was later also to be his murderer.


The texts discovered at Ugarit have also contributed to a better understanding of the vocabulary of the Old Testament. It would appear, for example, that the cultic term ‘û‘ûē, which was once translated as “burnt offering”, actually signified “rich gift”.

Parallels have of course been sought in Egypt for the account of Joseph and in particular for the seduction of Joseph by the wife of Potiphar (Gen. 39:11–20) found in the Egyptian narrative of the two brothers. The historical background of the Old Testament account of Joseph is the subject of dispute.

Egyptian sources provide us with information concerning a variety of situations in Canaan, which can be of importance for our reconstruction of Israel’s earliest history. A not unimportant place among them must be afforded to the so-called *Israel Stela* of pharaoh Mer-ne-Ptah dating from around 1230 BCE, in which the praises are sung of an Egyptian victory over Canaan. The stele contains the following text:

Plundered is Canaan with every evil;  
Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;  
Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;  
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;  
Hurru is become a widow for Egypt!  
All lands together, they are pacified;  
Everyone who was restless, he has been bound  
By the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon;  
the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat,  
given life like Re every day.

This constitutes the only Egyptian source in which “Israel” is specifically mentioned. While reference is clearly being made in this regard to a people dwelling in Canaan, the stela does not provide us with sufficient information to determine precisely where in Canaan it has in mind. We are equally at a loss as to whom we might identify this “Israel” with.

A report by an Egyptian border controller to his superior from a

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32 See further our discussion of the Joseph novel in the paragraph on the book of Genesis (ch. VIII).
slightly later date (around 1190 BCE) makes reference to a group of nomads who had been driven to the land of the Nile by famine:34

...We] have finished letting the Bedouin tribes of Edom Pass the Fortress [of] Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat—life, prosperity, health!—which is in Tjeku, to the pools of Per-Atum [of] Mer-ne-Ptah, to keep them alive and to keep their cattle alive, through the great ka of Pharaoh—life, prosperity, health!—the good sun of every land...

The Journey of Wen-Amon35 dating from around 1075 BCE provides a first person account of a journey to Canaan and Phoenicia and makes reference to the activities of an ecstatic prophet in Byblos. A similar narrative is that of Si-nuhe, who fled from Egypt to Syria and Palestine but was later fortunate to be able to return to his own land.36

With regard to the Old Testament presentation of the Mosaic Period, partial similarities between the Akkadian Legend of Sargon and the narrative of Moses in the papyrus basket (Exod. 2:1–10) are clearly evident:37

Sargon, the mighty king, king of Agade, am I
My mother was a changeling, my father I knew not.
The brother(s) of my father loved the hills.
My city is Azupiranu, which is situated on the banks of the Euphrates.
My changeling mother conceived me, in secret she bore me.
She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she sealed my lid.
She cast me into the river which rose not (over) me.
The river bore me up and carried me to Akki, the drawer of water.
Akki, the drawer of water, [took] as his son (and) reared me.
Akki, the drawer of water, appointed me as his gardener.
While I was a gardener, Ishtar granted me (her) love,
And for four [..] years I exercised kingship.

The account of King Idrimi of Alalach (Northern Syria) and the return to his fatherland38 offers striking parallels with the narrative of Moses’ flight to Midian in Exod. 2:11–22.

34 Translation: ANET, p. 259.
Reference must be made with respect to the giving of the law and the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai to Ancient Near Eastern treaties and legal codices. In 1955, Mendenhall pointed to the close literary affinity between the Decalogue (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5) and Hittite civil treaties. In addition to an historical review of the king’s benefactions towards his vassal as well as the stipulations of the treaty, such treaties also contained blessing and curse formulations.\(^{39}\) We are familiar with similar texts from the Assyrian and West Semitic world.\(^{40}\) By way of example we offer a portion of the treaty of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), which he established with at least nine vassals for the benefit of his son and future successor Ashurbanipal:\(^{41}\)

(This is) the treaty which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has established with you before the great gods of heaven and earth, on behalf of the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal, the son of your lord Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who has designated and appointed him for succession. When Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, departs from the living, you will seat the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal upon the royal throne, he will exercise kingship and lordship of Assyria over you. (If) you do not serve him in the open country and in the city, do not fight and even die on his behalf, do not always speak the full truth to him, do not always advise him well in full loyalty, do not smooth his way in every respect; if you remove him, and seat in his stead one of his brothers, younger or older, on the throne of Assyria, if you change or let anyone change the decree of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, if you will not be subject to this crown prince designate Ashurnabipal, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, so that he cannot exercise kingship and lordship over you (lines 41–61)...

May Ashur, king of the gods, who determines the fates, decree for you an evil, unpropitious fate, and not grant you fatherhood, old age, . . . ripe old age. May Ninlil, his beloved wife, induce him to pronounce evil for you and may she not intercede for you. May Anu, king of the gods, rain upon all your houses disease, exhaustion, di’u-disease, sleeplessness, worries, ill health. May Sin, the luminary of

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\(^{40}\) ANET, pp. 531–541; S. Parpola and K. Watanabe (eds.), *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Oaths* (State Archives of Assyria 2), Helsinki 1988.

heaven and earth, clothe you in leprosy and (thus) not permit you to enter the presence of god and king; roam the open country as a wild ass or gazelle! May Shamash, the light of heaven and earth, not give you a fair and equitable judgment, may he take away your eyesight; walk about in darkness! May Ninurta, leader of the gods, fell you with his fierce arrow, and fill the plain with your corpses, give your flesh to eagles and vultures to feed upon. May Venus, the brightest among the stars, let your wives lie in the embrace of your enemy before your very eyes, may your sons not have authority over your house, may a foreign enemy divide your possessions (lines 414–430)...

May all the gods who are named in this treaty tablet reduce your soil in size to be as narrow as a brick, turn your soil into iron, so that no one may cut a furrow in it. Just as rain does not fall from a copper sky, so may there come neither rain nor dew upon your fields and meadows, but let it rain burning coals in your land instead of dew (lines 526–532)...

More than a few scholars have endeavoured to establish associations between such treaty texts and the covenant texts found in Joshua 24, Exod. 19:3–8, Exod. 24:3–4a,742 and in the book of Deuteronomy.43 Most striking are the agreements between the cursing formulae of the Ancient Near Eastern civil treaties and those of Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26.44

Among the legal codices which have been passed on to us from the Mesopotamian world,45 the Codex of Hammurabi46 dating from the eighteenth century BCE has perhaps become the most familiar. His collection of judgements, discovered on a pillar at Susa in 1910, represents an ideal rather than prevailing justice.47 The close kinship between the juridical stipulations and several of those found in the

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book of the Covenant (Exodus 21–23) attracted immediate attention. While one should not speak of literary dependence between the book of the Covenant and the aforementioned codex, it is apparent, nevertheless, that daily life in Israel was based on a similar social and legal structure to that of its neighbours.

Ritual texts from Ugarit and Mesopotamia sometimes shed light on religious customs referred to in the Old Testament. This is particularly the case with respect to the rituals surrounding the Great Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The despatch of a scapegoat into the wilderness, for example, is already mentioned in texts from Ebla, dating from 2400 to 2300 BCE. The year of release (Sabbath, Deut. 15:1–11) and the Jubilee year (Lev. 25:10) would appear to have very ancient parallels in Mesopotamia.

Extra-biblical data is likewise available for the period of the monarchy, although information concerning the later monarchy is more copious than that concerning the early monarchy. Illustrative with respect to the former is the inscription of pharaoh Shishak on the temple wall of Karnak in Southern Egypt, in which the pharaoh describes his victories in Canaan (cf. 1 Kgs 14:25–26).

Assyrian campaign reports and annals frequently shed light on the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Of special interest in this regard are the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (858–824), Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), Sargon II (721–705), Sennacherib (704–681), Esarhaddon (680–669) and Ashurbanipal (668–633). To

54 Cf. ANET, pp. 276–301.
give an example of the nature of these texts we quote a segment from Sennacherib’s report of his military campaign against Judah in 701 (cf. 2 Kings 18–19):

As to Hezekiah of Judah, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-)ramps, and battering-rams, brought (thus) near to (the walls), (combined with) the attack of foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city’s gate. His towns which I had plundered I took away from his country and gave them (over) to Mitinti, king of Asdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza . . .

Such inscriptions and annals are not infrequently of value for the establishment of dates. The same can be said for the fragments of the so-called “Babylonian Chronicle”\(^{55}\) that confirm the keeping of a chronicle of the most important national events in Babylon from the middle of the second millennium BCE up to the Seleucid period. The chronicle in question sheds welcome light on the fall of Jerusalem under King Jehoiakin in 597 BCE.

We will examine parallels between Ancient Israel’s prophetic, wisdom and psalmic literature and similar literary products of the Ancient Near East in chapters IX and X.

CHAPTER THREE

AUTHORS AND AUTHORSHIP

As a rule, the identity of the authors of the various documents that have been passed on to us from the Ancient Semitic world is completely unknown. In a certain sense, the epistolary literature constitutes an exception in this regard. Letters usually begin with reference to the author(s) and the addressee(s): “Speak to N. N.: thus (says) N. N.”\(^1\) (often followed by some form of salutation,\(^2\) and then the contents of the message). It should be remembered, however, that the person sending the letter was not the author of the letter as such. In most instances letters were either dictated or the sender would tell his scribe what he wanted to see included in the letter. The scribe/secretary thus remained anonymous.

In addition to writers of business documents, there were also copyists who duplicated existing texts in temple schools (referred to in the Mesopotamian world as “the house of tablets” [edubba]) side by side with their pupils who would have busied themselves with training exercises, writer-collectors who frequently codified orally transmitted traditions and independent authors whose work, while original, was frequently based on older material. Among the latter group special reference should be made to the writers of wisdom literature.

We know more about the training of scribes in the Hittite, Egyptian and Mesopotamian world than we do about the scribes of Ancient Israel (cf. the survey in *Phoenix* 1992). The young man who, according to Judg. 8:14, offered Gideon a list of the officials and elders of Succoth was evidently not just any young man but a fairly advanced pupil from a scribal school. Reference to the aforementioned list serves as evidence of the fact that young people were being trained as scribes in the earliest periods of Israel’s existence in line with its neighbouring nations.

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\(^1\) Letters to a superior do not as a rule mention the recipient’s name; cf., for example, the El-Amarna Letter 103 (J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln I*, Leipzig 1915, reprint Aalen 1964, pp. 458–459): “to the king, my lord, my sun, thus [says] Rib-Addi, your servant: At the feet of my lord, my sun, I fall seven times seven times”. Cf. further the letters from scholars to the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* I (AOAT 5/1), Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970): “to the king, my lord, your servant N. N.” For the introductory formulæ employed in Ancient Israelite letters see the examples provided in ch. I.

Among the people of the Ancient Near Eastern world as a whole, the vast majority of whom were illiterate, the scribe was thus highly esteemed and belonged to the intellectual elite. Official appointments such as that of “scribe” (sôfer) and “chancellor” (mazkîr) were introduced by David based on Egyptian examples. Although their specific task is difficult to describe (cf. further Begrich 1940), the “scribe” apparently served as the private secretary of the king, writing his decrees and taking responsibility for their publication. With the help of his subordinates he also took care of diplomatic correspondence with foreign nations “in the secretary’s chamber” (Jer. 36:12,20), supervised the monies donated to the temple on behalf of the state (2 Kgs 12:10, Hebr. 12:11; 2 Kgs 22:3,9) and served among the ministers who were responsible for negotiations with foreign emissaries (2 Kgs 18:18,37). Royal scribes are generally referred to by name in the Old Testament: Seraiah (2 Sam. 8:17; cf. also 2 Sam. 20:24; during the reign of King David), Elihoreph and Ahijah (1 Kgs 4:3; during the reign of King Solomon), Shebna (2 Kgs 18:18,37; Isa. 36:3,11,22; during the reign of King Hezekiah), Shaphan (2 Kgs 22:3ff.; during the reign of King Josiah); Elishama (Jer. 36:12,20; during the reign of King Jehoiakim); Jonathan (Jer. 37:15,20; during the reign of King Zedekiah).

Reference must also be made to the priestly scribes associated with the sanctuary who not only recorded cultic regulations but also ancient historical traditions and (sometimes self-penned) songs in line with their counterparts in Ancient Israel’s Umwelt.

The Old Testament also provides evidence of the existence of private scribes who wrote down texts dictated by third parties (Jer. 36:4; 45:1) or (at least during the time of the later kings) drafted juridical documents such as letters of divorce and deeds of purchase (cf. Jer. 32:10–14; Deut. 24:2; Isa. 50:1).

Many documents from the Ancient Near Eastern world contain colophons attached to the end of a text that contain information relevant to the document in question such as the identity of the patron who commissioned the copy, the scribe himself, the date of the copy etc. A good example of a colophon can be found in the Baal myth from Ugarit.

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The scribe Ilimilku, the Shubbanite,
Disciple of Attanu-purulini,⁶ who is chief of the priests,
(and) chief of the cultic herdsmen;
ta’iyu-official of Niqmaddu, (who is) king of Ugarit,⁷
lord (of) YRGB, (and) master (of) TRMN.

The poets responsible for major epic, historical and cultic texts are virtually never identified. While a few names are known to us from the Mesopotamian world, we cannot be certain if the individuals in question were secretaries or the independent authors of the texts with which they are associated. Scholars tend for the most part to opt for the former. One of the versions (the Middle Babylonian) of the frequently redrafted *Gilgamesh Epic* (see ch. II) is ascribed to Sîn-leqi-unnini, another (the Ninevite version from the time of Assurbanipal) to Nabu-zuqqu-p-kena.⁸ The author of the so-called *Babylonian Theodicy* betrays his identity in an acrostic, formed by the initial letters of each strophe, which reads: “I, Saggil-kinam-ubbib, the priest of invocations, am a worshipper of God and the king”.⁹ The author of the *Poem of Erra and Ishum* (Kabti-ilani-Marduk) is likewise mentioned together with the report that the divinity revealed the poem to him at night and that he wrote it down in the morning without the addition or omission of a single line.¹⁰ The formulation of the text in question reveals that the collection of myths and traditions in Babylonia was considered to be a religious activity. This is in harmony with the fact that certain writings were ascribed to divine authorship.¹²

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⁶ According to J. C. de Moor (*An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* [Nisaba 16], Leiden etc. 1987, p. 99, n. 481), the fact that Ilimilku mentions his master’s name may suggest that the Baal myth had been transmitted orally up to that point. Ilimilku is also the writer of the Keret and Aqhat legends.
⁷ Niqmaddu II reigned over Ugarit from around 1365–1335 BCE.
¹¹ According to R. Frankena (*BiOr* 14 (1957), 6), the lines in which this statement is made (V 42–44) were added at a later date. W. W. Hallo (*IEJ* 12 (1962), 13–26, esp. p. 15) considers the appeal to divine inspiration as an indication that Kabû had received the epic from an older authority. One might consider the possibility that he was the first to write down an older oral tradition (Vriezen).
Their sacred character points not only to the cultivation of such literature in temple circles, it also explains the highly traditionalistic bias that tended to govern the transmission of literary material.

A number of fables have also survived from the Mesopotamian world, which identify the author or the person responsible for passing on the material.\footnote{13} The stele of King Idrimi of Alalakh, found at Tell Atchana in Northern Syria, contains (as noted) an historical text in autobiographical style concerning the fortunes of the monarch.\footnote{14} The conclusion to the text mentions the scribe Sharruwa over whom a blessing is pronounced.\footnote{15} The king who commissioned the inscription apparently wanted to honour his secretary in this exceptional fashion.

In principle, the image offered to us by Egypt is no different to that of ancient Mesopotamia. With the exception of the authors of “lessons in life” Egyptian literature, together with its plastic arts, is anonymous.

The anonymous character of the literature of the Ancient Near East can be explained primarily on the basis of the fact that the culture of the time strove to preserve ancient forms and traditions. Writers and narrators were first and foremost transmitters, expected to pass on what everyone had always and everywhere believed: they did not present themselves as individuals, intent on launching their own new ideas. This is most evident with respect to religious literature such as psalms and rituals, mythical narratives and incantation texts. In a fashion similar to our own liturgical texts, which contain elements drawn from centuries of tradition, such material remained unsigned and was so dependent on the tradition that reference to authorship was ultimately uncalled for. The poets responsible for the major epics were likewise aware of their debt to the tradition and tended to be regarded as collectors and publishers rather than creators of new texts. In saying this, however, we do not intend to deny that creative (or at least re-creative) minds lay behind certain songs and poetic compositions.

The first person inscriptions of Ancient Near Eastern monarchs were drafted by court scribes and elaborated as memoirs of the king himself. The name of the actual author thus remained unmentioned.

\footnote{13} Cf. W. G. Lambert, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 164 and 186.
\footnote{15} ANET, pp. 557–558.
The fact that collections of proverbs from both Babylon and Egypt are often ascribed to specific men of letters can be explained to a degree on the basis of the individual contribution of the wise men in question and the high esteem in which they tended to be held by the royal court and the priesthood. The “master” was apparently something of a demi-god in the eyes of his pupils, a man highly respected by one and all. The “school” had a certain independence and authority beside the king and the priesthood, although it would have been involved with both and would have depended on the court for support.

For a correct evaluation of the genesis and evolution of Old Testament documents, an understanding of the way texts were treated in the Ancient Near Eastern world is not unimportant. On the basis of material from a number of texts dating from several different centuries, it is possible to establish in outline how documents tended to be revised and passed on. W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, for example, have shown with respect to the Myth of Atrahasis that the poem existed in several different editions dating from the old to the new Babylonian periods. While the younger editions tended to follow the essentials of the ancient text, those responsible for its transmission were unrestrained in the way they dealt with certain turns of phrase and old formulations, even granting themselves the freedom to omit and rearrange material. The Gilgamesh Epic was subject to even more intense revision in the course of the centuries. One would be justified in asking whether the careful replication of specific texts or the revision thereof was (also) related to the literary genre in question (Atrahasis as divine myth, Gilgamesh as heroic epic). Whatever our response, it is evident that certain texts were later updated or actualised. In the Assyrian versions of the creation epic Enuma Elish, for example, the name of Marduk, the king of the Babylonian gods was replaced by Assur, the head of the Assyrian Pantheon.

21 Cf. A. Falkenstein and F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl in their article “Gilgamesh” in the Reallexikon der Assyriologie III.
A similar tradition history would appear to have been at work with respect to the Old Testament. While it is reasonable to assume that certain documents remained virtually unchanged in the course of their transmission, it is equally clear that other texts were later revised and supplemented. The primary difference with literature stemming from Mesopotamia lies in the fact that our research into the writings of Ancient Israel does not have several editions of a particular text that can be dated sequentially according to script and language at its disposal in order to establish its evolution with any degree of accuracy. Although a limited number of parallel texts in the Old Testament can be shown to have evolved from the same original (cf. Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22; Psalm 14 and 53; several chapters from the books of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles), information is still lacking with respect to time and place of origin that we often do possess in the case of Mesopotamian sources. This fact constitutes a major handicap for our research into the literary evolution of Old Testament writings. Beyond stylistic and (oft disputed) content-based characteristics, we do not, as a rule, have much in the way of clear and undisputed data at our disposal.

A further difference with respect to Mesopotamian and Egypt lies in the fact that the anonymous character of Old Testament wisdom literature remains intact. While a significant amount of such material was later ascribed to Solomon, it clearly did not begin with him. Old Testament prophetic literature on the other hand tends to exhibit strong associations with a particular person in a manner unparalleled in similar literature of the Ancient Near East. One can conclude, therefore, that in the cultural and spiritual life of Mesopotamia and Egypt, school and wisdom was considered to be primary, while the cult together with prophetic revelation rooted in direct, personal contact with God tended to hold pride of place in Israel and to dominate its spiritual life.

School and wisdom would indeed appear to have left their mark on the public life of Ancient Israel at a somewhat later stage in its history. In Jeremiah’s time, the sages together with the priests and the prophets formed an influential class (cf. Jer. 18:18). While charismatic figures (judges, prophets) exercised significant influence in Ancient Israel from the earliest stages of its history, it remains difficult to determine the extent thereof. In line with Th. C. Vriezen (Hoofdlijnen der theologie van het Oude Testament, Wageningen 1966, p. 53) one should note that the Old Testament is limited for the most part to Ancient Israelite
writings “from the bankrupt remains following the catastrophe of 587 that were able to withstand prophetic critique”. As a consequence, therefore, the Old Testament cannot simply be designated “the charter of Israelite religion”. Indeed, “a library of documents relating to Israelite religion or a collection of traditions would have had a quite different appearance”. As such, therefore, the Old Testament is dominated by prophetic witness and offers us a rather one-sided historical image of Ancient Israel’s religious past. In fact, the cult and the recitation of God’s salvific deeds and commandments in the sanctuaries will have had a significant role to play and will have been determinative of the spiritual life of the average Israelite (cf. Amos 4:4–5; 5:5 and Psalms 50, 80 and 81).

In any event, we can be fairly certain that, with a few late exceptions (e.g. Baruch’s portrayal of the life of Jeremiah and the memoirs of Nehemiah), the authors of Israel’s historical and poetic literature remain unknown. As a rule, therefore, the author tended to fade into the background, hiding in the shadow of the material he produced, and not only in the case of those who considered themselves in service of the temple (such as the Chronist, the author of the books of Chronicles).

It is unnecessary to insist that the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament served at the royal court or were associated with one or other sanctuary. Their work ought better to be understood as independent of monarchy and cult, as an autonomous and critically written trajectory that judged Israel’s ancient history in the spirit of the prophets and in the light of the relationship established by God with his people. While it is fair to suggest that the royal court had scribes in its service prior to the exilic period, it is probable that they were responsible for the annals which served as a source for the authors of the books of Samuel and Kings, a few specimens of which have survived to the present day (cf. 2 Samuel 8).

In the endeavour to reconstruct the literary history of the Old Testament, scholars have tried to distinguish the authors of the ancient historical books from one another on the basis of style and religious-historical tendencies. In so doing, recourse was made to abbreviations (sigla). The presumed authors of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) were thus designated with the letters J, E, D and P (abbreviations for Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomy and the Priestly Codex; see further ch. VIII). It has become increasingly evident, however, that the “source texts” delimited along these lines are not uniform in the literary sense. It is apparent that a variety of authors were responsible
for these respective works and others continued and supplemented them at a later date.

It is striking that the songs included in the book of Psalms, for example, are ascribed as a rule to specific poets, especially King David. This manner of identifying an author is unique in the Ancient Near Eastern world. It is perhaps best explained by the custom of ascribing certain literary works to important figures from the past, a tendency which is keenly evident with respect to later Jewish writings.

While uncertainty concerning the authors of large segments of the Old Testament tends to be the rule, the prophetic literature (as we already noted) contained therein forms an exception in various respects. Although it remains impossible to identify the direct author of such material, i.e. the collector-publisher thereof, we do possess information concerning the original figure behind its content. The book of Jeremiah remains the only work of which the name of the prophet to whom the book is ascribed and the collector-publisher thereof are known to us: Jeremiah’s friend and secretary Baruch (cf. Jer. 36:32). The autobiographical style encountered in several of the prophetic works (e.g. the Denkschrift of Isaiah 6:1–8:18, Hosea’s report of his marital life [Hosea 3], the visions of Amos [7:1–9; 8:1–3; 9:1–6]), leads us to suspect that the segments in question were written either by the prophet himself or drafted by a secretary in his service. One cannot exclude the possibility, however, that a particular prophet may have been directly responsible for writing down part of, or indeed the entirety of his message (cf. for example, Nahum). In any event, it is clear from the information we have at our disposal that the classical prophets played a pronounced personal role based on their divine vocation and not on the authority of the temple or the royal court. It is in the prophetic literature that the unique character of Ancient Israel’s writings is most evident. While the Egyptian tradition contains a number of prophecies in which the original speaker is mentioned by name,22 these cannot be compared in terms of quantity or quality with Ancient Israel’s prophetic literature. The personal element evidently played a much more significant role in Ancient Israel’s culture and religion than was the case elsewhere in the Ancient Near Eastern world, a fact which can be ascribed to

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22 Cf. ANET, pp. 441ff.
Israel’s religion and its immediate appeal to the entire person of the believer in his or her religio-ethical existence.

The study of Old Testament literature, therefore, obliges us to distinguish between three levels of publishing activity:

a) authors in the sense of autonomous writers such as the author of the history of Saul and David and the prophetic author of an autobiographical report;
b) collectors-publishers who revised and actualised existing writings and placed them in a different light;
c) redactors who combined existing writings while adding their own textual segments in the process.

The activities of these three groups cannot always be strictly distinguished from one another. Our capacity to discern the evolution of a text together with the authors who may have contributed thereto is based for the most part on questions of style and content. As such, therefore, all our attempts at reconstruction remain decidedly hypothetical. As we already noted, we can only make conditional use of stylistic criteria since Ancient Near Eastern authors tend as a rule to be part of a process.

Our evaluation of (religio-)historical information is not infrequently subject to circular argumentation. One only has to examine a few scientific commentaries on one or other prophetic document to realise the extent to which scholars differ in ascribing portions thereof to the person of the prophet in question. In other words, whatever the biblical book one is studying, the establishment of a boundary between authentic utterances and later interpolations remains a formidably difficult task.

The work of the copyists who reproduced the sacred books at a later date cannot be distinguished with watertight certainty from the various levels of authorship outlined above. While copyists as a rule tended to follow their Vorlagen as carefully as possible, they often afforded themselves the freedom to emend or add to the text they had before them. This partly explains why we have such a variety of textual recensions at our disposal (see, for example, the Dead Sea Scrolls, further in ch. XIV). We will be obliged to return to this subject in ch. V.
B. THE OLD TESTAMENT
(HEBREW BIBLE)
CHAPTER FOUR

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS CANON

The question of the structure of canon can only follow upon the question of the function of canon (J. A. Sanders)


With the exception of a number of segments written in Aramaic, the Hebrew Bible passed on to us by the tradition consists of 39 books that can be divided in three groups:

a) the Torah (the Law): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy;

b) the Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings; and the Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi;

c) the Writings, also known as Hagiographa: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles.

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1 The Aramaic segments of the Old Testament are restricted to Jer. 10:11; Ezra 4:8–6:18, 7:12–26; Dan. 2:4b–7:28.
With the exception of the Torah, the Septuagint and the Vulgate (for more on these translations of the Old Testament see the following chapter) present the above mentioned books in a different order and also contain a number of other books referred to by Jerome as the Apocrypha (see the end of the present chapter). The latter were not accorded the same canonical status as the books of the Hebrew Bible as such. Rejected by rabbinic Judaism, these books were granted the status of foundational literature by many members of the early Christian church, although not without varying degrees of hesitation and caution (full details can be found in M. Hengel, Die Septuaginta als “christliche Schriftensammlung”, in: id. and Anna Maria Schwemer, Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum (WUNT 72), Tübingen 1994, pp. 182–284).

It has often been thought that the Septuagint, sometimes referred to as the so-called Alexandrine canon, represented the collection of authoritative books maintained by the Jewish-Hellenistic diaspora. Katz (1956) and Sundberg (1964) have rightly shown, however, that such a hypothesis raises a number of problems. Our familiarity with this collection of documents is based exclusively on information provided by Christian sources dating from the second century CE (which also exhibit further variations in their enumeration of the books in question) A number of books, moreover, which are represented in the Septuagint but excluded from the Hebrew canon, would appear to be based on a Semitic original written in Palestine, a number of which seem to have enjoyed considerable prominence and respect within the broad circles of the Judaism of the day (e.g. Jesus Sirach and 1 Maccabees). The origin of the Christian canon of the Septuagint should, therefore, be located primarily in Palestine rather than in Alexandria. Together with its adoption of the Hebrew canon, the early Christian community apparently made an independent selection from the alternative Jewish writings at its disposal (Sundberg 1964, p. 82). Why the Septuagint contains a number of apocryphal books (to be treated in chapter XII) and not other Jewish books, such as 1 Enoch and Jubilees, remains something of a mystery.

The expression “Old Testament” is of Christian origin and is borrowed from 2 Cor. 3:14. In the middle of the second century CE, Melito of Sardis made reference to “the books of the Old Covenant” (cf. Eusebius, History of the Church IV 26,13–14), while Clement of Alexandria spoke of the “Old and New Covenant” around 200 CE (Stromata V 85,1). Together with Paul, Christians considered themselves participants in the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus (cf. Jer. 31:31; Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25) and thus applied the expression “Old Covenant/Testament” to the collection of books they had inherited from Judaism (including the apocryphal books).
The term “testament” is taken from the Latin testamentum, which serves in the Vetus Latina (the Old Latin translation related to the Septuagint, see chapter V) as the translation of the Greek term diathèkè, which in turn represents the Septuagint’s translation of the Hebrew concept berît (covenant). As a rule, the terms testamentum and diathèkè refer to a last will (and testament). Aquila and Symmachus (see chapter V), therefore, employed the Greek term synthèkè (covenant in the sense of agreement/treaty) for the Hebrew berît. In line with this, Jerome translated berît in the Vulgate as foedus (covenant) or pactum (agreement/treaty). These terms suffer from the disadvantage that they tend to place the accent on a two-sided agreement rather than on the unilateral character of the covenant established by God represented by the concepts diathèkè and testamentum. While it would be better to speak of the books of the Old and New Covenant in the sense of berît, the term Testament has become so commonplace that its use is virtually unavoidable.

The designations “Old and New Covenant/Testament” have given rise to a shift in meaning from idea of the allocation of salvation to that of the charter of the covenant. This shift in meaning, however, is already to be found in Paul (2 Cor. 3:14) and is in fact a minor shift since the charter in which the covenant was set out had a unique role to play in the establishment of the covenant as such (Koole 1983, p. 201).

The terminology “Old and New Covenant/Testament” suggests that both segments of the Christian Bible are to be seen as a unity: the Old Testament as witness to the God of Israel and Israel as the people of God, the New Testament as a collection witnessing to Jesus Christ as Son of the same God. The word “old” should thus be understood in terms of seniority: as “worthy of reverence”, rather than “obsolete” (as “ancien”, rather than “vieux”).

In recent decades, some have preferred to employ the terms “First” and “Second Testament” instead of Old and New Testament in order to express the idea that the second is fundamentally based on the first. Given Heb. 8:13 and the quotation from Jer. 31:31–34 that precedes it, the suggestion that this terminology should be considered more biblical than “Old” and “New Testament” on account of Heb. 9:1, 15, 18 is open to question. The author of the letter to the Hebrews employed “the first covenant” in the sense of the allocation of salvation (not of books) and stated that this was obsolete and out of date (8:13). Where the New Testament refers to the Old Testament as Scripture it employs the expression “Old Covenant” (2 Cor. 3:14). An additional objection to the use of the terminology “First” and “Second Testament” stems from the fact that no single ecclesial tradition supports it. The terminology as such is rooted in modern Jewish-Christian

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2 In Aristophanes (Aves 440f.), however, we encounter the meaning “agreement, treaty”.

3 The expression Ancien Testament is employed in French.
dialogue and reflects a particular theological perspective on the relationship between the Old and the New Testament.\(^4\)

The expression “Hebrew Bible” is chosen in order to distinguish between the books that (besides the segments passed on to us in Aramaic) have come down to us in Hebrew and the apocryphal books that have been transmitted in Greek in the Septuagint and in Latin in the Vulgate. In line with the Protestant tradition, the present volume will employ the designation “Old Testament” for the books of the Hebrew Bible.

Before the expression “Old Testament” became customary in Christian circles, Israel’s sacred writings were referred to as “the Law and the Prophets” (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 16:16) or “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Lk. 24:44), or in abbreviated form as “the Law” (Jn. 12:34; 1 Cor. 14:21), or “the Scripture” (Gal. 3:8, 22) or “the (sacred) Scriptures” (Rom. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:15; Lk. 24:27; Act. 17:2, 11). In the second century BCE, the grandson of Jesus Sirach spoke of “the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our forefathers” (Jesus Sirach: prologue; see further chapter XII). Since the middle ages, Jewish circles have employed the term *miqra* (“reading”, referring to the recitation of the Scriptures in the presence of the assembled community) as well as the artificial term TNK (Tenak), an acronym for *Torah* (Law), *Nebiʾîm* (Prophets) and *Ketubîm* (Writings) for the three main divisions of the Hebrew Bible.

As will already be apparent from the word “bible” itself, which is borrowed from the Greek term *biblia* (books), the Old Testament (as the New) constitutes a collection of writings dating from a variety of different periods and of diverse origins. It should be noted, however, that this “library” of books is not the result of a sort of arbitrary selection from among the literary works of Ancient Israel: the Old Testament contains those writings that were maintained as authoritative for the particular identity and life praxis of the leading Jewish circles in Jerusalem and Babylon after the Babylonian exile.

The concept *canon* is borrowed from the Greek in which it means, among other things, “reed staff” as well as the figurative “measuring

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\(^4\) The designation “second testament” tends to place the emphasis on the confirmation of the first covenant by the second and the extension of the group addressed by the first covenant (Israel) to non-Jews. Such usage, however, pays insufficient terminological attention to the new and critical elements raised by Christ’s revelation with respect to the old distribution (cf. Hebr. 8:13) and the normativity of the new covenant is afforded insufficient accent (cf. 2 Cor. 3:14–16).
stick” or criterium, norm, law or rule (cf. Gal. 6:16). A canonical book is a document that is accepted by a particular community as authoritative for its religious practise and teaching, whereby the said authority is binding for all generations. It is intended for both private and public study and interpretation (Leiman 1976, p. 14). In the biblical sciences, the concept ‘canonical’ is employed for books that are considered to be authoritative and divinely inspired as well as (in the stricter sense of the term) for a list of biblical books determined as a definitively closed and defined collection. Barr (1983) and Ulrich (1992) are of the opinion that one can only speak of a canon (in the latter sense of the term) with respect to the Hebrew Bible from the second century CE. Sanders (1987) draws attention to the fact that the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) only evolved from a sacred narrative into a sacred and standardised text at the end of the first century CE. In the opinion of the present author, however, there are indications that the definitive canonisation of the Hebrew Bible in the stricter sense of the term had already taken place among the Pharisees prior to the Common Era (Van der Woude 1992). It should be noted, nevertheless, that divergent canonical collections existed side by side within early Judaism. The Sadducees, for example, only considered the Pentateuch and possibly the book of Job (ascribed to Moses) as authoritative (cf. b. Baba bathra, fol. 14b), while the Essenes would appear to have ascribed authority to a large number of writings outside the Hebrew Bible (in particular 1 Enoch and Jubilees), although they evidently did not ascribe canonical status to the book of Esther.

Among the books that ultimately did not find their way into the Old Testament canon there will undoubtedly have been documents that were considered sacred in certain Ancient Israelite circles at one time or another. The literature surrounding the temples at Bethel and Dan, for example, should be considered as such together with the writings of the prophets whose principled and unconditional proclamations of salvation (cf. Jer. 8:11) would have been left dated by the fall of the southern kingdom.

As representatives of the community of Israel, the leading Jewish clergy only accepted those documents as canonical that were already considered to be authoritative. There was evidently an ongoing interchange between the authoritative book and the faith community that established the list of authoritative books and styled it as a canon.
In terms of content, primary consideration should be given in this regard to the literature that survived in the presence of prophetic critique among the assets remaining after the catastrophe of 587 (the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Solomonic temple) together with the witness of those pre-exilic prophets whose preaching was proved valid at the time in contrast to that of the so-called “false prophets”. Included among these sacred books were the writings of exilic and post-exilic prophets who built upon the preaching of their pre-exilic predecessors as well as the Psalms and the Wisdom books that, together with a number of other documents, can be described for the most part as a response on the part of faithful Israel to the revelation granted to the people.

The literature accepted as enjoying spiritual authority, therefore, can be summarised as follows:

a) everything that could claim to have its roots in what appeared to be reliable priestly torah (instruction) or its equivalent: legal texts that enjoyed normative value in the community and/or the sanctuary in Jerusalem;

b) everything that could claim to have its roots in what appeared to be reliable prophetic revelation; not only the prophecies as such but also the historical books that were written in a critical-prophetic spirit;

c) the songs employed in the cult as a response to and in interaction with divine revelation (Psalms; cf. also Lamentations);

d) Wisdom literature, since Israel, together with the rest of the Ancient Near East, considered Wisdom in general to be divinely inspired.

The two latter categories enjoyed a more or less secondary significance and were thus included among the Writings (the Ketubîm).

The canonisation of the books of the Old Testament does not rest upon the authority of an assembly or another instance at a particular moment in time but is the result rather of a centuries long process, which took place in various stages and ultimately led to a standardised text. This process can only be reproduced in terms of its primary characteristics. Its beginning is actually impossible to determine. Its concluding phase is often associated with the so-called synod of Jamnia (Javne) that is said to have taken place around the end of the first century CE. It is maintained that the rabbis came to a final decision during the synod as to whether the Song of Songs and Qoheleth “soil the hands” (meaning
most likely: enjoyed canonical status), cf. Mishna Yadayim 3:5. Recent studies have shown, however, that such a “synod” never took place (cf. Schäfer 1975; Stemberger 1977). Moreover, it appears that at the end of the first century CE the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and the author of 4 Ezra were familiar with the same number of canonical books as we now find in the Hebrew Bible. While debate raged from time to time as to whether a particular book or books of the Hebrew Bible deserved a place in the canon, it would appear to be the case that the present extent thereof must have been already established around the beginning of the common era among Pharisaic circles, the Jewish religious movement that was to survive the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.

Around the year 95 CE, Flavius Josephus wrote in his apologetic work Contra Apionem I,37–43 that the prophets had acquired their knowledge of the past by divine revelation and of their own time by careful observation. Of these 22 books, five stem from Moses and contain the laws and history of humanity up to his death. In thirteen other books, the prophets depicted history from Moses up to and including the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE). The remaining four books contain hymns addressed to God and instruction for human existence. While history was also depicted after Artaxerxes I, the documents which narrate it do not enjoy the same plausibility because they cannot lay claim to strict prophetic succession. For

5 Although not entirely clear in every respect, the expression evidently has concrete sacramental significance in the sense that the sacred is “infectious”. Leiman (1976) is of the opinion that the expression “soil the hands” had to do with a book’s inspired character and not with its canonical status.

6 It is for this reason that the frequently defended thesis that the definitive closure of the canon was accelerated by the emergence and spread of Christianity together with the dangers associated with various sorts of apocalyptic and adventuristic movements is open to discussion. The observation that the Law and the Prophets were already canonised in pre-Christian times, that Christians maintained the so-called Pharisaic canon (together with the apocryphal books) and that the youngest book of the Old Testament to find its way into the canon exhibited explicitly apocalyptic features (Daniel), all serve to undermine the said thesis. It is more likely that the existing Pharisaic canon became normative for Judaism as a whole after 70 CE. Rather than turning against emerging Christianity and apocalyptic influence, the Pharisaic canon tended on the one hand to oppose the Sadducees, who only considered the Torah (and possibly Job) to be authoritative, and on the other to oppose factions such as that associated with Qumran, a great many of whom held documents to be sacred that were later designated apocryphal or pseudepigraphal. Data relevant to the textual history of the Old Testament tends to support this hypothesis (see the following chapter).

Josephus, therefore, Ezra is the last of the prophets. The number 22 (agreeing with the number of consonants in the Hebrew alphabet) was apparently achieved on the basis of the fact that the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles together with the Minor Prophets were considered to be one document while the book of Ruth was taken together with Judges and Lamentations together with Jeremiah. The four last books evidently refer to the Psalms, the Song of Songs, Proverbs and Qoheleth ascribed to David and Solomon respectively. Josephus was thus already familiar with a three-fold division of the Old Testament, albeit in a different order (with the exception of the Pentateuch) to that found in the Hebrew Bible of today. This order, however, is apparently not older than the present order (Mt. 23:35 already suggests that Chronicles was the last book of the canon), but has its roots in the character of Josephus' historical work that focused initially on the historical books and thereafter on the remaining material.

Stemming from more or less the same period as that of Josephus' reference to the sacred books of the Jews, 4 Esdras 14 (see further chapter XIII) tells the story of Ezra who dictated 94 books to five men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit over a period of forty days after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. 24 of these books were accessible to everyone while the remaining seventy were preserved for the wise. The said 24 books evidently referred to the Hebrew Bible, whereby Samuel, Kings, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles were counted respectively as a single book. As $2 \times 12$, the number 24 apparently refers to the twelve months of the year or the twelve tribes of Israel and is achieved by counting Ruth and Lamentations as separate books.

Not counting the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and the Former Prophets (Joshua to 2 Kings, with the exception of Ruth), the order of which can be determined on the basis of content, the arrangement of the remaining Old Testament writings varied for a considerable period of time. This was due, in part, to the fact that a book tended as a rule to be confined to a single scroll and that scrolls could be arranged and classified differently.

The order of books in the Septuagint varies considerably from that of the Hebrew Bible. This was probably due, however, to Christian intervention: by placing the prophets at the end, their role in predicting the coming of the Messiah became all the more explicit. In the tractate Baba Bathra fol. 14b, which belongs to the Babylonian Talmud, we find the sequence Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Twelve Minor Prophets, together with Ruth, the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Qoheleth, the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. In the Codex Leningradensis (see the following chapter), Chronicles is located at the beginning of the Writings. In his prologus galeatus to 1–4 Kings (= Samuel and Kings) in the Vulgate, Jerome provides the following order of books: the five books of
Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy); the Prophets, whereby Ruth is located after Judges and Lamentations forms part of Jeremiah; the Writings (Hagiographa): following Job, the Psalms of David, Proverbs, Qoheleth, the Song of Songs (books ascribed to Solomon), Daniel, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. The not infrequently geographical differences in the order of the individual books of the Writings, often determined by particular (Jewish) schools, was later discontinued, at least for the most part, on account of the fact that the scrolls read in the synagogue during major feasts (the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qoheleth, Esther; see further chapter X) tended to be placed together, albeit initially in a variety of different sequences.

Valuable information concerning the canonisation process is to be found in Jesus Sirach (around 180 BCE). It would appear from his “Praise of the Fathers” (Jesus Sirach 44–49) that the author was familiar with the Law of Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy), the Former (Joshua-Kings) and Latter Prophets (Isaiah-Malachi), the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ezra and Nehemiah. Jesus Sirach’s grandson speaks accordingly of “the Law, the prophets and the other books of our fathers” in his Greek translation of his grandfather’s work, thereby indicating that the threefold division of the canon was already a fact in the second century BCE and further suggesting that both the Law and the Prophets enjoyed canonical status at that time. The third division would appear not to have acquired a name at this juncture, however, indicating in turn that it was not yet closed. The fact that book of Daniel only came into existence, at least in its final redaction, a number of decades later (165 BCE) thus explains its absence from Jesus Sirach’s list.

4QMMT, a text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and dating from the second half of the second century BCE (see further chapter XIV), offers a similar picture to that of Jesus Sirach, referring to “the book of Moses (and) the writings of the prophets and of David... the annals of) every generation” (C 10–11).8

The fact that the Law of Moses (Torah) was translated into Greek during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284–247 BCE), confirms the suggestion that it must already have enjoyed canonical authority for a significant time prior to the third century BCE. The nature of this translation, however, is the subject of dispute. If, in line with

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the narrative found in the letter of Aristeas (see further chapter XIII),
the initiative to make the translation came from a non-Jewish source
with the intention of making the Jewish patriarchal laws accessible
in Greek, then one need not assume that the Pentateuch alone
enjoyed canonical authority at the time. There is much to be said
for the suggestion that the writings of the (Former and Latter) Prophets
were also considered to be canonical literature side by side with the
Pentateuch at this juncture in history.

In addition to the above-mentioned data, we also have to rely on
reconstructions based on the results of literary and historical-critical
research in our endeavour to sketch the various stages in the process
of canonisation. Scholars tend to give priority to the destruction of
the temple of Solomon in 587 BCE as the initial phase of the process.
This event gave rise to a desire to collect the sacred books together
and to establish traditions familiar to the priests and wise men. Forty
years earlier, however, 2 Kgs 23:3 informs us that King Josiah and
the people of Jerusalem and Judah had already accepted the book
of the covenant (see further chapter VIII under Deuteronomy) found
in the temple as authoritative Scripture (cf. also Deut. 31:24–26). In
any event, we can presume that the destruction of the Solomonic
temple and the Babylonian exile must have accelerated the definitive
establishment of ancient temple traditions, prophetic utterances and
classical witnesses relating to Israel’s history. The catastrophe that
confronted Jerusalem and Judah at the time must, of necessity, have
led to a reconsideration of the religious tradition and would have
promoted its ultimate codification as a support to the identity of the
people of God that had lost its national independence. A good exam-
ple thereof is Israel’s historical opus stretching from Genesis to Kings
with its core in Deuteronomy that acquired its more or less final
form during the Babylonian exile based on numerous already exist-
ing documents (see further chapter VIII).

It is difficult to draw an exact line between the beginning of the process
of collection of classical books, which had already been underway for a
considerable time before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, and their canon-
isation in the sense that they came to determine the identity of Israel and
became binding for faith and life as a whole. One indication in support of
an early collection can be found in the reference in Prov. 25:1 to the fact
that “proverbs of Solomon” were collected during the reign of Hezekiah.
The same can be said for certain prophetic utterances to say nothing of
the documents relating Israel’s history and laws that had already come into
existence centuries before (see further chapter VIII). Such literary activity might be considered the initial stages of preparation for later canonisation.

A greater degree of certainty is provided by the witness of Neh. 8:1–13,19 in which we are told that the scribe Ezra read in Jerusalem (458 BCE) from the “law book of Moses” that he had brought with him from Babylon. We can be virtually certain that this document refers to the Pentateuch (see further chapter X under Ezra-Nehemiah), which must already have had the same form then as it has now. Even if one were to call the identification of Ezra’s law book with the Pentateuch into question, however, one would still be obliged to observe that the books it contained had been ascribed canonical significance at least in the fourth century BCE.

The process that led to the canonisation of the prophetic books must likewise have begun during the Babylonian exile. On account of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, the prophecies of the pre-exilic ‘writing prophets’, to which little attention had been paid while they were alive, came to be recognised as the word of God. Shortly after the end of the Babylonian exile, the prophet Zechariah speaks with respect of the “former prophets” (Zech. 1:4), whose writings were apparently familiar to him. The final canonisation of the prophetic books in their entirety, however, must have taken place at a later date, given the fact that some of them stem from the fifth or fourth century BCE (Malachi, Deutero-Zechariah, Jonah and [at least in its final form] Joel). While the conclusion of the canonisation process of these documents remains unknown (possibly between 350 and 250), it must be dated at least prior to the first half of the second century BCE at which time Jesus Sirach clearly considered Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel together with the Twelve Minor Prophets to be sacred documents. As we already noted, one cannot exclude the possibility that the books of the (Former and Latter) Prophets were accepted as authoritative at the same time as the Torah was ascribed canonical authority. The established expression “the Law and the Prophets” certainly points in this direction. The frequently accepted thesis that the formation of the canon took place in three stages: (the Pentateuch during the time of Ezra; the Prophets prior to 200 BCE; the Writings around 100 BCE) is far from certain.

The third series of books in the Hebrew Bible, the Ketubîm (the Writings), was collected together for the most part during the late post-exilic period, the largest portion thereof stemming from the cen-
turies following the Babylonian exile. We have already pointed out above that the definitive establishment of this third part of the canon of the Old Testament was only concluded shortly before the beginning of the Common Era and specifically within Pharisaic circles.

The fact that certain documents were taken as authoritative in the period immediately prior to the beginning of the Common Era does not yet imply that the texts of the books in question were passed on unaltered (certainly not for every group within Judaism). Even with respect to the Law (Torah) one is obliged to account for an (albeit limited) number of later interpolations and elaborations. For a significant period of time, no sharp dividing line was drawn between the transmitted text and commentary added at a later date. We will be obliged to return to this question in our treatment of the textual transmission of the Old Testament (see the following chapter).

The collection and canonisation of the writings of the Old Testament was largely inspired and typified by a single intellectual/spiritual current within the people of Israel, namely that of those who had remained faithful to יְהֹוָה before, during and after the Babylonian exile. It is for this reason that the Old Testament has the character of a typical orthodox Yahwistic collection. The aforementioned intellectual/spiritual current was not limited to that of the priesthood in Jerusalem; the prophetic element also clearly played a significant role therein. Tensions are thus evident within the Old Testament, specifically with respect to the understanding of the sacrificial cult. While this was obviously promoted by the priesthood and rarely rejected in principle by others, it was not infrequently subject to unequivocal prophetic critique (cf. Amos 5:21–24; Isa. 1:10–17; Ps. 51:18–19; see also 1 Sam. 15:22).

Tensions can also be observed on occasion between the tenor of ancient historical narrative series and the spirit of later Orthodox Judaism. Within the Wisdom literature we encounter opposition between the worldly wisdom of Proverbs on the one hand and the content of the books of Job and Qoheleth on the other. Ancient historical works contain all sorts of ideas and conceptions that were later to be rejected. Side by side with strictly monotheistic statements, we thus find reference to centuries in which resistance to the gods of the nations was not as vehement as it would later become. Next to the orthodox Yahwistic elements that typified the collection of authoritative writings, therefore, reference must also be made to the tendency to preserve the intellectual/spiritual property acquired
by Israel in the course of its history in all its diversity. The canon of the Old Testament thus obliges us to pay due attention to the developmental history of Israel’s religion and to ascribe a due significance to the tensions we observe in the text.

The problem of the relationship between the original sources of the individual biblical documents and the biblical books available to us today, raised in particular by Child’s *canonical criticism*, is related to the above discussion. Childs (1979) draws attention to the final form of the text of the Old Testament and the way in which this was created by and functioned in the faith community. While one is obliged to agree whole-heartedly that the last two centuries of Old Testament research have concentrated primarily and one-sidedly on the source documents and stages of transmission lying at the foundations of the individual biblical books, Childs is guilty of the reverse by his insistence that the “final form” is the only relevant canonical criterium available to the exegete (for an incisive critique of this perspective see Barr 1983). It seems preferable, however, to include both the final form of the text together with the components out of which it evolved within the context of theological hermeneutics. There is no reason, for example, to limit oneself to the evaluation of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3, which stem from different sources, in relation to one another and not, at the same time, to consider them independently. Where such limitation is employed we run an evident and serious risk of ignoring the witness of the various voices and various eras of the faith community of Ancient Israel in an ahistorical manner. When it is maintained that the theories concerning the genesis and evolution of many books of the Old Testament and of the Pentateuch in particular are nothing more than subjective speculation we are nevertheless left with the suspicion that the interpretation of the canonical form of the text is equally prone to subjective factors and the impressions of the exegete. It seems advisable, therefore, to pay due attention to the unique witness of the original sources as well as to the “final form” with its unique message in order to avoid succumbing to a tendency to blur and harmonise that does not do justice to the historical growth and polyphonic character of the books of the Old Testament. From the canonical perspective, the final form of the transmitted text together with the components from which it was constructed are both of theological relevance. The witness of the canonical Scriptures is many-sided and subject to the same degrees of distinction as one would apply to human life itself.

As we noted above, the order of books found in the Hebrew Bible differs from that of the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Broadly speaking, the Hebrew canon endeavours to follow a historical approach while the order found in the Septuagint and the Vulgate tends to
be more pragmatic (the “books of Moses” followed by the historical and poetic books and those of the prophets).

With respect to the Torah, there is no difference in the order of books between the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint and the Vulgate. The Hebrew Bible employs Hebrew terms and expressions to refer to the books in question (Beresît [in the beginning = Genesis]; Šemôt [names = Exodus]; Wayyiqra’ [and He called = Leviticus]; Bammidbar [in the wilderness = Numbers]; Debarîm [words = Deuteronomy]).

With respect to the Former Prophets, the Hebrew Bible consists of four “historical books” (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings), while the Septuagint, the Vulgate and the western translations add Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. The Septuagint in addition includes the apocryphal books of Judith, Tobit and 1–4 Maccabees. The Vulgate only includes Tobit and Judith at this juncture although it adds the book of Job that may have been considered semi-historical.

The Hebrew Bible lists the Latter Prophets immediately after the Former Prophets, the three Major Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (not Daniel), being followed by the Twelve Minor Prophets. The Septuagint, by contrast, follows the “historical books” with the most important “Documents”, including the three apocryphal books: the Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus Sirach and the Psalms of Solomon. The Vulgate tends on the whole to follow the Septuagint although it does not have the Psalms of Solomon and locates the book of Job (as we already noted) among the “historical books”. For a variety of reasons, the Septuagint, the Vulgate and the western tradition gave rise to a fourfold division in contrast to the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible.

In the Hebrew Bible, the Writings consist of various sorts of books: the Psalms, the Wisdom books of Job and Proverbs, the five Megillôt or festival scrolls (Ruth, Song of Songs, Qoheleth, Lamentations and Esther), the book of Daniel and the later historical books of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. In the Septuagint, the majority of these books are contained in the third subdivision, while the fourth consists of the Minor and Major Prophets (in that order) with two apocryphal books (1 Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah) and the Lamentations of Jeremiah placed between Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In addition, a supplemented form of Daniel is included among the prophets. The Vulgate, followed by the western translation, has the Major Prophets (including 1 Baruch) together with Daniel, then the Minor prophets.
The Vulgate, to conclude, adds 1 and 2 Maccabees and places the Prayer of Manasseh and 3 and 4 Esdras in an appendix after the New Testament.

By way of summary, we present the order of books found in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Vulgate and in English translation (apocryphal books in italics) in the following table:

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<td>Genesis</td>
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<td>Exodus</td>
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<td>Leviticus</td>
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<td>Numbers</td>
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<td>Deuteronomy</td>
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<td><strong>IIa. Former Prophets</strong></td>
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<td>Joshua</td>
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<td>Judges</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2 Samuel</td>
<td>1–4 Chronicles (= Samuel-Kings)</td>
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<td>1–2 Kings</td>
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<td><strong>IIb. Later Prophets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>1–2 Paralipomena (= Chronicles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>1–2 Esdras (= Ezra/Neemiah)</td>
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<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>Esther</td>
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<td>Hosea</td>
<td>Tobit</td>
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<td>Joel</td>
<td>1–4 Maccabees</td>
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<td>Amos</td>
<td>Psalms (and Odes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obadiah</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micah</td>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
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<td>Nahum</td>
<td>Job</td>
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<td>Habakkuk</td>
<td>Wisdom of Solomon</td>
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<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>Jesus Sirach</td>
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<td>Haggai</td>
<td>Psalms of Solomon</td>
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<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>Hosea</td>
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<td>Malachi</td>
<td>Amos</td>
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<td><strong>III. Writings</strong></td>
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<td>Psalms</td>
<td>Joel</td>
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<td>Job</td>
<td>Obadiah</td>
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<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>Jonah</td>
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<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Nahum</td>
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The Old Testament as Canon

Song of Songs
Qoheleth
Lamentations
Esther
Daniel
Nehemiah
1–2 Chronicles

Vulgate:
Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kings
1–2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Tobit
Judith
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Qoheleth
Song of Songs
Wisdom of Solomon
Jesus Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Isaiah

English translation:
Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kings
1–2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Song of Songs
Wisdom of Solomon
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:
TEXT, TRANSLATIONS AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Gott will niemand den Geist noch Glauben geben ohn das äußerliche
Wort und Zeichen, so er dazu eingesetzt hat (Luther)

P. Kahle, “Die hebräischen Handschriften aus Babylonien. Mit Faksimiles
von 70 Handschriften”, \textit{ZAW} 46 (1928), 113–137; B. J. Roberts, \textit{The Old
Testament Text and Versions—The Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of
the Ancient Versions}, Cardiff 1951; P. Kahle, \textit{The Cairo Geniza}, Oxford 1959;
I. L. Seeligmann, “Indications of Editorial Alteration and Adaptation in the
Masoretic Text and the Septuagint”, \textit{VT} 11 (1961), 201–221; D. Barthélemy,
\textit{Les décaniers d’Aquila (SVT 10)}, Leiden 1963; J. Barr, \textit{Comparative Philology
and the Text of the Old Testament}, Oxford 1968, Winona Lake IN 1987; id.,
\textit{The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible} (Schweich Lectures), Oxford 1989;
R. W. Klein, \textit{Textual Criticism of the Old Testament—The Septuagint after Qumran
(Guides to Biblical Scholarship, OT Series 4)}, Philadelphia 1974; F. M.
Cross and S. Talmon (eds.), \textit{Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text,
Testament} (OBO 21), Fribourg CH/Göttingen 1978; F. E. Deist,
\textit{Towards the Text of the Old Testament}, Pretoria 1978, 1981; id., \textit{Witnesses to
the Old Testament—Introducing Old Testament Textual Criticism (The Literature
of the OT 5)}, Pretoria 1988; E. Tov, \textit{The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in
Biblical Research} (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8), Jerusalem 1992 (revised
edition 1997); P. K. McCarter, \textit{Textual Criticism. Recovering the Text of the
Hebrew Bible} (Guides to Biblical Scholarship, OT Series 11), Philadelphia
1986; M. J. Mulder (ed.), \textit{Mikra. Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of
the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (CRINT II, 1)},
Philadelphia-Assen/Maastricht 1988; J. Sanderson, \textit{An Exodus Scroll from
Qumran: 4QpaleoExod \textsuperscript{m} and the Samaritan Tradition} (HSS 30), Atlanta GA 1986;
Criticism of the Hebrew Bible}, Minneapolis-Assen/Maastricht 1992 (best mod-
ern introduction to the textual history and textual criticism of the Old
Testament); A. S. van der Woude, \textit{Pluriformiteit en uniformaliteit. Overwegingen
betreffende de tekstoverlevering van het Oude Testament} (afscheidscollege), Kampen
1992; F. M. Cross, \textit{The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies
(The Biblical Seminar 30)}, Sheffield 1994; U. Glessner, \textit{Einleitung in die
Targume zum Pentateuch} (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 48),
Tübingen 1995.
We do not posses autographa (hand written manuscripts by the authors or their secretaries) of the books of the Old Testament. The oldest manuscripts that have been preserved to the present day with the complete text of the Hebrew Bible date from around 900 and 1000 CE and thus from a period more than ten centuries later than the youngest document of the Old Testament (Daniel).

The text that lies at the foundations of the current edition of the Hebrew Bible (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia)\(^1\) is provided by a manuscript dating from 1009, and preserved in the Saltykov-Schedrin library of the Russian city of St. Petersburg: the codex Leningradensis (L).\(^2\) Modern translations of the Hebrew Bible are based on this manuscript. An older document, the Aleppo Codex, which dates from the beginning of the tenth century, was rescued in 1947 from the synagogue of Aleppo after an anti-Jewish pogrom. Although badly damaged, the codex was later brought to Jerusalem with the help of the former Israeli president I. Ben-Zvi.\(^3\) This manuscript lies at the foundations of a new yet still far from complete edition of the Hebrew Bible being prepared by scholars at the Hebrew University (The Hebrew University Bible Project: HUBP). As with the Codex Leningradensis, the Aleppo Codex constitutes a “model codex”, which offers the official text of the Hebrew Bible to the smallest detail.

Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nash papyrus, dating from the second or first centuries BCE and discovered in Egypt in 1902, constituted the oldest extant manuscript of the Hebrew Bible at our disposal. The document consists of the Ten Commandments in a form that does not particularly concur with that found in Exod. 20:2–17 or Deut. 5:6–21 together with the beginning of the “Hear, O Israel” from Deut. 6:4–5. It

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\(^3\) For this manuscript, of which roughly one fourth has been lost, see, I. Ben-Zvi, “The Codex of Ben Asher”, *Textus* 1 (1960), 1–16; M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Authenticity of the Aleppo Codex”, *ibid.*, pp. 17–58; D. S. Loewinger, “The Aleppo Codex and the Ben Asher Tradition”, *ibid.*, pp. 59–111. The text has been published in a facsimile edition by M. Goshen-Gottstein (*The Aleppo Codex*, Jerusalem 1976). The text corrected by Ben Asher was used by Maimonides. Written around 910, the document came to light in Cairo in the eleventh century and was probably transported from there to Aleppo in the fourteenth century. I. Yeivin, “The Vocalisation of Qere-Kethiv in \(A\)”, *Textus* 2 (1962), 146–149, has defended the thesis that the codex was most likely vocalised by a Karaite (cf. also S. Szyszman, “La famille des Masorètes Karaites Ben Asher et le codex Aleppo”, *RB* 73 (1966), 531–551).
is better described as a liturgical text, however, rather than a biblical text in the strict sense of the term. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, a number of manuscript fragments were found in the genizah (junk room) of the Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo dating from the fifth century CE and including thousands of fragments of biblical texts (cf. further P. Kahle, op. cit., 1959, pp. 3–13 and M. C. Davis, Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections I–II, Cambridge 1978, 1980).

Since their discovery in 1947 at Qumran, twelve kilometres to the south of Jericho, the Dead Sea Scrolls have made an extremely important contribution to the study of the textual transmission and textual criticism of the Old Testament (see further chapter XIV). Included among the roughly 800 fragmentary and often very fragmentary manuscripts preserved at Qumran we find roughly 200 manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, dating from the third century BC up to and including the first half of the first century CE. With the exception of Nehemiah (a fortuitous coincidence) and Esther (that did not belong among the sacred writings of the community of Qumran) all the books of the Hebrew Bible are to be found in one or other manuscript, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and the Psalms, the scriptures most frequently referred to in the New Testament, being the best represented.

Almost sixty percent of the biblical manuscripts found at Qumran offer more or less the same consonantal text of the Old Testament as that found in the medieval manuscripts. Certain manuscripts exhibit striking resemblances with the text that lay at the basis of the Septuagint translation (see below). Others are clearly related to the

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6 The first Isaiah manuscript from Cave I of Qumran (1QIsa) has survived virtually intact. A facsimile can be found in J. Trever, Scrolls from Qumran Cave I, Jerusalem 1972. For a study of the character of the manuscript see A. van der Kooij, Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches (OBO 35), Freiburg CH-Göttingen 1981.

harmonising textual tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch (see likewise below). A limited number of manuscripts represent a text type that cannot be included under the aforementioned rubrics. Such pluriformity of Old Testament text traditions at Qumran stands in stark contrast to the virtually complete uniformity of the biblical manuscripts dating from the beginning of the second century CE stemming from Masada, Wadi Muraba‘at and other locations in the Judean desert (see further chapter XIV).

How can we then explain how the pluriformity of the textual transmission of the Hebrew Bible evidenced at Qumran gave way to the large degree of uniformity exhibited by the consonantal texts of the biblical manuscripts of Masada and Wadi Muraba‘at as well as the medieval manuscripts? Commentators have endeavoured to answer this question in a variety of ways without arriving at a unanimous conclusion. It is presumed, as a rule, that the variety of textual traditions found at Qumran was typical for Palestine as a whole during the period prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. This presupposition, however, is far from conclusive. There is sufficient reason to conclude that, side by side with the pluriformity found in various locations in Palestine and elsewhere, a fairly uniform textual tradition had already been in circulation in and around the temple for a significant amount of time prior to 70 CE, especially among the Pharisees and scribes (cf. A. S. van der Woude, op. cit., 1992). In our opinion, it is only in such an informal manner that one can explain why this textual tradition rather abruptly and exclusively continued after 70 CE. In contrast to other Jewish religious movements, the Pharisees managed spiritually to survive the catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. As a consequence, the Old Testament textual tradition that they maintained ultimately won the day. Indeed, it remains possible that this tradition had already enjoyed a significant degree of standardisation from the second century CE onwards.

The uniform textual tradition was apparently stimulated, moreover, by the conviction maintained by the Pharisees and the Scribes that the Holy Spirit, as the Scriptures’ source of inspiration, had already been absent from Israel since the days of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.8 Such a conviction naturally facilitated a standardisa-

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tion of the text. What remained were sacred books that, in principle, were no longer open to edifying additions or actualising and harmonising emendations. A process thus emerged whereby the Scriptures came to be considered as a literally inspired text that was perceived in the rabbinic period as a precisely established quantity of graphic signs coinciding with the reader as a perpetually valid revelation of God.9 We are thus faced with a development that begins with a Scripture that referred to a significant extent to divine revelation in history and ends with a Scripture that was literally considered to be revelation as such.

Pluriformity of textual tradition is a normal phenomenon, uniformity an exception. As along as no sharp boundary existed between the transmitted text and commentary upon the Scriptures, the text of the latter was not sacrosanct and remained open to emendation.10 There is occasional evidence of passages that were considered objectionable for one reason or another (e.g. Torah oriented piety) and were later subject to emendation.11 A striking example thereof is that of Deut. 32:8, in which the original reading “sons of God” (cf. the Septuagint and Qumran) was emended to read “sons of Israel”. Such interpolations and emendations remained possible a fortiori as long as there was an instance, side by side with the transmission of the Scriptures, that had the authority to make decisions concerning questions of dogma and day to day life and that considered itself entitled to actualise the tradition with an appeal to divine inspiration (e.g. the priests of the temple in Jerusalem who were considered messengers of yhwh [Mal. 2:7], and the priests of the community of Qumran, especially the “Teacher of Righteousness”; see further chapter XIV). For the faithful, pluriformity of textual tradition/transmission rooted in copyist errors, variant spellings, harmonisations,
alternative readings, learned and edifying commentary, actualisations, religious tendencies and dogmatic “corrections”, were not considered to be essential problems.

While it is probable that the (consonantal) text of the Hebrew Bible, as we are now familiar with it from the medieval manuscripts, was already standardised in certain Jewish circles prior to the beginning of the common era, it will be apparent from what we have said so far that we no longer have access to the original text of the various books of the Old Testament. As a rule, however, the actual content of these books was not affected thereby. The ancient Hebrew tradition apparently tended to place the emphasis on the correct meaning of a text rather than on the literal word. Variants even exist within the Hebrew Bible itself in what otherwise remain identical segments of text (cf., for example, 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18; Ps. 60:7–14 and Ps. 108:7–14).

The original Hebrew text was written without vowels (as is the case with a number of other Semitic languages including Modern Hebrew and Arabic). The pronunciation of the text was thus only known on the basis of oral transmission. In later times, Jewish scholars established the pronunciation, which varied at certain points, via the Babylonian, Palestinian and Tiberian systems of vocalisation. Manuscripts providing evidence of these systems were discovered in the genizah (junk room) of the Ezra synagogue of Old Cairo (Kahle 19592). The Tiberian system, elaborated by scholarly families (Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali) in Tiberias, ultimately won the day. The Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad codex employ the system of Ben Asher. The pronunciation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is thus only know to us from a relatively late tradition, that of the Masoretes, the “transmitters” (of the Hebrew text). There can be little doubt that this pronunciation is not completely identical to the pronunciation of Hebrew in the pre-Christian period.

13 According to P. Kahle the Masoretes in Tiberias were the designers of this punctuation system. M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Rise of the Tiberian Bible Text”, in: A. Altmann (ed.), Biblical and Other Studies, Cambridge 1963, pp. 79–122, argues by way of contrast that Aaron ben Asher systematised an already exploited punctuation system and applied it to the entire biblical text. In so doing he created a model text of the Old Testament as a whole (the Aleppo Codex), based on the best written and oral traditions.
Beside the variety of pronunciations evidenced by the Babylonian, Palestinian and Tiberian vocalisation systems there would appear to have been further variations. The Greek transcription of the Hebrew text found in the second column of Origen’s Hexapla (third century CE; the first polyglot Bible known to us; see below) offers a striking example thereof. While deviations from the Masoretic Text in this work are fairly frequent, they tend to be of subsidiary importance. Similarly, the manner in which the Septuagint renders biblical names differs in a number of places from the Masoretic tradition. The alternative spelling of a number of words in the Dead Sea Scrolls is likewise informative and suggestive of a pronunciation at variance with that of the later Masoretic tradition.14

Beside the Masoretic tradition of the Old Testament and that uncovered by the discoveries at Qumran, we also have the Samaritan Pentateuch (Samaritanus; also in Hebrew) at our disposal.15 Written in old Hebrew script and dating from the Hasmonaean period, this text has survived, albeit in the form of late copies, in the religious community of the Samaritans who limited the ascription of canonical status to the first five books of Moses (and Job?). It would appear to a large extent to have its roots in an Ancient Israelite tradition stemming from the period prior to the secession of the Samaritans from their Judean co-religionists.16 Next to orthographic and phonological differences, evident when this text type is compared with the Masoretic tradition, the Samaritanus exhibits a predominant tendency to harmonise by adapting parallel verses to one another (e.g. Exod. 20:8 and Deut. 5:12, in which the Samaritanus in both instances


16 Scholars disagree as to when this secession took place. Some propose the fifth, others the fourth and others still the second century BCE (see further J. Sanderson, op. cit., 1986, pp. 28–35).
has “maintain [the Sabbath day]”), by providing details that the reader might potentially have known from preceding texts, and by detailing the execution of commands where the Masoretic tradition limited itself to a summary text. It was only at a later date that the Samaritanus came to be considered a sectarian text, on account of the fact that Mount Gerizim was introduced as a legitimate cultic location (cf. the addition to Exod. 20:14 and Deut. 5:18 together with the replacement of “Ebal” in Deut. 27:4 by “Gerizim” in the Samaritanus). From the text-critical perspective (beside the deviations from the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11), the variants that the Samaritanus has in common with the Septuagint in contrast to the Masoretic Text are of primary importance. The Samaritan text tradition with its characteristic harmonisations is represented by a number of manuscripts found among the scrolls of the Dead Sea, in particular 4QpaleoExod. The available manuscripts of the Samaritanus stem without exception from the late middle ages. The Abisha Scroll, preserved in Nablus and published by P. Castro (Séfer Abiša, Madrid 1959; cf. E. Robertson in VT 12 [1962], 228–235), enjoys significant fame within the Samaritan faith community. The discovery of proto-Samaritan biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls has definitively dismissed the notion that the Samaritanus is a reworking of the (pre-)Masoretic Text, a claim that held sway during the nineteenth century.

The most important translation of the Hebrew Bible is the Septuagint (lxx), a version that derives its name (“seventy”) from the legend

17 As would appear from the publication of J. Sanderson, op. cit., 1986.
referred to in the Letter of Aristeas (see below) and elsewhere that maintains that 72 men translated the Pentateuch in Alexandria into Greek (six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel; the figure was later rounded down to 70). Whatever degree of historicity one might be inclined to ascribe to this tradition, the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek did indeed begin in the third century BCE with the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy). In the following two or three centuries, translations of a number of other books of the Hebrew Bible were added. Given the use of terminology and the different translation techniques employed in the process, it is evident that the Septuagint is the work of many hands. Several other translations have been strongly influenced by the Septuagint, sometimes fairly directly (Vetus Latina; Coptic translations), sometimes less directly (the Peshitta and the Vulgate, see below).


Counter to Paul de Lagarde’s assertion that all manuscripts of LXX ultimately stem from a single prototype, Paul Kahle has defended the hypothesis that several attempts at translation were originally undertaken: the narrative offered in the Letter of Aristeas is intended to propagate an official revision of earlier translations and does not represent a description of a new translation. Kahle’s theory, however, tends on the whole to be rejected by the majority of Septuagint experts.
The oldest textual witnesses to the Septuagint are the Greek papyrus 458 of the John Rylands Library dating from the second century BCE, Papyrus Fouad 266 dating from the first century BCE, fragments among the manuscripts of Qumran from Cave 4 (cf. DJD IX, pp. 161–197 and E. Ulrich, The Greek Manuscripts of the Pentateuch from Qumran, in: A. Pietersma and C. Cox (eds.), De Septuaginta [FS J. W. Wevers], Mississauga 1984, pp. 71–80) and Cave 7 (cf. DJD III, pp. 142–143) together with the scroll of the Minor Prophets discovered in the Judean desert (from the first century BCE; cf. DJD VIII). In addition to these documents, we also have the Chester Beatty papyri dating from the second to the fourth century CE, the Berlin fragments of a Genesis manuscript dating from the third century and the Bodmer papyrus XXIV likewise dating from the third century CE at our disposal. For more detailed information see. E. Würthwein, op. cit., 19885, pp. 73–75.

The most important codices containing the text of the Septuagint are the Codex Sinaiticus (S or _SUR: from the fourth century CE), the Codex Vaticanus (B: likewise from the fourth century CE) and the Codex Alexandrinus (A: from the fifth century CE). For these and other codices see E. Würthwein, op. cit., 19885, pp. 75–77.

The origin and background of the _lxx continue to be a matter of dispute,21 in spite of the now widely familiar story of the Greek translation of the Pentateuch found in the Letter of Aristeas22 (from

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22 For the Greek text of the Letter of Aristeas see A. Pelletier, Lettre d’Aristée à Philocrate (Sources Chrétiennes 89), Paris 1962 (with introduction, translation and marginal comments). According to N. Meisner, Aristeasbrief (JSHRZ II/1), Göttingen 1973, pp. 35–87, the letter represents a propaganda document intended for Greeks with a view to demonstrating the excellence of the Jewish religion and the Law. The vast majority of scholars, however, are of the opinion that the letter was intended for Jews and represents a defense of the literary products of Alexandrian Judaism against attack from Palestinian quarters. G. Howard (“The Letter of Aristeas: A Re-Evaluation”, JThS 22 [1971], 337–348) argues in addition that the purpose of the letter was to confirm the value of the Septuagint, S. P. Brock (“The Phenomenon of the Septuagint”, OTS 17 [1972], 11–36) that it was directed against attempts by Palestinian Jews to revise the Septuagint, and A. F. J. Klijn (“The Letter of Aristeas and the Greek Translation of the Pentateuch in Egypt”, NTS 11 [1964–1965], 154–158) that its goal was to defend the Septuagint against the Jewish priests of the temple at Leontopolis.
the end of the second or the beginning of the first century BCE; see further chapter XIII). According to this document, the five books of Moses were translated during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BCE) on the instigation of his librarian and with the intention of placing them in the library at Alexandria. The translation is said to be based on a Torah scroll from Jerusalem provided him by the Jewish High Priest Eleazar. The details of the letter remain open to question. Were they historically correct, then we are left with the problem as to why the Letter of Aristeas was forced to defend the translation against Jews a century after it was made. In addition, points of agreement between the Septuagint and the Samaritanus likewise remain to a large extent unexplained. In any event, it is apparent that the Greek translation of some of the remaining books of the Hebrew Bible differs significantly from the Masoretic tradition (in particular the books of Samuel, Jeremiah, Job and Daniel). All this has its consequences, of course, for the evaluation of the text-critical value of the Septuagint when compared with the Masoretic Text. After the discovery of the biblical manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is equally clear that variations in content between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text should not as a rule be regarded as free translations or paraphrasing. Such variant readings have their roots in a different and often much older Hebrew text tradition than that which lies at the basis of the Masoretic tradition. Both traditions thus are deserving of our respect\(^{23}\) (cf. E. Tov, op. cit., 1997\(^{2}\)).

The tendency to make the text of the Septuagint conform to that of the Hebrew Bible is already evident among prominent Jewish circles prior to the beginning of the Common Era.\(^{24}\) The fact that the early Christian church considered the Septuagint to be its sacred Scripture may, at the most, have strengthened this process, but it should not be considered the primary cause thereof. The revisions of the Septuagint that were made prior to Origen’s Hexapla (see below), namely the translations of Aquila (A), Symmachus (Σ) and Theodotion (Θ), traditionally referred to as “the three” (α, β, γ), constitute striking examples of this reworking tendency.


The Greek scroll of the Minor Prophets stemming from the first century BCE, discovered in the Judean desert in 1952 and published in DJD VIII, contains a revision of the LXX that closely resembles the Masoretic text, and is akin to the translation ascribed in antiquity to Theodotion (end second century CE), as provided (in part) in the sixth column of the Hexapla (see below), and various segments of the LXX in Samuel-Kings (2 Sam. 11:1–1 Kgs 2:11 and 1 Kgs 22:1–2 Kings). Given its relationship with the aforementioned scroll, this revision would appear to be a couple of centuries older than the period in which Theodotion lived. This led Barthélemy to employ the reference kaige-Theodotion, based on the fact that the Hebrew word *gam* ("also") is normally translated therein by the Greek term *kaige*. Others refer in this regard to "proto-Theodotion". The extent to which the text revision implemented in *kaige*-Theodotion can be ascribed to Theodotion himself (second century CE) remains unclear.

The highly literal translation made by Aquila, a proselyte from Pontus and disciple of rabbi Akibah (± 125 CE) is likewise based on *kaige*-Theodotion. This translation enjoyed great respect in the Jewish world for a significant period of time.

The revision of Symmachus, a Samaritan scribe who converted to Judaism, is similarly based on *kaige*-Theodotion. This revision, stemming in all probability from the second half of the second century CE, offers both word for word and free translations. Its primary aim appears to be a readable Greek text. Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, praises it highly.

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27 The Hebrew nota accusativi were thus rendered with the Greek *sou*, “with”, apparently on account of the alternative meaning of the Hebrew ה.
Between 230 and 240 CE, Origen compiled the Hexapla (the “sixfold edition”), in which he presented the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Hebrew text in Greek transcription, the translations of Aquila and Symmachus, together with the (revised and annotated) text of the Septuagint and that of Theodotion in six columns. Unfortunately, relatively few segments of this work have survived to the present day. It is possible, however, to construct a reasonably clear picture of the content of the fifth column (that of the Septuagint) based on the Syriac translation made by Paulus of Tella between 615–617 CE, the so-called Syro-Hexaplaris.

In the foreword to his translation of Chronicles, Jerome makes reference around 400 CE to the existence of three recensions of the Septuagint: that of Hesychius, which is said to have been current in Egypt, that of Lucian (died a martyr’s death in 312 CE), employed in Constantinople and Antioch, and that of Origen, which was read in Palestine. The revision of Hesychius is incomprehensible to the present day reader, the character of that of Lucianus a matter of some dispute. D. Barthélemy (op. cit., 1963, pp. 126–127), for example, denies the very existence of a Lucianic recension, insisting that it is “essentiellement la Septante ancienne, plus ou moins abâtardie et corrompue”. E. Tov (“Lucian and proto-Lucian—Toward a New Solution of the Problem”, RB 79 (1972), 101–113) considers it possible that the said recension was “composed of a substratum containing the original translation and a second layer containing a revision by Lucian” (cf. E. Tov, Textual Criticism, p. 148).

The complex transmission history of the Septuagint and the absence of the original text thereof have given rise to a multitude of reactions. Paul de Lagarde (1827–1891), for example, set his sights on tracing the original text by classifying the manuscripts of lxx according to the textual traditions

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30 Origen employs various sigla (obelos, metobelos and asterisk) in order to indicate which words in lxx are lacking in the Hebrew text. On the other hand, he also employed asterisk and metobelos in order to indicate words lacking in lxx that he himself had supplied on the basis of another translation. His interventions in the transmission of the text, however, are sometimes left unmarked. His rendition of lxx in the fifth column of the Hexapla exerted considerable influence on later manuscripts of lxx.

31 As a matter of fact, the sixth column does not always contain the text of Theodotion (e.g. with respect to the Minor Prophets and the Psalms).

mentioned by Jerome, dividing them up between the said recensions with the help of quotations from the Church Fathers and other criteria. In the context of the Septuaginta-Unternehmen of the Göttinger Akademie der Wissenschaften, a great deal has been done under the inspirational leadership of A. Rahlfs to bring this project to a reasonable conclusion. It later became apparent, however, that the problems were more complicated and with each book more convoluted than De Lagarde had suspected (cf. further E. Würthwein, op. cit., pp. 63–64). In The Cairo Geniza, Oxford 1959, pp. 209–264, based on his 1941 Schweich Lectures, Paul Kahle resolutely challenged the approach of De Lagarde and his followers. Taking the data contained in the Letter of Aristeas as his point of departure he maintained that the translation lauded therein should be understood as a revised version stemming from around 100 BCE, arguing that the letter itself (§ 314–316) makes reference to older, albeit “unreliable” Greek translations. Side by side with this revision, Kahle insists, other recensions continued to circulate and, with the exception of the Torah within Judaism, no attempts were made to arrive at a standardised text. In the second century CE, new translations that closely associated themselves with the authoritative Hebrew text (Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) replaced the Septuagint. Only the Christian church established a standard text that was able to survive through the ages. Consequently, Kahle adjudges the Septuagint by analogy with the Aramaic Targums (see below), at the origin of which a uniform text equally lacks evidence. Kahle’s propositions have been adopted by some and sharply disputed by others. The aforementioned scroll of the Twelve Prophets, discovered in the Judean desert in 1952, tends more to contradict Kahle’s theses than to support them (see further E. Würthwein, op. cit., 1988, pp. 64–68 and E. Tov, op. cit., 1992, pp. 183–185).

The classical Syriac translation of the Old Testament, referred to as the Peshitta (“the simple [translation]”), stems for the most part from the second century CE and is based in principle on the (pre-)Masoretic Text (with the exception of Jesus Sirach, the apocrypha were trans-

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lated on the basis of the LXX). The hypothesis that this translation was influenced by the Targum traditions (see below)\(^{35}\) appears to have been incorrect.\(^{36}\) Its place of origin (Edessa?; the Jewish kingdom of Adiabene?) and the identity of its translators\(^{37}\) remains a matter of dispute. In any event, one must account for the fact that, with the exception of the Pentateuch, the translation took place in successive stages. The most modern edition of the Syriac translation is based on the Codex Ambrosianus (preserved in the Ambrosian library in Milan), which dates from the sixth or seventh century CE.\(^{38}\)

The Old Latin translation, which underwent frequent revision and circulated in a variety of different recensions, is referred to as the Vetus Latina or (less appropriately) Itala and is based on a text form of the Septuagint. The Vetus Latina came into existence in the second century CE and was employed in North Africa and Western Europe by the Latin Church Fathers. An excellent although still incomplete critical edition of the Old Latin translation has been made available since 1949 by the Vetus Latina-instituut of Beuron (Germany) in the series “Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel”.

Between 390 and 405 CE, the Church Father Jerome\(^{39}\) produced a Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible on the request of Pope Damasus I and under the influence of the hebraica veritas (“the Hebrew truth”: the reliability that stems from the Hebrew text). The result of his endeavours is referred to as the Vulgata, c.q. the Vulgate (the “general”, the “popular [translation]”).\(^{40}\) Jerome frequently sought


\(^{37}\) It is possible that some books were translated by Jews and others by Christians.

\(^{38}\) This codex lies at the basis of the prestigious yet still incomplete edition of the Peshitta prepared (with critical apparatus) by the Peshitta Institute in Leiden (The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version, Leiden 1966 and subsequent years). Thus far the texts of Genesis-Deuteronomy, Joshua, Job, Judges, Samuel, Psalms, Kings, Chronicles, Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon, Qoheleth, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel, Bel and the Dragon, the Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Esdras, the Odes, the Prayer of Manasseh, the Apocryphal Psalms, the Psalms of Solomon, Tobit and 1[3] Esdras have been published.


the advice of Jewish scholars in his work and also made use of the LXX and the translations of Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus, especially the latter. In spite of the resistance it initially encountered (in particular from Augustine) Jerome’s translation was able to survive, albeit in a variety of recensions, through the course of the Middle Ages and at the expense of the Vetus Latina. The Council of Trent (1546) resolved to introduce a uniform Vulgate text into circulation and thereby raised the question of a critical text edition. After the edition edited by Pope Sixtus V (the Sixtina of 1590), which was later withdrawn, the edition of Pope Clement VIII (the Clementina of 1592, corrected in 1593 and 1598) became the official text of the Vulgate and the normative Bible text of the Roman Catholic Church, although this edition was likewise unable to claim to be a literal rendition of Jerome. In 1907, Pope Pius X entrusted the preparation of a critical edition of the Vulgate to the Benedictine order, a task which the monks energetically pursued. In 1979, however, a new official Latin edition of the Bible was announced by Pope John Paul II. This Nova Vulgata came about as the result of a revision of Jerome’s translation recommended by the Second Vatican Council.

Next to the abovementioned translations of the Old Testament, particular mention deserves to be made of the paraphrasing Aramaic versions of the Old Testament as found in the so-called targumîm (plural of Targum, “rendition”) of Jewish authorship. In the last cen-
tury prior to the beginning of the Common Era, Hebrew lost its significance as a popular language and was ousted by Aramaic. It became necessary, therefore, to combine the reading from the Hebrew Bible in synagogue services with an oral Aramaic rendition. It goes without saying that these translations differed from the Hebrew text according to place and time, choice of words, nature and extent of paraphrasing, interpretation and actualisation. The Targums are thus of relatively little importance from the perspective of textual history although their significance for our knowledge of the later interpretation of the Hebrew Bible should not be underestimated.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has proven definitively that Aramaic renditions of books of the Bible were already being committed to writing from the period of the Second Temple. As a rule, these renditions tend to bear close resemblance to the Hebrew basis text although, even at this juncture, they also contain interpretative and edifying interpolations.

The Targums of later date that have survived to the present day can be divided into two categories: a) the various forms of the Palestinian Targum; b) the Targum Onqelos of the Pentateuch and the Targum Jonathan of the Prophets edited in Babylon.

The Palestinian Targum has never been officially edited and as such the available manuscripts thereof exist in more or less variant forms:

a. the Targum Jerushalmi I, also referred to as the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which appears to have been reworked in line with the Targum Onqelos (see below);
b. the Targum Jerushalmi II, also referred to as the Fragmentary Targum because it only offers explanations of individual verses and not a continuous paraphrasing translation;
c. Targum fragments from the genizah of Old Cairo;
d. the manuscript Neophiti I, dating from 1504 and discovered in 1956. Preserved in the Vatican Library, the targumic text of this manuscript may date back to the first or second century CE.

The Targum Onqelos of the Pentateuch and the Targum Jonathan of the Prophets have come to enjoy authoritative status for Judaism. While they have their roots in an ancient, probably Palestinian tradition, the text thereof was only officially established in Babylon during the fifth century CE. As a rule, the Targum Onqelos tends to follow the Masoretic Text quite literally. Targum Jonathan, on the other hand, contains more haggadic material than Targum Onqelos.

The Targums of the writings are mostly of a later date, although the Dead Sea Scrolls already contain a Targum of Job.

By way of example, we offer below the text of Exod. 24:9–11 in its various textual traditions side by side with that of the versions (deviation from the Masoretic Text is indicated in italics).

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50 Detailed information on the various Targums is provided by P. S. Alexander in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* VI, New York etc. 1992, pp. 320–331.
Masoretic Text

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stones, like the very heaven for clearness. He (God) did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

Samaritanus

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Itamar, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stones, like the very heaven for clearness. He (God) did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

Septuagint

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stones, like the firmament of the very heaven for clearness. And none of the chosen ones of Israel died; also they appeared at the place of God, and they ate and drank.

Aquila = Masoretic Text

Symmachus

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw in a vision the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stones, like the very heaven for clearness. He (God) did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

Targum Onqelos\footnote{B. Grossfeld, The Targum Onqelos to Exodus. Translated, with Apparatus and Notes (The Aramaic Bible 7), Edinburgh 1988, p. 72.}

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, as well as the seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they perceived the Glory of the God of Israel and beneath the throne of His Glory was something like the work of a precious stone and in appearance like the sky for purity. Yet the leaders of the Israelites were not injured even though they perceived the glory of the
Lord; and they rejoiced in their sacrifices which were accepted as though they were eating and drinking.

Targum Neofiti I\textsuperscript{52}

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the wise men of Israel went up. And they saw the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord; and under the footstool of his feet there (was) like brick-work of sapphire, as a vision of the heavens, when they are pure from cloud. And he did not stretch out his hand to the young men of the children of Israel; and they saw the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord, and they rejoiced over their sacrifices, which were received as if they ate and drank.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan\textsuperscript{53}

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. Nadab and Abihu lifted up their eyes saw the glory of the God of Israel; under the footstool of his feet that was placed under his throne (there was) the likeness of a work of sapphire stone, recalling the slavery with which the Egyptians had enslaved the children of Israel with clay and bricks. As the women treaded the clay with their men, there was a delicately reared maiden there who was pregnant. She lost the embryo and it was tread on with the clay. Gabriel came down and made a brick out of it, and bringing it up to the heavens on high, he placed it as a platform under the footstool of the Lord of the world. Its splendour was like (that of) a work in precious stone and like the glorious beauty of the heavens when they are clear of clouds. But, at that time, he did not send his plague against the handsome young men Nadab and Abihu. But it was reserved for them until the eighth day of ordination, when it would afflict them. And they saw the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord, and rejoiced in their offering that had been accepted with favor, as if they ate and drank.

Peshitta

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stones, like the very heaven for clearness. He (God) did not lay his hand on the elders of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.


Vulgate

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire and like the heaven when it is clear. He (God) did not lay his hand on those who had distanced themselves from the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

It will be apparent from this comparison that the Septuagint and the Samaritanus have ventured to include a number of glosses in the text while the Peshitta and the Vulgate have endeavoured to provide a literal translation. The important role played by Eleazar and Itamar in the Samaritan tradition explains their inclusion in the Samaritanus. The version of the Septuagint (cf. Symmachus) and the Targums clearly represent a theologically founded resistance to the idea that a human person can see God and live. The “young men” of Targum Neofiti I (cf. Exod. 24:5) are identified in Pseudo-Jonathan with Nadab and Abihu, who were later to be stricken by the punishment of ýhwh (cf. Num. 10:1–5).

A second example is taken from Gen. 49:10–12:54

Masoretic Text

A sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a ruler’s staff from between his feet,
until Shiloh comes,
and the obedience of the peoples is his.
He shall bind his donkey to a vine
and his donkey’s colt to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
He shall be more sparkling of eyes than wine
and whiter of teeth than milk.

Samaritanus

A sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a ruler’s staff from between his standards,

54 In verses 8–9 the Aramaic Targums offer supplementary information concerning the history of Judah: Neofiti I with respect to Tamar, Jerushalmi I and II with respect to Tamar and Joseph. Cf. R. de Hoop, Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context (OTS 39), Leiden 1999.
until Shiloh comes,
and the obedience of the peoples is his.
*Bound is* his donkey to a vine
and his donkey’s colt to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
*His eyes shall sparkle* more than wine
and *his teeth* shall be whiter than milk.

**Septuagint and Theodotion**

*A ruler* shall not depart from Judah,
*nor a leader* from between his hips,
until *what was set aside for him* comes,
and *he is the expectation* of the peoples.
He shall bind his young animal to a vine
and his *donkey’s* colt to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
*More joy inspiring are his eyes* than wine
and *whiter his teeth* than milk.

4Q Genesis Pesher* (≡ 4Q252), fragment 1, column V*55

The *sceptre* shall [no]t depart from the tribe of Judah.
While Israel has the dominion,
*There [will not] be cut off* someone who sits on the throne of David.
*For “the staff” is the covenant of royalty*
*[and the thous/ands of Israel are “the standards”]*.
Until the Messiah of righteousness comes, the branch of David.
*For to him and to his descendents has been given the covenant of the kingship of his people for everlasting generations,*
*which he upheld [...] the Law with the men of the Community,*
*for [...] it is the assembly of the men of [...] [...] He gives*

**Aquila and Symmachus**

A sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
*nor a commander*66 from between his feet,
until *he* comes,
and the *alliance* of the peoples is his.

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56 Symmachus has “power/might” at this point.
He shall bind his *young animal* to a vine
and his *donkey’s* colt to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
*Bright are his eyes* more than wine
and *whiter his teeth* than milk.

Peshitta

A sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a *leader from his court house*,
until the one to whom it belongs comes.
The peoples *await* him.
He shall bind his donkey to a vine
and his donkey’s colt to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
His eyes shall sparkle more than wine
and *his teeth* shall be whiter than milk.

Vulgate

A sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a *leader from his hips*,
until the one who must be sent comes;
He shall be *the expectation* of the peoples.
He shall bind his young to a vine
and his *she-ass, O my son*, to a choice vine.
He shall wash his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes.
*More beautiful are his eyes* than wine
and *his teeth* whiter than milk.

Targum Onqelos

*The ruler shall never depart from the House of Judah,*
*nor the scribe from his children’s children for evermore,*
until the *Messiah* comes,
*to whom belongs the kingdom,*
and him shall the nations obey.
He shall lead Israel round about his city;
*the people shall build his Temple;*
*the righteous shall be round about him;*

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and they that carry out the Law shall be with him in study. Let his raiment, be of fine purple, and his garment all woolen, crimson, and of bright sparkling colours. His mountains shall be red with his vineyards; his vats shall be dripping with wine; his valleys shall be white with grain and with flocks of sheep.

Targum Neofiti I

Kings shall not cease from among those of the house of Judah, and neither (shall) scribes teaching the Law, from his son’s sons, until the time King Messiah shall come, to whom the kingship belongs; to him shall all the kingdoms be subject. How beautiful is King Messiah, who is to rise from among those of the house of Judah. He girds his loins and goes forth to battle against those who hate him; and he kills kings with rulers, and makes the mountains red from the blood of their slain and makes the valleys white from the fat of their warriors. His garments are rolled in blood; he is like a presser of grapes. How beautiful are the eyes of King Messiah, more than pure wine, lest he see with them the revealing of nakedness or the shedding of innocent blood. His teeth are more pure than milk, lest he eat with them things that are stolen or robbed. The mountains shall become red from his vines and the vats from wine; and the hills will become white from the abundance of grain and flocks of sheep.

Targum Jerushalmi I

Kings and rulers shall not cease from those of the house of Judah, nor scribes teaching the Law, from his descendents, until the time the King Messiah comes, the youngest of his sons, because of whom the people will pine away. How beautiful is King Messiah,

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58 M. McNamara, Targum Neofiti I: Genesis. Translated, with Apparatus and Notes (The Aramaic Bible 1A), Edinburgh 1992, pp. 219–221.
who is to arise from among those of the house of Judah.
He girds his loins and comes down
arranging battle lines against his enemies
and slaying kings together with rulers;
and there is no king or ruler who can withstand him.
He makes the mountains red with the blood of their dead,
his garments are rolled in blood;
he is like a presser of grapes.
How beautiful are the eyes of the King Messiah,
like pure wine,
for they have not seen the uncovering of nakedness,
or the shedding of innocent blood.
His teeth are whiter than milk,
because he has not eaten what has been robbed or taken by force.
His mountains and his press shall be red from wine,
and his hills white from the harvest and from the flocks.

Targum Jerushalmi II

Kings shall not cease from the house of Judah,
nor scholars and and teachers of the Torah from his children’s children,
until such time that the King Messiah comes,
whose is the kingdom,
and unto whom all the kingdoms of the earth will be subjugated.
How beautiful is the King Messiah,
who will arise from the house of Judah!
He girds his loins and goes out to battle against those who hate him,
and he kills kings and rulers;
he reddens the mountains from the blood of their slain,
and he whitens his valleys form the fat of their mighty ones;
his garments roll in the blood,
and he is like one who presses grapes.
How beautiful to behold are the eyes of the King Messiah,
they are purer than wine,
from [avoidance of] seeing through them the uncovering of nakedness,
and the spilling of innocent blood;
his teeth are whiter than milk
from [avoidance of] eating with them
[the fruit of] violence and robbery;
his mountains will be red with grapes,
and his press, from wine;
his hills will be white from abundance of grain and flocks of sheep.

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60 M. L. Klein, The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to their Extant Sources (Analecta Biblica 76), Rome 1980, p. 119.
The Messianic explanation of Gen. 49:10–12 already suggested in the Septuagint is made explicit in 4QpGen\(^a\) and in the Targums. The messianic expectation in the Qumran document, which belongs among the paraphrasing and exegetical literature of the community that resided therein (see further chapter XIV), is clearly presented as an inner community matter. The Targumic rendition of the text segment constitutes a fine example of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the passage in Jewish circles from the first century of the Common Era. The highly nationalistic paraphrasing found in Neofiti I, Jerushalmi I and Jerushalmi II is worthy of note.

A third example of variety of textual transmission is provided by Job 42:1–6. We limit ourselves in this instance to the Masoretic Text, the Targum of Job from Cave 11 of Qumran and the Septuagint.

**Masoretic text**

Then Job answered the Lord and said:

I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?\(^61\)

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you declare to me.

Only had I heard of you by the hearing of the ear,

but now my eye sees you.

Therefore I recognise my nothingness\(^61\)

and consider myself dust and ashes.

**Targum of Job from Cave 11 of Qumran\(^62\)**

Job answered and said before God:

I know that you can do everything,

and that you are not in want of strength and wisdom.

*I have spoken and I will not repeat;*

*twice and to that I will not add.*\(^63\)

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\(^{61}\) The translation of *'èm'as* as “I revoke” proposed by the NBG is not supported by the use of the respective verb elsewhere in the Old Testament. See E. Noort, *Een duister duel. Over de theologie van het boek Job*, Kampen 1986.


\(^{63}\) Cf. Job 40:5 (tr. 39:38).
Listen, then, and I will speak;  
I will question you, and you shall answer me.  
I have heard of you only by hearsay,  
and now my eye has seen you.  
For this I will be poured out and dissolved,  
and I will turn into dust and ashes.

Septuagint

Job answered and said to the Lord:  
I know that you are capable of all things  
and nothing is impossible to you.  
Who is it that conceals your counsel,  
holding back words and intending to hide (them) from you?  
Who makes known to me what I do not know;  
great and wonderful things that I do not understand?  
I will question you, you will teach me.  
By word of mouth I once heard of you,  
but now my eye has seen you.  
Therefore I consider myself insignificant and am dropped down,  
I consider myself dust and ashes.

Typically lacking in the Targum of Job from Cave 11 of Qumran is any suggestion that Job himself was bereft of insight (cf. MT Job 42:3). It would appear that Job is being portrayed at this juncture as an exemplary pious individual in harmony with later religious ideals.

The text comparisons presented above reveal how actual circumstances and theological perspectives played a far from insignificant role in determining the manner in which a text was transmitted.

The textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible is devoted to the observation, comparison and evaluation of textual variations in the transmitted manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible and the versions. These procedures ultimately include an attempt to form a hypothesis concerning the character of the text traditions in question together with an analysis of translation techniques. The aim of textual criticism is thus limited to the endeavour to trace the “best text”. While the desire to literally reconstruct the original text of an Old Testament document may be aiming too high, the effort to get as close as possible to this goal is clearly a productive process.

The establishment of preferred readings in individual cases is seldom easy. Nevertheless, evident copyist errors are frequently detectable
(e.g. confusion between letters that resemble each other in Hebrew script [in particular b and k, d and r, w and r as well as w and y], the omission of one of two identical opening or concluding clauses [homoioarchton and homoioteleuton], incorrect division between words [cf., for example, Amos 6:12 and 7:4], alternative readings [cf., for example, the word “kingdoms” side by side with “generations” in Jer. 1:15a], the omission of words [e.g. 1 Sam. 13:1, in which the Masoretic Text reads: “Saul was one year old when he became king; and he reigned for two years over Israel”, whereby certain numbers have evidently been omitted], glosses [cf., for example, 1 Kgs 22:28c, borrowed from Micah 1:2a] and the writing of a letter only once instead of twice or vice versa (haplography and dittography respectively).

A degree of reserve must be maintained in the endeavour to reconstruct the earliest attainable text of the Hebrew Bible on the basis of later translations, although the latter can be useful on occasion (see, for example, Micah 6:16, in which the LXX with kai apahanistētai, “and shall be destroyed”, refers to a reading of the Hebrew text wayyiš-tammed instead of wayyištammer, “and shall be preserved” as found in the Masoretic Text). The determination of the meaning of a word that occurs only once (a hapax legomenon) or only a few times in the Old Testament can also benefit from the witness of the ancient translations as well as that of other ancient languages akin to Hebrew.

It should be remembered that the translators of the Septuagint and the compilers of the oldest Targums must have had a reasonable grasp of the meaning of words since they often exhibit close affiliation with ancient Hebrew usage. At the same time, however, this need not imply that they

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64 It is possible that some errors can be traced back to very ancient times when old Hebrew script was still in use and letters such as b and r, m and n were difficult to distinguish. See the still instructive work of F. Delitzsch, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament nebst den dem Schrifttexte einverleibten Randnoten klassifiziert*, Berlin-Leipzig 1920. The confusion of m with the ligature mw and s with z also occasioned errors from time to time.

65 Read bbqr ym, “with cattle the sea”, instead of bbqym, “with cattle”.

66 Read hbb 's, “a rain of fire”, instead of hb b's, “to punish with fire”.


always clearly understood the 500 to 1000 year old texts they had at their disposal. The Hebrew language developed significantly after the Babylonian exile, whereby the ancient meaning of a word came in certain instances to be replaced by a new meaning. Our ever-increasing knowledge of ancient Semitic languages and dialects provides us with the potential to understand and interpret ancient texts in a manner no longer accessible to the Jewish world at the beginning of the Common Era.

Earlier generations of exegetes were not infrequently over zealous in their use of the versions as a means of “correcting” the text of the Hebrew Bible. One might even venture to suggest that they were somewhat konjekturfreudig! The fact that more material has come to light that we can compare with the Hebrew standard text, together with the conviction that a variety of text recensions of the Old Testament were simultaneously in circulation, has inclined scholars to be more cautious in the use of these textual witnesses for the correction of the textus receptus. Certain biblical manuscripts found among the scrolls of the Dead Sea and the analysis of the textual transmission of the Septuagint give evidence, for example, of the existence of a variety of literary strata in the early transmission history of books such as Jeremiah, Joshua, Ezekiel and in 1 Samuel 16–18.70

For centuries, the Masoretic Text has been considered more or less infallible, not only in Jewish circles but also among Christians of the reformed tradition. While such a thesis is clearly no longer tenable, some scholars (e.g. Nyberg in his Studien zum Hoseabuche [1935]) insist on the superiority of the Masoretic Text above all other textual traditions. In the present author’s opinion, such a perspective is only justifiable if one opts for the first centuries prior to the beginning of the Common Era as one’s point of departure. To a significant degree, however, the textual transmission of the individual books of the Hebrew Bible prior to this period remains a mystery, although the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has offered us a glimpse thereof. Bearing 4QJer b in mind, for example, it would appear that the Septuagint version of the book of Jeremiah is based on a Hebrew Vorlage that is older than the Masoretic Text (see further chapter XIV).

Besides the unintentional errors that found their way into the text of the Hebrew Bible in the process of transmission, Scribes of the

first centuries prior to the Common Era also indulged (albeit to a modest degree) in intentional correction and emendation. Of significant interest in this regard are the textual emendations introduced by the Scribes in a number of places rooted in reverence for God or on exegetical grounds (the *tikkune soferîm*, the “emendations of the scribes”). In Gen. 18:22, for example, they read “Abraham stood before ḤWH” instead of “ḤWH stood before Abraham”, because the verb “to stand before” later came to have the potential meaning “to be the servant [of someone]”.

The tradition that the final text of the Torah was established on the basis of three standard texts preserved in the temple, whereby the reading supported by two of the three was chosen in the event of divergent readings, likewise points to text-critical endeavour, which ultimately led to the final form of the textual tradition we have today. Out of respect for the tradition, however, the Masoretes left the transmitted consonantal text unemended. In roughly a thousand cases, however, they replaced “the written (word)” (*ketîb*) by indicating in the margin how the said word was “to be read” (*qerê*), the *ketîb* thus being vocalised according to the *qerê*. While the so-called constant *qerê* or *qerê perpetuum* is not indicated in the margin, in this instance also the *ketîb* is vocalised with the vowels of the *qerê*. The divine name is ḤWH (which originally was probably pronounced Yahwêh) thus came to be vocalised with the vowels of *adonay*, “Lord”, which led in turn to the mixed form Jehovah (where ḤWH occurred next to *adonay* it was vocalised with the vowels of *èlohîm*, “God”).

As a rule of thumb, scholars only tend to consider emendation of the transmitted text of the Hebrew Bible justifiable on those occasions when it can be demonstrated (with the help of the versions) why the text is corrupt (e.g. where letters have been interchanged or where “dogmatic correction” is evident). At the same time, the specific character of the individual textual witnesses, together with the translation-technical and content based presuppositions that can be determined to have been essential elements of the foundations thereof, must be accounted for before one employs information acquired from the versions as the basis for a correction of the text of the Hebrew.

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Bible. The versions frequently reflect later theological or alternative perspectives, which will have exerted a degree of influence on their rendition of the Vorlage. This need not imply that the use of such witnesses in our efforts to establish the primitive Hebrew text of the Old Testament is ill advised. One should be on one’s guard, however, against the tendency to draw often hasty and mechanical conclusions on the basis of a simple comparison of texts without accounting for the unique and particular character of the translations we have at our disposal.
CHAPTER SIX

THE LITERARY GENRES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

a. Poetry


1. Introduction

While the literary sciences frequently present poetry as an older form of literature than prose, such questions have little if any relevance
when it comes to the evaluation of Israel’s literature as found in the Old Testament. From the perspective of culture, Israel was something of a latecomer in the Ancient Near East. It is not surprising, therefore, that both forms of literature evidently existed side by side from its earliest stages.

Virtually half of the Hebrew Bible consists of poetic texts. While these obviously include the Psalms, Lamentations and the Song of Songs, one should also take account of the poetic character of the book of Proverbs and to a significant degree the books of Job and Qoheleth. In addition, a very large portion of the prophetic literature is also poetic in nature. The Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and the Former Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings) likewise contain a number of poetic texts, which are often immediately recognisable in the ancient manuscripts on account of the extra space left between verse segments (this is not true of the Prophets). In some instances, the verse segments are written in consecutive (colometric) lines.1

The most significant characteristic of Hebrew poetry is its use of parallelism between the verse segments (so-called parallelismus membrorum), a style figure likewise found in the literature of Egypt, Ugarit and Mesopotamia. The phenomenon takes a variety of forms including:

a) repetitive (synonymous) parallelism;
b) adversative (antithetical) parallelism;
c) complementary (synthetic) parallelism;
d) climactic parallelism (“staircase parallelism”).

In the first instance, a verse line is formed by two clauses expressing the same idea using synonymous terminology. See, for example, Ps. 24:1–6:

1 The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;
2 for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.
3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?
4 Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false and do not swear deceitfully.

1 An example thereof can be found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in 4QDeut6 (= 4Q44); cf. P. W. Skehan, “A Fragment of the Song of Moses (Deut 32) from Qumran”, BASOR 136 (1954), 12–15.
5 They will receive blessing from the Lord
and vindication from the God of their salvation.

6 Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

In the second instance, an idea is set in sharp relief by placing positive and negative expressions thereof side by side. See, for example, Ps. 37:16–17:

16 Better is a little that the righteous person has
than the abundance of many wicked.
17 For the arms of the godless shall be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.

In the third instance, the second half of the verse line supplements the first. See, for example, Ps. 51:16–17:

16 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing of your deliverance.
17 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

In the fourth instance, the second segment of the verse line repeats a word or several words from the first. See, for example, Ps. 29:1:

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Repetitive parallelism is best represented by far in the book of Psalms. It should be noted thereby, however, that parallelismus membrorum as a whole does not only represent repetition but also progress of thought.2

Given the fact that “conceptual rhyme” is characteristic of Hebrew poetry, its authors would appear to have had little need to employ word rhyme. See, however, Gen. 4:23 (two lines ending in -ati) and Judg. 16:24 (four words at the end of each verse segment ending in -enu).3 Alliteration is more frequently employed (see below).

Strophes in the strict sense of the term, i.e. verses with an equal number of lines of the same length, tend in principle to be rare in

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Hebrew poetic writing. A specific form of strophic construction can occasionally be recognised, for example, in the alphabetic segments of Psalm 119 and in Psalms 42–43 that employ a refrain and form a literary unity (cf. Ps. 42:6,12; 43:5; see also Ps. 107:8,15,21,31).

From time to time we come across acrostic poems, songs whereby the verse lines or strophes begin with Hebrew consonants in alphabetical order such as Psalms 9 and 10 (which belong together), 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 145 and 119 as well as Lamentations 1–4. There is some dispute as to whether pure alphabetic acrostics are represented elsewhere in Hebrew poetry.

In light of the fact that the Hebrew language underwent significant evolution in the course of the centuries and that contemporary scholarship only has an approximate idea of its pronunciation in biblical times, the question of metre in Hebrew poetry remains virtually unresolved. The additional fact that it is frequently impossible to distinguish later interpolations from the original text in the historical evolution of the Old Testament simply compounds the problem. Some scholars maintain the existence of an accent based system while others insist on a system based on alternating stress, while others still argue that the one followed the other in historical sequence. The accentual system presumes the existence of a meter based on the natural rhythm of words and clauses. Budde and Sievers speak in addition of anapaeasts, metrical measures consisting of two unaccented syllables and one accented syllable, as well as syncope, whereby one accented syllable clashes with another. The alternative stress system, on the other hand, tends to presume the presence of an iambic rhythm with the alternation of accented and unaccented syllables with which syncope can also be associated (cf. Hölscher, Robinson,

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4 In this instance the acrostic in the text that has survived to the present day is incomplete.
5 Acrostics are occasionally limited to a part of the alphabet (cf. Nahum 1:2–8).
6 In spite of arguments to the contrary, Psalm 110 should not be understood as alluding to Simon the Maccabean on account of the initial letters of verses 1b–4. The psalm dates from a period considerably earlier than that of the Maccabeans.
7 H. Kosmala (op. cit., 1964, 1966) has argued that the foundations of Hebrew poetry are not established on meter or rhythm but rather on a fixed number of “word (thought)-units” that together constitute the two cola of a verse line (such units can consist of both short and long words); verse lines alternate with one another with a degree of regularity and combine to form strophes. Hebrew poetry is thus based on the symmetric organisation of verse lines in a particular strophe. For critique of Kosmala’s standpoint see K. Elliger, op. cit., 1967.
Mowinckel and Horst). The following example from the lament (qîna) in Amos 5:2a will serve to illustrate both approaches. Sievers renders the rhythm of the text as follows:

\[ nafelá ló tosíf qúm betulát yisra'él, \]

while Horst reads:

\[ náfélá ló tósíf qúm betúlat yísra'el. \]

Segert has suggested that both systems should be distinguished from one another chronologically, the early period of the monarchy employing the accentuating system and later centuries the alternating stress system. More important than the unsolved (and perhaps unsolvable) problem of the use of meter in Hebrew poetry is the observation that the Hebrew poets made use of all sorts of ancient terminology, language figures and elevated expressions; to such an extent that one would correct to speak of a sort of dialectus poeticus. The images employed in Hebrew poetry are often rather bold according to present day norms (e.g. streams that “clap their hands” and mountains that “rejoice”, cf. Ps. 98:8). Such images bear witness to a personification of the natural elements, which were not infrequently experienced as divine in the strongly dynamistic world of the Ancient Near East. Impressive examples include the personification of the sun in Ps. 19:6–7, the description of the fields in Ps. 65:10–14, the representation of heaven and earth in Ps. 96:11–13 as well as the sea and the mountains in Psalm 114. The metaphors employed in Ps. 23:1ff., together with the comparisons found in Ps. 1:3–4, Ps. 42:2 and Qoh. 12:2–7, bear witness to the energetic imagination of the poets of Ancient Israel.

Hebrew poetry also exhibits a formal and effective capacity to add emphasis to that which it desires to say. Linguistic devices intended to reinforce the impact of a verse at the phonetic level include alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia. Sentence constructions whereby use is made of chiasm (the association of word pairs in inverted order), for example, are likewise significant in this regard.

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8 A more detailed discussion of these and other theories of meter in Hebrew and other Semitic poetry can be found in Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry, pp. 87–113.
We offer some examples for those familiar with biblical Hebrew. Alliteration can be found in Num. 21:18b (4x m), Judg. 5:12b (5x b to Barak), Judg. 14:14,18 (4x m in the riddle of Samson and 5x m in the response thereto), Hos. 12:2a (the use of r) and Amos 5:5b (the g). Assonance can be found in Isa. 1:4a, whereby the long ò of hôy (“woe”) resounds throughout the entire verse segment, and in Jer. 15:10a, where the predominant use of the vowel i serves to echo the sound of grief and affliction (cf. also 2 Sam. 1:26). An outstanding example of onomatopoeia can be found in Judg. 5:22, in which the sound of the hoofs of galloping horses is echoed in the predominant use of short a sounds and in the meter: 7āz hālemû šiqqê-sûs mid-daharôt daharôt ’abbûrâw “Then loud the beat of horses’ hoofs with the galloping, galloping of his steeds” (cf. also Jer. 47:3a).

A striking example of chiasm can be found in Gen. 9:6a: “Whoever sheds (a) the blood (b) of a human (c), by a human (c’) shall that person’s blood (b’) be shed (a’)”.

Some excellent examples of the expressive capacity of Hebrew poetry can be found in the song ridiculing Babel in Isaiah 47, in which the author expresses his disgust of idol worship, in the colourful portrayal of Nineveh’s rise and fall in Nahum 2, in the impressive description of nature in Job 38–41 and in the imaginative representation of erotic love in the Song of Songs.

2. Profane poetry

Although the historical books of the Old Testament have preserved and transmitted a number of profane songs, quotations from such material can also be found in the prophetic writings. The prophetic texts, moreover, are often characterised by their use of profane poetic technique, as is the case, for example, in the song of the vineyard in Isa. 5:1–4.

An absolute distinction between profane and religious poetry in the Old Testament remains an impossible task. Indeed, many a poem, such as the otherwise nationalistic Song of Deborah in Judges 5, bears a thoroughly religious character, much akin to the traditional national anthems sung on state occasions throughout the world. The poems that make up the Song of Songs are likewise rooted in profane love poetry and only acquired their mystical significance at a much later time.

Singing was a constituent part of life in Ancient Israel. We can discern from Judg. 9:27 and 21:21 together with Isa. 16:10 (cf. also 9:2) and Amos 5:17 that harvest songs must have existed at some time,
although the texts thereof are no longer at our disposal. It would appear that the grape harvest, for example, gave occasion for jubilant celebration accompanied by much singing.

Isa. 52:8–9 similarly allows us to presuppose that the watchmen in their high vantage points were inclined to pass the time with the singing of songs as they awaited the rising of the sun (cf. Ps. 130:6).

Festivals, characterised by music and the extravagant consumption of food and drink (cf. Isa. 5:11–12; 22:13), were likewise occasions for song. One such festival song has been passed on to us in the text of Isa. 22:13:

Let us eat and drink,
For tomorrow we die.

The so-called *Song of the Well* in Num. 21:17–18 is also worthy of note:

Spring up, O well! Sing to it!
The well that the leaders sank,
that the nobles of the people dug,
with the sceptre, with the staff.

This poem would appear to be addressed to a well located above an underground water vein, summoning it to provide water anew and calling to mind its noble origins. The song as such is not typically Israelite. We know from ancient Arab sources that, when a well dried up, feasts were held with music and dance to stimulate a restoration of the water flow.

The so-called *Song of Revenge* in Gen. 4:23–24 represents a completely different genre in which a non-Israelite man sings of the unconstrained bloodlust of Lamech and the descendents of Cain:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
You wives of Lamech, listen to what I say.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
A young man for striking me.
If Cain was avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold!

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10 The text of Amos 6:3–7 most probably refers to a religious feast celebrated by an elite cultic-religious “sociëteit”, which endeavoured to achieve communion with the divinity by sharing a meal with the venerated Lord.

Although often considered of Amorite origin, the so-called *Glory Song* Num. 21:27–30 should be ascribed to Israelite sources and would appear to celebrate the conquest of the city of Heshbon:  

> Come to Heshbon, let it be built;  
> let the city of Sihon be established.  
> For fire came out from Heshbon,  
> flame from the city of Sihon.  
> It devoured Ar of Moab,  
> and swallowed up the heights of the Arnon.  
> Woe to you, O Moab!  
> You are undone, O people of Chemosh!  
> He has made his sons fugitives,  
> and his daughters captives  
> to an Amorite king, Sihon.  
> So their posterity perished from Heshbon to Dibon,  
> and we laid waste until fire spread to Medeba.  

The Old Testament has also preserved and transmitted other victory songs, the *Song of Deborah* (Judges 5) being perhaps the most familiar. As a rule, such songs offer thanks to the divinity for the gift of victory over the enemy. Some are extensive (cf. Psalms 18 and 68), while others are short (e.g. the *Song of Miriam* in Exod. 15:21 and 1 Sam. 18:7). 

Examples of mocking songs in the Old Testament tend to be either political or religious in character. The political mocking song often formed part of a victory song (as is the case in Judg. 5:27–30), although they also occur on their own as in Isa. 14:4–21. The religious mocking song is found for the most part in the context of a different literary genre, focusing generally on the impotence of idols. A familiar example can be found in Jer. 10:3–5a:  

> For the customs of the peoples are false:  
> a tree from the forest is cut down,  
> and worked with an axe by the hands of an artisan;  
> people deck it with silver and gold;  
> they fasten it with hammer and nails  
> so that it cannot move.  

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13 The translation is not entirely certain on account of the fact that the Hebrew in places is open to more than one interpretation. This is particularly the case with respect to v. 30.
Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk.

Isa. 28:15 ascribes a song to ‘scoffers’, who sing the praises of immortality:

We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter.

In the case of songs of lament, a distinction is to be made between individual and collective laments: the personal song of mourning and the political song of death. Both frequently exhibit the so-called qîna meter with 3 + 2 beats. Striking examples of the individual lament include the song of David on account of the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:19–29) and on the murder of Abner (2 Sam. 3:33–34). A good illustration of the political lament can be found in the book of Lamentations, which deals with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. The prophetic literature often relates the song of lament to some future catastrophe, thereby fulfilling the function of an announcement of doom. See, for example, Amos 5:2:

Fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel, forsaken on her land, with no one to raise her up.

Hebrew profane poetry also includes the proverb, a sort of adage or short saying. The following words alluded to by Ezekiel (18:2, cf. Jer. 31:29) would appear to have been a common saying in Israel:

The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

While it is difficult to distinguish in the book of Proverbs between the teachings of the wise and popular adage, there can be little doubt that much of the material contained therein has its roots in vernacular usage.

14 The translators of the Dutch Authorised Version and the NBG incorrectly render the term as “oppressors”.
Popular sayings related to the tribes of Israel are preserved and transmitted in Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33.

The riddle constitutes a particular type of saying, a familiar example of which can be found in the history of Samson (Judg. 14:12–18).

3. Religious poetry

The religious poetic artistry encountered in the Old Testament is of much greater significance than the remnants of profane poetry found therein. While the former clearly exhibits its own unique creativity, it remains nevertheless dependent to a large extent on the genres represented in the latter.

A distinction can be made in the context of religious poetry between proverbs and songs. It should be noted in advance, however, that what we understand to be included under the single word “proverb” (a short expression of ethical or religious character), required a variety of different terms for the ancient Israelite. The latter distinguished, for example, between a (priestly) teaching (torah), a word (dabar) of God (used in particular by the prophets for divine utterances but also for divine utterances in general) and a proverb (mashal, including the taunting song, the wisdom saying and the proverb). By virtue of its origin and form, therefore, the religious proverb can thus be understood from three distinct perspectives: cultic, prophetic or chokmatic (deriving from wisdom teaching).

Priestly torah is a form of teaching given by a priest on the request of someone who had consulted the oracle or a teaching provided by the priest himself ex-officio. 1 Sam. 23:9–12 contains an example of a request for a divine utterance using the priestly ephod with the Urim and Thummim (‘fortune’ stones, cf. Exod. 28:30; Deut. 33:8). In Hag. 2:12–14 (Hebr. 2:11–13) we read how the prophet Haggai requested torah (instruction) from the priests on a particular matter and how they provided him with an answer. It is probable that the request addressed to יְהֹוָה in Psalm 15 concerning those who have the right to enter the sanctuary represents a request for a torah (cf. also Psalm 24:3–5). It is evident from the aforementioned examples that a priestly proverb could take both poetic and prose forms. It is likewise probable that texts such as those found in Gen. 16:11 and Judg. 13:3,7 (cf. 1 Sam. 1:15–18; Gen. 25:22–23; Isa. 7:14) were originally related to utterances stemming from the consultation of the oracle in the sanctuary. Such utterances would have been formulated
in this or similar fashion by the priests in response to the requests of women who desired to have or were expecting a child and who turned to them for a divine word. The expression “to seek yhwh” originally meant to request a divine oracle through the mediation of priests or prophets.

In addition to the priestly torah we also have examples of the *prophetic word*. While such statements are not always found in poetic form, prose examples are much less frequent than is the case with priestly torah. The relationship between temple bound priests and prophets and between priestly instruction and prophetic revelation remains difficult to assess. It is possible that priestly torah was primarily associated with cultic occasions (cf. Hagg. 2:12–14, Hebr. 2:11–13) while prophetic aphorisms had more to do with political matters (cf. 1 Kgs 22:5ff.; Jeremiah 28; Micah 3:11). Examples exist, on the other hand, of prophets being consulted on personal matters outside the sanctuary context (cf. 1 Sam. 9:6–10). Ancient Israel’s prophets were not limited to the temple(s). Num. 11:24–29, for example, speaks of Eldad and Medad as representatives of non-cultic prophets (see also Amos 7:14).

The means employed for the reception of divine oracles varied. As we already noted, the priests had sacred oracular instruments at their disposal: the ephod (cf. 1 Sam. 14:3; Hos. 3:4) with the Urim and Thummim (Deut. 33:8; Ezra 2:63) and were familiar, in addition, with the cultic tradition (cf., for example, Hagg. 2:12–14, Hebr. 2:11–13). The prophets tended to receive their revelations in visions or dreams or by allowing themselves to be influenced by the playing of musical instruments whereby “the hand of yhwh” came to rest upon them (2 Kgs 3:15). Prophets not infrequently received their revelations in ecstatic states and it is for this reason that they were sometimes referred to as crazy (2 Kgs 9:11; Hos. 9:7). Such ecstatic states, however, are not characteristic of all the prophets. Jeremiah, for example, would appear to have never resorted to such procedures.

Reference is frequently made with respect to the most important of the so-called ‘writing prophets’ (i.e. those whose words are preserved in individual books of the Old Testament) to a specific call to ministry. Such prophets were “singular” individuals whose ministry, unlike that of the cultic min-

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istry of the priests, was not inherited. As a consequence, the individual personality of the writing prophets tends to be much more explicit than that of the priests.

A striking characteristic of the prophetic utterance is the I-form whereby the word of God is transmitted. In using this form, however, the prophet did not intend to identify himself with YHWH as such but rather to express his awareness of being YHWH’s emissary. The prophetic utterance constitutes, in principle, a message from the one who commissioned him. The prophets thus make frequent use of the formula analogous to that found in the letter form: “Thus says YHWH”, or of the words “utterance of YHWH” (ne’um YHWH).

In the context of their preaching, the prophets employed a variety of literary genres: short aphorisms, homilies, mocking songs (cf. Isaiah 14), the lament over the dead (cf. Amos 5:2), the collective lament (Hos. 6:1–3; Jer. 3:23–24) etc. They likewise endeavoured to interpret the divine revelation they had received in their own preaching. Illustrative examples include Amos 5:3 with the lament of Amos 5:2 and Isa. 5:11–17, in which the divine utterance of v. 13 (YHWH in the first person!) is elucidated by prophetic commentary (YHWH in the third person!). From time to time the prophet’s preaching takes the form of a dialogue, as is the case in Jer. 3:21–4:2: the prophet speaks of the people’s remorse in v. 21, a divine utterance follows in v. 22a, the people speak in vv. 22b–25, a further divine utterance follows in 4:1 and the prophet takes the floor again in v. 2. A similar example can be found in Hosea 14:2–9: the prophet speaks in vv. 2–4, a divine word follows in vv. 5–8, Ephraim continues in v. 9a followed by God in v. 9b, Ephraim in v. 9c and God once again in v. 9d.16

The Old Testament Wisdom Saying represents an entirely different genre.17 Less varied and less developed than the modes of prophetic speech, such sayings tend to remain close to ancient forms. Jer. 18:18 (see also Jer. 8:8–12) clearly distinguishes between the bearers of the wisdom traditions and the priests and the prophets. Such individuals would appear to have functioned as counsellors as well as teachers.

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of the children of the upper classes. Although rooted in principle in popular empirical wisdom and priestly ethical teaching, their sayings tend as a rule to be founded on broad-based Ancient Near Eastern moral values yet located within the framework of Israel’s faith in God: the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10). The teachers of wisdom represent a sort of wisdom school aimed at a positive participation in social life and a judicious organisation of individual existence. The fixed form and pointed content of their sayings provided their teachings with a degree of authority and influence and made them, at the very least, easy to remember (cf. Qoh. 12:11).

In its original form, a proverb (mashal) consisted of a verse line made up of two cola, each with an equal number of accented syllables, containing a comparison.\(^\text{18}\) Cf. Prov. 26:7–9,11:

7 The legs of a disabled person hang limp;
   so does a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
8 It is like binding a stone in a sling,
   to give honour to a fool.
9 Like a thorn bush brandished by the hand of a drunkard,
   is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit,
   is a fool who reverts to his folly.

Besides such barbed comparisons, which resemble present day epigrams and were taken over in satirical verse, the proverbs also include a variety of different sorts of expressions borrowed from everyday life (cf. Prov. 12:24: “The hand of the diligent will rule, while the lazy will be put to forced labour”). These include the exhortation (cf. Prov. 14:7: “Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not find words of knowledge”), the numerical aphorism, the “better than” saying and the beatitude.

In addition to Prov. 6:16–19 an excellent example of a numerical aphorism can be found in Prov 30:21–23:

21 Under three things the earth trembles,
   under four it cannot bear up:
22 a slave when he becomes king,
   and a fool when glutted with food;
23 an unloved woman when she gets a husband,
   and a maid when she succeeds her mistress.

\(^{18}\) The term mashal is derived from a Hebrew root meaning “to be like”.

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The proverb is akin to the riddle (cf. also the synonyms in Prov. 1:6). Indeed the ability to solve riddles (see, for example, 1 Kgs 10:1 and Dan. 5:12) and understand proverbs represent an elevated form of wisdom.

Prov. 17:1 constitutes a fine illustration of the so-called “better than” saying (cf. also 12:9; 15:16, 17; 16:8, 19; 27:5, 10b):

Better is a dry morsel with quiet,
    than a house full of feasting with strife.

Examples of the beatitude (also referred to as the macarism) can be found in Prov. 3:13; 8:32, 34; 14:21b; 16:20b; 28:14a; 29:18b; cf. also Isa. 30:18; 32:20; 56:2; Ps. 1:1; 2:12; 32:1.

Wisdom literature evolved from short proverbs to longer forms of teaching that took on the character of didactic poems (Proverbs 1–9) supported by first person experiential testimonies (cf., for example, Prov. 7:6ff.; 24:30–34). A further evolution of wisdom sayings is exemplified in the lengthy reflections found together with typically short proverbs in the book of Qoheleth. The book of Job contains a series of dialogues reminiscent of Greek drama. The dialogue form, which also plays an important role in prophetic poetry and Ancient Israelite narrative, enjoyed widespread application in the Ancient Near East and was already highly developed in the Gilgamesh Epic and in the Babylonian Theodicy.19

The religious song is strongly represented in the Old Testament. Such songs enjoy a variety of backgrounds including prophetic preaching, cultic circles and songs that have their roots in the lives of individuals.

As we already noted, prophetic preaching made frequent use of the genres of profane poetry. At the same time, however, it also exercised a significant influence on Israel’s poetic imagination (cf. Ps. 81:7–17 and 95:7b–11).20

Religious poetry had its particular place in the service of Israel’s cultic liturgy, which, if we are to believe Amos 5:23, was accompanied by a more than adequate amount of music and song:

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20 H. Gunkel and J. Begrich explicitly emphasise prophetic influence in their Einleitung in die Psalmen, Göttingen 1933, 1966².
Take away from me the noise of your songs,  
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

Several of the psalms clearly indicate the extent to which music and song were employed in the liturgy of the sanctuary: Ps. 33:2–3; 98:5–6; 147:7; 149:3 and Psalm 150. The songs of praise with which the majesty of יְהֹוָה was lauded frequently took the form of antiphonal poems with musical accompaniment. Israel’s cult would appear to have been far from sober and monotonous. Many of the superscriptions to the Psalms likewise make reference to the musical accompaniment associated with particular songs sung in the temple, although the musical/cultic terminology employed remains something of a mystery to the present day.

The most important forms of Ancient Israel’s cultic poetry, which not infrequently exhibit common features with Canaanite and Ancient Babylonian poetry, include the hymn, the song of thanksgiving, the lament, the penitential song and the didactic song (prophetic, priestly or chokmatic). Such songs are not only to be found in the Psalter but also throughout the entire Old Testament, particularly in the historical and prophetic books. Examples thereof, such as those found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Psalms of Solomon and the songs of Mary and Zachariah in Luke 1, witness to their ongoing use into the period of early Judaism.

Perhaps the most frequently represented of such songs are those that laud the magnificence and majesty of יְהֹוָה. Essential elements thereof include the call to praise God and the reason why this should be done: even the shortest of the Psalms (117) includes both these elements (see also Exod. 15:21). The call to praise can consist of a single verse (Ps. 98:1) or several verses (Ps. 118:1–4; 135:1–3) and is sometimes repeated in the course of the psalm (cf. Ps. 98:4–8). The exhortation is frequently addressed to the cultic community (Psalm 118; 135), but also to all creation (Psalm 148). The motivation behind the appeal to praise the wonderful deeds of God is often introduced by the term “for” (e.g. Ps. 98:1,9), but can also take the form of a participial clause (cf. Psalms 136 and 147). Both forms are employed from time to time in one and the same psalm (cf., for example, Psalm 145).21

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Individual songs of thanksgiving (Danklieder des Einzelnen) relate the situation of need from which an individual had been saved (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:1–10; Isa. 38:10–19; Psalm 30) and were frequently recited in the sanctuary together with a vow of praise (cf. Psalm 116 and Jonah 2). Psalm 107 represents a fine example of a collective song of thanksgiving.

Collective laments were recited at times of great need and during penitential feasts and were accompanied as a rule by periods of fasting (cf. Psalms 44, 74, 79, 80 and Joel 2:15–17). Such laments offered prayers for the restoration of God’s salvific care. The so-called penitential psalms, exemplified, for example, in Jer. 3:23–25 and 14:7–9, were profound and heartfelt songs expressing shame and repentance for past sins.

Individual laments (Klagelieder des Einzelnen) are well represented in the Psalter (cf. Psalms 3, 5, 6, 7, 22, 28, 51, 69 and 130). The literary structure of such laments exhibits the same elements as one finds with respect to the collective laments: invocation, lament, confession of trust in God, prayer of entreaty and vow of praise. A striking feature of several of the laments is the abrupt change of mood, whereby the words of lament suddenly make way for words of thanksgiving (cf., for example, Ps. 6:9–11; 22:23–32; 31:20ff.). Some scholars argue that this phenomenon was due to a later amalgamation of lament and thanksgiving songs. Others maintain that the unexpected transition from lament to thanksgiving should be explained as the result of a priestly or prophetic oracle of salvation offered to the individual in the course of his lament (cf. Ps. 5:4b; 28:6; 56:11; 140:13, see also 2 Chron. 20:3ff.).

The king had a central role to play in cultic matters in the Ancient Near East. The same can thus be said, in principle, of the king of Israel (cf. 1 Kings 8 and 2 Kings 23). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that several of the psalms have the king as their primary subject. Psalms 2, 72 and 110 bear witness to his liturgical activity in relation to his accession to the throne. Psalm 45 similarly recalls his solemn oration in the context of a princely wedding. It would appear that a special liturgy accompanied his marching out to battle and honoured his victories (cf. Psalms 20 and 21), as well as his defeats (cf. Psalm 60).

A great deal has been written on the songs praising the kingship of יְהוָה (Psalms 47, 93 and 96–99), frequently considering them, in line with Mowinckel, as songs of praise in honour of an (annual)
feast of יְהוָה’s accession to the throne. The Hebrew expression יְהוָה malak is often understood in this regard as “יְהוָה has become king”. It is more likely, however, that this expression implies that יְהוָה (and no other god) is king (cf. Ps. 47:9). While it may be true that the Israelite New Year Feast celebrated the kingship of יְהוָה, it remains highly unlikely that some form of accession to the throne was implied thereby, especially given Israel’s religious convictions.

The so-called pilgrim songs found in Psalms 120–134 were similarly associated with the cult. They give expression to the disposition of pilgrims during their journey towards and arrival at the Holy City (a few of the songs included in this series, however, originally had little or nothing to do with a pilgrimage, cf. Ps. 130:1–6). Psalm 84 exhibits kinship with such songs. Ps. 42:5 and 43:3–4 clearly express the disposition of a pious pilgrim. Psalm 100 represents a hymn of praise sung as the pilgrims approached the sanctuary while Psalms 15 and 24 go hand in hand with their entry into the temple enclosure. Vv. 7–10 of the latter (cf. Ps. 132:8) would appear to represent a processional song accompanying the carrying of the ark into the temple (see also Num. 10:35–36).

Didactic poems such as Psalms 19 and 119, together with related Psalms 14 and 53, would appear to have no direct lines of association with the liturgy, representing rather the utterances of individuals expressed in poetic form. The same can be said of the historical psalms 78, 105 and 106 and the related penitential psalms of Ezra 9:6–15, Neh. 1:5–11; 9:6–37 and Dan. 9:4–19.

It seems reasonable to assume that many of the psalms that make use of the first person singular were highly personal in character and should not be considered as songs of the community, in spite of the fact that the latter frequently expressed its experiences in the I-form.

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A significant number of songs were originally composed for personal rather than cultic purposes, although they may have been employed at a later stage in the liturgical context. Psalm 51 represents a striking example of such a personal song in which the poet offers himself as a true oblation, calling to mind his contrition of heart and his awareness of guilt. Vv.20–21 of the psalm would appear to have been added at a later date, praising the sacrificial liturgy. It is in such songs of the individual that Israelite poetry reached its spiritual summit. Indeed, these very poems serve to provide the book of Psalms as a whole with its abiding value, offering a point of identification to those who read them in moments of need, struggle and gratitude up to the present day.

b. Prose

As was the case with the poetical material found in the Old Testament, the prose texts contained therein are varied in character and include legal documents, official records and narrative material.

1. Legal material


Legal texts make up a substantial part of the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy). Viewed from the perspective of their literary form,
one can distinguish variety in the formulation of such laws as early as the oldest collection thereof in the so-called Book of the Covenant in Exodus 21–23. Diversity in content and formulation would appear to go hand in hand. It is reasonable to presuppose that the original Sitz im Leben or social milieu in which such texts came into existence also varied.

In a now celebrated lecture, the German scholar Albrecht Alt made a distinction between the casuistic and apodictic formulation of laws. With respect to the so-called casuistic legal formulations a general instance was presented, introduced by “when” (Hebr. ki), under which a specific instance could be classified, introduced by “if, in the event of” (Hebr. ‘im), after which the legal consequences (punishment) were determined. Such casuistic legal formulations are to be found throughout the Ancient Near East, both in the Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian world and in that of the Hittites. A comparison between Mesopotamian and Hittite legal collections as found, for example, in the famous Hammurapi Codex (1728–1686 BCE) serves to illustrate this fact. The modes of expression have their roots in customary law, while the subjects thereof stem from every day civil life.

With respect to the so-called apodictic legal formulations, Alt distinguished three variants forms of “categorical prohibitive” (R. Smend Jr.). The first variant tended to take the form “The person who does this or that shall certainly be put to death [by stoning, cf. Lev. 20:2]” (cf. Exod. 21:12, 15–17; 22:19 [Hebr. 22:18]; see also 31:15b). The second took the form: “Cursed is the one who . . .” (cf. Deut. 27:15–26), followed for the most part in the Hebrew by a description of the perpetrator employing a participial form. Variant formulations can be found, however, in Lev. 20:2, 9–13, 15–16, 27; 24:17; 27:29. In terms of content, such prohibitives usually had to do with ethical/religious crimes that carried a punishment of death or exile (cf. Exod. 22:20, Hebr. 22:19). The third variant represented the classical form of apodictic law: “You shall (not) . . .” (Exod. 22:18 [Hebr. 22:17], 21–22 [Hebr. 20–21], 28–31 [Hebr. 27–30]; 23:1–3, 6–9; cf. also Lev. 18:7–17). Such laws could be related to legal actions or lawsuits (Exod. 23:1–3, 6–9) or to forbidden sexual intercourse between family members. For the most part, however, they had to

25 A. Alt, op. cit., 1934.
do with the totality of a person’s religious and ethical life, as is evident from the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:6–21, cf. also Lev. 19:3–4, 11–12 and Lev. 19:13–18).

Apodictic law reflects Israel’s ancient religious legislation that had its basis in the word of Yahweh. The introduction to the Ten Commandments, for example, presents Yahweh as speaking “then God spoke all these words”, while Leviticus 18 and 19 present Him as speaker “the Lord spoke to Moses, saying...” or as enforcer of the laws contained therein. R. Smend Jr. describes the apodictic law in which Israel’s particular jurisprudence was most prominent as “popular Israelite and divine Yahwistic”. It goes without saying that such religious legislation was not detached from civil law. The Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20–23), for example, contains both casuistic and apodictic legal formulations side by side. Although dependent on the Book of the Covenant, the legal ordinances found in Deuteronomy 12–26 are largely apodictic in form. The fact that this book emerged from typically Yahwistic circles, however, makes this hardly surprising.

In recent years, scholars have shown that Alt’s hypothesis concerning Ancient Israel’s apodictic law lacked a necessary degree of nuance. In certain instances, for example, there would appear to be evidence of casuistic law in apodictic formulations. In addition, many apodictic commandments may trace their origins to the authority of the pater familias. In such instances, therefore, it would be more appropriate to speak of ethical rules in apodictic formulations instead of laws (cf. Gerstenberger 1965). Apodictic law, moreover, has turned out to be less exclusively Israelite than Alt had suggested.

Cultic legislation likewise exhibits both casuistic and apodictic formulations. The fact that the latter tend to be in the majority is to be expected, although the former are far from rare, particularly in the sacrificial legislation of Leviticus 1–7 with its roots in ancient popular traditions. Casuistic formulations tend to be based on religious usage while apodictic formulations (here also in a variant form; cf. Lev. 7:23–30; 11:2ff., 9ff.) reflect priestly oracles (priestly torah). As priestly teaching and sacred law the latter by its very nature enjoyed canonical authority: the priest spoke in the name of Yahweh.

2. Official records

Official records, consisting mainly of lists, constitute an entirely different type of prose material to that found in the legal documents. In terms of type, origin and date such material is highly varied. A familiar example thereof can be found in the geographical lists in the book of Joshua, which can be further divided into collections of place names and boundary descriptions. The list of “returnees” from the Babylonian exile found in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7,26 together with the list of the builders of the walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 3 represent a further type variant as do the genealogies in Genesis 10 and the patriarchal narratives, the lists in 1 Chronicles 1–9 (“die genealogische Vorhalle”), the list of David’s champions in 2 Sam. 23:8–39 and of David and Solomon’s officials (2 Sam. 8:16–18; 1 Kgs 4:1–20). Many of these lists are clearly authentic and of considerable geographical and/or historical importance, even although they are not always located in the correct historical context (e.g. those in the book of Joshua). The lists of names in particular, with their frequent reference to theophoric (containing a divine element) personal names, are of extraordinary religious-historical significance, even although they may not be among the most loved segments of the Old Testament and would appear indeed not to be intended as devotional literature.

The so-called annals kept in significant number by Israel and other Ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, represent a further type of official record. Unfortunately only a small and fragmentary number of such first rank historical sources have been preserved to the present day. Clear examples of court annals can be found in 2 Sam. 8:1–14 and 1 Kgs 9:10–2827 and of temple annals in 1 Kings 6–8. The authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles evidently employed and made frequent reference to these official documents (cf. Bin-Nun 1968).

While relatively little epistolary literature has been preserved in the Old Testament, examples can be found nevertheless in Jeremiah 29 and Ezra 4–5. We are more familiar with this type of literature,

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26 For further detail on the character of this list see our discussion of the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah in chapter X.

27 The historical reliability of these annals has been reinforced by the excavations lead by Yiga’el Yadin at the city of Hazor, which is referred to in 1 Kgs 9:15 together with Megiddo and Gezer as having been constructed by Solomon. Yadin has been able to establish that the gates of the aforementioned cities were built according to the same system and must thus stem from the time of Solomon (cf. Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, London 1960, p. 248).
however, from non-Old Testament sources such as El Amarna and the Lachish letters (see chs. I and II).

A court order has been preserved in Ezra 1:2–4 and an official memorandum in Ezra 6:3–5. While treaty texts and other charters are lacking in the literature of the Old Testament, Jer. 32:11 nevertheless offers some evidence of the existence of deeds of purchase during the later period of the kings.

3. Narrative literature


Of the material preserved among the literature of Ancient Israel the narrative clearly plays an important role. Such narratives are typified by their imaginative vigour and, given their frequent use of exclamations (“see/behold”), they often tend to exhibit the characteristics of spoken narration rather than pure literary composition. Ancient Near Eastern men and women invested their entire person in their stories and employed a variety of gestures to facilitate understanding. Such narratives rarely correspond to modern norms of completeness and serene narrative style, tending rather to present images of a particular situation, moments placed side by side, whereby the point of connection is not always so clear. Indeed, important links are often left out altogether. Modern day scholars have often found themselves misled by this narrative style, frequently leading to unjustified source divisions.

A further characteristic of the Hebrew narrative is its use of repetition as a means to increase tension. This style element, also known to us from the epics of the Ancient Babylonians and the writings of Ugarit, had the effect of slowing the narrative down and mostly took the form of a dialogue in which the main character recounted his experiences. Examples include the narrative of the wedding of Rebecca
and Isaac in Genesis 24 and that of Solomon’s accession to the throne in 1 Kings 1. The execution of an already given command tended thus to be reported in the same words as the command itself (cf. 2 Sam. 14:24 and especially the creation narrative of Genesis 1). While such repetition provided the narrative with a degree of style and an elevated accent, it comes across as rather monotonous to our present day tastes. Monotony, however, was apparently intentional. The employment of repetition in the creation narrative of Genesis 1 evokes the sense of grandeur intended by the author (cf. the prologue to the gospel of John). The style of artistic prose thus tended to closely approximate the style of poetry with its characteristic parallelismus membrorum. A reading of the narrative of David’s defeat of the giant Goliath (1 Samuel 17), for example, leaves one with the impression that one is reading an epic poem. Indeed the description of Goliath’s armour (1 Sam. 17:5–7) could have been plucked directly from Homer’s Iliad.

The intention or purpose of a narrative was often disclosed only in its conclusion. Gen. 3:24, for example, ends by stating that humans were driven from the Garden of Eden and that cherubs were stationed to prevent them from gaining access to the tree of life: the paradise narrative is thus intended to explain how humans had lost their right of access to the tree of life. Gen. 11:9 explains the intention of the narrative of the Tower of Babel: the dispersion of humankind over all the earth. According to some, 1 Kgs 2:46 betrays the intention of the preceding family history of David: “the monarchy was confirmed under the hand of Solomon”. Care should be taken, however, not to presume that the key to the explanation of every narrative is to be found in its concluding verse. Jonah 4:11, for example, would appear to be a response to Jonah’s protest in 4:2–3 rather than the key to the intention of the entire book (in the sense that God’s clemency could also be given to other nations and not only to Israel). The conclusion to the book of Ruth (4:17) serves more as a point of exclamation (David is the grandson of Ruth, a Moabite woman!) and should not be understood as the key to the entire book as such.

On the other hand, the actual objective of a narrative can also be stated directly in its opening verses (cf. Gen. 22:1). This phe-

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nomenon is likewise evident on other literary genres. The introductory verses (52:13–15) of the prophetic text Isa. 52:13–53:12 are thus of essential importance for the understanding of Isaiah 53. The core of a text can sometimes be found both at the beginning and at the end (cf. Ps. 8:1 and 8:10).

Old Testament narratives make frequent use of word-play, which tends as a rule to be lost in translation. It is said of the first humans in paradise (Gen. 2:25), for example, that they were “naked” (מאורמ) and of the snake (3:1) that it was “cunning” (דורמ). Both words in Hebrew sound very much the same. Similarly, the terms for “human” and “soil”, which play such an important role in the paradise narrative, are clearly related (אדם and עולם). The author of Gen. 4:11 would appear to have heard echoes of the Hebrew verb “to acquire” in the personal name Cain. In like fashion, the name Babel in Gen. 11:9 is related in Hebrew with the term בلال “to confuse” while the personal name Jacob is related to אקיב, “to deceive” (cf. Hos. 12:4, see also Gen. 27:36).

While such popular etymologies do not tend as a rule to coincide with the actual meaning of the names in question (Babel, for example, means “God’s door” and Jacob “may [God] protect”), their function remains effective nevertheless. In spite of the fact that Hebrew personal names are not, as often claimed, an indication of the person’s essence (Jonah was not a “dove” nor Deborah a “bee”, although that is the meaning of their names), they nevertheless enjoy a certain “power” on account of the authority of the bearer. Place names, for example, could change when there was a change of owner (cf. Gen. 23:2), and personal names could change when there was a change of sovereign (cf. 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17; Dan. 1:7) or on account of one or other extraordinary event (cf. Gen. 35:18; Ruth 1:20). It is for this reason that the names of alien gods were not to be uttered (cf. Exod. 23:13), the theophoric element Baal, for example, being distorted to read בוסֶּט, “shame”: Ishbaal (man of Baal), the son of Saul, thus became Ish-bosheth (man of shame) in 2 Sam. 2:8ff. The prophet Hosea likewise speaks of בֵּיתֵאָבֶן (= house of godlessness) instead ofBethel (= house of God; cf. Hos. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5).

Word-play has a particularly important role to play in the prophetic literature, serving to reinforce prophetic announcements. Familiar examples include Isa. 5:7c (“He expected justice [משפָּל] but saw bloodshed [משפָּחֶת], righteousness [סֶדַּקָּה] but heard a cry! [שֶׁדַּקָּה]”), Isa. 7:9b (“If you do not

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stand firm in faith [ta’amînu], you shall not stand at all [te’amenu”], Amos 5:5 (gilgal galô yiglê: “Gilgal shall surely go into exile”) and Jer. 1:12–13 (“I see a branch of an almond tree [saged]” next to “I (= God) am watching over [saged] my word to perform it”).

The narratives of the Old Testament also exhibit a variety of literary forms depending on the material employed by the narrator as his source of information. In contrast to other Ancient Near Eastern writings (as noted above) it is striking that the myth tends to enjoy only a limited place in the Old Testament. Reference can be made to Gen. 6:1–4, which speaks of the giants who were the resultant offspring of sexual liaisons between the sons of God and beautiful human women. Allusions to ancient myths are also evident in the chaos motif in Gen. 1:2, for example, and in the description of paradise with its mythical trees that were a source of divine knowledge and eternal life. Other examples include the reference to the snake (an animal associated with divine wisdom) in allusions to God’s conflict with the chaos monster (Ps. 74:13–14; 89:11; Isa. 51:9) and in descriptions of Leviathan ( Isa. 27:1; cf. Amos 9:3), the morning star (Isa. 14:12ff) and of the heavenly cherub in the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 28:12ff). While it would appear that many such myths were clearly well-known among the people, one can conclude that Israel’s spiritual leaders endeavoured where possible to distance themselves therefrom, transforming and historicising mythical material and thereby placing it at the service Israel’s faith in God.30

The Old Testament has also preserved significant elements associated with folk narratives in the form of legends related to sanctuaries and prophets together with heroic, nature and tribal sagas. Every sanctuary (e.g. Bethel) had its legend, tracing its existence back to the time of Jacob. Legends of martyrs can be found in the book of Daniel. The narratives of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 19–2 Kings 9) serve as a fine illustration of the prophetic legend. Remnants of the nature saga can be found in the history of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19), which not only allude to the constitution of the Dead Sea but also to the existence of an unusual pillar of salt in the area (Gen. 19:26). Tribal sagas frequently serve to explain the

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relationship between peoples and their origins (cf., for example, the Moabites and the Ammonites in Gen. 19:30–38). They also serve to explain a variety of customs among the peoples: e.g. the blood feud and the sign of Yahweh associated with the Kenites (Genesis 4) and the prohibition against the consumption of the sciatic (hip) nerve in Israel (Gen. 32:32). Striking characteristics of the hero saga have been preserved in the narratives related to Samson in Judges 13–16. Such popular stories would doubtless have circulated in a specific area for a significant period of time and would have been transmitted orally. Elements thereof, such as the blurring of the distinction between humans and animals (Balaam’s ass speaks in Num. 22:28–30) were not unusual. From time to time one also encounters fables with an educational character, such as that preserved in Judg. 9:8–15f. in which the trees desire to elect a king and that of the thorn bush in 2 Kgs 14:9 that sought the hand of a daughter of a cedar of Lebanon for its son in marriage.

Israel’s historical writings, which apparently commenced in the Davidic period, also contain elements of folk narratives. Examples include the history of Saul and David, the recounting of the magnificence of Solomon, the account of the liberation of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah etc. Given the fact that they were intended to provide spiritual guidance, Israel’s historical texts exhibit a degree of bias and are not always as objective as one might be led to believe. Having said this, however, we do not intend to call the historical reliability of the events described in these texts into question, only to point out that they tended to be placed, as a rule, in a specific political-religious context. A characteristic of this material can be found in the tendency to criticise the people and their kings rather than glorify them. In spite of the fact that the writer of David’s family history (2 Samuel 9–1 Kings 2) immensely admired his subject, he did not avoid explicit reference to the latter’s weaknesses and failings. The same is true for the patriarchs and even Moses, much in contrast to the early Jewish tendency to exonerate such figures of every form of guilt, foolishness or injustice. In similar fashion, the Deuteronomistic history relates Israel and Judah’s past within a framework of disloyalty to Yahweh, judgement, conversion and restoration. Such critical historiography is quite distinct from the information found in inscriptions from Assyria-Babylonia and Egypt and serves to reinforce confidence in the historical reliability of the narratives that have been passed down to us.
A unique form of narration is to be found in the biographies and autobiographies. The most detailed biography we have at our disposal (besides the life history of David) is the description of the fortunes of Jeremiah recorded by his secretary Baruch (Jeremiah 26–45). A certain apologetic tendency cannot be denied in the latter, however, its author insisting that the prophet remained faithful to his people to the bitter end in spite of their abuse. Autobiographies include the memoirs of Ezra (Ezra 7ff.) and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1–2; 4–7; 13), which likewise exhibit a degree of self-justification. Analogous autobiographical segments can also be found in the prophets (Amos 7; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1; Ezekiel 1–3), which were apparently intended as “letters of accreditation” legitimating their prophetic commission.

A highly specific form of prose can be found in the so-called preaching texts, in which the author referred back to Israel’s history and called for genuine service of God under threat of judgement. Such material served as a newer and more elaborate form of the teaching that was once the reserve of prophets and priests. This literary genre is not found among the other peoples of the Ancient Near East and would thus appear to be typically Israelite. It is not only restricted to the period after the Babylonian exile. Evidence of such prose preaching can be found as early as Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7; cf. also Jeremiah 26) and the Deuteronomists, who presented their message in line with Deuteronomy and thus further disseminated the form. Indeed, it is even possible that the form (besides short prophetic messages and priestly utterances) has its roots in their reforming activities.

A related form is to be found in the liturgical prayer as preserved, for example, in 1 Kgs 8:22ff.

Israel’s narratives pretend to be “true stories”. In spite of the fact that historical-critical analysis may undermine the veracity thereof from time to time, this reality must still be taken seriously. Israel based its faith on the prophetic allusion to God’s great deeds in history and on his liberative and punitive activities (cf. Exod. 20:1 and Psalm 78). Whether we interpret Israel’s historical experience, guided as it was by prophetic preaching, as a genuine encounter with God or as an encounter with its own religious genius, must remain the subject of personal judgement. Whatever the case, our ability to understand the narratives of the Old Testament requires that we respect the particular explanation ascribed thereto by Israel.
CHAPTER SEVEN
THE PROBLEM OF DATING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Debora redet nicht anders wie Qohelet (Bauer-Leander)


The anonymity of the majority of Old Testament documents and the highly uniform language in which they were written allow us to draw few if any conclusions with respect to the period in which the individual books or parts thereof came into existence. As a consequence, literary and religious-historical information tends to provide the only possibility for dating the material we have at our disposal. In other words, we must endeavour to determine the date of a book on the basis of its own inherent characteristics. We are much better off in this respect when it comes to many Babylonian-Assyrian and Egyptian literary remnants, ancient copies of which have been excavated at specific sites, bearing the characteristic scribal and linguistic forms of their time of origin.
The question of dating the literature of the Old Testament is made all the more difficult on account of the fact that many texts from different time periods have been more or less organically woven together to form the text we now have at our disposal. One and the same book might thus contain segments from a variety of different origins. As we already noted, the extraordinary nature of the transmission of such literature has led to the almost complete loss of its original linguistic features. The limited amount of epigraphical material available to us in Hebrew inscriptions exhibits striking linguistic differences with biblical Hebrew. It seems reasonable to presume that such epigraphical texts more faithfully reflect dialectical variations within ancient Hebrew than the texts of the Old Testament. It is difficult if not impossible to avoid the conclusion that the original Hebrew of the biblical source texts underwent a process of regularisation, bringing into line with later “standard Judean” (cf. De Moor 1986). In any event, the Old Testament contains only a limited few traces of dialectical and ancient linguistic usage, so much so that one can say without fear of contradiction that “Debora speaks the same language as Qoheleth”, in spite of the more or less 1000 years that lie between them. Given such a restricted basis, our dating of the literature of the Old Testament on grounds of style and use of terminology clearly requires a high degree of circumspection.

From a purely linguistic perspective, precious little information is available to us for determining the age of a text, the presence of Aramaisms, Greekisms and Farseeisms or words borrowed from Aramaic, Greek and Persian respectively tending to be the primary factor. Persian loan words are naturally to be found in the youngest books of the Old Testament. Our limited knowledge of Ancient Hebrew and the close relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic makes it particularly difficult to determine whether a specific word can be characterised as an Aramaism (cf. Wagner 1966). In addition, one cannot completely dismiss the possibility that certain regions of Palestine preserved elements of ancient Aramaic in the Hebrew. Indeed, scholars are convinced that at least some Israelites were of Aramean origin and that one cannot exclude the possibility that Aramaic linguistic influences were introduced with the adoption of the language of the Canaanites. It remains reasonable to assume, however, that the presence of Aramaisms in classical Hebrew texts can serve as an indication of later interpolations and as supplemen-
tary evidence for the dating of texts that give the impression of being younger for other reasons.

Style based arguments for dating a text are only convincing if they are sufficiently familiar and can be chronologically established with enough certainty. This is the case with respect to the terminology of the Deuteronomist and that of the post-exilic historical books Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. For the rest, however, we must remain modest in our judgements. One cannot simply maintain, for example, that a concise style of composition is always older than a more elaborate narrative style. The *Thronfolgegeschichte* (Succession Narrative) of David in 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2, which would appear to date from the Solomonic period, is a much more extensive account than the report of Amos’ expulsion from Bethel which is to be dated no earlier than the second half of the eighth century (Amos 7:10–17). Likewise, the Song of Debora in Judges 5, which is certainly one of Israel’s oldest songs, exhibits such a high poetic style and makes such significant use of the means of literary artistry that one has to be on one’s guard not to speak of an evolutionary leap forward in the calibre of Hebrew literature in its regard.

Given this state of affairs it is hardly surprising that, in addition to limited linguistic and stylistic data, literary and religious-historical arguments have come to enjoy a significant role in our efforts to determine the date of Old Testament books or parts thereof. Such evidence, however, frequently lacks any degree of certainty. Wellhausen and his followers, for example, dated the priestly source of the Pentateuch (P) as the youngest while other scholars (Kaufmann, Eerdmans) considered the same source to be rather old. Pedersen (1931) preferred for the most part, therefore, to avoid the dating of “sources”, opting to focus his attention on the milieu rather than the point in time at which they came into existence.

The dating of the various songs collected in the Book of Psalms offers a good illustration of the problem. For a considerable period of time the psalms were considered to be post-exilic. Indeed, some scholars even preferred to date them primarily from the Maccabean period (second century BCE). More recent scholarship, however, has tended to shift the boundaries somewhat, dating many of the psalms as pre-exilic and some even from the Davidic period. Our increased knowledge of Ancient Near Eastern literature and improved insight concerning the liturgical use of the psalms has led to a new religious-
historical appreciation thereof and, as a consequence, to a radically different approach to dating across the board.

In light of the above, one is obliged to conclude that the writing of a history of ancient Hebrew literature will only be possible on a limited scale, since the many proposals with respect to the dating of such material often remain no more than hypotheses. We will likewise be obliged to bear this in mind as we proceed. We prefer to distance ourselves, nevertheless, from the tendency evident among certain contemporary scholars to date virtually all of the source documents of the Old Testament as late, i.e. as stemming from the period of the Babylonian exile and thereafter, although we recognise that the final redaction of several books of the Hebrew Bible took place, as a rule, around this time. We will elaborate further on this standpoint as we examine the individual writings of the Old Testament in the remaining chapters. At the present juncture we will limit ourselves to a partial summary of the results proposed by contemporary scholarship with respect to the dating of the sources available to us, bearing in mind the current state of our knowledge of the literature of the Old Testament.

Globally speaking we can say that the literature preserved in the Old Testament covers a period of roughly 1000 years: the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) has been dated around 1100 BCE while the final redaction of the book of Daniel dates from 165 BCE.

It is possible that the original form of the Decalogue (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) dates back to Moses while the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21–23 with the exclusion of later interpolations) would appear to date from the time of the judges or shortly thereafter. A number of proverbs contained in Jacob’s blessing in Genesis 49 and that of Moses in Deuteronomy 33 would likewise appear to date from this period.

The golden age of the reign of David and Solomon not only rekindled interest in the composition of national songs and the beginning of the maintenance of chronicles (cf. the annals of 2 Samuel 8), it also saw the emergence of authentic historiography of which the aforementioned history of David and his family in 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2 serves as a clear example. Vriezen was of the opinion that Zabud, the son of the prophet Nathan, was the author of the latter (see our treatment of the Books of Samuel below). These chapters constitute a spiritually ennobled piece of dynastic history that follows a middle path between biography and a heroic poem.
in prose style. In terms of form, however, it does not constitute an epic. The fact that this history ends with the beginning of Solomon’s reign suggests that it was probably written during his lifetime.

Since the days of the German Old Testament scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), the cornerstone for the analysis of the origins of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) has been focused on the centralisation of the cult in Jerusalem under King Josiah in 622 BCE. Given the fact that the sources referred to as Yahwist (J) and Elohist (E) do not appear to have known Josiah’s reforms, that Deuteronomy prescribes cultic centralisation (cf. Deuteronomy 12) and that the priestly source (P) presupposes it, scholars have tended to date J and E prior to 622 and P thereafter in the exilic or post-exilic period (see further chapters VIII and IX). In more recent decades, however, certain scholars have argued that J came into existence, in essence, in the period of the Babylonian exile (see further the following chapter). This approach thus ignores the Archimedean point established by the aforementioned theory and forces us to assume that the Yahwist (J) consciously portrayed a primitive period without making reference to the political structures of his own time.

The tendency to ascribe a later date to the (sources of) the historical books has spread among the members of the so-called “Amsterdam School” (e.g. Beek 1968, Deurloo/Zuurmond 1984, Smelik 1977), to include pre-Jeremian prophecy. This approach to the dating of the Old Testament documents is based on the belief that the time of the Babylonian exile was a period of literary creativity and on the desire to observe extreme caution in drawing transmission-historical and historical conclusions. It should be noted in this regard that the supporters of such late dating place greater emphasis on the literary creativity of those responsible for the present text of the Old Testament than on the fact that Ancient Near Eastern writers tended as a rule to be transmitters of ancient traditions rather than authors in the modern sense of the word. In saying this, however, we do not deny that the writings of the Old Testament were frequently subject to later expansion by interpolations and actualisations.

In the meantime, one has to account for the possibility that the sources contained in the Pentateuch may have come into existence and been revised side by side instead of one after the other. An exilic or post-exilic dating of the Grundschrift of the Priestly Codex (P), which is said to have been codified after Deuteronomy, remains uncertain (Weinfeld dates P before Deuteronomy; see also Houtman 1994).
Whatever the case, P evidently contains some very old material and never makes explicit allusion to cultic centralisation. At the end of the nineteenth century, Graf Baudissin was among the first to point out that P had only been compared with circumstances prior to the Babylonian exile and that no effort had been made to determine whether the information contained in this literary source might tally with the reality of the (exilic or) post-exilic world.1

The various standpoints adopted by scholars with respect to the dating of the Old Testament documents have obvious consequences at the (religious-)historical level. If one is inclined to argue that a large portion of the (source) documents of the Pentateuch stem from the time of the Babylonian exile then one will be likewise inclined to ascribe a considerably lesser value to the historical reliability of the information contained therein than would be the case if one were to opt for an earlier dating. Where the prophetic books are concerned, supporters of a late dating will similarly be inclined to account for only a minimum of information on the actual preaching of the individuals whose names the said documents bear.

One can also assume that the beginnings of psalm and proverb composition can be dated to the period of David and Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 4:29–34). The temple liturgy called for new forms and it is probable that, in addition to original songs, elements were borrowed from Canaanite psalms (see, for example, Psalm 29), which were tailored to suit the service of Yahweh. We will never be completely certain as to the extent to which David was responsible for writing the psalms. One cannot exclude the possibility, however, that certain songs were penned by him (e.g. Psalm 18), nor that Psalm 110 was composed for his accession to the throne in Jerusalem.

Not only later but also earlier tradition (cf. 1 Kgs 4:32–34) associates the beginnings of Israel’s wisdom literature with King Solomon. The fact that David followed Egyptian models in the governance of his kingdom in the appointment of scribes (sofer) and a chancellor (mazzîr) and that Solomon was closely related to the Egyptian court by marriage, makes it highly probable that the influence of Egyptian wisdom literature was extended to Israel at the time. It remains difficult, however, to establish the extent to which such influence found its way into the book of Proverbs.

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In spite of their theological bias, the descriptions of the history of the rulers of Israel and Judah found in the books of Kings contain a significant amount of information borrowed from the chronicles that were maintained at the royal court (see chapter VI).

For the dating of the prophetic and poetical books reference should be made to the relevant chapters below.

The books of Qoheleth (probably third century BCE) and Daniel (in its final redaction second century BCE) can be considered the youngest books of the Old Testament.
CHAPTER EIGHT

ANCIENT ISRAEL’S GREAT HISTORICAL MASTERPIECE:
GENESIS—II KINGS

a. Introduction


The title of the present rather extensive chapter calls for a degree of explanation. Introductions to the Old Testament generally endeavour to treat the Pentateuch (“consisting of five books”: Genesis-
Deuteronomy) separately and then turn their attention in a distinct chapter to the writings of the so-called Former Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings with the exception of Ruth which belongs to the Writings of the Hebrew Bible). The subdivision into Pentateuch and Former Prophets, however, is based on canonical considerations (cf. chapter IV) that have nothing as such to say concerning the literary-historical origins of the documents contained in both segments and their potential literary cohesion. A degree of canonical force has been ascribed to the term Pentateuch from the outset since the documents collected therein were considered, at least up to a few centuries ago, to be “the five books of Moses”, the author thereof being understood as one and the same person as the lawgiver of Israel. For a variety of reasons to be elaborated below, critical biblical research definitively abandoned this position some two centuries ago. In the meantime, however, scholars continued to treat the five books of the Pentateuch as a single whole, thus transforming the term into a literary-historical construct (which led in turn to the proposal of a Hexateuch [a six part work from Genesis-Joshua] or a Tetrateuch [a four part work from Genesis-Numbers]).

The title of the present chapter implies, therefore, that we ultimately believe Genesis-2 Kings to be a single extensive opus consisting of several parts, each of which enjoys its own history of origin. The fact that the nature and origin of the constitutive parts of this work do not exhibit the necessary consistency required at the level of content to refer to them as a work of history in the modern sense of the term, however, makes it difficult to speak of them in such a manner. The books of Genesis-Joshua, for example, have their roots in a number of different sources, each with its own particular set of accents, while the understanding of history found in Judges differs from that found in 1–2 Kings. The commonly used expression “Deuteronomistic history” (see below), nevertheless obliges us to continue to speak of a “work of history”.

Leaving aside the possibility of additions of limited extent after the Babylonian exile, this substantial work was most probably concluded not long after the death of the Babylonian king Ewil-Merodach (560 BCE; cf. 2 Kgs 25:27–30). This is supported by the fact that no allusion is made in either the Pentateuch or the Former Prophets to a return from exile in Babylon, although certain texts may contain evidence of the promise of just such a return (cf. Lev. 26:40–45...
and Deut. 30:1–10). The conclusion to the work (2 Kgs 25:27–30) can likewise be interpreted as alluding to a hoped for restoration of Israel, but the realisation thereof is not mentioned.

Bearing the above considerations in mind, we can say that the content of the books of Genesis-Kings is relatively consistent and can be summarised as follows: Israel, chosen from among the nations, with whom יְהוָה had established a covenant on Mount Sinai and to whom He had granted the land promised to the patriarchs, forfeited the gift of God’s salvation and blessing by disobeying His commandments and was forced as a result into exile.

The above implies that we distance ourselves from the position held by many that a Deuteronomistic history consisting of the books of Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (with the exclusion of Ruth) once existed independently. In his Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien (1943), the famous German scholar Martin Noth proposed the thesis that Ancient Israel had produced three historical works: the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic history and the Chronistic history (Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah). According to Noth, however, the Pentateuch must be considered a compilatory work, on account of its elaborate composition and variety of authors, and as such cannot be compared with the other two works, which he maintains had a single author. He notes with respect to the Deuteronomistic history: “Dtr. (= the Deuteronomist, the author of the work) was not a redactor but the author of an historical work which summarised ancient traditions of highly different character and brought them together in a well-considered whole. In so doing and for the most part, Dtr. simply allowed the foundational literary sources at his disposal to speak for themselves, combining the separate segments with a connecting text. In certain places, however, it can be shown that he made a conscious choice from the material he had available to him” (op. cit., p. 11). The connecting framework introduced by the Deuteronomist is lacking in Genesis-Numbers, and as such, according to Noth, the latter cannot be considered a part of the Deuteronomistic history. In his opinion, Deut.

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1:1–4:43 constitutes the introduction to the said history that was added to an already existent book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 4:44–30:20). The author then goes on to describe the conquest of the land of Canaan, narrate the period of the judges and survey the history of Israel from the departure from Egypt to the construction of the temple under Solomon over a period of 480 years (1 Kgs 6:1). The work concludes with reference to the fall of Jerusalem and a brief allusion to the release of King Jehoiachin in 561 BCE. According to Noth, the work must have been written in Canaan around the middle of the sixth century BCE (scholars have since argued in support of the land of exile as its place of origin or have declared the problem insolvable). Given the fact that the work begins with Moses expounding the law in the fields of Moab immediately prior to the entry into Canaan (Deuteronomy 1 ff.) and concludes with a detailed portrayal of the discovery of the Mosaic law in the temple in Jerusalem during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22–23), it may have been composed with these significant events in mind. At decisive moments, the Deuteronomist ascribes speeches to leading figures, which interpret the course of events in both retrospective and prospective fashion and draw practical conclusions for the way the people should behave (see, for example, Joshua 23; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kings 8) or offer a historical-theological survey (see Judges 2; 2 Kgs 17:7 ff.). In Noth’s view, the purpose of the work was to show that Israel’s downfall was not due to any lack of power on God’s part but to its own fault (cf. Deut. 29:22–28). יְהוָה had continually given warning to his people on account of their disobedience to the commandments mediated by Moses, but they had cast these ordinances and the words of the prophets to the wind. According to Noth, the author did not account for a future return from exile.

Noth’s thesis provided a clear and simple answer to the question as to how it was possible that a substantial portion of the Former Prophets could be permeated by specific theological perspectives and a particular style. The thesis has thus found a wide circle of supporters, although scholars have introduced corrections thereto in the course of time (especially with respect to the idea that the history is the work of a single author and that it maintained the same theological schema throughout). Indeed, several have come to the conclusion that the Deuteronomistic history is the end result of the activities of three authors: the historical narratives having been created by the historian DtrH, the majority of the prophetic narratives
and a prophetic historical theology having been the responsibility of DtrP and a history measured against the Deuteronomistic law having been the work of the so-called “nomist” or DtrN (Smend jr., Dietrich, Veijola, Würthwein). Others argue in favour of a pre-exilic Deuteronomist active during the reign of King Josiah whose work was later continued and completed by a writer during the period of the Babylonian exile (thus Cross and Nelson, cf. also Helga Weippert).

Noth’s thesis (in spite of later elaborations) confronts us, nevertheless, with a number of problems. Unless one is willing to accept that the books of Genesis-Numbers were added later in the form of a prologue to the Deuteronomistic history, one is obliged to argue that the work of the Yahwist (the primary source of the Pentateuch) must have extended beyond Numbers (and elements of Deuteronomy 31–34), since the promise of the land has such an important role to play therein. It is virtually untenable, therefore, that the conquest of Canaan was not described by the Yahwist. Bearing Noth’s thesis in mind one is then obliged to accept that the conclusion of the work of the Yahwist (or of JE), in which the Landnahme is narrated, must have been set aside in favour of the narration thereof in the book of Joshua which belongs to the Deuteronomistic history. Furthermore, passages can be found in the book of Exodus that are written in the

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same Deuteronomistic style as the proposed Deuteronomistic history (cf. Exod. 19:3–8 and 24:3–8; see also Exod. 23:20ff.). In addition, it is argued that while the books of Joshua and Judges were Deuteronomistically reworked, the books of Kings were written by Deuteronomists and 1–2 Samuel were only subject to a very limited degree of Deuteronomistic intervention. One might raise the question, moreover, as to whether Deuteronomy 1–3(4) constitutes an appropriate introduction to the proposed history (cf. Childs 1979, pp. 213–215) and why the work does not begin with a description of the exodus event, given the multiple references to the departure from Egypt in the books of Joshua-2 Kings. This question is all the more pressing if one accounts for the fact that the chronological system maintained by the so-called Deuteronomist takes its point of departure in the exodus from Egypt (cf. 1 Kgs 6:1).

In light of our critical stance towards the notion of a once independent Deuteronomistic history stretching from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings and before we endeavour to formulate our own standpoint with respect to the genesis and evolution of Israel’s historical masterpiece, it seems appropriate for the sake of clarity to offer a short sketch of the history of Pentateuch research up to the present juncture.

b. A short sketch of the history of Pentateuch research

Old Testament studies can never rest on a secure foundation until the pentateuchal problem is resolved (Frederick V. Winnett)


Scholarly endeavour in the last couple of centuries to disentangle the emergence and history of the Pentateuch serves as the most expressive and significant example of the application of literary and historical-critical methods to the documents of the Old Testament. Together with Franz Delitzsch we might add that the problem of the genesis of the Pentateuch is “nach allen Seiten hin die eigentliche Grund- und Hauptfrage” of Old Testament research.

A great deal has been said and written concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch. Up to a few centuries ago the ancient Jewish tradition, which was adopted by Christianity, held Moses to be the author of Genesis-Deuteronomy. One of the first to counter this
traditional assertion was Andreas Bodenstein Karlstadt (1486–1541), who had once served as a pastor together with Luther in Wittenberg. In his *De Canonicis Scripturis Libellus* of 1520, he denied the possibility that Moses could have been the author of the Pentateuch based on the fact that the book of Joshua exhibited the same style. He likewise rejected the hypothesis that Ezra could have been the author on account of the fact that the style of the latter did not agree with that of the Pentateuch. It is probably due to Karlstadt’s later ideas and his unfortunate career that this perspective did not attract the attention it deserved. Inspired by relevant observations made by a number of medieval Jewish rabbis, among them Ibn Ezra, the philosopher Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) similarly denied Mosaic authorship of Genesis-Deuteronomy in his *Tractatus theoligico-politicus* of 1670, although he considered Ezra to have been the compiler of the Pentateuch.

The path of critical biblical research was smoothed out once and for all when the Enlightenment of the seventeenth century brought about a change in our world view, definitively eroded the authority of the Scriptures at every level of reality and established reason as the only reliable instrument of scientifically justifiable knowledge. It was also the Enlightenment (together with the emergence of text-critical research) that provided the decisive thrust towards the literary and historical-critical study of the Old Testament in general and the Pentateuch in particular.14

One of the first observations made in this regard was the difference in the use of divine names in the Pentateuch. Several segments thereof employed *YHWH* (JB: Yahweh; NRSV: the Lord, in line with the translation *kurios* found in the Septuagint; Dutch Authorised Version: de HEERE) while others employed *Elohim* (God) as the divine name. Once it was discerned that this difference in designation was characteristic of some parallel narratives, the foundations of source division were established. Scholars thus made an initial distinction between two sources, a Yahwist and an Elohist.

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Although he was not the first to support this hypothesis, Jean Astruc (1684–1766), bodyguard to Louis XV and professor of medicine at the University of Paris, is nevertheless considered the father of source theory. It is interesting to note that Astruc’s motives in setting forth his hypothesis were primarily apologetic rather than critical, his ultimate aim having been to defend the Mosaic origin of the first five books of the Bible. His study, which was published anonymously in Brussels in 1753 under the title *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroit que Moyse s’est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*, begins with the presupposition that Moses had ordered his sources in four columns and that a later redactor had reworked them into one continuous narrative, thereby giving rise to the various irregularities we encounter in the present text. Astruc was particularly critical of Spinoza, whom he accused of *hardiesse*, and exhibited a serious concern with respect to the critical spirit of the time (*la maladie du dernier siècle*), which he not only detected in Spinoza and Hobbes but also among Roman Catholic authors.

Astruc’s position was confirmed at the end of the eighteenth century by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1825), the pioneer of the *older documentary hypothesis*, in his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. Although Eichhorn initially upheld the idea of a Mosaic reworking of the apparent sources, he later hypothesised that the latter must have been compiled after Moses. In his *Die Urkunden des Jerusalemer Tempelarchivs in ihrer Urgestalt I: Die Urkunden des ersten Buchs von Mose* (Halle 1798), Carl-David Ilgen (1763–1834) went on to defend the idea that, next to J (the Yahwist), one should distinguish not one but two Elohist sources. These were later to be designated as E (Elohist) and P (the Priestly codex).

While earlier scholars had already associated Deuteronomy with the reformation of Josiah (cf. 2 Kings 22–23), they had not denied Mosaic origins thereof (e.g. Jerome and Lessing). In his dissertation

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published in 1805,17 however, Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849) disputed the Mosaic origin of the book and argued that it should be dated to the late period of the kings. His work serves as an essential turning point in Pentateuch criticism on account of the fact that he clearly indicated a relationship between the genesis of Deuteronomy and the cultic reforms of King Josiah.18

The foundations were thus established for the hypothesis that the Pentateuch was made up primarily19 of four sources:

J: the Yahwist, which employed יְהֹוָה as the divine name;
E: the Elohist, which employed אֱלֹהִים (= God);
D: the author(s) of the book of Deuteronomy;
P: the priestly author(s) responsible for the majority of the cultic laws but also for a number of historical texts, which maintain a variety of phases in the revelation of the divine name: from the creation to the patriarchs—Elohim (Gen. 1), among the patriarchs—El Shadday (Gen. 17), and only later, in relation to Moses, the ‘full divine name’—יְהֹוָה (Ex. 6:2ff.).

Such source division led in turn to a number of new questions: a) are the individual source documents the work of a single author or of a variety of authors or, for that matter, of an entire “school” of authors?; b) what if any is the relationship between the different source documents? In the course of time, for example, scholars came to distinguish several Yahwist authors (J 1, J 2, J 3) and a number of segments of different priestly origin: Grundschrift of P (P^g), the Holiness Code (P^h), supplements to P (P^s), etc. The chronological sequence of J and E, whereby the former was dated prior to the latter, continued to be a matter of dispute. In his Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung (Berlin 1853), Hermann Hupfeld (1796–1866), the founder of the newer documentary hypothesis, considered P to be the oldest source,20 but then later maintained it to be

19 No one has ever succeeded in ascribing the entire Pentateuch to four source documents (cf., for example, Genesis 14).
20 Hupfeld distinguished four sources in chronological order: the Urschrift E 1 (= P), the younger Elohist E 2 (= E), the Yhwh-ist (= J) and Deuteronomy (= D).
the youngest (thus Kuenen; see below). Scholars were more or less agreed, however, on the dating (and original form) of D, which was introduced during the reign of Josiah (622 BCE, cf. 2 Kings 22–23) and came into existence a couple of decades earlier.

The documentary hypothesis tended not to enjoy much support at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Several scholarly circles had welcomed the *fragmentary hypothesis*, defended at the end of the eighteenth century by the Scottish Roman Catholic priest Alexander Geddes (1737–1802) and further elaborated by the German scholar Johann Severin Vater (1771–1826). According to this hypothesis, the Pentateuch was compiled on the basis of a number of independent and often contradictory fragments of differing sizes, stemming from Elohist and Yahwist circles, which were brought together by a redactor most probably during the period of Solomon. The so-called *supplementary hypothesis* proposed by De Wette, reformulated by Heinrich Georg August Ewald (1803–1875) and supported by Friedrich Bleek (1793–1859) likewise enjoyed some backing: the Pentateuch and Joshua consisted of an Elohist *Grundschrift*, which was later supplemented by Yahwist and other component elements, incorporating Deuteronomy some time thereafter.

Well-known conservative biblical scholars such as Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg and Carl Friedrich Keil were strongly critical of any form of rationalism. Originally part of this conservative group, Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890) later joined the ranks of the critical school and accepted the documentary hypothesis. Together with August Dillmann (1823–1894), Delitzsch belonged to a moderate critical tendency that exercised some degree of influence in the second half of the nineteenth century. Scholars such as Rudolf Kittel (1853–1929) emerged from the same school. Kittel’s worthy endeavours are familiar to many in the form of the *Biblia Hebraica* (BHK: 1906 and several reprints thereafter) and his research into the history of Israel which took significant account of the results of archaeological studies (cf. his

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21 In the first edition of his *Historisch-kritisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds*, Leiden 1861, Abraham Kuenen more or less accepted Hupfeld’s newer documentary hypothesis, although he was later inclined to consider the *Urschrift* (P) as the youngest source.


23 See his *Commentar über den Pentateuch*, Halle 1802–1805.

The development that lead to a broader acceptance of the documentary hypothesis was prepared for by the work of Johann Karl Wilhelm Vatke (1806–1882). In his *Die biblische Theologie wissenschaftlich dargestellt I: Die Religion des Alten Testaments nach den kanonischen Büchern entwickelt*, published in 1835 and exhibiting Hegelian influence, Vatke adopted the idea of an historical development whereby Israel’s religion evolved from a tribal religion under the influence of Moses into a national religion and under the prophets into an ethical religion. Furthermore, Eduard Reuss (1804–1891) and his pupil Karl Heinrich Graf (1815–1869) defended the thesis that the Law was younger than the Prophets and the Psalms younger than both. The Leiden professor Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891) and the German Old Testament scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) added their support.

Kuenen’s *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek naar het ontstaan van en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds* (first edition in three volumes 1861–1865) is a standard work, which continues to attract admiration on account of the author’s clarity of explanation and impressive command of his material. Wellhausen’s various publications bear witness to a stylistic excellence that continues to make his work interesting and worthy of reading. Wellhausen was a unique and

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27 For the person and his work see R. Smend jr., *op. cit.*, 1989, pp. 99–113.

28 The second, completely revised edition of 1885–1889, bears the same title with minor emendations. The third volume of this edition was published in 1893 by J. C. Matthes (1836–1917), Kuenen’s brother-in-law.

erudite scholar whose influence on Old Testament studies was so immense that instead of speaking of the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen school, contemporary research tends to limit itself to the school of Wellhausen. He distinguished, in essence, three layers in the Pentateuch: JE, consisting of two sources (J and E), each exhibiting the characteristics of three editions in sequence although difficult to distinguish from one another, Deuteronomy (D) and the priestly source (P, referred to by Wellhausen as Q abbreviated from “the book of the four [quattuor] covenants”, those with Adam, Noah and Abraham together with the Sinai covenant). In his opinion, the layers stem from around 840, 700, 620 and 500 BCE respectively and were connected together in a succession of redactions. Wellhausen’s belief that the aforementioned documentary sources extended into the book of Joshua implies that one should speak of a Hexateuch (a six part work: Genesis-Joshua) rather than a Pentateuch (a five part work: Genesis-Deuteronomy).

Both Kuenen and Wellhausen were consistent in applying the historicism dominant in the nineteenth century to the religion and literature of Ancient Israel, albeit each in his own fashion. In their opinion J represented the most primitive form of Israel’s religion, its conception of God being the most naïve. E bears witness to a purer stage of religious thought. D represents prophetic monotheism and P follows suit. Based on literary analysis, Keunen and Wellhausen thus offered an image of Israel’s religious history that set traditional theories of Old Testament transmission on their head, so to speak. Instead of portraying a pure form of Yahwism under Moses’ leadership at the beginning of Israel’s history that degenerated during the period of the judges and the kings under the influence of the worship of other gods, a thesis emerged whereby Israel’s religion was seen to have developed from a virtually polytheistic original phase into a pure form of Yahwism in the period of the kings. Israel’s religion was thus considered to have started as a natural religion only to evolve under the prophets with their highly ethical preaching. The ethical

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30 Keunen’s anti-supernaturalistic theological perspective and natural theology (God’s spirit and power are made manifest in the development of the human person) are in frequent evidence; cf. S. J. de Vries, op. cit., 1968, 19892, 48ff. Wellhausen was in the first instance an historian, although he believed himself to be at the service of theology; cf. the final chapter of L. Perlitt, Vatke und Wellhausen (BZAW 94), Berlin 1965, pp. 153–243.
norms preached by the prophets brought about a complete renewal and later came to dominate the cult. Israel’s liturgy thus emerged with which we are familiar from the laws found in the Pentateuch. Neither Kuenen nor Wellhausen were inclined to rate this evolution highly, however. Keunen maintained that Israel’s religion had evolved into empty formalism while Wellhausen determined the evolution to be the beginning of Judaism, which he viewed negatively.

Wellhausen supported his reconstruction of Ancient Israel’s religious history with the following arguments:

a) JE presume different sacrificial locations, whereas D demands centralisation of the cult and P presupposes it, projecting itself back to the wilderness period (the tabernacle);

b) Sacrifices in the period of the kings were not subject to regulation and tended to be offered in the family context. Josiah centralised the cult and only allowed the laity to engage in profane slaughter (cf. Deuteronomy 12); the ancient offerings consist only of animal sacrifice and burnt offerings; sin and guilt offerings stem from the time of the Babylonian exile;

c) Religious feasts with respect to JE have an agrarian character (Exod. 23:14–19; 34:18–26) and lack any fixed date. D historicises the said feasts (cf. Deut. 16:1–17) and P ritualises them (cf. Lev. 23:1–44; Numbers 28–29). The New Year Feast and the Great Day of Atonement stem from the period of the Babylonian exile;

d) In the period of the kings each sanctuary had its own clergy. While D desired to transfer the Levites to Jerusalem (Deut. 18:6–8), Ezekiel made them the servants of the priests (Ezek. 44:10–14) and P confirms this situation (Numbers 1–4).

A highly critical assessment of Wellhausen’s liberal Protestant aversion to ceremonial and ritual together with a radical critique of his thesis concerning the development of Israel’s religion can be found in Report No. 14/79 of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University penned by M. Weinfeld under the title Getting at the Roots of Wellhausen’s Understanding of the Law of Israel on the 100th Anniversary of the Prolegomena, Jerusalem s.d. Cf. also M. Haran, Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel. An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School, Oxford 1978.

In the meantime, however, many of Wellhausen’s hypotheses have turned out to be untenable:

a) It is correct to say that the tabernacle was the only cultic location during the period in the wilderness and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that Lev. 17:3–7 determined that every animal slaughter had to take place there. If this passage presupposes the cultic centralisation characteristic of the time of King Josiah, however, it is inconceivable that P in line with D (Deuteronomy 12) did not allow profane slaughter for those who could not bring their animals to Jerusalem;
b) 2 Kgs 12:16 (Hebr. 12:17) reveals that sin and guilt offerings were in fact made in the period of the kings (cf. also Hos. 4:8);\textsuperscript{31}

c) While Leviticus 23 (P) likewise associates the festivals with nature, it also attaches them to a fixed date in line with traditions found elsewhere in the Ancient Near East. Atonement rituals are known to us from Ugarit and the Mesopotamian world dating back to very ancient times\textsuperscript{32} (cf. ANET, 331–334);

d) A distinction between priests and Levites, senior and junior cultic personnel, can already be found with respect to Hittite temples (cf. J. Milgrom, JAOS 90 [1970], 204–209).

It did not take long for a degree of resistance to develop with respect to the theses proposed by Keunen and Wellhausen among both conservative scholars and those who, in principle, shared their critical perspective. Reference can be made in this regard to scholars such as August Dillmann (1823–1894) and Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin (1847–1926) who continued to support an early dating of the cultic law, maintained the emergence of P prior to the Babylonian exile and thus rejected an evolutionary schema. At the same time, a huge variety of dates were associated with J and E, running from 1200 to 500 BCE. Some scholars, including Eduard König (1846–1936), who excelled in both the exegetical and the linguistic arenas,\textsuperscript{33} were inclined to push the date as far forward as possible while others exhibited the opposite tendency. In addition, there was a significant lack of unanimity regarding the distribution of the transmitted material over the various sources in which individual preference and certain theories on the character of the source documents played an important role. Perhaps the most significant controversy surrounded the religious evaluation of the differentiated sources and of particular narratives whereby literary-critical judgements and religious-historical and theological considerations traversed and frequently thwarted one another.

An upsurge of criticism of the system elaborated by Wellhausen and his supporters is evident after 1900, both from the perspective of the literary critics themselves and from the cultural, religious-historical and dogmatic

\textsuperscript{31} As a matter of fact, the translation “sin offering” is somewhat inaccurate since the offering in question was more probably a purification offering; cf. J. Milgrom, “Sin-offering or Purification-offering?”, VT 21 (1981), 237–239.

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. B. Levine, “Ugaritic Descriptive Rituals”, JCS 17 (1963), 105ff.

\textsuperscript{33} Cf., for example, his Historisch-Comparative Syntax der Hebräischen Sprache, Leipzig 1897.
perspective. While a complete survey of the problems and objections raised would be impossible at this juncture, the following information should suffice to exhibit the primary thrust of the new developments.

In the Netherlands, Bernardus Dirks Eerdmans (1868–1948), the second successor to Kuenen in Leiden, can be singled out as the one who spearheaded the attack from the literary-critical perspective in his *Alttestamentliche Studien*.\(^{34}\) Eerdmans firmly rebuffed any form of source division that arbitrarily tore a narrative asunder in spite of its evident intention to present itself as a literary unity. He rejected the thesis that E and P once constituted independent source documents, which offered a continuous historical narrative, and denied the possibility that J and E could be distinguished on the basis of their use of divine names. He likewise considered Israel’s official cult as significantly older than Wellhausen had proposed. In religious-historical terms, however, Eerdmans ultimately shared the radical-critical standpoint of the school of Wellhausen, being similarly convinced of a development of Israel’s religion from naturalistic polytheism through prophetic reaction to the monotheism of Deuteronomy and later prophecy.\(^{35}\) Rooted in his belief that polytheism had a greater role to play than other critics were inclined to argue, Eerdmans located the emergence of Ancient Israelite literature at an earlier stage than was customary at the time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the complex nature of the literary sources already recognised by Kuenen and Wellhausen (especially with respect to P) led several scholars to engage in meticulous research into the composition of the individual source documents, which led in turn to an extensive literary segmentation of the transmitted texts. Such, in many respects, sterile and atomistic analysis of narratives that ultimately presented themselves as a unity elicited significant resistance in a variety of circles and tended to contribute little to the endeavour to reconstruct Israel’s religious history. The distinctions introduced within the various sources unintentionally

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\(^{35}\) Cf. his *Religion of Israel*, Leiden 1947, pp. 4ff.
undermined the classical documentary hypothesis, which based itself as a rule on a high degree of homogeneity with respect to the sources and on single authorship. Developments led to a more well-defined documentary hypothesis, later referred to as the **newest documentary hypothesis**, initiated by Karl Budde (1850–1935), further elaborated by Rudolf Smend Sr. (1851–1913) in his *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin 1912), and vigorously defended by the Old Testament scholar Otto Eissfeldt (1877–1973) in his monumental *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen 1964). In line with Smend Sr., Eissfeldt distinguished five literary layers in the Hexateuch (Genesis-Joshua): L, J, E, D and P, or the “lay source” (*Laienquelle*) stemmed from the Davidic-Solomonic period and reflected a nomadic ideal and a protest against Canaanite influences in Israel (cf. J 1 and J 2 according to Smend Sr.). While Eissfeldt continued to envisage individual authors of the source documents, he not only recognised that they had employed older material but also that their work was not completely homogenous.

Other commentators were more inclined to reduce the number of the four traditionally accepted sources J, E, D and P. Several influential scholars argued, for example, that E had never existed as an independent documentary source, constituting rather only a supplement to J. This thesis was strongly defended by Paul Volz (1871–1941) and Wilhelm Rudolph (1891–1987) in *Der Elohist als Erzähler. Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?* (Giessen 1933) and by the lat-
ter in his Der “Elohist” von Exodus bis Josua (Giessen 1938). Mowinckel (1884–1965)\(^{38}\) and Vriezen (1899–1981)\(^{39}\) also joined their ranks. Vriezen maintained, in addition, that P should be considered a reworker of the material transmitted in JED and not as an independent source document. Following Johannes Hempel (1891–1964),\(^{40}\) however, Vriezen also distinguished three distinct complexes within J (J 1 = Genesis 12–36; J 2 = Genesis 37–50; J 3 = Genesis 2–11: J 1 was supplemented with J 2, E and J 3 to become JE, D and P being added thereafter).

Even the relationship proposed by De Wette, and many others after him, between (proto-)Deuteronomy and the reforms of King Josiah was not left unchallenged. J. B. Griffis, for example, argued in his The Problem of Deuteronomy (London 1911) that linguistic and archaeological evidence revealed that the vast majority of the laws found in the book of Deuteronomy could not have stemmed from the time of King Josiah. In his Das deuteronomische Grundgesetz (Gütersloh 1923) Theodor Oestreicher not only denied any specific relationship between Deuteronomy and the Josianic reforms but also contested the idea that the work restricted the liturgy to a single location. Adam C. Welch ascribed the legislative segment of Deuteronomy to the time of Samuel in his The Code of Deuteronomy (London 1924). In his essay “Komposition und Ursprung des Deuteronomiums”, \(\mathcal{Z}IW\) 40 (1922), 161–255, Gustav Hölscher argued that the Deuteronomic law would have been unworkable in Josiah’s time and dated it to the post-exilic period. All these studies ultimately served to undermine the primary foundations of Wellhausian Pentateuchal criticism. For a more detailed survey see M. J. Paul, Het archimedische punt van de Pentateuchkritiek. Een historisch en exegetisch onderzoek naar de verhouding van Deuteronomium en de reformatie van koning Josia (2 Kon. 22–23), ’s Gravenhage 1988.

Criticism from the culture-historical and religious-historical perspective would appear to have been more influential. Wellhausen had described the development of Israel’s religion as an immanent process (albeit prior to the Babylonian exile), which the nation had undergone in virtual

\(^{38}\) S. Mowinckel, Erwägungen zur Pentateuch-Quellenfrage, Oslo 1964.

\(^{39}\) See De literatuur van Oud-Israël, Katwijk aan Zee 1989, p. 159 and earlier editions thereof (E as “augmented edition of J”). Claus Westermann similarly denies the existence of E as an independent source document in his impressive commentary on Genesis (in the series BK).

\(^{40}\) Cf. J. Hempel, Die althebräische Literatur, Wildpark-Potsdam 1930 (reprint Berlin 1968). In this striking standard work Hempel would appear to be heavily influenced by Gunkel and Gressmann. He maintains the presence of older material in all the sources of the Pentateuch, including P, and argues in favour of a slow yet lively evolution of the source documents.
isolation. Ancient Near Eastern excavations since the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, however, especially those in Mesopotamia, have increasingly made it clear that Israel had formed a part of the culture and history of the region from ancient times. The idea of a development from a low polytheistic religion to the level of the prophets in a relatively short period of time appeared to many to be an improbable if not untenable thesis. The discovery of the Babylonian creation narrative Enuma Elish and the flood narrative of the Gilgamesh epic, both of which exhibit striking agreements with the biblical reports, left a significant and indelible impression (cf. chapter II). In addition, the laws of Hammurabi, which exhibit remarkable parallels on specific points with the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 21–23, further contributed to the realisation that an exchange of cultural assets between the nations of the Ancient Near East should not be underestimated. Later excavations at Nuzi and Ugarit further served to underline Israel’s relationship with its neighbours (cf. chapter II). Given the Babylonian-Assyrian and Egyptian sources, it appeared that Israelite sources had been frequently ascribed a much too late date. As a consequence, the highly influential “Religionsgeschichtliche Schule”, represented by Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin (1874–1927), Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926), Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) and Hugo Gressmann (1877–1927), called for further research into the sociological, religious and cultural roots of the available Old Testament texts in addition to source critical considerations.

Hermann Gunkel and Hugo Gressmann stand out among those who argued in favour of dating all sorts of elements of the Old Testament much earlier than was the general tendency among scholars at the time. As a matter of fact, even Eerdmans’ critique recognised the significance of the Ancient Near Eastern material brought

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41 Paul Volz in his Mose. Ein Beitrag zur Untersuchung über die Ursprünge der israelitischen Religion (Tübingen 1907, 1932) already defended the thesis that Mosaic religion exhibited an equally high level as that maintained by the school of Wellhausen with respect to the Prophets.


to light by the aforementioned excavations, albeit in the background thereto. Many, nevertheless, continued to uphold Wellhausen’s theory. Gunkel and Gressmann were of the opinion, however, that the pure literary-historical school should make room for the “religious-historical school”. In addition to and in association with their interest in religious-historical parallels, both scholars were responsible for the introduction of form-critical and style-critical research. They based themselves on the hypothesis that the writers of the Ancient Near Eastern world made use, in the first instance, of stock material associated with popular tradition, i.e. with literary genres (Gattungen) that bore their own formal and material characteristics and functioned in a specific concrete situation (Sitz im Leben); priestly instruction was given in a specific form in the context of the sanctuary, the mourner chanted a dirge over the bier of a lost loved one, an individual recited a hymn of thanksgiving in the temple in fulfilment of the vow he or she had made in time of need etc. Their research into the smallest literary units that are to be found in the available sources was, by implication, more focused on the socio-ethical and spiritual content of the tradition than on historical considerations. Instead of inquiring in the first instance into the time at which a literary unit came into existence, each unit was subjected to an analysis of style and content and studied in light of parallels familiar from Israel’s Umwelt. Given the fact, however, that the literary genres appeared to have developed over time and not remained constant, it was still possible to draw historical conclusions on the basis of the literary forms, at least to a certain degree. Attention continued to focus, nevertheless, on the functional significance of the texts in question.

Gunkel’s form-critical work was particularly oriented towards the book of Genesis, in which he detected primarily Ursagen (Genesis 1–11) and Väteragen (Genesis 12–50), and, hardly surprisingly, the book of Psalms. In his opinion, the sagas frequently bore an etiological

46 H. Gunkel, Genesis übersetzt und erklärt (HKAT), Göttingen 1901, 1964.
character (e.g. Gen. 1:1–2:4a as response to human questions concerning the origins of the heavens and the earth and why the Sabbath was celebrated) and had already been joined together in clusters in a pre-literary stage. While Gunkel followed the main lines of Wellhausian source analysis, he nevertheless introduced a not insignificant correction thereto. By considering J and E to be the end product of schools of collectors (“Sammler”), he ultimately broke with Wellhausen’s hypothesis, which maintained the existence of individual authors (“Einzelschriftsteller”) whose work reflected the spiritual ideas of their own day.

In similar fashion, Gressmann focused his research on the tradition surrounding the exodus from Egypt and the period in the wilderness (cf. his Mose und seine Zeit. Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen [Göttingen 1913]), placing specific emphasis on stylistic and tradition-historical issues.

Research inaugurated by Gunkel and Gressmann into the specific component parts out of which the source documents as collections were compiled led not only to the realisation that the composition of the Pentateuch was much more complex than hitherto proposed but also drew attention to the pre-literary history of the sources and their constituent elements, i.e. to the role of the oral tradition. In many respects, the idea of “written sources” was thus diluted. Scholars came to realise that the Priestly codex (P), for example, formed a conglomeration of both old and young elements, and that generalisations in its regard were much open to debate “a source is both old and young at the same time” (Pedersen). Against such a background, the significance of research into the sources, which had preoccupied older generations, naturally diminished in favour of the study of independent traditions and attention came to be focused on überlieferungs- and traditionsgeschichtliche research (see below).

A third avenue of research, the so-called idea-historical, likewise registered significant difficulties with the theories elaborated by Wellhausen and his supporters. Countering a one-sided literary-historical approach, a number of scholars expressed the need for research into the spiritual significance of the Scriptures. It meant little to know the source to which the paradise narrative in Genesis 2–3 belonged and even less to be able to dissect it into its original components. Such scholars were more interested in the meaning ascribed by the author as a whole to the narrative he had compiled. Prominent representatives of this approach included Johannes Pedersen and Willy Staerk,
although both followed a different path in their research, the former psychological and religious-historical\(^{48}\) the latter more spiritual-historical and theological.\(^{49}\) Gerhard von Rad can likewise be considered a part of this movement (see below). Their method tended to prioritise a synthetic rather than analytic approach: the study of a text’s external characteristics should make way for an exploration of the meaning of a narrative through which one can endeavour to enter into the mind of the author. It was to be observed in so doing that a variety of authors could be discerned in the narratives of the Old Testament, each betraying himself according to his distinct spiritual ideas. Following this line of thought, Pedersen was able to distinguish the Old Testament authors from one another according to the various milieus from which they had emerged. He denied the possibility, however, of classifying these authors in chronological order.

It was but a small step from *Formgeschichte*, with its study of the genre and *Sitz im Leben* of smaller literary units, to *Überlieferungs-*, c.q. *Traditionsgeschichte*, which endeavoured to trace the process whereby the individual traditions coalesced in the oral phase prior to their use by the authors of the source documents in the composition of their narratives.\(^{50}\) Inspired by their teacher Albrecht Alt (1883–1956), whose study concerning the “God of the fathers”,\(^ {51}\) together with his


\(^{50}\) While the concepts “transmission history” and “tradition history” are frequently used in distinction they are also often identified with one another. Perhaps the best option is to employ the German *Überlieferungsgeschichte* for the process related to the oral transmission of narratives, songs etc. as *transitio* and *Traditionsgeschichte* for the transmission and evolution of idea complexes (creation tradition, exodus tradition, Davidic tradition.) as *traditum*; cf. F. Deist, “De overleverings- en traditiekritische methoden”, in: A. S. van der Woude (ed.), *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*, Kampen 1986, pp. 159–172.

style and form-critical analysis of the legal literature and the list found in the book of Joshua had earned him a well-deserved place in scholarly history, and Martin Noth (1902–1968) endeavoured to shed light on the pre-history of the material transmitted in the Pentateuch. A significant transition can be observed in the process whereby the attention afforded by Kuenen and Wellhausen to the period of the kings was transferred to the period in which Israel had not yet developed a monarchy.

The work of William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971) and his followers exhibits a firm belief in the possibility of tracing Israel’s earliest traditions. Established more on the basis of archaeological discoveries than on tradition-historical analysis, however, their theories do not differ to any great extent from those of Martin Noth.

In his Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch (Stuttgart 1938) Von Rad defended the thesis that the Hexateuch (Genesis-Joshua) constituted a detailed elaboration of an ancient cultic credo (“das kleine geschichtliche Credo”), which he believed had served as the framework within which the tradition had coalesced. In his view, Deut. 26:5b–9 represented the earliest form of this credo in terms of content, which he maintained had its origins in the sanctuary at Gilgal. Given the fact that the credo lacks any reference to the Sinai event, he argued that the tradition with respect to the giving of the law, as described in Exodus 19–24; 32–34, represented an independent traditional complex that should be related to the cult at Shechem. In Von Rad’s opinion, the Yahwist lived during the golden Davidic-Solomonic age.
and was responsible for the elaboration of the salvation historical schema based on material from a variety of origins. He thus provided for the Einbau of the Sinai tradition, the Ausbau of the patriarchal history and the Vorbau of the primeval history. The Yahwist likewise placed his mark on the Hexateuch and made the Landnahme completed by David into the confession of all the tribes of Israel. The Yahwist was not driven by primarily historical concerns but had, rather, a theological goal in mind: to show that the Davidic dynasty was yhwh’s desired result for Israel’s earliest history (cf. Gen. 12:1–3). The framework provided by the credo, according to Von Rad, remained unaffected by the addition of E and P.

Scholars rightly objected to this albeit impressive theory concerning the origins of the Hexateuch. None of the formulations of the “small historical credo” proposed by Von Rad can be shown to be pre-Deuteronom(ist)ic and thus be regarded as ancient. According to its character, a credo tends to be more of a summary of already existing traditions rather than a point of departure for the formation thereof or a framework within which such formation is facilitated.

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57 According to Von Rad this “great people” is to be identified with the Israel of the Davidic kingdom and the “great name” with that promised to David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:9).


The fact that the Sinai tradition is lacking in the oldest formulations of the credo need not imply the existence of an independent traditional complex per se, but would appear rather to be a functional determination related to the various contexts.\textsuperscript{60} By proposing a tradition-historical separation between exodus and Sinai, one is forced to associate the figure of Moses in origin with one or the other or with neither. It remains improbable, however, that the Israelites who had lived through the departure from Egypt ought to be distinguished from a group that had witnessed the Sinai event. Indeed, the Old Testament as a whole does not offer sufficient reason for such a hypothesis. The departure from Egypt is hardly conceivable without a leader and the giving of the law on Sinai without a religious founder. The fact that the Bible presents Moses as just such a leader and founder remains highly plausible from the historical perspective.

In his Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch (Stuttgart 1948), Martin Noth divided the material found in the Pentateuch into five “themes” (exodus from Egypt, arrival in Canaan, promise to the patriarchs, journey in the wilderness, revelation on Sinai) which he maintained were originally transmitted by different tradition bearers and later expanded with material from a variety of origins. The said themes were already fused together at the pre-literary phase, whereby the figure of Moses, whom Noth considered more or less alien to all five themes, provided for a secondary framework of interconnections.\textsuperscript{61} It has been correctly observed, however, that the opposite may have been the case: that a historical figure of the stature of Moses attracted a variety of traditions to himself. Noth considered the role of J to be much more limited than that ascribed to it by Von Rad. Indeed, he was inclined to view J, E, D and P more as compilers of traditions than as independent authors, although he upheld the opposite position with respect to the authors he presumed to be at the basis of the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic histories.

Reference should be made in this regard to a number of Scandinavian scholars who, while likewise recognising the fact that the Pentateuch was the result of a complex process of transmission,

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. A. Weiser, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, Göttingen 1957\textsuperscript{4}, pp. 73ff.
\textsuperscript{61} For a thoroughgoing critique of the school of Alt and Noth see the work of J. Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing. A Study in Method (SBTh 19), London 1956.
arrived nevertheless at different conclusions to those of Von Rad and Noth.62

Johannes Pedersen (1883–1978), for example, was highly critical of the method of a number of literary critics, which he considered to be too western, and of the vision of the development of Israel’s religion defended by the Wellhausen school. He ascribed the internal tensions and irregularities evident in the texts we have at our disposal to the transmission process itself. In his opinion, JE (which, he maintained, could not be distinguished from one another), D and P served as sigla for recorded collections dating from the post-exilic period, which reflect the pluriform culture and religion of Ancient Israel both before and after the time of the exile.

Ivan Engnell (1907–1964), a supporter of the so-called “Myth and Ritual School”63 set up by Samuel Henry Hooke, which maintained the existence of general Ancient Near Eastern cultic pattern (“common pattern”) with the sacral function of the king as its central element, was influenced by Pederson as well as by the orientalist Hendrik Samuel Nyberg (1889–1974). The latter was of the opinion that while the written Old Testament stemmed from the period after the Babylonian exile, its content had been transmitted prior thereto in oral form. This explains Nyberg’s immense confidence in the Masoretic text and his dislike of prevailing literary criticism. Engnell shared these perspectives and developed his own vision of the origins of the books of Genesis-Kings.64 In line with Noth, he took the existence of a Deuteronomistic history extending from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings as his point of departure, maintaining that this history was completely independent of the collection of traditions found in Genesis to Numbers. The latter, he argued, was brought together by a priestly

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writer from the period of the exile who drew his material from, in part, extremely old oral traditions and incorporated JE traditions in his work that were not to be distinguished from the remaining traditions collected in the priestly document.

While scholars have generally distanced themselves from the idea that the material of the Old Testament was transmitted in an almost exclusively oral fashion prior to the Babylonian exile, the criticism voiced by the Scandinavians led nevertheless to the understanding of the sources of the Pentateuch as streams of tradition and to the attribution of many irregularities evident therein to the oral phase of the transmission.

Following in Nyberg’s footsteps, many Scandinavian scholars have in fact been inclined to overestimate the role of the oral tradition in Israel. Based on his studies of Arabic, Nyberg was convinced that the oral tradition had had a much more significant role to play in the Semitic world before, during and after the written form thereof than had been hitherto maintained. He considered the prevailing literary criticism of the Old Testament to be little more than grasping at straws and was of the opinion that little if any of the Old Testament tradition had been written down prior to the Babylonian exile. He ultimately maintained that the use of writing in pre-exilic Israel was unimportant.65

Archaeological discoveries have tended to undermine the propositions of Nyberg and his followers (see chapter I). Given the fact that the Babylonian-Assyrian and the Egyptian world would appear to have been quite schreibselig, in spite of their complex writing system, it seems all the more likely that Phoenicia and Israel, with their relatively simple writing system, would have been likewise inclined to write. This need not imply that the oral tradition was unimportant.66 It seems evident that the latter continued to exist side by side with written forms and in many respects may have enjoyed preference in practice. Genuinely important texts, however, such as contracts, laws, treaties and letters, together with other material to which significant importance was attached, such as wisdom teachings, oracles and divine utterances (see Isa. 8:1, 16; Hab. 2:2; Jer. 29:1–23; 32:9ff.; 36; Prov. 25:1) were clearly committed to writing.

The work of I. Engnell was strongly criticised by S. Mowinckel (1884–1965) in his Prophecy and Tradition. The Prophetic Books in the Light of the Study of the Growth and History of the Tradition, Oslo 1946. Mowinckel rejected the one-sided thesis of Engnell, which purported to have disposed of literary-historical criticism, and unhesitatingly recognised the significance of both the written and the oral tradition.

65 Cf. E. Nielsen, Oral Tradition (SBTh 11), London 1954, p. 60.
One is left with the impression that Nyberg had rooted himself too firmly in the cultural phase that existed among the later Arabic tribes, which he then projected onto Ancient Israel. G. Widengren challenged Nyberg’s theories in his *Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets* (UUÅ 1948/10), Uppsala 1948. E. Nielsen later endeavoured, however, to instil new life into Nyberg’s propositions in his *Oral Tradition*, London 1954. Further discussion of the issue of the oral tradition can be found in J. P. M. van der Ploeg, *Le rôle de la tradition orale dans la transmission du texte de l’Ancien Testament*, *RB* 54 (1947), 5–41 and in A. H. J. Gunnegeweg, *Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition der vorexilischen Prophetenbücher als Problem der neueren Prophetenforschung* (FRLANT 73), Göttingen 1959. Mowinckel continued to maintain that the written and oral traditions had existed side by side and that they had influenced one another.

The documentary hypothesis, which distinguishes a number of redactionally related source documents within the Pentateuch (c.q. the Tetrateuch or the Hexateuch), continues even today to enjoy support among many scholars although it has become the subject of serious criticism since the nineteen seventies. In their contemporary form, the fragmentary and supplementary hypotheses, also referred to respectively as the *Erzählkrans* and *Grundschrift* hypotheses, have been enjoying something of a renaissance.

In his *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147, Berlin-New York 1977) Rolf Rendtorff defended the hypothesis that the Pentateuch (with the exception of Deuteronomy and the laws) consisted of rounded-off complexes of tradition that were only related to one another at a redactional level by P and Deuteronomistic circles: the primeval history (Genesis 1–11), the narratives of the patriarchs (Genesis 12–50), the plague narratives, the departure from Egypt, the journey in the wilderness and the history surrounding Sinai (Exodus-Numbers). In his opinion, there was no place for continuous source documents in such tradition complexes. Indeed, the Yahwist (J), he maintained, had never existed! Rendtorff correctly drew attention to the insufficiently considered relationship between Überlieferungsgeschichte (which takes independent tradition complexes as its point of departure) and the documentary hypothesis (which distinguishes various continuous sources within the process of literary transmission). His alternative to classical literary-historical criticism, however, leaves a number of questions unanswered. How does one explain the existence of a double tradition with respect to certain narratives (doublets) in the context of a successive growth of tradition complexes? What should we make of the use of different divine names in distinct segments of the Pentateuch, especially in Genesis? The reduction or the amalgamation of independent tradition complexes to a redactional, theologically interpretative activity stands in a state of tension with the possibility of a coordination of originally independent traditions in a pre-literary phase.67

Rendtorff’s student Erhard Blum was of the opinion that a Deuteronomistic redactor had re-worked a pre-exilic “history of the time of Moses” in the post-exilic period and bound it together with a pre-exilic account of the patriarchs. This Deuteronomistic work (KD) underwent a priestly reworking (KP), which led more or less to the text we now know.68 Blum thus allows no room for continuous and originally independent sources (J, E, P). The question has since arisen whether one can date his KD as late as he maintained. Rendtorff’s model leaves the relationship between Deuteronomy and

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parallel texts in the Tetrateuch (e.g. between Deuteronomy 1–3 and Numbers 11, 13–14 and between Deuteronomy 9–10 and Exodus 32–34) virtually undiscussed. This ultimately paved the way for the thesis that Genesis-Numbers should be considered a prologue, added to the Deuteronomistic history (Deuteronomy-2 Kings) at a later date.

A second recent approach to the problems surrounding the Pentateuch is offered by John van Seters and Hans Heinrich Schmid who defend the hypothesis that the vast majority of the segments thereof traditionally attributed to J are later than Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history. In his Abraham in History and Tradition (New Haven-London 1975), Van Seters accounts for three Yahwistic layers in the narratives concerning Abraham, each building further upon the other and thereby ruling out the suggestion of a long and complex history of development. In his opinion, the Yahwist wrote during the time of the Babylonian exile, the promises to the patriarchs only making sense in this period. The P segments, according to Van Seters, were added after the exile. J, in his opinion, is in essence the product of literary creativity, whereby little if any place is left for the oral tradition. An E source or layer is ruled out, the relevant segments from the history of Abraham being ascribed either to J or to a pre-Yahwistic stage. While J would appear to sketch the world of the patriarchs, its narratives, according to Van Seters, are in fact determined by historical and cultural circumstances of a late date. He also argues that J was written as a prologue to the Deuteronomistic history and that it never existed as an independent corpus. Van Seters remains an outspoken critic of the school of

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William F. Albright (1891–1971), to which scholars such as J. Bright, F. M. Cross, D. N. Freedman and G. E. Wright belonged. Based on archaeological discoveries, the latter group observed evidence of the cultural and historical situation of the Ancient Near Eastern world of the second millennium BCE in the patriarchal narratives (see also C. H. Gordon\textsuperscript{71} and E. A. Speiser).\textsuperscript{72} In the meantime, however, the minimal role ascribed by Van Seters to the tradition, his emphasis on the literary creativity of the Yahwist, the fact that the description of the cult of the patriarchs (El religion, worship of the God of the fathers) in the time of the exile exhibited little actual significance and the lack of firm evidence for the suggestion that the promises to the patriarchs are only appropriate during this period, raises doubts as to the veracity of such a radical rejection of the prevailing theory on the genesis of the Pentateuch.

Independent of Van Seters, Th. L. Thompson (\textit{The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives} [Berlin-New York 1974]) continues to uphold the traditional dating of J while arguing that the patriarchal narratives should be read against the background of circumstances in the tenth and ninth centuries BCE (cf. Wellhausen).

A third trajectory (as noted above) continues to maintain the classical documentary hypothesis, at least in principle. Indeed, some recent introductions to the Old Testament tend to defend the hypothesis on the whole.\textsuperscript{73} J. Vermeylen,\textsuperscript{74} for example, maintains the existence of a Yahwistic opus, dating from the Solomonic period and extending potentially into the books of Samuel, which underwent an Elohistic redaction around 700 BCE. In the course of four Deuteronomic redactions, he argues, the Deuteronomic law from the time of

and is of the opinion that “the author may have intended it (= his work) as a supplement (i.e. a prologue) to the work of the Deuteronomistic Historian” (p. 242).


\textsuperscript{72} Cf. his commentary \textit{Genesis} (AB), Garden City NY 1964.


Josiah was integrated and Genesis-2 Kings was combined together to form a single work. According to Vermeylen, P represents a priestly redaction from the post-exilic period that took place in two stages (P 1 and P 2).

In his *Die Hexateucherzählung. Eine literaturgeschichtliche Studie* (Lund 1976), S. Tengström emphasises the cohesive character of the books Genesis-Joshua in a fashion entirely unrelated to that of classical source theory. In his opinion, an epic work narrating the history of the patriarchs, the departure from Egypt, the journey in the wilderness and the conquest of the promised land lies at the basis of the said books. This work, he maintains, came into existence in Shechem prior to the period of the kings and was later subject to supplementation.

Since the nineteen-sixties, so-called *Structuralism* has offered an analysis of the biblical texts with the emphasis placed on compositional technique and stylistics.\(^75\) It would be incorrect to maintain that this growing interest in the structure and function of the texts of the Pentateuch in their present form should be ascribed to a fundamental rejection of diachronic research into the Pentateuch. Those who support this approach do not, as a rule, tend to dispute the legitimacy of scholarly research into the origins and evolution of Genesis-Deuteronomy (although many either show limited interest therein or expect such a study to produce little if any concrete results),\(^76\) calling attention rather to the texts in their *Letztgestalt*. The meaning of the texts, they maintain, should be sought primarily in this final form and nowhere else: their structure and style are essential for their interpretation. The first line of inquiry ought to focus on the texts’ *Sitz in der Literatur*, their place in a cycle, book, collection, the Torah, rather than their *Sitz im Leben*. This approach is represented in the Netherlands by the so-called, yet far from homogeneous, “Amsterdam school”, of which Karel Adriaan Deurloo serves

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for the moment as primary spokesperson, and by Joannes Petrus Fokkelman. In addition to the influence of Jewish scholars such as Martin Buber, Cassuto and Jacob and that of the autonomy movement in the literary sciences (New criticism; working interpretation), theological aspects based on the work of Karl Barth, Kornelis Heiko Miskotte and Frans Hendrik Breukelman ("the Old Testament is fundamental for theology") also play an important role. This synchronic approach to the narratives of the Pentateuch can be considered a welcome correction of the markedly atomistic-diachronic analyses of the supporters of the source theory. For its own part, however, the Amsterdam school is barely able to avoid the risk of considering the narratives of the Pentateuch as products comparable with the literary masterpieces of European culture, of underestimating the diversity of the content of the books of Moses and of paying insufficient attention to the role of the oral tradition. An a-historical approach to the material has led, moreover, to a late dating of the individual documents, which is not always convincingly justified. Future exeges would be advised to avoid playing diachronic approaches to the Pentateuch off against synchronic approaches. Both approaches should be allowed, rather, to develop to their fullest potential.

In line with Claus Schedl, an entirely unique approach to the Pentateuch has been developed by Casper Jeremias Labuschagne who argues in favour of a numerical structural analysis of the Old Testament documents. In his opinion, these documents are numerical compositions, determined fundamentally according to their size, division and structure by a limited quantity of numbers. Up to the

81 For a detailed evaluation of the theses of the “Amsterdam school” see Fokkelman’s work and the related publications of C. Houtman, op. cit., 1994, pp. 251–278.
82 E. Talstra’s study Solomon’s Prayer (CBET 3), Kampen 1993, represents a good example of such an approach.
84 A detailed explanation of his methodology can be found in C. J. Labuschagne, “De literairkritische methode”, in: A. S. van der Woude (red.), Inleiding tot de studie
present, Labuschagne’s thesis, which naturally ignores source division, has tended to enjoy only a restricted following among exegetes and has been the subject of pointed criticism from others.85

c. *The origins and evolution of Israel’s great historical masterpiece: a provisional sketch*

Any attempt to offer a different approach to the study of the Pentateuch that does not take into account the achievements of historical critical scholarship over the last two hundred years is both naive and arrogant (Brevard S. Childs)


Given the above outline sketch of the history of research into the origins and evolution of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy), c.q. the Tetratuch (Genesis-Numbers) or the Hexateuch (Genesis-Joshua), it would not be surprising if the reader were to experience some


degree of despondency when confronted with the vast array of frequently divergent standpoints and hypotheses. A convincing and broadly accepted alternative for the classical documentary hypothesis, however, remains unavailable, in spite of the persisting criticism it continues to attract. The reader is thus faced with a choice: either to uphold the classical theory in principle, in the full awareness of its weaknesses, or to reject it altogether without, in essence, being able to offer a better alternative. It is also possible to approach the texts in question from a purely synchronic perspective and to consider the diachronic issues associated therewith to be virtually insolvable and thus better left to one side. There can be no doubt, however, that the best approach is to continue to search for a solution to the literary-historical problems with which we are confronted, accepting at the same time that such a solution will not be easy to find.

To begin with, it remains important that we respect the intensive labours of our predecessors and not fall prey to the arrogant or indeed imprudent outright rejection of the arguments that led to the documentary hypothesis. The use of different divine names (yāhwh and 'Elohîm), for example, especially in the book of Genesis, is too frequently combined with variations in style, discrepancies in the representation of the religious conceptual universe and double narratives (doublets) to permit such high-handedness. Even when limited to the use of a translation, the observant student of the Bible will be unable to ignore the fact that Gen. 1:1–2:4a(P), for example, differs stylistically from Gen. 2:4b–3:26(J) and that both texts employ different divine names and exhibit a different spiritual tone. Abraham is judged differently in Gen. 12:10–20(J), in which the divine name yāhwh is employed, than in the parallel narrative in Gen. 20:1–18(E), in which the divine name 'Elohîm is used. The style, terminology and theological content of Deuteronomy (D) clearly distinguish themselves from that of the four books that precede it (with the exception of a few Deuteronomistically shaded passages). One is ultimately obliged to recognise the fact that the Pentateuch consists of different literary layers, which have been combined in one way or another.

It is for this reason that the majority of introductions to the Old Testament tend to treat the proposed source documents of the Pentateuch c.q. Hexateuch (J, E, D and P) separately. In the remainder of the present volume, and bearing in mind the evident diversity of the assembled parts, we consciously prefer (with the exception of the laws of the Pentateuch) to discuss the books
In spite of their evident diversity, the books Genesis-Joshua would appear to contain a number of elements that have been attuned to one another. The God of the fathers familiar from the Genesis narratives (Gen. 26:23[J]; 28:13[J]; 32:9[J]; 46:3[E]) is also referred to in Exod. 3:6(E), 13(E), 15(E), 16(J) and 4:5(J). Gen. 46:3–4 anticipates the period in Egypt and the departure therefrom (cf. also 50:20). The reference to Shittim in Josh. 2:1 and 3:1 would appear to hark back to Num. 25:1(J) while Josh. 14:6ff. would seem to do the same with respect to Num. 14:24(E). The description of the designation of Joshua as successor to Moses in Num. 27:18–23(P), Deut. 31:23(E) and 34:9(P?) calls for an outline of the task ascribed to him. The promises to the patriarchs in Genesis 12–36 are presupposed in Gen. 50:24(J), Exod. 13:5 (Dtr?), 32:13 (Dtr), 33:1–3a(J) and in Num. 10:29(J), 14:23(J), 30(?). See also the content of Num. 20:14–16(J) and Deut. 34:4(J).

As we have seen, the classical documentary hypothesis endeavours to explain the evident unity in diversity of the text by proposing the existence of a Yahwistic document (J) stemming from Judah, which was later combined by a redactor with fragments of an Elohistic source (E) stemming from the Northern Kingdom. Deuteronomy (D) was added at a later stage and the thus created JED was finally combined with a once independent Priestly codex (P). As far as the theory is concerned, however, the redactors responsible for this process remain more or less in obscurity. Segments of the Pentateuch, such as Genesis 14, 24, 27, 38 and 49, cannot be reconciled with the schema.

An important correction to the older documentary hypothesis, with its rather one-sided literary bias, is provided by the insight that a variegated oral tradition preceded the literary sources, one that should not be dissociated from the later phase of literary codification.

The factor of the oral tradition serves to limit the use of style and vocabulary as a means to distinguish the literary sources from one another, since the style and vocabulary encountered in the text may have been borrowed in significant degree from the said tradition. This is particularly the case with respect to J and E (P is more of an author than a tradition and is typified by a characteristic style
and terminology [McEvenue 1971] to an extent that cannot be determined of J and E; the same can be said of D). As criteria for distinguishing sources, therefore, variations and differences in style and vocabulary can only be used in combination with other supporting factors. The use of the divine names יְהֹוָה and Elohim should not automatically lead to the designation of texts as J or E. While the use of Elohim and El Shaddai (“God the Almighty”) is typical of P prior to the latter’s narration of the revelation of the divine name יְהֹוָה (Exod. 6:3), it would already appear from Gen. 3:1–7 that another author (J) employed the single name Elohim from time to time in one and the same narrative side by side with יְהֹוָה Elohim. Likewise, doublets and repetitions do not always offer evidence of different authors but can often be explained as variants of the tradition or (in the case of repetitions) as the conscious application of a style figure. Theological elements and those associated with a particular world view should be treated with prudence when employed in support of source differentiation, especially since it is clear that authors, in particular J and E, should not be considered as creators of their own theology and world view but rather as the transmitters of prevailing convictions. Evidence of distinctive accents in this regard should, therefore, be demonstrated to be present in the entire work of a particular source if they are to be convincing.86

Those who insist in principle on the veracity of the classical documentary hypothesis are ultimately faced with questions relating to the extent, nature and origin of the presupposed documentary sources. Such questions confront us with serious difficulty at a variety of levels.

While scholars have endeavoured to trace the beginning of the Yahwistic source (J) to Gen. 2:4b, the conclusion thereof remains the subject of intense dispute. If one accepts, together with Noth, an original and independent Deuteronomistic historical opus extending from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings, then one is obliged to accept that J, in the transmitted text, does not at present extend beyond Numbers (14:8a or chapter 32). Others argue, however, that there are also traces of J in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Others still have

encountered evidence of J in 1 Kings 2, 8, 12 and 14:25 and even in 2 Kings. While Judg. 1:1–2:5 is often maintained to be the conclusion of J, the nature and disputed origin of this text segment raises serious doubts in this regard (see further in the discussion of the book of Judges below).

In the present author’s opinion, the problem of the conclusion of J, which one is obliged to revisit with respect to E and P, can only be solved with any degree of satisfaction when one accepts the existence of one major historical work extending from Genesis to 2 Kings that was ultimately created by Deuteronomists on the basis of a variety of sources and concluded during the period of the Babylonian exile. While it is now impossible to trace all of the said sources, the designations J, E, P and D provide a certain number of clues where the Pentateuch is concerned. Given the fact that the Deuteronomists used and selected from these sources, among others, in their work, it seems reasonable to argue that the conclusions thereof, at least with respect to J, E and P, can no longer be established with any degree of accuracy.

In addition, the suggestion that J constitutes the material remaining after the subtraction of the segments ascribed to E, P and D together with a number of chapters (such as Genesis 14 and 49) that cannot be associated with any of the aforementioned source documents in the traditional analysis of the Pentateuch c.q. Hexateuch remains open to objection. The idea that this remainder can be understood as virtually identical to an original source document is doubtful, especially when one considers that J, across the board, does not tend to exhibit an unambiguous profile. It is true that certain scholars have frequently insisted that passages such as Gen. 22:17–18; 32:10–13; 50:20,24 and in particular Gen. 12:1–3 can be considered typical of the theology of J. In line with the explicit promises and predictions found in these and other texts, Von Rad, for example, envisaged the work of J to be a legitimation of the Davidic monarchy. Others, moreover, have maintained the opinion that traces can be detected in J of a protest against the overconfidence of the court of Solomon. It is striking, however, that themes encountered in the abovementioned Genesis texts are virtually lacking in the segments of the books of Exodus-Numbers ascribed to J. The fact that the segments of the primeval history (Genesis 1–11) traditionally ascribed to J do not explicitly anticipate the narratives of the patriarchs, together with the evidently unique character of the history of
Joseph (Genesis 37–50), further underline the probability that the material abstracted from E, D and P should not be ascribed to a single author.

In line with Herman Gunkel and others, therefore, who claim that J constitutes the work of a “school of narrators” (Erzählerschule), it seems justifiable to argue that J has its roots in a heterogeneous literary *compendium of Ancient Israelite traditions*, dating from a variety of periods and based on a series of both oral and literary traditions. So understood, the idea that J may have originally been limited to the material dealing with primeval history up to and including that concerning Israel’s entry into the promised land remains uncertain. It seems more likely that this long series of narratives extended beyond the boundaries of the Pentateuch to include the family history of David in 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2.

This means that an individual writer J never existed. In spite of the definition of the so-called Yahwist tradition outlined above, we have and will continue to employ the siglum J as a concession to current scholarly usage.

There are reasonable arguments available in support of a dating of significant segments of the material characterised as J in the period of King Solomon or shortly thereafter (particularly with respect to the patriarchal narratives and the exodus and wilderness traditions). It remains true, however, that certain scholars presently date J for the most part in the period of the Babylonian exile (see above under b.). Such a late date is, nevertheless, unlikely since it tends to consider J once again as an individual author and thus denies that J stands for a “school” that passed on ancient traditions already formulated, in principle at least, in the period of the judges. Gen. 12:1–3 would appear to have the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom in mind, whereby Israel acquired a “great name” for itself (cf. 2 Sam. 7:9). The nations that have a role to play in J (Philistines, Moabites, Amonites, Arameans, Edomites, Amalekites and Canaanites) are the same as those with which David and Solomon were involved (cf. 2 Samuel 8). The favourable judgement apportioned to Esau (Edom) in Genesis 33 (J) is difficult to harmonise with the sharp contrast between Judah and Edom found in the late pre-exilic and exilic periods. Those responsible for transmitting the material subsumed under the siglum J, therefore, were evidently active in the period of the kings, although their work may have been subject to expansion in the centuries that followed.
Gen. 27:40b as a reference to the Edomite uprising against Solomon narrated in 1 Kgs 11:14–22 and the predictions found in Num. 24:7–9,17–19 with their probable reference to Saul and David likewise serve to support a relatively early dating of J. Cf. also Gen. 36:31 together with the cursing of Canaan and his subjection to Shem (Israel) and Japheth (the Philistines; see Gen. 9: 25–27).

A number of problems have likewise been raised with respect to E. Indeed, scholars have called into question whether an independent Elohist history ever existed. Volz and Rudolph (see paragraph b), for example, rejected the idea of E as a continuous literary source and argued that the so-called Elohist elements in the Pentateuch were additions to J (cf. also Vriezen87 and Westermann). Clear distinction between J and E, especially in the books Exodus-Numbers, remains difficult if not impossible to establish and scholars are far from agreed on locating the conclusion to E (in Exodus 34?; in Deuteronomy 31–34?; in Joshua 24?). If one is still inclined to consider E as an originally independent source document then one will be obliged to admit that only fragments thereof have been preserved. The combination of E with material from J can be ascribed to the Deuteronomists.

Scholars have argued that the particularistic-nationalistic and pietistic character of E, together with its antithetical attitude to syncretism and idolatry (cf. Gen. 35:1–4; Exodus 32; Josh. 24:23) and its faith in prophetic intercessors, should be considered as indications of the origin of the tradition offered therein in the period of King Ahab and the prophets Elijah and Elisha (see, for example, Vriezen in previous editions of the present volume, p. 164).

A significant number of scholars maintain that substantial reasons exist in support of E as an independent source document. The doublets with J in relation to the description of the Gefährdung der Ahnfrau in Gen. 12:10–20(J) and Genesis 20(E) (cf. also Gen. 26:7–11[J]), for example, together with the account of Hagar’s flight in Genesis 16(J) and Gen. 21:8–21(E) serve, in their opinion, to establish their hypothesis. In contrast to J, which locates Abraham by the terebinths of Mamre (near Hebron), E locates the patriarch in the land of the Philistines, c.q. in Beersheba (Gen. 20:1; 21:22–34; 22:19), in the city that, according to Amos 5:5 and 8:14, enjoyed a special relationship with the Northern Kingdom. The revelation of the divine

87 In earlier editions of this work; cf. the ninth edition of De literatuur van Oud-Israël, Katwijk aan Zee 1989, p. 159.
name *yahweh* in Exod. 3:14(E) serves as a clear indication of a tradition that can be distinguished from J (cf. Gen. 4:26 and Exod. 4:19) and is in harmony with the fact that E consistently employs the divine name *Elohim* up to that point. The “fear of God” theme (Gen. 20:11; 22:12; 42:18; Exod. 1:17; 18:21) together with the representation of Abraham as a prophet (Gen. 20:7) would appear, likewise, to be characteristic of E. E, furthermore, speaks (as in D) of Horeb (Exod. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6) instead of Sinai and refers to the father-in-law of Moses as Jethro (Exod. 3:1; 18:1 etc.) instead of Reuel (J: Exod. 2:18; Num. 10:29). Several allusions to past events add to the impression that we are dealing with a continuous source document (cf. Gen. 31:13 and 28:18).

The suggestion that E constitutes an augmented edition of J would appear not to provide sufficient account for the striking differences in vocabulary, style and spiritual attitude evident between J and E. Scholars are likewise unable to explain why E, in such an instance, did not immediately adopt the divine name *yahweh* employed, as a rule, by J.

E is not represented in the primeval history of Genesis 1–11. At the present time, biblical scholarship tends to ascribe primarily the following text segments to E: Genesis 20; 21:(6), 8–34; 22:1–14, 19; 23:11–22*; segments from Gen. 29:31–30:24; 31:2, 4–16 and a number of texts following chapter 31: 32:2–3, 14b–22; 33:5, 10–11; 35:1–5, 7–8; significant portions of the Joseph story/novel (see below in our treatment of Genesis); Exod. 1:15–21; 3:1bβ, 4b, 6, 11–15; 4:10–17, 27–28, 30a; 13:17–19 and a number of passages in Exodus 14; Exodus 18*; Exod. 19:3a, 16b, 17, 19; 20:18–21; 24:9–11; segments of the story of Bileam in Numbers 22–24; Deut. 31:14–15, 23. Several scholars maintain that evidence of E is also to be found in Joshua, especially in Joshua 24*, and others as far as in 1–2 Kings.

In light of the fact that E and J are frequently indistinguishable, Wellhausen was inclined to prefer the designation Jehovistic history (JE).

While D can be traced with relative ease, it remains impossible to determine the extent of a proto-Deuteronomy. Some have questioned the identification of the latter, or a revised form thereof, with the law book of Josiah (Houtman) and others have rejected the idea outright (Hölscher, Kaiser). Such an identification, however, remains probable (Labuschagne, Otto). It is striking that Deuteronomy

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makes no mention of the sacrificial high places that the Deuteronomistic authors of the books of Kings so vehemently resisted. D makes no reference to a distinction between priests and Levites at a single sanctuary, commands that the remembrance of Amelek, who had had no significant role to play since the Davidic period, be wiped out (Deut. 25:17ff.; cf. also 1 Chron. 4:43), provides an affirmative evaluation of Edom (Deut. 23:7) in contrast to 2 Kgs 8:20; 14:7 and 16:6 and the later prophecies against the foreign nations, contains war laws that do not mention the king, prescribes directives against idolatry that were virtually inoperable after David and Solomon, allows for the consumption of tithes by those who offer sacrifice and their families (Deut. 14: 22ff.; in contrast to P which set them aside for the priests and Levites) and calls special attention to the Levites who lived in the cities. D exhibits evidence of a programme of cultic centralisation prior to the time that God was to grant Israel rest from its enemies (Deut. 12:9v.) and does not declare itself in favour of a single established place in which יוהו was to make his name abide. One is left with the impression, therefore, that D has its roots in very ancient traditions and that its first recension saw the light in Northern Israel, based in all probability on the preaching of the Levitical priests from the sanctuary at Shechem (see further in our treatment of Deuteronomy).

While the majority of scholars are inclined to locate the beginning of P in Genesis 1, there is much debate as to whether it constitutes an independent source or a redactional layer. If one is inclined to accept the first option then one is likely to be confronted with a variety of opinions on conclusion of the—in principle—narrative material contained in the Grundschrift of P (in Exod. 40:33b; in Lev. 9:24; in Deut. 34:7–9; in Josh. 19:51?). The fact that P would appear to offer nothing by way of information that might point to a date during the Babylonian exile or thereafter (cf. Haran), suggests a pre-exilic dating, at least with respect to the Grundschrift of P, possibly the seventh century BCE.

One might consider the possibility that P, from the outset, is a reworked and supplemented adaptation of the material of JE cast in

93 For the various options see Thomas Pola, Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift. Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg (WMANT 70), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995.
its own documentary form. Such a suggestion, however, is open to objection. Why, for example, did P not modify the narrative of the golden calf (Exodus 32), which places its much-honoured High Priest Aaron in a highly compromising position? If one brings together the segments of P found in Genesis one is left with a more or less continuous narrative, thus making it difficult to identify P as a mere redactor. Where P’s narrative Grundschrift is concerned, we would appear to be dealing with an originally separate source document that was later combined with material from JE. P’s supplementary legal material (P\(^s\)), on the other hand, can indeed be considered as a redactional layer. The latter evidently consists of a compilation of (not always homogeneous) prescriptions stemming from a variety of different periods and forming the primary contours of the law code of the priesthood of the temple in Jerusalem from the time prior to the Babylonian exile.

In spite of the many contrary hypotheses that place it in the exilic or post-exilic period, the suggestion that P stems in principle from the period prior to the Babylonian exile has earned the present author’s support, especially in light of the fact that themes such as the territorial boundaries of the twelve tribes and the subdivision of the promised land (Numbers 26: 34), the Levite cities (Numbers 35) etc. would have been of little relevance in the exilic, let alone in the post-exilic period. On the other hand, the complete lack of reference in P to subjects such as the function of the Levites as singers, musicians and doorkeepers, so evident in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, presents a problem.


As is the case with the prophetic literature, it is evident that JE, P and D have been subject to a steady process of supplementation
(Fortschreibung), thus confirming Johannes Pedersen’s conviction that source documents are both young and old at the same time. It has long been accepted, for example, that P contains both young and old elements side by side and that Deuteronomy is not aus einem Guß. The same is true for the material traditionally ascribed to J/E, although literary growth in this instance is, as a rule, more difficult to ascertain. The dating of the constituent parts of the “source documents” thus becomes a perilous task, lacking serviceable criteria. This fact alone is sufficient to urge caution and healthy circumspection when dealing with scholarly hypotheses that claim to determine the relative age of the traditions we have at our disposal.

Whether Deuteronomy was taken up into JEP before or after the supplements of P remains open to discussion. One might be inclined to wonder whether the extensive interpolation of priestly material ascribed to Moses (especially that of P) may not have formed the basis for the later canonical division between the Torah and the Former Prophets. Vriezen\textsuperscript{95} proposed the thesis that prescriptions stemming from P introduced such a profound accent on the cult and the classical period of the revelation to Moses that the first part of Israel’s great historical masterpiece should, as a matter of course, be separated from the books of Joshua-2 Kings. Such a proposal remains extremely interesting and does not stand in the way of the idea that the Deuteronomists, from a literary perspective, created a continuous historical work running from Genesis to 2 Kings and based on existing documents. It remains possible to modify Vriezen’s thesis, however, in the sense that the temple and the cult in the post-exilic period came to function within the boundaries of a geographically small and dependent (on a world power) Judea as symbols of national identity, thus occasioning a specific emphasis on Mosaic legislation.

Our response to questions concerning the chronological relationship between P and D depends to a large extent on one’s understanding of the period of origin of (proto-) Deuteronomy. The widespread recognition of the relationship between the latter source document and E and with the prophecies of Hosea has not infrequently led to arguments favouring the origins of D in Northern Israel. While contemporary scholars agree as a rule on the Northern Israelite origins of elements of the material found in Deuteronomy, they generally tend to associate the first edition of the document with Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah or his successor Manasseh. It remains striking, however, that while recognition is given to the existence of available written sources in the case of Hosea, sources that were reworked in Judah not long after the fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE), the same recognition is not given as a rule with respect to (proto-) Deuteronomy. The

\textsuperscript{95} De literatuur van Oud-Israël, Katwijk aan Zee 1989\textsuperscript{9}, p. 198.
present author is thus inclined to consider this proposal inconsistent and uncompelling and to support the idea of an originally Northern Israelite document also in the case of (proto-)Deuteronomy. References to the exile, such as those found in Deut. 30:1ff., do not necessarily have to allude to the period after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, but may just as easily have been written in response to the deportation of Northern Israelites to Mesopotamia. In its present form, therefore, Deuteronomy evidently constitutes the final redaction of a Northern Israelite document stemming from the end of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century, which was rediscovered under the reign of Josiah and formed the basis of his reformation (cf. 2 Kings 22–23). The present author is convinced that this thesis alone is capable of avoiding the characterisation of the discovery of the “law book of Moses” (ultimately to be identified with Deuteronomy) as ‘staged’. The latter would only appear to be the case if one were to accept the suggestion that the document was put together by oppositional circles during the reign of King Manasseh a short time prior to its discovery.

In the present author’s opinion, the chronological order upheld by Wellhausen and his followers (J, E, D and P) was too excessively determined by a currently no longer acceptable hypothesis concerning the development of the religion of Ancient Israel, a one sided glorification of prophetic preaching and a scant appreciation of the cult. We are more inclined to argue that the sources JE, D and P came into existence to a significant degree side by side rather than the one after the other. Based in part on the fact that the source documents were later reworked and supplemented with additions and interpolations, one would be better advised to avoid efforts to force them into a straightjacket of chronological sequence (as many still do) and pay greater attention to the milieu and circumstances in which they first saw the light of day. The variety we encounter in the transmission of the Pentateuch reflects the variety of traditions that ultimately characterised Ancient Israel’s historical and religious existence.

The suggestion that Genesis-Numbers was later added as a prologue to the Deuteronomistic history (thus J. van Seters and A. D. H. Mayes, cf. also R. N. Whybray, op. cit., 1987, p. 242), seems difficult to defend. The thesis does not only presuppose an originally independent Deuteronomistic history (extending from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings), it also implies a single (relatively late, exilic) author for the books of Genesis-Numbers (a prologue is more likely to have been the work of one author than of several authors!).

As we explained in detail in paragraph a., we are more inclined to reject the hypothesis that an independent Deuteronomistic history once existed. If our conviction in this regard is correct then the suggestion that Genesis-Numbers constitutes a prologue to the Deuteronomistic history can no longer be maintained. One might also be inclined to wonder why a later addition consisting of Genesis-Numbers and taking the form of an introduction to a presumed historical work does not exhibit a more profound Deuteronomistic hallmark than is in fact the case.

Should one accept the idea that the book of Joshua and those following it exhibit a more evident Deuteronomistic hallmark than those preceding it, one still lacks sufficient evidence to argue that a Deuteronomistic history ought to be distinguished from the Tetrateuch (Genesis-Numbers). After the proclamation of Deuteronomy as Mosaic law, the Deuteronomists had reason enough to hold up the commandments contained therein against the history of Israel and to endeavour to explain why the people and its leaders had failed to achieve God’s will.

While the book of Joshua is framed by Deuteronomistic material, the latter is only evident in the introduction to the book of Judges. The fact that the book of Judges came into existence independently of Joshua is supported by the secondary material found in Judg. 2:6–9, which corresponds to a significant degree with the conclusion of Joshua.

The books of Samuel have undergone their own literary history and only exhibit sporadic evidence of Deuteronomistic reworking.

The books of Kings, by contrast, constitute a Deuteronomistic composition with entirely unique characteristics.

For a variety of reasons, therefore, we are led to conclude that Israel’s great historical opus came into existence with the amalgamation of material concerning Israel’s earliest history transmitted by JE, D and P with traditions concerning the Landnahme, reports related to the period of the judges, documents from the Davidic-Solomonic period and a representation of the period of the kings after the division of the Northern and Southern kingdoms based on diverse pieces of information. It is probable, therefore, that the final redaction of the Pentateuch, together with that of the books that follow, was Deuteronomistic in nature rather than priestly.

There can be little doubt that the analysis offered above must remain hypothetical. The genesis and evolution of the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua-2 Kings can no longer be established with
any degree of certainty. It is clear, however, that while neither the Pentateuch nor the books that follow it can be considered to be *aus einem Guß*, they are nevertheless presented as a single whole and are intended to be read as such. This twofold fact may serve to legitimate a synchronic approach to the material we have at our disposal, but it does not dispense us from the duty to ask diachronic questions concerning the character and the period of origin of the compound parts of this unique work. Such are not only the demands of a critical, scientific approach to the material transmitted to us down through the centuries, they are also the only avenue of access we have to the primary features of Ancient Israel’s religious history as well as its variegated theology.

d. *The Book of Genesis*

Die Genesis ist eine Sammlung von Sagen (Hermann Gunkel)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles (see also below among the literature mentioned in 2 and 3):


1. Content

The book of Genesis owes its name to the Greek translation of Gen. 2:4a: “This is the book of the origins (genesis) of heaven and earth”. It contains three distinct sections:

a) the primeval history (1–11);
b) narratives concerning the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (12–36);
c) the Joseph narrative (37–50).

The primeval history contains a narrative dealing with the creation of the world (Gen. 1:1–2:4a) followed by a description of the earliest history of human beings: the paradise narrative (Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and their ultimate expulsion therefrom: Genesis 2–3), the murder of Cain by his brother Abel (Genesis 4), a genealogy of the ancient fathers from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5) and the narrative of the flood (Gen. 6:1–9:17) followed by the story of Noah’s
drunkenness and the genealogy of his three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen. 9:18–10:32). The primeval history concludes with the narrative of the Tower of Babel, the confusion of language and the dispersion of the people over all the earth together with a genealogy running from Shem to Terah, the father of Abra(ha)m (Genesis 11). Striking agreements are frequently evident between these and other Ancient Near Eastern texts.

The patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12–36 make an unmistakable distinction between the presentation of Abraham and that of Jacob. Traditions concerning Isaac are strongly related to those concerning Abraham, both being localised in the southern part of the promised land. Traditions concerning Jacob are located primarily in the territory around the Middle Euphrates, Transjordania and Middle Palestine (Bethel, Shechem).

The cycle dealing with Abraham, “the father of the faithful”, begins with his divine call and his journey to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1–7). Once in Canaan he is driven by famine to Egypt where he pretends that his wife is his sister and she is taken by Pharaoh into his harem. Stricken by plague, Pharaoh calls Abra(ha)m to book and expels him together with his wife, his nephew Lot and all his possessions out of Egypt (Gen. 12:10–20). Upon their return to Canaan Abra(ha)m and Lot go their separate ways (Genesis 13), the latter settling near Sodom.

Genesis 14 offers an independent tradition that narrates how Abra(ha)m saved Lot from the clutches of a number of Ancient Near Eastern kings who had captured Sodom and taken his nephew as a prisoner of war. The encounter between Abra(ha)m and Melchizedek, the king of Salem, to whom Abra(ha)m gave a tenth of all his possessions, has been added to this tradition.

Chapter 15 narrates Abra(ha)m’s complaint concerning his childlessness and God’s promise of an heir, the ratification of Yahweh’s covenant with Abra(ha)m and the promise of land (15:18; cf. 12:7). Perhaps the most familiar verse from this chapter is v. 6, which states “and Abram believed Yahweh and He reckoned it to him as righteousness”. Paul refers to these words on a number of occasions in his letters (Rom. 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6).

Genesis 16 relates how infertile Sarai gave her slave Hagar to Abra(ha)m in order to provide him with an heir. Once pregnant, however, Hagar comes to despise her mistress and having been humil-
iated by her takes refuge in the wilderness where an angel of Yahweh appears to her and instructs her to return to Sarai, predicting that she is to give birth to a son. Hagar does indeed bear a son to Abra(ha)m, the child being given the name Ishmael.

Chapter 17 constitutes an elaborate story of priestly origin in which reference is made to the promise of an heir and to the covenant between Yahweh and Abram. Circumcision (the removal of the foreskin from the male member) is instigated as a sign of the covenant. Abram’s name is changed to Abraham, because he is to be “the ancestor of a multitude of nations” (17:5), and that of Sarai to Sarah.

Chapters 18–19 narrate the promise of a son given to Abraham by three “men” who come to visit him, and the destruction of Sodom (and Gomorrah), whereby Abraham intercedes for the condemned city (18:22–33). Lot is saved but his wife is transformed into a pillar of salt because she disobeyed God’s command and looked back at the burning city (19:26). Lot sires two children by both his daughters, their son’s becoming the ancestor of the Moabites and the ancestor of the Ammonites (19:30–38) respectively.

Chapter 20 contains a second instance of the narrative of “die Gefährdung der Ahnfrau” (cf. 12:10–20). In this case, Abraham, who once again refers to his wife Sarah as his sister, is engaged in a conflict with King Abimelech of Gerar. The latter is informed by God in a dream, however, that Sarah is married. Abraham is presented in this chapter as a prophet and intercessor (20:7).

Chapter 21 relates the birth of the son (named Isaac) promised to Abraham in chapter 18 and the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael at the explicit request of Sarah (cf. Genesis 16). Abraham establishes a covenant with King Abimelech and plants a tamarisk tree at Beersheba where he calls upon the name of Yahweh El Olam (“the Lord, the Everlasting God”).

Perhaps the most dramatic narrative involving Abraham is that found in chapter 22, which relates how the patriarch was put to the test by being instructed by God to sacrifice his only son. Obedient to the last, Abraham departs with his son Isaac to the land of Moriah. Underway, Isaac asks his father where the sacrificial animal is to be found and Abraham answers: “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son” (22:8). Just as Abraham is at the point of slaughtering his son, an angel of Yahweh instructs him not to hold out his hand against the boy, informing him that he has shown
himself to be God fearing and willing to sacrifice even that which was most dear to him. A ram caught nearby with its horns in the thicket is sacrificed instead of Isaac.

Chapter 23 narrates the death of Sarah and her burial in the cave of the field of Machpelah, purchased by Abraham from the Hittites.97

Chapter 24 offers a detailed report of Isaac’s acquisition of a bride and his marriage to Rebekah, the grand-daughter of Abraham’s brother Nahor and the sister of Laban.

After Abraham’s death (25:1–11) Rebekah gives birth to the twin brothers Esau and Jacob. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for a plate of lentil stew (25:29–34). Having deceitfully deprived his brother of the paternal blessing, Jacob is forced to flee to Rebekah’s brother Laban in Haran (chapter 27).

While few traditions survive concerning Isaac himself, the text tends to locate him nevertheless in the southern part of the land. Genesis 26 relates the tensions that existed between him and Abimelech of Gerar (cf. Genesis 20) and their later peaceful relations.

Besides the traditions relating to Abraham, the patriarchal narratives contain a substantial number of lengthy references to Jacob who was later to be called Israel. As tribal ancestor, he was particularly familiar among the tribes of Middle Israel. His home is located in Bethel, in the Transjordanian Peniel (Gen. 32:22–32) and in Mahanaim (32:1–2). Where Abraham is represented as the “father of the faithful”, Jacob is portrayed as a characteristically oriental figure for whom cunning and guile had become something of a virtue. His name is associated with the Hebrew verb “to deceive” (Gen. 27:36; Hos. 12:4; see also Jer. 9:4, Hebr. 9:3). In any case, the crafty outsmarting of others such as Isaac, Esau and Laban clearly had an important role to play in his life. The narratives concerning Jacob are much more closely related to ancient folk tales than the religious epic into which the history of Abraham had ultimately evolved. Nevertheless, from birth onwards Jacob is represented as the one blessed by God who is finally able to evade Laban’s opposition and Esau’s revenge. The promises once made to Abraham are passed on to him (Gen. 28:13–15).

Having fled to Haran, Jacob was received with open arms by Laban, the father of Rachel and Lea, who bound him in his ser-

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vice for seven years with the promise that he would give him his
daughter Rachel, whom Jacob loved, as his wife. Laban deceived
Jacob, however, by giving him his older daughter Lea instead of
Rachel, forcing him into a further seven years of service in order to
acquire Rachel as his wife (Gen. 29:15–30). Leah gave birth to four
sons to Jacob but Rachel remained initially childless, only acquiring
sons after she had given her slave Bilhah to Jacob as his wife. Leah
followed suit by giving her slave Zilpah to Jacob with whom he sired
two sons. Leah herself gave birth to a further two sons. Rachel only
gave birth to her own sons (Joseph and Benjamin) at a later date. She
died as the result of a difficult labour prior to the birth of
Benjamin (Genesis 30; 35:16–20).

Narratives detailing the tense relationship between Jacob and Laban
following Gen. 30:25 reach their climax in Jacob’s flight, the latter
this time outsmarting his host Laban (chapter 31). Jacob would still
appear to be under God’s protection at this juncture (31:13, 24, 29,
42). The story is rounded off with the narrative of Rachel’s theft of
the teraphim (idols/household gods) from her father’s tent and the
covenant between Laban and Jacob (31:22–55).

A new episode is introduced in the life of Jacob in Genesis 32–33,
with the much-feared encounter with his brother Esau that ultimately
ends in reconciliation between the two (Genesis 32–33). Prior to this
encounter, Jacob is involved in a wrestling match with an unnamed
figure by the ford of the Jabbok. Jacob’s name is changed at this
point to Israel “for you have striven with God and with humans
and have prevailed” (32:28). Having met his brother Esau, Jacob
sets off for Shechem (where he erects an altar with the name “El,
the God of Israel”, 33:20). A conflict arises at this juncture between
the Shechemites and the sons of Jacob after the rape of Dinah,
Jacob’s daughter, by Shechem, the son of the local prince (chapter
34, which stands entirely on its own). After he had buried the for-

eign idols he had in his possession under the terebinth at Shechem, Jacob
departed for Bethel where he received a new revelation from
God (Gen. 35:6–15, cf. Genesis 28). His journey comes to an end
in Hebron, where he encounters his father Isaac once again. Gen.
35:23–26 and Genesis 36 record the generations of Jacob and Esau
respectively.

98 Cf. O. Keel, “Das Vergraben der ‘fremden Götter’ in Genesis XXXV 4b”,
VT 23 (1973), 305–336.
The transmitted text passes over from the narratives concerning Jacob to the history of Joseph without a noticeable transition (37:2a), continuing with interruptions relating the story of Jacob and Tamar in chapter 38, the generations of Jacob in Gen. 46:8–27 and the blessing of Jacob in Gen. 49:1–28 through to the end of the book of Genesis. The text relates how Joseph was sold by his brothers to passing merchants (Gen. 37:12–36) and how he became viceroy to the Egyptian pharaoh (41:37–57) after many trials and tribulations (Gen. 39:1–41:36). In his capacity as viceroy he encounters his brothers once again, who have come to Egypt in response to a famine in the land. Jacob provides his brothers with grain (Genesis 42) and finally reveals his identity to them (Genesis 45) after their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43–44). Joseph later invites his father and brothers to join him in Egypt (Gen. 46:1–47:12).

In its present form, the so-called Joseph novel serves an important functional significance, bridging the gap between the narratives of the patriarchs and those concerning Moses and the exodus from Egypt.

Based on his form- and tradition-critical approach, Gunkel (commentary 1910) has made a decisive contribution to research into the book of Genesis (cf. Knight 1975). The work of Von Rad (commentary 1952) and the impressive commentary of Westermann (1974–1982) likewise deserve particular mention. Recent decennia have given rise to a renewed interest in the problem of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives (see further under 3), while literary aspects of the book of Genesis have also been the subject of much study (Fokkelman 1975; Fishbane 1979; Alter 1981; Sternberg 1985). Anthropological and folkloristic studies have similarly provided an important addition to Genesis research (Culley 1985, pp. 180–189; Niditch 1987; Oden 1987).

2. The primeval history (Genesis 1–11)

Bound together for the most part by way of genealogies, the various independent narratives dealing with the primeval history would appear at first sight to constitute a literary unity to which the history of the patriarchs is continguously adjoined (Genesis 12–50). Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that Genesis 1–11 also contains a number of doublets. Having spoken of the creation of the

world and of humankind in Gen. 1:1–2:4a, the same narrative is repeated, albeit in a completely different way (cf. 2:7, 18–25), in the so-called paradise narrative in 2:4b–3:24. In addition, we find two genealogies that appear to be, at least in part, related (Genesis 4: Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael, Lamech; Genesis 5: Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mehalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech). Two flood stories can likewise be distinguished from one another (see below). In Gen. 10:11 Assyria is presented as a country while verse 22 of the same chapter employs it (Asshur) as a personal name for the son of Shem. Prior to the confusion of language and the dispersal of humanity related in the Tower of Babel narrative in Gen. 11:1–9, Genesis 10 already presupposes a multitude of nations and languages (10:5, 20, 31). The aforementioned references would appear to offer evidence of two literary layers that have somehow become entwined. This observation is confirmed by the fact that in one of these layers a clear relationship can be detected between Gen. 1:26–28 and Gen. 5:1–2 and between Gen. 1:28–30 and Gen. 9:1–7. In addition, the same terminology and the designation of God with the term 'Elohim is evident in each related segment. In the second layer God is referred to consistently as יְהֹוָה (in Genesis 2–3 יְהֹוָה God) and one encounters narratives that frequently exhibit a different style, character and even content to those found in the first layer. The first layer consists of Gen. 1:1–2:4a; 5 (with the exception of v. 29); several passages from the flood narrative (see below); 10:1–7, 20, 22–23, 31–32; 11:10–32. The second layer consists of Gen. 2:4b–4:26; 5:29; the remaining passages from the flood narrative; 10:8–19, 21, 24–30; 11:1–9.

The above analysis, however, does not provide a complete solution to the literary problems encountered in Genesis 1–11. The reference to Jabal as the ancestor of the tent dwellers, to Jubal as the ancestor of the musicians and to Tubal-Cain as the ancestor of the smiths in Gen. 4:20–22, for example, is hard to harmonise with the flood narrative that follows. The original story of Noah’s drunkenness (Gen. 9:21–27) evidently presupposes that Canaan was the youngest of Noah’s sons (“Ham, the father of Canaan” in Gen. 9:18b,22 would appear to be a harmonising interpolation). A number of tensions are also to be observed within the paradise narrative of Genesis 2–3 (it is stated twice that human persons were placed in the garden by יְהֹוָה [2:8b, 15] and twice that Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden [3:23, 24]; reference is made to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden [2:17; 3:3, 11], then there appear to be two trees: the tree of knowledge and the tree of life [2:9;
Several scholars have endeavoured to solve these irregularities by advocating a more refined distribution of sources. We already noted that R. Smend sr. made a distinction between J1 and J2, referred to by Eissfeldt as L(aienquelle) and J, whereby L was considered to constitute the oldest source, the author of which being somewhat reserved concerning the developed land on account of his nomadic ideals. Fohrer, on the other hand, spoke of J and N, whereby N served as an abbreviation for “Nomadenquelle”. He was inclined, however, to date N after J, since the former seemed to be a conservative/nomadic reaction to J’s apparent optimism with respect to the developed land. The question remains, however, as to whether such literary-critical analyses, with their sub-division of J into two distinct source documents, are ultimately necessary. One can explain the irregularities and disharmony within J from a more convincing tradition-historical perspective rooted in the pre-history of the material we now have at our disposal. The Old Testament writers were, in principle, conveyers of tradition who employed material that had already been compiled into cycles by the oral and written traditions, which they then reworked into new and larger segments.

Critical biblical scholarship tends to ascribe the first layer apparent within the narratives of the primeval history to a priestly author designated P (as abbreviation for the Priestly Codex or Priesterhandschrift), the latter consisting (as we already noted) of a number of genealogies, the creation narrative of Gen. 1:1–2:4a and a version of the flood narrative. The genealogies, which bear the superscription “these are the toledót (“birth registers”, “genealogies”) of . . .”, were probably based on texts preserved in the temple archives in Jerusalem. An excerpt from just such a list can be found in 1 Chronicles 1. Such registers were either exclusively genealogical by nature, making reference to the birth of sons (see 10:1ff.) or more comprehensive lists containing details of age and reference to the birth of a single male heir in the succession of the generations (see Genesis 5 and 11:10ff.).

Style and use of terminology make it clear that the creation narrative and the version of the flood narrative provided by P stem from the same literary and spiritual milieu. As with the genealogies, one can likewise envisage the existence of originally independent texts in this regard. The rounded-off character of the creation narrative in Gen. 1:1–2:3, together with the presence of the postscript in 2:4a, leave one with the impression of an independent literary unit comparable with Psalm 104 and the Babylonian creation epic Enuma Elish. The suggestion that a priestly flood narrative once existed as a separate text cannot be excluded altogether. What we encounter
in Genesis 6–9, however, is the intertwining of two literary layers. The fact that the main lines of the original content of both can distinguished has ultimately served to single out these chapters as the showpiece *par excellence* of the source hypothesis. P offers continuous and precise dating while the other literary layer limits itself in this regard to details. P speaks of a single pair of animals entering Noah’s ark while the other layer speaks of seven pairs of pure and one pair of impure animals. P designates 150 days for the waters of the flood to rise and abate while the other literary layer states that torrential rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

The priestly character of the segments of the primeval history ascribed to the first literary layer is clearly discernable. The *creation narrative* of Genesis 1 creates the impression of a liturgical text that may have been recited at the New Year feast. It is probable that the said narrative has its roots in an earlier poetical work. While the dominant motif in this narrative is clearly that of creation by divine word, other more ancient motifs can also be detected therein: Gen. 1:2 presupposes the existence of the primal waters and the description of the first act of creation still contains echoes of the struggle against chaos in the reference to the division between light and darkness and the waters above the firmament and those below it; the use of the verb *to make* side by side with *to create* may suggest evidence of an older representation of creation, although “to make” can also mean “to call into life” (cf. Job 33:4); the distribution of the eight deeds of creation over six days reveals that the narrative traditions we now have at our disposal were reworked on the basis of theological considerations. In spite of such reminiscences of ancient motifs, however, the narrative is alive with the spirit of Israelite monotheism. Every reference to an ethnogeny (divine birth) is lacking. God is primary with respect to his creation, while chaos plays only a minor role as His antagonist. The heavenly bodies are presented as lifeless “lights” and not as divine powers. The cosmos is demythologised! The work of creation reaches its climax in the Sabbath.

99 In this layer (J), the distinction between pure and impure animals is not determined by later Mosaic legislation (cf. Leviticus 11), but by “primitive” ideas concerning their appropriateness as food. J reveals here that he has a generally accepted understanding of pure and impure in mind; cf. further C. Westermann, *Genesis I* (BK), p. 575.
While the priestly version of the flood narrative (6:9–22; 7:6, 10b, 11, 13–16b, 17, 19–22, 24; 8:1–5, 13a, 14–19; 9:1–17, 28–29) presents the catastrophe in light of God’s judgement (6:13), it also alludes to a new beginning by mentioning the covenant established by God with Noah and his three sons (with renewed humanity and, indeed, with all of creation; cf. 9:8–17). Analogous with the Sabbath in Gen. 2:2–3, this new beginning goes hand in hand with a new institution, namely the prohibition against the use of animal blood (and in association therewith the prohibition against killing): humankind is to consider all blood as sacred since it is considered to be dedicated to God (9:3–6). Ritual priestly texts repeatedly draw attention to this prohibition.

It remains possible that, within the framework of the P version of the flood narrative, the prohibition against the consumption of blood and the prohibition against killing correspond with the sin so explicitly observed by P prior to the flood, namely that of violence (6:11–13).

The second layer, offering narratives concerning the primeval history, consistently employs the divine name YHWH (YHWH ‘Elohim is the dominant designation in 2:4b–3:24). Scholars are thus inclined to speak in this regard of the Yahwistic source (with its customary siglum J). The author thereof provides a narrative of the creation of humankind in paradise and humankind’s dismissal from the Garden of Eden next to the tree of life. Humankind’s disobedience and desire to acquire divine knowledge is the cause of their downfall and results in a curse spreading over all the earth. While a generation of virtuous individuals continues to exist (Seth, Enosh, Noah) after the expulsion from the garden, sin nevertheless predominates among humankind (Cain, Lamech). A new form of death and destruction is introduced into the world with the appearance of angels (“sons of God”) who take human daughters as their wives. Their marital relations result in the birth of giants (NRSV: heroes of old; 6:1–4; vv. 3 and 4a probably stem from a later hand). The wickedness of humankind ultimately becomes so great that YHWH sends the flood in judgement. Only the virtuous Noah and his kin are spared. God decides thereafter no longer to curse the earth on account of humankind (8:21), “even although the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth”. The author draws considerable attention to the power of sin, which brought about the downfall of humankind by
God’s judgement. While it is more evident in the present instance than was the case with respect to P that the author made use of ancient mythological material in his narrative, it is equally evident that he reworked this material in his own fashion, placing it at the service of his profoundly spiritual prophetic preaching. The prophetic insistence on obedience and the prophetic protest against the primordial sin of overconfidence and self-reliance (the desire of humanity to go its own way) resound time and again in these chapters.

Unique in the Ancient Near Eastern world, the so-called list of the nations in Genesis 10 harks back to both literary layers outlined above. The verses ascribed to P (1a,2–5,6–7,20,22–23,31–32) are characterised by their formulaic phraseology (“the sons of N.N. were . . .”), while those segments ascribed to J (1b,8–19,21,24–30) are narrative in style and contain traditions relating to individual persons and nations (including Nimrod, the “first mighty warrior on earth”, and “a mighty hunter before YHWH”: 10:8–9). The formulaic information provided by P relates how the descendants of Noah spread over the entire earth in accordance with the divine command in Gen. 9:1 (“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”).

The narrative of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of language (Gen. 11:1–9; J) is evidently the result of a reworking of a paradigmatic, condemnatory story concerning human overconfidence. The possession of a single language as a human ideal can also be found in a Sumerian text.100 The historical background of the original narrative may have its roots in the incomplete construction of the temple tower (ziqqurratu) Etemenanki by Nebuchadnezzar I (1123–1101 BCE), a dilapidated ruin that served in the Ancient Near Eastern world as a basis for the formation of legends and as a manifestation of human megalomania.101

In addition to the literary and historical-critical analyses of Genesis 1–11 outlined above, recent decades have witnessed the emergence of a variety of new approaches to the text including synchronic literary approaches and so-called ideological approaches such as those rooted in liberation theology and

feminist/womanist studies. Synchronic literary studies tend to be thematic or structuralist in character, both exhibiting an a-historical approach that rarely if ever pays attention to the literary stratification of the texts under consideration (in some instances this is completely ignored). Clines (1978), for example, describes the theme of Genesis 1–11 as the divine ability to call a halt to the destructive tendencies of humankind (“uncreation”). The structuralist method, whereby the internal dynamics of a text are identified without necessarily appealing to text-external data, has taken on a variety of forms. In addition to the representatives of the so-called “Amsterdam school” striking examples of this approach can be found in the work of Joannes Fokkelman (1976) and Ellen van Wolde (1994). While liberation-theological studies tend as a rule to account for the historical-critical approach (see, for example, Louise Schottroff and Wittenberg), they focus attention nevertheless on the social background of the transmitted texts. Wittenberg, for example, considers the J source to be anti-Solomonic propaganda and argues that Genesis 3 and 11 are a condemnation of Solomon’s wisdom and building activities. Feminist/womanist readings of the text tend as a rule to be synchronic and literary in character (cf. Trible). A detailed description of recent approaches can be found in Rogerson, op. cit., 1991, pp. 11–52.

Several answers have been proposed in response to questions surrounding the manner in which the literary layers evident in the primeval history came to be conjoined. Even if one accounts for the fact that P made use of existing priestly documents, one cannot exclude the possibility, at least in principle, that P had ultimately unearthed a unique, independent document beginning with the primeval history. A later redactor may have combined P’s primeval history with material borrowed from J. This tends in fact to be the commonly held hypothesis on the matter.

Others consider P to be a redactional layer of the segments ascribed to J. While it is not impossible that J once offered a coherent and continuous description of the primeval history, it has to be recognised nevertheless that this is not the case with regard to the material that has been passed down to us (cf., for example, 5:29; see also the lack of any narrative concerning the construction of the ark; similarly, J does not establish a bridge between the narrative of the Tower of Babel and the traditions relating to the patriarchs in transmitted text). This fact makes it difficult to consider P as a redaction of J. In contrast to J, however, the P segments of the primeval history do form a continuous narrative.

A third possibility that cannot be excluded in advance lies in the hypothesis that the material associated with J takes up that associated with P and offers a supplement thereto. Blenkinsopp (1995), for
example, has argued that the paradise narrative of 2–3 exhibits closer kinship to texts such as Ezek. 28:11–19 and is less evidently a witness to “antiker Erdgeruch” (see Wellhausen). In his opinion, the pessimistic attitude to humankind in the J segments of the primeval history (Gen. 6:5; 8:21) relate more appropriately with what is said in Jer. 17:9–10. Genesis 2–3 (J) would appear to explain how creation once positively understood, reference to which is found in Genesis 1 (P), had become corrupt. Gen. 11:1–9 (J), according to Blenkinsopp, would likewise appear to explain how P’s reference to the dispersion of the nations and to the confusion of language in chapter 10 had ultimately come about. Such information, Blenkinsopp maintained, would tend to point in the direction of interpolations of (to be dated late) J in P narratives. Wenham102 has recently raised new arguments that serve to make the priority of P with respect to J more acceptable.

All things considered, it seems most likely that a redactor combined the material ascribed to J (which differs significantly from P) with that ascribed to P (which made use of priestly documents)103 to form a new whole, letting himself be guided in the process primarily by the priestly narrative.

The dating of the layers in question (P and J) is far from simple. It should be acknowledged, however, that the accounts relating to the primeval history came into existence in the oral tradition independently of the patriarchal narratives: the primeval history does not explicitly anticipate the patriarchal narratives nor do the latter hark back to the former.104 This fact should hardly come as much of a

103 The idea that we should account for originally independent priestly documents is not only suggested by the well-rounded creation narrative of 1:1–2:4a, but also by the different character of the genealogies in chapters 5 and 11 on the one hand and chapter 10 on the other. The narrative of the flood repeats the reference to the conception of the sons of Noah (6:10[P]), whom we already encounter in the genealogy of chapter 5 (5:32[P]). The suggestion that Shem became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood at the age of 100 years (11:10[P]) runs counter to Gen. 5:32 (P) and 9:29 (P), since Shem according to the latter information must already have been 100 years old during the flood. Arpachshad, moreover, figures in 10:22 (P) as the third son of Shem, but in 11:10(P) as the eldest: “Das ist nicht so gemeint, als setze P zwei Individuen voraus, den gleichen Namen hätten, sondern so, daß Arpachsad für P in 11:10 in einem anderen Traditionszusammenhang steht als in 10:22. Dort ist er Repräsentant einer korporativen Einheit, während er hier nur Glied in einer genealogischen Reihe ist” (C. Westermann, Genesis I (BK), p. 746).
104 Cf. F. Crüsemann, “Die Eigenständigkeit der Urgeschichte. Ein Beitrag zur
surprise: the primeval history relates the history of *humankind* while the patriarchal narratives make reference to the fortunes of the patriarchs of *Israel*. This does not offer conclusive proof, however, that both complexes of tradition are not related to one another at the *literary* level. Such is evidently the case with respect to P, which employed the family tree of Shem, in which Terah figures as the father of Abra(ha)m, in order to establish a connection between the primeval history and the patriarchal narratives (11:26,27a, 31–32). Whether one would be justified in identifying the J narrator of the patriarchal narratives with the author of the non-priestly material in the primeval history remains a question. Hempel and Vriezen ascribed the J segments of the primeval history to a different author than that of the J traditions relating to the patriarchs. Both scholars have distinguished a J3 for the primeval history, a J1 for the Abraham and Jacob cycles and a J2 as author of the history of Joseph (Genesis 37–50). While much can be said in support of this hypothesis, the P elements interwoven with the J elements in the genealogy of Terah (Gen. 11:27–30; cf. also 22:20–24) incline the present author to hesitation. P would appear in this instance to have been familiar with a J genealogy that had established a bridge with the history of the patriarchs. If one can identify the J of the latter with the J of the primeval history then one must naturally date both in the same period. As we have already noted, we are probably dealing with the period during which King Solomon reigned or shortly thereafter.

While the primeval history ought to be distinguished from the tradition-historical perspective from the narratives concerning the patriarchs, one is at liberty to interpret the call of Abra(ha)m (Gen. 12:1–3) in the text of Genesis that has been passed down to us as a new beginning comparable with YHWH’s initiative in creating the world and humanity, a beginning replete with salutary divine actions following upon the fact that humankind had once again brought disaster upon itself and had remained in sin in spite of the judgement of the flood (Gen. 6:5; 8:21).\textsuperscript{105}

If P made use of existing temple archives then we must date the literary layer ascribed thereto prior to the Babylonian exile in the late period of the kings.\textsuperscript{106} Kinship between the language of P and that of Ezekiel, whereby priority ought to be ascribed to P,\textsuperscript{107} would appear to point in the same direction. While it is impossible to establish a precise date, there would appear to be reasonable cause to locate the origins of the P segments in the 7th century BCE. The reference to the Sabbath in Gen. 2:2–3 does not contradict such a hypothesis. Although the day of rest was strongly emphasised during and after the Babylonian exile, one is not at liberty to consider the Sabbath as an exclusively late exilic, c.q. post-exilic institution (cf. 2 Kgs 4:23; Amos 8:5).

3. The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12–50)


\textsuperscript{106} Th. C. Vriezen (\textit{De literatuur van Oud-Israël}, Katwijk aan Zee 1989\textsuperscript{2}, p. 154, note a) believes the doxology of Jer. 31:35 to contain a reference to Genesis 1.

The narratives concerning the patriarchs that form the bulk of the material found in Genesis 12–50 are quite different in character to those relating to the primeval history. The former are primarily family stories with occasional summarising texts such as genealogies and journey descriptions (itineraria) as well as promises. In addition to the genealogies of the twelve sons of Jacob, each of whom represents the “ancestral father” of one of the twelve tribes, the latter
also frequently serve to establish a bridge between the history of the patriarchs and that of the people of Israel.

While certain conservative Old Testament scholars maintained that the patriarchs should be understood as historical figures from Israel’s pre-history, Wellhausen envisaged them as non-historical characters that function only as “Vorbilder des rechten Israeliten”. In his opinion, we have no historical reports that can bridge the immense gap between Ancient Israel and the patriarchal period. The mythical explanations of the so-called pan-Babylonians (see chapter II) tended to be based on Babylonian and Canaanite mythology and frequently interpreted the patriarchs as local Canaanite deities. The tribal-historical explanation understood them as tribal designations (cf., in particular, the twelve sons of Jacob whose names were identical with the twelve tribes). In their form-critical approach to the material of Genesis 12ff. Gunkel and Gressmann brought about a major change of direction in the study of these chapters by arguing that the patriarchal narratives were to be understood as originally oral traditions passed on in the form of sagas. According to the former, the sagas concerning the patriarchs exhibited a fairy-tale like quality and as such were to be considered as “reines Gebilde der Phantasie”. In his renowned study Der Gott der Väter, Albrecht Alt (1929) argued on the basis of (late) Nabatean and Palmyrene parallels that three originally independent and nameless deities lay behind “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”, who were further specified by the personal names of their worshippers. According to Alt, these deities were not bound to a specific place or sanctuary but accompanied a particular patriarch and the group he represented as helpers and protectors. Alt’s thesis has been the subject of severe criticism in recent years. William F. Albright and his followers together with French and Israeli scholars and the British academic H. H. Rowley have studied the patriarchal narratives from the archaeological perspective. Their research has unearthed “external evidence” in support of the (in principle) historical reliability of the patriarchal narratives in the identification of individual and place names with those found in ancient North West Mesopotamian sources, in legal customs (cf. Nuzi), in the pre-Asian migrations of the second millennium BCE etc. Scholarly arguments denying the establishment of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives in such fashion, however, have been far from lacking (cf., for example, Th. L. Thompson, op. cit., 1974 and C. Westermann, Genesis I (BK), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, pp. 52–90).

Particular reference should be made at this juncture to H. Weidmann, op. cit., 1968 and C. Westermann, Genesis 12–50 (EdF 48), Darmstadt 1975, pp. 2–13. The latter has correctly argued that the future task of research into Genesis 12–50 must consist of a combination of the study of the history of the oral tradition up to and including the establishment of the writ-

ten form thereof with a study of the information arising from the Umwelt prior to the beginning of Israel’s history (op. cit., p. 13). An initial step in this direction has been taken by R. de Vaux in his Histoire ancienne d’Israël I. Les traditions patriarcales, Paris 1971, pp. 157–273 (cf. also C. Westermann’s commentary on Genesis 12–50 in the BK series).

Chapters 12–50 of the book of Genesis were written at a time when the unified tribes had come to form a nation and a state. Those who passed on these chapters, however, had held firm to the conviction that Israel had emerged from the families of the patriarchs and that the family had a fundamental significance for every other form of social alliance (Westermann). Such an observation need not, nevertheless, impede our understanding of the unique character of the individual segments of Genesis 12–50. The narratives dramatised by the Abraham, Jacob and Joseph cycles each exhibit their own distinct character and spiritual ambience. The narratives concerning Abraham (12:1–25:18), for example, in which the hand of J is most prominent, reveal a profound spiritual depth, in spite of their apparent naïve realism: the author ultimately presents the said traditions as a personal history guided by God. The Jacob cycle (25:19–36:43), on the other hand, bears much more evidence of the character of a popular folk tale, in which a great deal is made of individual human conflicts (Esau versus Jacob; Laban versus Jacob). The narratives concerning Joseph (Genesis 37–50) are replete with the awareness of God’s providence (Gen. 45:7; 50:20). A further difference between the narratives relating to Abraham and those relating to Jacob can be detected in the fact that the promise of the birth of a son, of a multitude of descendants and of the possession of the land predominates in the former while the blessing predominates in the latter: the paternal blessing so deceitfully appropriated by Jacob (Genesis 27) results in conflict between Jacob and his brother Esau while the blessing manifests itself in the narratives relating to Jacob and Laban (29–31) in their abundant herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Genesis 12:1–25:18, moreover, offers predominantly independent narratives while Genesis 25:19–36:43 contains consistently long narrative series. The narratives concerning Joseph constitute a sort of novel exhibiting the influence of Israel’s early wisdom tradition (Von Rad). The aforementioned differences serve to indicate

that the traditions concerning Abraham, Jacob and Joseph must have enjoyed an individual and independent prehistory.

Chapters 12–50 of the book of Genesis exhibit a complex character whereby a few elements stand out in greater relief against the background of the whole: not only lists but also a number of narratives.

Perhaps the most striking are the genealogical lists ascribed to P and introduced, as in the primeval history, with the words: “these are the descendants (toledôt) of…” (Gen. 11:27ff.; 25:12–18, 19ff.; 36:1–5, 9–14; 37:2a). Similar lists can be found in Gen. 35:23b–26 with respect to the sons of Jacob, Gen. 46:8–27 with respect to the sons of Jacob and their descendants and Genesis 36 with respect to Esau’s descendants, tribal chiefs and kings.110 While the genealogies do not always serve as a framework for the narratives, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the texts of 11:27ff. (JP) and 25:12–18 (P) intentionally constitute the framework of the narrative concerning the once infertile Sarah (cf. also 16:1), who provided Abraham with a son in her old age, and the narrative concerning Hagar and her son Ishmael. The same would appear to be true of Gen. 25:19–20 and 35:23ff. (with the interpolation of Esau’s descendants in chapter 36).

Besides the genealogical lists and chapters 17 and 23,111 P’s contribution to the history of the patriarchs tends to be limited to short notices concerning the age of the various patriarchs at significant points in their lives and the details surrounding their death, to references to births, marriages and funerals, and to an extremely modest representation of the course of the patriarchal history. While it is striking that the patriarchal narratives are less prominent in P than in the primeval history, the very fact that the change of name from Abram to Abraham (Gen. 17:5) and from Sarai to Sarah (17:15) found in the following material not ascribed to P has nevertheless been incorporated therein clearly points to the work of a redactor who combined the material ascribed to J (and E) with that of P. In

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111 While the origin of this chapter of P is not undisputed, it remains acceptable nevertheless; cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis II* (BK), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, pp. 454–456.
our treatment of the primeval history we concluded that P was written prior to the Babylonian exile. Such dating would appear to be confirmed by Gen. 17:6 (P) and 35:11 (P), in which God announces to Abraham and Jacob respectively that kings would emerge from among their descendants. The formulation of such a promise does not fit appropriately within the period of the Babylonian exile or thereafter.

Scholars have endeavoured to ascribe the following passages from the patriarchal narratives to P: Gen. 12:4b–5; 13:6, 11b, 12ab; 16:1a, 3, 15–16; chapter 17 in its entirety; 19:29; 21:1b–5; chapter 23 in its entirety; 25:7–11a, 12–17, 19–20, 26b; 26:34–35; 27:46–28:9; 29:24, 28b, 29; 31:18a; 33:18b; 35:6a, 9–13, 15, 22c–26, 27–29; 36:6–8 (the additional contribution of P to this chapter is disputed); 37:1, 2; 41:46a; 46:6–7; 47:5b, 6 lxx, 7–11, 27b–28; 48:3–7; 49:1a, 28b–33; 50:12–13.

Genesis 17 and 23 are of particular interest among the texts ascribed to the priestly source. Chapter 17 retraces the institution of circumcision back to the time of Abraham and locates it within the context of the covenant. Delimited by verses 1–2 and 19 relating to the death and burial of Sarah, Genesis 23 makes reference to Abraham’s purchase of the field and cave of Machpelah as a burial place for his deceased wife.

Independent literary units that cannot be associated with the sources J, E or P include Genesis 14 and 49 and, apparently, Genesis 15. The character of Genesis 14, which speaks of Abram’s military campaign against the kings of the east who had pillaged Canaan and imprisoned his nephew Lot, is the subject of particular dispute. The chapter is historically and chronologically difficult to locate: scholarly identification of the individuals referred to therein with well known figures from Ancient Near Eastern history has been far from

convincing. It is clear, nevertheless, that Genesis 14 presents a picture of the patriarch Abra(ha)m that differs significantly from that of the surrounding chapters. Its positive representation of Melchizedek, the king and priest of Salem (Jerusalem), may be intended to justify David’s cordial policy towards the Jebusites (the original inhabitants of Jerusalem/Jebus), but this is far from certain. The blessing of Jacob in Genesis 49, which, given its context, functions as a bridge between the patriarchal narratives and Israel’s most ancient history, contains proverbs relating to the tribes of Israel that evidently originate from the period prior to David. For a significant length of time, scholars have endeavoured to ascribe Genesis 15, in which Abra(ha)m is promised both descendants and the land of Canaan, to E (vv. 1–6) and J (vv. 7–21) and have frequently considered the chapter as a later combination of two originally independent text segments. Others have argued in support of the literary unity of the chapter (e.g. Snijders). Contemporary scholarship has often portrayed this material as Deuteronomic or as a Deutoronomistically reworked unit that evidently stems from a relatively late period, perhaps from the last decades of the seventh century BCE, during which the promised land was threatened by the Babylonians. Recent research, however, has ultimately abandoned the idea that

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118 Cf. also the use of the expression “Ur of the Chaldeans” (15:7), which would appear to refer to the neo-Babylonian empire. J. Van Seters, op. cit., dates the chapter in the late exilic period.
E can first be detected as a literary source in Genesis 15. The description of Abra(ha)m’s reaction to God’s promise: “And he believed ſw; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (15:6),119 does not constitute part of an ancient tradition but serves rather as an impressive expression of later reflection that aimed at presenting Abra(ha)m as the father of all the faithful.

Genesis 24, which relates the acquisition of a bride for Isaac in the form of a novel, would also appear to be a later addition to the Abraham narratives.120 Genesis 26,121 which represents a tradition concerning Isaac and interrupts the connection between Gen. 25:19–28 and chapter 27, is clearly an independent and well-formed literary composition in which Deuteronomistic characteristics can be detected (cf. 26:5).

Genesis 34 (Jacob’s revenge against the Shechemites on account of the rape of his daughter Dinah) and 38 (Judah and Tamar) would likewise appear to stand more or less on their own. Both give pride of place to the relationship between the sons of Jacob and the Canaanites. While Genesis 34,122 in its present form, clearly contains evidence of a later hand (it presupposes Deuteronomy 7 and exhibits affinities with the language of ſ), it has its roots, nevertheless, in two very old sources: a family history and a tribal narrative. Genesis 38123 is a similarly independent tale124 reflecting relationships between


the Israelites and the Canaanites as well as the period of the Landnahme. Its theme is the problem of childlessness, a theme that has a significant role to play in the patriarchal narratives as a whole. While the chapter cannot be described as a tribal saga, it is best represented as a family tale added to the Jacob cycle.

The remaining chapters of the book of Genesis consist of three cycles of narratives each relating to the figures Abraham, Jacob and Joseph respectively. While they would appear at first sight to represent a literary unity, closer inspection reveals that we cannot ascribe them to a single author (the P segments to one side). Of immediate and striking interest is the fact that certain texts would appear to be doublets of one another: Genesis 20 and Gen. 12:10–20 as well as Gen. 21:8–21 and Genesis 16 constitute parallel traditions characterised, moreover, by different divine names (’Elohim and yhwh).

Two narratives also exist with respect to the foundation of the sanctuary at Bethel (Gen. 12:8; 28:18–22). The objection that such doublets do not suggest evidence of different literary layers but illustrate rather the creative narrative skill of the author (Moberly 1992, p. 70) or represent repetitive descriptions of more or less identical events is not convincing, especially since the text segments in question not only differ from one another stylistically but also because they tend to exhibit different evaluative perspectives: the author of Gen. 12:10–20, for example, implicitly condemns Abra(ha)m’s half truth by offering not a single word in his defence, while the author of Genesis 20 exonerates him from any form of guilt.

We have already noted that many scholars accept that the patriarchal narratives (with the exception of the already mentioned P segments) are based for the most part on the redactional combination of two originally independent source documents: that of the Yahwist (J) stemming from Judah and that of the Elohist (E) stemming from Northern Israel, the former preferring the divine designation yhwh, the latter ’Elohim. It should be noted, however, that scholars also consistently recognise that J and E have been frequently woven together by later redactor(s) in such a fashion that any attempt to unravel the underlying literary layers of what appear to be unified texts must run the risk of an arbitrary segmentation thereof. Others are of the opinion that E provides an augmented edition of the foundational narrative of J (see, for example, Vriezen). Others still deny the existence of an Elohistic author and argue for a later reworking and enlargement of J or of supplements to J (cf. Westermann).
The promises to the patriarchs constitute a problem in themselves: the promise of a son (Gen. 15:4; 17:16; 18:1–15), of a multitude of descendants (Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 16:10; 17:4–6; 21:13, 18; 22:17; 26:3–4; 28:14; 32:12, Hebr. 32:13; 35:11; 46:3; 48:4)\(^{125}\) and of the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:7; 13:14–15, 17; 15:7–21; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3–4; 28:13; 35:12; 48:4; 50:24) together with the promise of divine assistance and blessing. The motif of the promise of a son is firmly anchored in J’s Abraham cycles (Gen. 18:1–15; cf. also 17:16[P]). The same is true for the promise of a multitude of descendants (Gen. 12:2; 16:11, cf. 17:4–6) and the promise of the land (Gen. 12:7; 28:13; cf. 17:8). Genesis 15 elaborates these promises in narrative fashion, a fact that has justifiably led many a commentator to consider the chapter to be relatively young (see above). Other texts containing promises to the patriarchs, however, would also appear to be relatively young in terms of date (e.g. Gen. 13:14–17). By way of conclusion, one might thus argue that the promises already made to the patriarchs in more ancient traditions (e.g. Gen. 12:2; 12:7; 18:1–15) have acquired an extra accent on account of additions to the original text introduced at a later date (cf., in particular, C. Westermann, op. cit., 1976).

The Yahwistic Abraham Cycle (Genesis 12–13; 16; 18–19; 21:1–2, 6–7) begins after a genealogical note (11:27–30 intertwined with P elements) with J’s description of the call of Abram who is invited to leave his land and follow the way יְהֹוָה will show him. God promises to make him into a great nation, to make his name great, and that all the generations of the earth shall bless themselves in him (Gen. 12:1–3). The verses themselves exhibit a thematic character. J not only portrays the emergence of Israel in the Pentateuch and its development into a great and independent nation, it also harbours elevated ideas concerning the significance of its people for the world (12:2–3; cf. Amos 3:2). Its horizon is universalistic (12:3), its God not only the God of Abraham, but also the protector of the Egyptian Hagar (Genesis 16) and the one who did not leave the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah unpunished (Genesis 18–19); Ishmael and Edom are

\(^{125}\) It is hardly surprising that the promise of a son was already combined at an early stage with the promise of a multitude of descendants. Originally, however, both promises were independent from one another: the promise of a son relates to the desire for an heir in the context of childlessness (cf. the Ugaritic Keret and Aqhat legend; Judg. 13:2–5; 1 Samuel 1).
reckoned among the descendants of Abraham. J presupposes a direct relationship between \( \text{YHWH} \) and Abraham, a relationship just short of anthropomorphism (cf. Gen. 18:22).

J exhibits a lofty vision of the vocation of the people: it exists in order to follow the ways of its great forefather in obedience. In addition to evidence of nationalism, J’s work also bears a religious character and it is for this latter reason that it lays emphasis time and again in the course of history on the fact that Israel had not lived up to its vocation. This element is already apparent in the narratives concerning Abraham, although it comes more evidently to the fore in the narratives concerning Jacob and those dealing with Israel’s liberation from Egypt and, in particular, the period in the wilderness. The idea expressed in Amos 3:1–2 might better serve as the groundwork of its portrayal of history than the desire to write an exalted national history. The history of Israel is one of divine calling and human disobedience. While the focus of disobedience is often a woman (Sarah and Rebekah), Abraham, Jacob and even Moses are not without guilt. The most guilty of all, however, is the people as a whole. The spiritual affinity between these narratives and the J narratives in Genesis 1–11 is unmistakeable.

While E is represented in the history of Abraham, it’s presence would appear to be limited to Genesis 20 and 21:8–34, in which reference is made to Abraham’s experience with Abimelech of Gerar and the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The chapters constitute an appendix to the preceding J segments, following a procedure that has been applied elsewhere (cf. Judges 17–21 and 2 Samuel 21–24 as additions to the narratives of the judges and the history of David respectively). The segment Gen. 21:1–7, which narrates the birth of Isaac, is based on both P and J traditions (vv. 1–2 J and P; vv. 3–5 P; vv. 6–7 J).

Genesis 22 (the testing of Abraham who is asked by God to sacrifice his son Isaac) can be alternately ascribed to E and J (or in part to both). It is probable, however, that we are dealing in this instance with a relatively late story in which, by analogy with Genesis 15, a theological problem (namely the trial of faith) gave rise to the creation of a narrative, although it remains possible that an extremely old tradition may have been employed.\(^{126}\)

Traditional literary critics tend to emphasise the representation of E in the Jacob Cycle over that of Abraham. According to several com-

\(^{126}\) E. Noort (ed.), The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations (TBN 4), Leiden 2001 (Lit.!)
mentaries, J tended primarily to place the accent on the opposition between Esau and Jacob therein while E provided narratives in which the conflict between Jacob and Laban comes to the fore. Scholars note that J is constructed on the basis of Judean traditions, which explains the fact that its narratives consistently make reference to Hebron and Beersheba. E, on the other hand, is said to contain primarily Northern Israelite traditions associated with Bethel, Peniel and Shechem.

Given the fact that J and E cannot always be distinguished from one another with water tight certainty, the following segments can only be conditionally ascribed to J: 25:20–27:45; 28:10–16; chapter 29; 30:24–31:3; 32:4–33; 33:1–16. Besides a number of priestly texts, the remaining segments of these chapters, together with 35:1–22, are to be ascribed for the most part to E.

Dating the Yahwist is currently more the subject of dispute than ever before. The time around the reign of Solomon (roughly 900 BCE) or shortly thereafter, once accepted as a rule for the origins of the J source, has been vigorously challenged in recent years by a variety of scholarly arguments and ultimately called into question. If one sets aside the fact that J exhibits stylistic affinities with the Thronfolgegeschichte of David (2 Samuel 9–1 Kings 2), however, it becomes difficult to imagine how he could have written his work after Amos and Hosea, bearing in mind that he somewhat innocently associates Abraham and Jacob with Bethel (12:8; 28:10–16), the sanctuary of which was severely censured by both prophets (Hos. 10:5–6; Amos 4:4; 5:5). J’s universalistic vision would have been conceivable in the period of the united kingdom under Solomon and David and may well have led to the codification of his patriarchal histories in the Solomonic period or shortly thereafter. His portrayal of Jacob’s treacherous behaviour is already to be found as a motif in Hosea 12.

It is interesting to note at this juncture that Abraham does not figure in the early prophetic books (for Jacob, however, see Hosea 12). Even the later prophets rarely refer to him (Isa. 29:22 [secondary]; 41:8; 51:2; 63:16; Jer. 33:26; Ezek. 33:24). Explanations of this phenomenon vary considerably. Hempel was of the opinion that Abraham had become too literary a figure to feature in popular awareness as a living personality. In his Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels (BZAW 48), Giessen 1928, K. Gallling elaborated the hypothesis that the prophetic silence with respect to Abraham served to illustrate the fact that (in his opinion) the prophets had come to reject
the motif of Israel’s election as the people of God so strongly associated with him. It is more probable, however, that the tradition surrounding Abraham did not tally sufficiently with prophetic preaching that challenged any nationalistic reliance on God’s unconditional guarantee of salvation for his people on the basis of Israel’s election (which they did not, as such, deny!), while trying to stimulate the people’s sense of vocation and responsibility. The prophets thus harked back in particular to Israel’s exodus from Egypt in order to preach יִהוָה as liberator of the oppressed. In so doing, the figure of Abraham acquired a background position.

It would appear that the Jozefnovelle (Genesis 37–50)\textsuperscript{127} circulated in Northern Israel as an originally independent narrative. According to the text of Gen. 37:22–25a, 28a,c, 29–31, 34a, 36, Joseph was cast into an empty pit on the suggestion of is brother Ruben (who wanted to spare his life) and rescued therefrom by Midianite merchants who had the intention of selling him as a slave in Egypt. According to Gen. 37:19–21, 25b–27, 28b, 32–33, 34b–35, Judah interceded to save Joseph’s life and his brothers traded him off to Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Unless one is inclined to accept that the reference to the Midianites in verses 28 and 36 should be considered a gloss or one is able to account for the portrayal of the fraternal compassion of both Ruben and Judah in one and the same source, allusion to the role of Judah would appear to have its roots in a secondary, Judean reworking of the history of Joseph, stemming perhaps from J. Whatever the case, the narrative, which has undergone an extensive Wirkungsgeschichte,\textsuperscript{128} presently establishes a bridge between the Jacob Cycle and the history related in the book of Exodus: it


explicitly anticipates the latter (cf. Gen. 50:20b). Only sporadic evidence of the hand of P can be detected in the history relating to Joseph (Gen. 37:2; 41:46a; 46:6–27; 47:5b, 6a–11, 27b–28; 48:3–7; 49:1a, 28b–33; 50:12–13).

From the spiritual perspective, it would be a mistake to ignore the striking differences between the Yahwist and the Elohist rendition of the history of the patriarchs. J portrays the patriarchs in their weakness and lack of faith (cf. the conclusion to Genesis 12; Gen. 18:12–15), and even their deceitfulness (Jacob), and establishes a spiritual ambience reminiscent of the narratives concerning David and the stern judgement evident in the preaching of the great yhwh prophets. On the other hand, while E exhibits more evidence of theological reflection than J, albeit less profoundly religio-ethical, the former’s characteristically particularistic-pietistic perspective portrays the patriarchs as flawless and exemplary figures (Abraham: Genesis 20; Jacob: Gen. 28:17–22; 31:4ff; 35:1ff). The other nations are not infrequently presented by E in an unfavourable light: cf. the godlessness and hostile behaviour of the Philistines (20:11; 21:25) together with the deceitfulness of the Aramean Laban (31). The positive portrayal of Jacob offered by E stands in sharp contrast to the negative image of Jacob presented by Hosea in chapter 12 of the book that bears his name, which characterises him as the prototype of the overconfident Israel of his day. P is manifestly and consistently more detached. While he rarely offers anything by way of judgement with respect to the patriarchs, he does not fail to mention nevertheless that Abraham laughed when the birth of a son was promised him in his old age (Gen. 17:17).

e. *Exodus and Numbers*

Commentaries on Exodus:

Commentaries on Numbers:


Monographs and articles relating to Exodus:


Monographs and articles relating to Numbers:


1. **Content**

The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy follow the book of Genesis in the Pentateuch. Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy contain a significant amount of legal prescriptions while
Leviticus is almost entirely made up of such material. In order to be able to offer a reasonable overview of Exodus to Numbers we will devote a separate segment of our text to the laws contained therein. Deuteronomy will also be treated separately. In the meantime we will limit ourselves for the most part to the narrative material found in Exodus and Numbers.

The books of Exodus-Deuteronomy describe how the people of Israel were forced into slavery in Egypt, how they were liberated by God’s intervention and how they set out into the wilderness with Canaan as their final destination. During their journey through the wilderness, tradition informs us that they received the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant on Mount Sinai. Infidelity to יהוה and frequent murmuring characterised the people’s general behaviour at this time. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the entire generation that had been liberated from Egypt died in the wilderness. We are informed that Moses likewise died before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan.

After the portrayal of the threat of genocide that confronted the Israelites in Egypt on account of forced labour and Pharaoh’s command to kill all newborn children in Exodus 1, Exodus 2 relates how Moses was saved by the daughter of Pharaoh, having been set afloat in a papyrus basket (a story reminiscent of that of Sargon of Akkad [see chapter II]). As an adult, Moses’ life is placed in danger when a fellow Israelite threatens to inform the authorities that he had intervened in a dispute between an Israelite and an Egyptian and had killed the latter in the process. Moses is thus forced to flee to Midian where he takes Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro the priest of Midian as his wife.

Chapter 3 is among the most central chapters of the book of Exodus. It relates how Moses was called by God on Mount Horeb. יהוה reveals himself to him in a burning yet unconsumed bush as the God of the fathers and commissions him to lead the Israelites out of oppression in Egypt. While Moses endeavours to object to his divine vocation, יהוה insists, giving him the power to work wonders and designating his brother Aaron to stand at his side as his spokesman (Exod. 4:1–17).

On his way to Egypt with Zipporah and his two sons, יהוה threatens Moses’ life but his wife Zipporah is able to avert disaster by circumcising her oldest son and doing the same in symbolic fashion...
ion to Moses (4:18–26). After meeting with his brother Aaron, the latter communicates God’s message to the elders of the people and their reaction is positive (4:27–31). When Pharaoh refuses to permit the Israelites to offer sacrifice to Yahweh in the wilderness and makes their forced labour more unbearable than ever before, however, the people turn against Moses and Aaron (5:1–21). In a renewed divine revelation, Yahweh’s plan of liberation is presented to Moses once again and he is called upon to return to Pharaoh and insist that the Israelites be set free (6:1–12). The numerous plagues with which Egypt is confronted on account of Pharaoh’s stubborn refusal to agree to Moses’ demands (7:14–10:29), culminate in the death of the first born of the Egyptians (11:1–10). Faced with this disaster, Pharaoh allows the Israelites to depart, the latter having celebrated the Passover Feast in the meantime. After a change of heart, however, Pharaoh sets off with his troops in pursuit of the departing Israelites, only to encounter their death in the Sea of Reeds, which the Israelites had passed through in miraculous fashion (13:17–14:31). This salvific event is recorded in the so-called Song of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron (15:20–21).

What follows is a report of the beginnings of the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness, presented as a succession of difficulties and confrontations whereby the people’s murmuring and complaint against Moses and Aaron, and ultimately against Yahweh, is not entirely unfounded. Often tormented and driven at times to despair by lack of food and water, the people are granted God’s assistance time and again nevertheless in overcoming their problems (15:22–17:7). A new trial awaits them in Rephidim where the Amalekites endeavour to thwart their progress (17:8–16). The latter, however, are ultimately defeated by the Israelites.

Chapter 18 constitutes a narrative in itself in which reference is made to Jethro, the priest of Midian, who returns Moses’ wife and sons to him, to a sacrifice offered by the former to God and to a cultic meal with the elders of Israel (18:12) in addition to instructions concerning legal order among the people (18:13–27).


130 The narrative is by a different author to that of Exodus 3.
Chapters 19–23 describe Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai and their sojourn in the area, whereby the revelation of God’s law is drafted: the proclamation of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) and the Book of the Covenant. The narrative of the establishment of the covenant (24:3–8) and the tradition relating how the representatives of Israel saw God and ate and drank in his presence follows in 24:1–2,9–11. While Moses remained for forty days on the divine mountain, receiving the stone tablets of the law, Aaron constructed a “golden calf” as a symbol of the God who had led Israel out of Egypt. Upon his return from the mountain, however, Moses shattered the stone tablets of the law on the ground and destroyed the idolatrous symbol of the “golden calf” (Exodus 32).

Chapter 33 contains an appeal to God on the part of Moses to be allowed to travel further with the people and a request to be allowed to see the glory of יְהֹוָה. His appeal is ultimately granted but only in part. In chapter 34 he is ordered to fashion anew two stone tablets upon which יְהֹוָה inscribes the words that were written on the tablets Moses had cast to the ground.

Following extended reference to the tabernacle legislation and the mention of numerous prescriptions in Leviticus and Numbers 1:1–10:10, Num. 10:11 picks up the second trajectory of the journey in the wilderness up to the borders of the promised land in a narrative frequently interrupted by new legislative material. Particular attention should be given to the report of the twelve men who were despatched to spy out the land of Canaan (Numbers 13–14), the unsuccessful revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram against the authority of Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16), the death of Miriam (Num. 20:1) and of Aaron (Num. 20:22–29), the refusal of Edom to allow the Israelites to pass through his land (Num. 20:14–21), the narrative of the bronze serpent (Num. 21:4–9), the conflict with King Sihon of Heshbon and Og, the king of Bashan (Num. 21:21–35), the appearance of the prophet Balaam (Num. 22:2–24:25) who blesses the people in spite of being summoned to curse them by King Balak of Moab, the people’s idolatrous worship of Baal of Peor (Num. 25:1–18) and the appointment of Joshua, the son of Nun, as Moses’ successor (Num. 27:12–23). At the end of the book of Deuteronomy, reference is made to Moses imparting the law in the fields of Moab and

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to his final instructions (31), his song (32:1–43), his blessing (33) and his death (34).

2. The Exodus narratives

Leaving aside those elements of the history of Joseph, which serve to bridge the patriarchal narratives with the time of Moses, the book of Exodus introduces the reader into a completely different world to that of the patriarchs, a world in which the descendants of Jacob-Israel have grown into a great nation dwelling in Goshen (on the outskirts of Egypt) and the wilderness of Sinai and perceived by the Egyptians as a threat to their very existence as a nation (1:9–10). God’s revelation to Moses (Exodus 3) heralds the beginning of a new era. A significant portion of chapters 1–24 of the book of Exodus (together with the traditions recorded in Exodus 32–34) contains, as it were, the ‘gospel’ of the Old Testament: tidings of Israel’s liberation from slavery in Egypt.

The literary layers traditionally designated as J and E are more difficult to distinguish from one another in Exodus and Numbers than in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. While Rudolph was inclined to deny any evidence of E in Exodus (and Numbers) as an independent source document, Fohrer was able nevertheless to detect his “Nomadenquelle” (N) in Exodus 1–15. J. Pedersen, followed by the Dutch Old Testament scholar J. de Groot, on the other hand, considered Exodus 1–15 to be a literary unity in the sense of a (later reworked and supplemented) festival legend for the celebration of Pesach. In his opinion, these chapters came into existence as a liturgical text intended for the cult and as such do not exhibit the characteristics of an historical account. While the present author would be happy to support the idea that the chapters in question were later employed in the context of the celebration of Pesach, he is nevertheless unable to ignore the typically historical narrative style of Exodus 1–15, which continues after Exod. 15:1–21

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133 W. Rudolph, Der “Elohist” von Exodus bis Josua (BZAW 68), Berlin 1938.
134 G. Fohrer, Überlieferung und Geschichte des Exodus (BZAW 91), Berlin 1964.
135 J. Pedersen, “Passahfest und Passahlegende”, ZAW 52 (1934), 161–175.
with the narratives concerning the period in the wilderness without any recognisable caesura. Above all else, one should not ignore the evidence of doublets in these chapters. According to Exodus 3 (in a segment ascribed to E), for example, Moses receives a revelation from God in which God makes himself known to him as “I am, who I am” (cf. the name יְהֹוָה). Moses is commanded thereby (after his flight to Midian, cf. 2:11–22) to return to Egypt in order to liberate Israel. Exod. 4:19, on the other hand, which scholars endeavour to ascribe to J, relates how Moses received the command to return to Egypt but does not presuppose the revelation of the divine name יְהֹוָה that J had already employed in the Genesis narratives. P, furthermore, presents the call of Moses in Exod. 6:1–11, a text that speaks once again of a divine revelation: El Shaddai (the name with which God appeared to the patriarchs) makes himself known to Moses as יְהֹוָה and commands him to tell the Israelites that יְהֹוָה will lead them out of their forced labour under the Egyptians. This threefold reference to the call of Moses has a parallel in the threefold allusion to Moses’ own admission of slowness of speech (Exod. 4:10; 6:11, 29). Chapters 3–6, moreover, contain the written expression of several ancient traditions concerning an event constitutive for the people of Israel. As such, therefore, they do not constitute a continuous narrative stemming from a single author, but appear rather to be a collection of traditions that contradict one another from time to time yet exhibit, in terms of content, a greater degree of mutual conformity than is often suggested.

The following chapters, which contain the narrative of the Ten Plagues (7:14–12:30 with legislation concerning the Passover feast in 12:1–28), present us with virtually unsolvable literary-historical problems, although one can identify the P segments therein with a


high degree of probability (with the exception of 7:1–7, 8–13 segments 7:19–20a, 21b–22; 8:1–3, 11b, 12–15; 9:8–12, 35b; 11:9–10). The plagues can be divided into two groups. On the one hand they can be identified as miraculous signs (which the Egyptian wise magicians endeavour to imitate), whereby Moses and Aaron are legitimated as emissaries of the Most High. On the other hand they can be seen as reprisals employed by YHWH to force the Egyptians to let his people go. Correspondingly, the first group of plagues take place unannounced through the intervention of Aaron (or of Aaron and Moses), while the second group are predicted by Moses and brought about by YHWH. Only the latter group contains reference to Moses’ endeavour to intercede with Pharaoh. Nevertheless, the fact that the aforementioned groups have come to form a single narrative requires a degree of caution in our endeavour to assign the segments not ascribed to P to other sources. The boundaries of the Yahwistic portion of the text are the subject of much dispute. Some are inclined to argue in favour of an interweaving of J and E, while others support a redactional supplementation of J. It is possible that E was unfamiliar with the plagues and that it alludes only to a flight from Egypt (14:5) instead of a forced liberation from slavery. The narrative of the plagues intends to reveal the majesty of YHWH (9:16). God hardens Pharaoh’s heart in order to make His power all the more evident in the liberation of his people.

Exod. 12:1–20 contains instructions for the celebration of Passover in a segment of the book that can be ascribed to P. The verses were located by the priestly author before 13:3–16, the latter containing a Deuteronomistic description of the institution of the Passover feast (12:24–27a likewise from a Deuteronomistic author).

The thread of the historical narrative is picked up again in 12:29ff., which relates how YHWH brought about the death of the first born of the Egyptians and how Pharaoh gave the people of Israel his permission to leave his land (12:29–34, 37–39: J; 12:35–36: E [?]). Exod. 13:17–14:31 follows with a description of the miraculous passage of

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the Israelites through the Sea of Reeds (cf. 13:18; 15:4) and the death of the pursuing Egyptian military forces as the sea returned to its place. It is here that we encounter the text of the proto-confession in narrative form of Israel’s liberation by yhwh from the land of Egypt (cf. Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; Ps. 81:11; Hos. 11:1; 12:10; 13:4). This segment of the book of Exodus, however, also exhibits evidence of several authors. It is stated in 14:21,27 (J), for example, that yhwh drove back the sea with a powerful east wind while 14:21b–22, 29 (P?) maintains that Moses caused the waters to be divided so that they formed a wall for the fleeing Israelites on their right and on their left. Evidence of J, P and (to a more limited extent) E can be found throughout Exod. 13:17–14:31, although some deny any share of the text to P. The episode is concluded in Exodus 15 with the Song of Moses by the Sea of Reeds, a text that would appear to presuppose the conquest of the promised land (v. 17; v. 16 apparently refers to the crossing of the Jordan). It is possible that the song is an elaboration of the song of Myriam in v. 21:

Sing to yhwh, for he has triumphed gloriously;
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

Scholars disagree on the date of the Song of Moses. Some relate the expression “holy abode” (v. 13, cf. v. 17) with the promised land itself, while others relate it to Mount Zion. Based on style (reminiscent of Ugaritic literature) and use of archaic terminology, Cross and

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Freedman endeavoured to date the song in the twelfth—eleventh century BCE. Others are more inclined, however, to favour a late date during the period of the kings of Judah.

The Deuteronomistically tinted passages of the book of Exodus (12:24–27a, 13:3–16, 15:25b–26, 19:3b–6, 23:20–33; 24:3–8 and 34:11–16) deserve particular attention. Some scholars, among them Brekelmans, are inclined to speak in this regard of pre-Deuteronomic text segments, while others support a Deuteronomistic redaction from a later period. Others still ascribe the material to a post-Deuteronomistic reworking.

The wilderness narratives, which begin in Exod. 15:22, consist of two blocks, one prior to the description of the Sinai event (Exodus 15–18) and one thereafter (Numeri 10ff), both exhibiting significant doublets: both Exod. 17:1–7 and Num. 20:2–13 make reference to an event at Meribah in what are clearly parallel narratives while Num. 11:4–35 returns to the theme of the manna and quails referred to Exodus 16. In spite of the fact that Deut. 32:10ff., Hos. 2:14 and Jer. 2:1–3 present the period in the wilderness as an ideal time, the majority of wilderness traditions in Exodus and Numbers are permeated with allusions to the motif of the murmuring of the people expressed repeatedly in stereotype terminology. In principle, two patterns can be discerned in this regard. The first is characterised by a situation of acute need (e.g. lack of water) that leads to murmuring among the people, Moses’ intercession and God’s miraculous intervention (Exod. 15:22–25; 17:1–7; Num. 20:2–13). The second makes no direct allusion to external factors as the reason for the people’s murmuring, underlines Israel’s lack of obedience, which results in God’s wrath and punishment, and concludes with Moses’
intervention and the end of the threatening situation (Num. 11:1–3; 21:4–10). Both patterns, however, quickly came to be seen as examples of Israel’s negative reaction to God’s salvific deeds. The motif of resistance against Moses’ leadership is later associated with these narratives, especially with respect to P.

The narrative in which the bitter waters of Marah are made sweet by Moses on yhwh’s instruction and reference is made to the agreeable Elim with its twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees (Exod. 15:22–27) is followed by that of the provision of manna, “bread from heaven” (Exodus 16; cf. Ps. 105:40; Neh. 9:15). The latter can be ascribed, for the most part, to P who employed J elements in the process. As with the quails, the manna is represented as a gift of God. In terms of its literary origins, the story associated with Massah and Meribah (17:1–7), whereby Massah (cf. Deut. 6:16; 9:22) and Horeb (17:6) would appear to indicate Deuteronomistic influence, is the subject of dispute (with the exception of 17:1ab[P]).

The location of the conflict with Amalek (17:8–16) in Rephidim together with the allusion to the staff of Moses, already mentioned in the preceding narrative, makes for an unusual story in that Moses is represented as a magician who brings about victory by holding up his hands. When his hands grow weary, Aaron and Hur provide a stone for him to sit on and support his hands until sunset, until the battle with the Amalekites is won under Joshua’s leadership. While reference to the “staff of God” (vs. 9), which Moses holds in his hand, has led scholars to ascribe the pericope to E, the present author is inclined to favour J as the more likely source. Verse 14 constitutes a Deuteronomistic interpolation in which Moses is com-


manded to inscribe the victory over Amalek in a book and to recite in the presence of Joshua that יהוה will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven (cf. Deut. 25:17–19). From the tradition-historical perspective, verses 15–16 suggest a later stage than the original narrative, which harks back to a very ancient tradition, since they nevertheless allude to the role of יהוה in the conflict (not mentioned in vv. 9–13) in the context of the construction of an altar by Moses. The words assigned to Moses, however:

The hand (= the monument) on the throne of יהוה!
יהוה will have a war with Amalek from generation to generation
can only stem from the period prior to David, the latter having brought definitive end to the Amalekite raids that had plagued the southern territory (cf. 1 Sam. 30:1–2; 2 Sam. 8:12; see also 1 Samuel 15).

The narrative of the visit of the Midianite priest Jethro to his son-in-law Moses at the mountain of God passed on to us in Exodus 18,¹⁵⁰ stems in essence from E. It is reminiscent of Exodus 2–4, in which reference is made to Moses’ flight to Midian (Exod. 2:15), his marriage with Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro (referred to in 2:18 as Reuel; 2:21), his keeping of his father-in-law’s flock (3:1), the revelation on the mountain of God (3:1ff.) and יהוה’s endeavour to kill him on his way back to Egypt, which Zipporah is able to thwart by circumcising her son (4:24–26).¹⁵¹ Chapter 18 has occasioned a whole series of questions. Jethro’s recommendations in the context of Moses’ acting as judge for the people (18:13–26) have a parallel in Deut. 1:9–17, in which Jethro is not mentioned and the decentralisation of jurisdiction is consigned a chronologically later date. The sacrificial meal offered by Jethro, (Moses), Aaron and the elders of the people (vs. 12), is presided over by Jethro. Many scholars have


formed the opinion on the basis of this chapter that Jethro was thus a worshipper of יִהְוֵה and that he considered himself confirmed in his faith by Moses’ account of the miraculous liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. Such considerations gave rise to the so-called “Kenite Hypothesis”, which maintains that יִהְוֵה was originally the God of the nomadic Midianites and Kenites who lived in the Negev and the Sinai peninsula. If one interprets the information provided by Exodus 18 as referring to the establishment of a covenant between the priestly ruler of Midian and the Israelites confirmed by a cultic meal, then the emphasis would appear to be more on the fact that Jethro recognised the power of Israel’s God (cf. especially Gen. 26:28).

Associated with the traditions concerning the period in the wilderness (Exod. 15:22–19:1; Num. 10:11ff.), the Sinai traditions contain reference to the theophany, the provision of the law and the establishment of the covenant (Exodus 19–24; 32–34). The suggestion that these traditions found their way as secondary interpolations into the transmission of the Pentateuch and that their original Sitz im Leben was the cult, is improbable and difficult to defend, although it would be wrong to deny that they had a place in Israel’s liturgy. One should not only bear in mind that the God of the exodus and the period in the wilderness is, in origin, the same as the God of Sinai, but also that the figure of Moses is clearly at home in each of these traditions from the outset (contra M. Noth, op. cit., 1948). While יִהְוֵה is Israel’s God from Egypt onwards (Hos. 12:10; 13:4), he is also, according to an ancient expression, “the God of Sinai” (Judg. 5:5; Ps. 68:9). Outside the Pentateuch, Moses is already portrayed in Hos. 12:14 as the one under whom יִהְוֵה led Israel out of Egypt and as the one who kept watch over Israel during the period in the wilderness (cf. also Mic. 6:4). He is too closely associated in the Old Testament tradition with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai to accept that he was only assigned a place in the Sinai traditions at a later date (cf. also Exod. 3:12). One is obliged to observe, there-

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fore, that the exodus and Sinai traditions constitute one single complex (Fohrer 1964). Redactional reworking to one side, it is hardly surprising that evidence of the literary sources that can be traced in the preceding (and later) chapters can also be found in the written form of the tradition concerning God’s revelation on Sinai.

Exod. 19:1–20:21, a segment that describes the theophany on Mount Sinai and God’s proclamation of the Ten Commandments, combines a variety of different traditions and exhibits a complex literary character. The narrative as we now have it contains several irregularities: verses 8b and 9b constitute a doublet; Moses ascends Mount Sinai at least three times (19:3a, 20b; 20:21); the theophany is first represented as a storm with thunder and lightning (19:16) and then as a volcano with fire and smoke (19:18). Scholars have endeavoured to solve the problems raised by this passage of scripture from both literary-critical and tradition-historical perspectives.

On its own, the documentary hypothesis would appear to be incapable of providing a literary-critical solution to the problem. While one can ascribe 19:1, 22–24 to P and the splendid (in terms of composition and content) text segment 19:3aβ–8 (supplemented with v. 9a), which harks back to the exodus and looks forward to the revelation of the commandments to Moses together with the obligations the people take upon themselves, to a Deuteronomistic (or pre-Deuteronomic) author, the remainder of the chapter does not allow us to make a convincing distinction between J and E. In the last analysis we are forced to account for additional material that does not stem from the aforementioned sources.

In the context of his tradition-historical approach to Exodus 19ff., Mowinckel located the Sinai pericope against the background of the cult, associating it with a ceremony of covenant renewal. Along similar lines, Von Rad (op. cit., 1938) located the Sinai tradition (distinct from the exodus tradition) in a covenant renewal feast at Shechem. With the exception of the secondary verses 19:3aβ–8 and Exod. 24:3–8, however, there is little evidence of a covenant renewal feast to be found in Exodus 19–24. Furthermore, the Hittite vassal treaties dating from the second millennium BCE are of limited significance as background information for the interpretation of the establishment of the covenant at Sinai: in contrast to these treaty texts, the Decalogue does not contain blessing and curse formulas nor is there any apparent parallel to the role of Moses as covenant mediator.
One can conclude, therefore, that the literary structure of Exod. 19:1–20:21 can no longer be reconstructed in detail. In spite of the clear presence of disruptive seams between certain segments of the text, its sources have been combined in such a unified fashion that further subdivision is well-nigh impossible. Constitutive for Israel’s history and faith, the two-sided nature of this story harks back on the one hand to a single principal narrative while revealing evidence, on the other hand, of repeated expansion. As such, therefore, it has taken on the character of a collection of traditions. Textual analysis is thus both entirely justifiable and to a significant extent entirely impracticable.

“The more one goes into details, the more convoluted the course of the narrative becomes” (Smend jr.). This would certainly appear to be the case if one is inclined to make an issue of source analysis. Exod. 24:15b–18a can be ascribed to P as introduction to 25:1–31:17, the latter containing the directive to construct the tabernacle with its furnishings and the reference to the ordination of priests. It is also clear that 24:1–2 and 9–11 belong together (although v. 2 would appear to be a later interpolation intended to underline the unicity of Moses and the other leaders of Israel). 24:1–2 constitute the introduction 24:9–11, which relates how Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders of the people beheld God, how the Almighty did not lay a hand on them and how they ate and drank in His presence. Whether one ought to consider this meal as a ratification of the covenant remains a question. The fact that the accent is placed on those present seeing God who had entered into an alliance with Israel, however, makes this unlikely. In any event, the intervening verses 3–8 relate the establishment of a covenant between יְהֹוָה and the people on the basis of “all the words of יְהֹוָה and all the ordinances” (24:3) and exhibit clear parallels with Exod. 19:3b–8. According to several commentators, this expression alludes to both the Decalogue and to the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 21–23. Given that reference is only made to “the words” after v. 3, however, others are inclined to see “and all the ordinances” (cf. 21:1) as an interpolation introduced with a view to the (in their opinion) later attachment of the Book of the Covenant to

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the Sinai tradition. In the original narrative, therefore, the establishment of the covenant must have taken place on the basis of the “words of יְהֹוָה” revealed to Moses, i.e. the Decalogue of Exod. 20:2–17. The expression “all the words of יְהֹוָה” is too unspecific to associate it per se with 20:1, the introduction to the Decalogue. The arrival of Moses (24:3), who tells the people “all the words of יְהֹוָה and all the ordinances”, also presupposes 20:21, which relates how Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. It is evident, therefore, that the covenant charter of Exod. 24:7 does not imply the Decalogue and that we must read v. 3 as “all the words of יְהֹוָה, namely all the ordinances” (cf. 21:1) and as a reference to the Book of the Covenant.

Ascribed by some to E and by others to a pre-Deuteronomistic or Deuteronomistic author, the pericope Exod. 24:3–8, which refers to the “young men” who offered burnt offerings, exhibits characteristics that may have been borrowed from a covenant renewal feast celebrated at Shechem.

Exod. 24:12–15a, 18b forms the beginning of a new segment encompassing the themes of the two stone tablets, the worship of the golden calf and Moses’ intercession, which we encounter in Exodus 32–34 (after the intermezzo concerning the instruction to build the tabernacle). These chapters are located within the framework of sin and forgiveness (Childs). Chapter 32 relates the breaking of the covenant while chapter 34 speaks of the restoration thereof. Allusion is made to Moses’ intercession in 32:11–14, 30–34; 33:12–17; 34:8–9 and to the stone tablets in 32:15–16 and in 34:1, 4, 28–29. The theme of God’s nearness and guidance is particularly evident in chapter 33, but also in 32:34 and 34:9, while that of God’s judgement and forgiveness threads its way through all three chapters (32:10–14, 34; 33:3, 19; 34:6, 14). In their present form, chapters 32–34 are the work of a redactor who not only wove together existing traditions in their work but also contributed to the composition thereof.

The story of the golden calf (Exodus 32) is based on an ancient tradition to which the Deuteronomistic narrator of 1 Kings 12 alludes in his polemic against the introduction of calves of gold into the sanctuaries of Bethel and Dan by King Jeroboam I. Exodus 32 has its roots in a pre-Deuteronomistic tradition (although one cannot entirely exclude the possibility that 1 Kings 12 later influenced the design of Exodus 32). Evidence of this is not only based on the
differences with Deuteronomy 9. If Exodus 32 were to be understood as tradition-historically dependant on the narrative of 1 Kings 12, then it would be impossible to explain why the author of the former accuses the entire people of idolatry at Sinai. The literary-critical analysis of Exodus 32 likewise confirms this conclusion. A persuasively Deuteronomistic passage, in which Moses’ intercession on behalf of the people is heard by יְהֹוה (contra vv. 30–34!) was added to the oldest layer in vv. 7–14. Reminiscent of the Levi statement in Deut. 33:8–11, the remarkable passage Exod. 32:25–29, which tells of the bloodbath instigated among the people by the Levites and which etiologically underpins and defends their right to the priesthood in the anti-Aaronide sense, is likewise a later account associated with the present narrative.

Exodus 33 turns around the theme of God’s presence and guidance in the wilderness after the departure from Sinai and constitutes a fairly loose collection of various interwoven elements. A literary analysis of this material in line with traditional source theory is more or less out of the question. The announcement that the angel of יְהֹוה, not יְהֹוה himself, is going to go before the people (cf. Exod. 32:34), is experienced by Israel according to the Deuteronomistically reworked segment 33:1–6 as a punishment. Moses’ appeal for God’s personal guidance in 33:12–17 would appear to be related thereto (although the content of v. 12 is something of a surprise following 33:2). The narrative of Moses’ erection of the tent of meeting (33:7–11), in which יְהֹוה spoke to him “face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (33:11), undoubtedly constitutes an originally independent tradition, although it is framed in the present context as a reference to Moses’ role as mediator and the respect shown him by the people in this regard. The passage 33:18–23, in which Moses asks to be able to see God’s glory but is only a ff ordered a glimpse thereof, functions in the context as a manifestation of God’s “goodness” (v. 19) and mercy towards his people (cf. Exod. 34:6).

At the beginning of Exodus 34, יְהֹוה’s command to Moses to cut out new stone tablets (after he had shattered the first set: Exod. 32:19), the theophany, which goes hand in hand with the announcement of God’s benevolence and righteousness, and Moses’ appeal for יְהֹוה’s personal guidance (34:1–9) all serve to conceal the promise of a restoration of the rupture that had arisen between יְהֹוה and his people on account of the latter’s disloyalty and disaffection. The consequences of this situation had been evident for a long time.
Many (e.g. Goethe, Wellhausen and Mowinckel) have been inclined to consider the text of Exod. 34:11–26, the content of which is strikingly similar to “the mantle of the Book of the Covenant” (Exod. 20:23vv.; 23:12, 13b–19), as evidence of a *cultic Decalogue*, older than the ethical Decalogue found in Exodus 20. The same scholars likewise tend to ascribe the former (Exodus 34) to J and the latter (Exodus 20) to E. The tradition of the two sets of stone tablets may indeed contain an allusion to two ancient collections of covenant stipulations. Aside form the problems surrounding the assignation of Exod. 20:2–17 to E, however, and since the protests voiced by Eerdmans and Sellin against the hypothesis that Exod. 34:11ff. contains a Decalogue, objections to this thesis have increased to such an extent that we are obliged to argue that little more can be said in its favour (cf. Halbe 1975). Scholars endeavour to ascribe the final section of the chapter, which speaks of the shining skin of Moses’ face after descending Mount Sinai, a result of having spoken with yhwh (34:29–35), to P.

3. The narratives in Numbers and Deuteronomy 31 (conclusion), 32 (beginning) and 34

Beginning with notations assigned to P concerning the departure from Sinai (Num. 10:11–28), the narrative of the period in the wilderness is continued in Num. 10:29–14:45; 15:32–36; 16; 17; 20–27; 31; 32; 33–36 and the conclusion of Deuteronomy.

The literary sources we have been discussing are also to be found in these passages. Scholars endeavour to assign the following to P: significant portions of the narrative concerning the twelve men sent to spy out the land (Numbers 13f.), of the story of Korah (16–17) and the punishment of Moses and Aaron associated with the water miracle at Meribat-Kadesh (20:1–13; cf. Exod. 17:1–7); the description of the death of Aaron (20:22–29); a short note on the encampment in the fields of Moab (22:1); the Phinehas scene (25:6–18); the counting of the people in the fields of Moab (26); the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad (27:1–11); the announcement of Moses’ death and the appointment of Joshua as his successor (27:12–23); the revenge action against the Midianites (31); an overview of the journey through the wilderness (33:1–49); instructions for apportioning Canaan and the boundaries of the land by lot (33:50–34:29); stipulations concerning Levite cities and free cities (35) and an appendix on marriage...
of the daughters of Zelophehad (36; cf. 27:1–11). The narrative of
the man gathering sticks on the Sabbath (15:32–36) has the char-
acter of a later interpolation. Up to the description of his death,
Aaron has a significant role to play in these text segments alongside
Moses and the summaries clearly belong to the lists associated with
P. The style of the segments in question is also recognisably that of
P. The oft supported suggestion that traces of P can be found in
Deut. 1:1b–3 and 34:7ff. has been refuted in recent research.

With the exception of the priestly laws, the remaining segments
are based for the most part on J traditions together with traditions
ascribed to E. In the present instance also, however, one is obliged
to account for material of a different origin to the aforementioned
sources. While the story of Balaam found in Numbers 22–24, which
bears the character of being a unique tradition (the proverbs of which
being at least in part older than the narrative itself), contains con-
sistent evidence of both J and E, it would appear to be impossible
nevertheless to distinguish the said sources from one another in any
water-tight fashion. As with the book of Exodus, the second part of
the book of Numbers also contains clear indications in places of a
Deuteronomistic hand (see, for example, in Num. 14:11–25 [cf. Exod.
32:10–14] and the story of the spies).

It will be apparent from the discussion so far that in line with the
narratives of the book of Genesis, those of the books of Exodus,
Numbers and Deuteronomy are of a composite character and are
not the work of a single hand. While one must agree that the texts
as we now have them create the image of being a single, continu-
ous history (thus justifying a synchronic reading thereof), they nev-

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ertheless reveal evidence of a variety of literary sources and a process
of repeated reworking that served to introduce countless new ele-
ments, so much so that the final result is clearly a colourful collec-
tion of traditions (thus making diachronic analysis a necessity).

f. The laws of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers

Commentaries:
Exodus: see above under e.

Leviticus: A. Bertholet (KH) 1901; B. Baentsch (HKAT) 1903; P. Heinisch
(HSAT) 1935; J. W. de Wilde (TU) 1937; A. Noordtzij (KV) 1940; W. H.

Numbers: see above under e.

With the exception of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–17; cf. Deut. 5:6–21), the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:23–23:33) and a segment of the legislation concerning the tabernacle (Exodus 25–31; 35–40; Leviticus 8–9), the laws of the Pentateuch do not form an integrative part of the original narratives thereof. Stemming from a variety of different periods and widely divergent in character, they can be considered as a rule to have been introduced into the books of Exodus-Numbers as secondary material. Excluding Deuteronomy, the laws of the Pentateuch can be collected together under the following rubrics:

1. The Decalogue (Exod. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:6–21)
2. The Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:23–23:33)
3. Legislation concerning the tabernacle (Exodus 25–31, 35–40; Leviticus 8–9)
4. Sacrificial laws (Leviticus 1–7)
5. Purity laws (Leviticus 11–16)
6. The (so-called) Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26) with its appendix (Leviticus 27)

1. The Decalogue (Exod. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:6–21)

The Decalogue\textsuperscript{154} of Exod. 20:2–17, the Ten Words (cf. Exod. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4), also referred to as the Ten Commandments, can be found in a variant form in Deut. 5:6–21. The most striking difference between the two texts has to do with the motivation behind the command to keep the sabbath, the former (Exod. 20:9–11) relating the command to the priestly creation narrative (cf. Gen. 1:1–2:4a), the latter (Deut. 5:12–15) providing it with socio-religious foundations.

The Decalogue, which contains ethical and religious prescriptions, is considered to have been given by God to his people on Mount Sinai. According to Zwingli, Calvin, Reformed Protestantism and the

\textsuperscript{154} The term is borrowed from the Greek expression \textit{deka logos}: “ten words.”
Anglican Church,\textsuperscript{155} the prologue (“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery”) is followed by five prescriptions relating to one’s duties towards God and one’s parents (the so-called “pietas”): 1) the prohibition against the worship of gods other than \textit{yhwh},\textsuperscript{156} (2) the prohibition against the manufacture of divine images,\textsuperscript{157} (3) the prohibition against the misuse of the name of God,\textsuperscript{158} (4) the command to uphold the day of rest (the sabbath)\textsuperscript{159} and (5) the command to honour one’s mother and father.\textsuperscript{160} The remaining five commandments have to do with one’s relationship with one’s neighbour (the so-called “probitas”): the prohibition against (6) murder, (7) adultery, (8) stealing (which Alt and others maintain to be a reference, at least in origin, to the theft of human persons),\textsuperscript{161} (9) bearing false witness in a court case and (10) coveting the property of one’s neighbour.\textsuperscript{162} Preceded by the

\textsuperscript{155} The Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions follow the division of Clement of Alexandria and Augustine, whereby Exod. 20:2–6 is understood as a single commandment and v. 17 (the tenth commandment) is split in two. Jewish circles take v. 2 as the first commandment and vv. 3–6 as the second.


\textsuperscript{158} B. Lang, “Das Verbot des Meineids im Dekalog”, \textit{Theologische Quartalschrift} 161 (1981), 97–105.


prologue ("the gospel precedes the law"), the entire text\textsuperscript{163} constitutes an all-embracing proclamation of God’s will.

According to the Old Testament, the Decalogue was written by \textit{\textit{YHWH}} himself (Exod. 24:12; 31:18; 32:16; 34:1, 28; Deut. 4:13; 5:22; 10:4) on both sides of two stone tablets (Exod. 32:15). No reference is made to the distribution of the commandments over the tablets, which tradition maintains were given a place in the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:16, 21; 40:20).

The Decalogue of Exodus 20 would appear to be so loosely anchored in its context that one is left with the impression that it was added to the exodus narrative at a later date. Some scholars are of the opinion, for example, that the Decalogue of Exod. 20:1–17 interrupts the cohesive flow between Exod. 19:19(25) and Exod. 20:18–21, and that it was once located after Exod. 20:18–21, prior to the (accepted) interpolation of the Book of the Covenant (see paragraph 2). Both Exod. 20:22 and Exod. 20:20, however, evidently presuppose Exod. 20:1–17 (cf. also Deuteronomy 5). In the present instance it is hard to imagine a theophany of \textit{\textit{YHWH}} without the giving of the law.

One might consider the possibility that Deuteronomy 5 represents the Northern Israelite version of the Decalogue and Exodus 20 the Judean version.\textsuperscript{164} Both forms would appear to hark back to a (impossible to reconstruct with any accuracy) \textit{proto-Decalogue} that contained extremely short commandments without further motivation,\textsuperscript{165} as is presently the case with respect to the sixth to the ninth commandments. The Decalogue had its place in the cult, possibly during the feast of the renewal of the covenant (cf. Deut. 31:10–13 and Psalms 50 and 81).

Many have considered the Decalogue to be relatively young, arguing that the prophets would have been the first to introduce an eth-

\textsuperscript{163} A detailed commentary on the individual commandments with extensive bibliography can be found in C. Houtman, \textit{Exodus III}, Kampen 1996, pp. 27–80.

\textsuperscript{164} This consideration naturally goes hand in hand with our thesis that the first edition of Deuteronomy stems from Northern Israel (see further our discussion of the Book of Deuteronomy).

ical dimension into Israel’s religion. The prohibition against images and the commandment to honour the sabbath would likewise appear to support a late date. The characteristic influence of the prophets, however, cannot be traced in the Ten Commandments, nor is the vocabulary found therein related to their preaching. There is no conclusive evidence to support the suggestion that the prohibition against images and the sabbath commandment are young. On the other hand, while there is no compelling argument in support of the proposed Mosaic origins of the (proto-)Decalogue, the possibility itself cannot be simply dismissed out of hand. Scholars argue to and fro as to whether Hos. 4:2 and Jer. 7:9 refer to the Decalogue, but the possibility still remains open. The manner with which the prophet Nathan chastises King David in 2 Samuel 12 on account of the latter’s treatment of Bathsheba and her husband Uriah can only be explained with any degree of satisfaction in its Ancient Near Eastern context if one accepts the fact that both Nathan and David were familiar with the seventh and the tenth commandments.

The question of dating the (proto-)Decalogue remains closely related to one’s opinion as to the character thereof. If one is inclined to follow Alt and consider the Ten Commandments as a summary of serious crimes deserving the death penalty (cf. also Phillips 1970), or as a literary compilation of provisions representing the essence of God’s will and based on a collection of different types of laws (Houtman, Exodus III, Kampen 1996), then one will tend to accept a relatively late date for the origins of the Decalogue. If, on the other hand, one is inclined to follow Vriezen\(^\text{166}\) and consider the latter as a sort of “manifesto”, as a collection of normative rules for the existence of a people analogous to the Ancient Near Eastern “ideal legislation” established by a ruler at the beginning of his reign, then one will not tend to exclude the possibility of Mosaic origins in advance. The evidently priestly and Deuteronomically tinted formulation of the motivation of a number of the commandments reveals, however, that the final form of the decalogue of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy stem from a relatively late date.

Twentieth century critical research into the age and origins of the Decalogue exhibits a number of pendulum swings and has given rise to a variety of divergent results. While many followed Wellhausen around 1900, excluded

\(^{166}\) Th. C. Vriezen, De godsdienst van Israël, Zeist-Arnhem-Antwerp 1963, p. 119.
the possibility of Mosaic origins and argued for a date/time of origin for
the Ten Commandments dependent on the preaching of the prophets, a
whole series of critical scholars in the decades that followed either refused
to exclude the possibility of Mosaic origins (cf., for example, L. Köhler
1929 and H. H. Rowley 1951/1952) or at least emphasised the Decalogue’s
considerable age. Such scholars were correct in arguing that the influence
of the socio-ethical preaching of the prophets cannot be traced in the
Decalogue. It was likewise observed that Israel’s resolute resistance to the
nature religion of the Canaanites after the Landnahme would have been
impossible to explain without some form of powerful religious impulse at
the earliest stages of its history.

S. Mowinckel (1927) located the origins of the Decalogue in the cult, espe-
cially in the New Year feast—c.q. in his proposed feast of yhwh’s acces-
sion to the throne. While he correctly considered current versions of the
Ten Commandments to be relatively young, he nevertheless maintained
their origins to be ancient. G. von Rad considered the Sinai pericope to
be the festival legend of a specific cultic celebration and the Sinai tradi-
tion to be the content of the Shechemite covenant feast. While it does
remain possible that the Decalogue enjoyed some kind of cultic function
(cf. Psalms 50:16–20 and 81:9–10), it is far from established that the Ten
Commandments owe their origins to the cult. Albrecht Alt suggested that
we should search for the roots of the Decalogue in apodictic law (see the
following paragraph). 167 A new phase in the study of the Ten Commandments
was introduced by G. Mendenhall (1954) who associated the Decalogue
with Hittite vassal treaties (cf. also Baltzer 1960). Essential elements of such
treaties (e.g. curse formulas; sanctions imposed upon violation of the treaty),
however, are absent from the Sinai tradition of Exodus. Gerstenberger
(1965) rejected the thesis that the Ten Commandments owed their origins
to the cult or were formally related to Hittite treaties and argued that we
should consider their roots to be in the ethics of the clan. Phillips (1970)
considered the Decalogue to be a summary of Israel’s penal law in the
context of the covenant. The studies of Nielsen (1965), Hossfeld (1982) and
Lang (1984) presuppose that the Decalogue was preceded by a number of
collections of legal prescriptions. Together with Stamm (19622, p. 31), how-
ever, one might be inclined to ask whether the opposite was not the case.

Commentators have frequently argued in favour of the existence of
an (older) cultic Decalogue in Exod. 34:10–26 in addition to the
(ethical) Ten Commandments of Exodus 20/Deuteronomy 5 since
the former exhibits striking agreements with “the mantle of the Book

167 A. Alt, Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts (Berichte über die Verhandlungen
der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische
Klasse 86, Band 1, 1. Heft), Leipzig 1934 (= id., Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des
Volkes Israel I, Munich 1959, pp. 278–332).
of the Covenant” (Exod. 20:23ff.; 23:12, 13b–19).\(^{168}\) Rowley (1951/1952) considered this to be a pre-Mosaic series of commandments borrowed from the Kenites that continued to enjoy validity among the southern tribes of Israel for a significant period of time. It would seem, nevertheless, that Exod. 34:11–26 does not contain a cultic Decalogue (cf. Halbe 1975; Houtman, commentary 1996, p. 692) and that we should no longer speak of two Sinai Decalogues to be ascribed to E (the ethical Decalogue) and J (the cultic Decalogue) respectively.

2. The Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:23–23:33)


The designation Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:23–23:19 together with 23:20–33, the latter constituting an epilogue written in the Deuteronomic spirit) is borrowed from Exod. 24:7. In any event, the legal corpus was known prior to the time of Deuteronomy since the latter document continuously presupposes the Book of the Covenant: Deuteronomy 12–26 constitutes an historical and literary reinterpretation thereof. The Book of the Covenant constitutes a once independent collection of laws that, in spite of frequent argument to the contrary, should not be ascribed to one single Pentateuchal source (E).

The document, which contains material of various sorts and from a variety of origins, would appear to have had a complex history. The legal provisions contained therein are likewise formulated in a variety of ways. The “ordinances” (miṣpatîm) of 21:1–22:17 (Hebr. 21:1–22:16), for example, contain prescriptions formulated in a casuistic fashion (“when [someone] . . ., then . . .”; 21:12–17 employs a participial style and the formula “he shall certainly be put to death” differs formally from its surroundings). Reference is made to bonded slavery (21:1–11), the violation of another’s physical integrity (21:12–36) and the theft of another’s property (22:1–17, Hebr. 22:17–22:16). Derived from common law, such prescriptions exhibit both formal and content-based agreements with other Ancient Near Eastern legal codes and may have circulated as an independent document. Socio-religious prescriptions, formulated as a rule in apodictic style (e.g. “you shall (not) . . .”), follow in 22:18–23:9 (Hebr. 22:17–23:9) relating to a variety of ‘heinous’ practices (witchcraft, bestiality, idolatry; 22:18–20, Hebr. 22:17–19), care for the socially powerless (22:21–27, Hebr. 22:20–26), the reviling of God

of your people”\(^{170}\) (22:28, Hebr. 22:27), cultic gifts (22:29–30, Hebr. 22:28–29), the meat of ‘mangled’ animals (22:31, Hebr. 22:30), justice in the context of a lawsuit (23:1–3,6–9) and willingness to help one’s neighbour (23:4–5). They appeal to our human sense of responsibility and kindness, to our respect for God and our superiors, to our concern for the socially underprivileged and our love for the truth. In the last analysis, they have to do with a way of living one’s life that cannot be enforced by juridical means, a way of living that remains fundamental for a person who is dedicated to God and the welfare of the religious community as a promoter of social harmony.

The text would appear to contain a number of Deuteronomistic interpolations (cf. 22:21b, 23b–24, 27 [Hebr. 22:20b, 22b–23, 26]; 23:9b, 13).

The distinction between casuistically and apodictically formulated legal prescriptions was promoted primarily by Alt in his 1934 article, reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften* of 1959. He considered the former to reflect the “(common)law of the gate” and the latter a “divine law” typical of Ancient Israel. Alt did not account for mixed forms containing both casuistic and apodictic formulations. While he considered the participial formulation of legal prescriptions to be apodictic law, there are good reasons to categorise such formulations under casuistic law. Some scholars have offered a more refined subdivision to that of Alt (cf. Cazelles 1946; Horton 1971) or have proposed changes in the terminology employed (e.g. Gerstenberger 1965; Boecker 1984\(^2\)). Alt’s thesis that apodictic law was typically Israelite has turned out to be untenable.


In terms of its origin, the Book of the Covenant stands apart from the Sinai event. Commentators correctly point out that the legal prescriptions of the former bear no demonstrable relationship in terms of content with the establishment of the covenant at Sinai and that

\(^{170}\) It is difficult to determine whether allusion is being made at this juncture to a tribal chief or a king. The former is more probable.
presence in the promised land is presupposed (people live in houses [Exod. 22:2, 7–8, Hebr. 22:1, 6–7] and ought to visit established sanctuaries [Exod. 23:17, 19]; reference is made to a grain and wine harvest [Exod. 22:29, Hebr. 22:28; cf. 23:10–11] and to olive trees [Exod. 23:11]). In the context of literary transmission, however, the Book of the Covenant is closely associated with the Sinai tradition (cf. how Exod. 24:1 clearly refers back to Exod. 20:22; see Alexander, op. cit., 1999).

The Book of the Covenant should be considered more of an expression of Israel’s desired law than an expression of its actual legal praxis. The “ordinances” and the apodictically formulated segments of this collection of laws contain traces of a legal system that conforms in many respects with Ancient Near Eastern legal norms and the spiritual values respected in Israel’s Umwelt.

A great deal has been written concerning the age of the Book of the Covenant. Given the total absence of reference to urban commercial culture and the monarchy (later interpolations excepted), a dating of the legal corpus during the period of the judges or the early period of the kings cannot be excluded.

3. Legislation concerning the tabernacle (Exodus 25–31, 35–40; Leviticus 8–9)

Wellhausen and his followers considered the biblical data concerning the tabernacle as a temporary and portable structure that housed the ark of the covenant, formed the focal point of the liturgy (Lev. 17:1–9) and served as “the tent of meeting” (Exod. 33:7), as the location of God’s revelation to be a historical fiction penned by post-exilic priestly authors and a projection of the Solomonic temple in the Mosaic period. Scholars have rightly criticised this presentation. Information concerning the tabernacle in Exodus 25–31, 35–40 and Leviticus 8–9 tends rather to represent the result of a combination of an extremely ancient tent tradition, as is still to be found in Exod. 33:7–11, and elements of a tabernacle tradition that had its roots in turn in traditions surrounding the wilderness sanctuary and Ancient Near Eastern temple traditions. The latter were indeed influenced, in part, by information gleaned from the Temple of Solomon (B. S. Childs, op. cit., 1974, pp. 512ff).

Scholars have endeavoured to solve the lack of harmony in the information we have at our disposal concerning the tabernacle by hypothesising three different redactions (Baentsch) or by presupposing the existence of two different layers of P throughout the entire Pentateuch (P^a and P^b: Von Rad and Galling). Such arguments have turned out to be unconvincing. Irregularities observable in texts relating to the tabernacle can be ascribed to a significant extent to later interpolations and to traces left behind by older traditions. Elements
of an ancient tent tradition that narrated God’s encounter with Moses (cf. Exod. 33:7–11) have been preserved in Exod. 25:22; 29:42; 30:6, 36. The ancient tabernacle tradition contained reference to the construction of a tent sanctuary with its various fittings according to the model thereof revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4). It is worthy of note that this presentation cannot be regarded as a constituent part of later priestly theology and as such cannot be found in Exodus 35–39(40).

While the aforementioned chapters consistently and closely follow God’s instructions as found in Exodus 25–31 with reference to the description of the implementation of the construction of the tabernacle, the differences should certainly not be ignored. The organisation of the material found in Exodus 25–31 on the one hand and in 35–39(40) on the other frequently differs. In terms of style and terminology, both text segments do not always follow the same path. Chapters 35–39(40), the Septuagint version of which differs extensively from that of the Masoretic tradition, represents a later stage in the development of the priestly theology than Exodus 25–31. No convincing argument has been raised to the present in support of dating the codification of the aforementioned chapters in the exilic, let alone post-exilic period. While the description of the tabernacle establishes a bridge with the temple of Solomon, it would be wrong to insist that the portable tent sanctuary of the wilderness period is a historical fiction, especially in light of the sanctuary at Shiloh (cf. Josh. 18:1, 8, 9; 1 Samuel 1–4; Jer. 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9) and the tent set up for the ark by David (2 Sam. 6:17).

4. The sacrificial laws (Leviticus 1–7)

In spite of their relatively late codification, the sacrificial laws of Leviticus 1–7, which would appear to have once existed as an independent collection (at least chapters 6–7; cf. Lev. 7:37–38), reflect ancient traditions associated with the temple in Jerusalem. It would likewise seem that cultic customs (certainly those of the Ancient Near East) tended to remain more or less unaltered over several centuries.

Together with Rendtorff (1954; 1967), one must distinguish between chapters 1–5, which contain a collection of cultic prescriptions for lay people, and chapters 6–7, which were written with the priests in mind. The latter chapters contain a list of rather short prescriptions, instructions concerning the sacrifice and the activities surrounding it. They are introduced by the stereotype formula: “This is the ritual of the burnt offering, grain offering etc.” (Lev. 6:9, 14, 25 [Hebr. 6:2, 7, 17]; 7:1, 11). The sequence of the various types of sacrifice here in chapters 6–7 (burnt offering, grain offering, sin offering, guilt offering, peace offering or offering of well-being) differs to a degree from that found in chapters 1–5 (burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, guilt offering). Particular emphasis is placed in chapters 6–7 on the parts of the sacrifice ascribed to the priests.

A number of sacrifices are designated as ‘iššê, which is better translated as “offering/oblation” ¹⁷¹ than “burnt offering” (cf. NBG). The burnt offering (Lev. 1:2–17; 6:8–13) was entirely consumed by flame and enjoyed a reconciliatory function. The grain offering (2:1–16; 6:14–23) was unleavened and unsalted as a sign of the covenant (2:13). The peace offering (3:1–17; 7:11–21, 28–34) was a voluntary oblation in thanksgiving or accompanying a vow. The expression “peace offering” is a translation of the Hebrew zèbach šelamîm and is not the best choice [better to speak of an “offering of well-being” (Grabbe, NRSV), of a “Heilsmahlopfer” (Elliger) or of a “Gemeinschaftsschlachtopfer” (Noth; Rendtorff)]. The sin offering (4:1–5:13; 6:24–30; Milgrom:

“purificatory offering”) was usually made in the context of unintentional sin. The guilt offering (5:14–6:7; 7:1–10; Milgrom: “reparation offering”) would appear to have been made in the context of unintentional blasphemy of one kind or another.

Information gleaned from Leviticus 1–7 does not provide a complete picture of Israel’s sacrifices since no reference is made therein to the libation and the function of the grain offering remains at least partly obscure.

Whether one should presuppose prophetic influence in the references to the fact that sin and guilt offerings were only to be made in the context of unintentional transgressions or sins committed due to negligence remains a question. It would seem that Jerusalem’s cultic legislation was associated with ethical prescriptions from early times (cf. Psalms 15 and 24).

5. The purification laws (Leviticus 11–16)


Purity and the lack thereof had a fundamental role to play in Israel’s religion and liturgy. Cultic purity or impurity should not to be interpreted in terms of hygiene but rather as referring to a state of physical and spiritual purity or impurity that made access to the holy and the Holy One possible or impossible. While cultic purity implies moral “purity” it makes no explicit reference thereto.

Leviticus 11–15 places the emphasis on matters that can be estab-
lished in the exterior forum. It is striking that reference to the sanctuary is barely evident in this regard, purity being related for the most part to every day life. Where priests had a role to play, they tended to function as diagnosticians and therapists (Gerstenberger).

The literary unity of Leviticus 11–15 is confirmed by the formulas introducing and concluding its six constituent parts: “YHWH spoke to Moses [and Aaron]” (11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 14:33; 15:1) and “this is the ritual of…” (11:46; 12:7b; 13:59; 14:32; 14:54ff.; 15:32–33).

In terms of content the following themes are treated: pure and impure animals (Leviticus 11, cf. Deut. 14:3–21); the impurity of a woman after the birth of her child (12); dangerous skin diseases (13:1–46)172 and related mould on clothing (13:47–59); purification offerings (14:1–32); the formation of moulds in houses (14:33–57)173 and male and female genital discharges (15).

In contrast to the preceding chapters, Leviticus 16, which describes the Great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)174 with its celebratory rites for both the sanctuary and the people (cf. Vriezen 1950), is oriented towards the religious community (cf. Lev. 23:26–32; Num. 29:7–11). It describes a number of ceremonies (especially that of the scapegoat,175 which removed sin in a physical-symbolic fashion) that would appear to be very old, some of which stemming from the pre-Israelite period.176

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6. The (so-called) Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26)


Since August Klostermann (1837–1915) many have been inclined to consider the prescriptions found in Leviticus 17–26 (with Leviticus 27 as appendix), which he styled the Holiness Code (H or P⁴), as an originally distinct collection.¹⁷⁷ The designation Holiness Code has its roots in the command: “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (19:2; cf. also 20:7, 26; 21:6–7, 8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32–33).

Determining the boundaries of H is not without difficulty. While Chapter 26, which announces blessing for those who keep the commandments and curse for those who do not, does appear to offer a fitting conclusion to a legal codex (cf. Exod. 23:20ff. and Deuteronomy 28), scholars are unable to agree on whether the chapter should be


¹⁷⁸ Already in K. H. Graf, Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments, Leipzig 1866, pp. 75–83, which designates Leviticus 17(18)–26 as a separate collection. The expression “Holiness Code” was coined by Klostermann.
considered to form the conclusion of a once independent H or of a larger literary complex.\footnote{R. Rendtorff (op. cit., 1954, p. 155) considers the chapter to be the conclusion to the entire law-giving event at Sinai beginning in Exodus 25 (cf. 26:46 and 27:34). See also Wagner, op. cit., 1974.} It is possible to consider Leviticus 17 with its stipulations concerning the place of sacrifice and the prohibition against the use of blood or carrion as analogous to Deuteronomy 12 and Exod. 20:24–26 and as the opening of H. In such a case, however, one will be obliged to note that this chapter lacks the prominent superscription\footnote{The introductory words of 17:1–2 constitute P’s customary introductory formula.} and formal characteristics evident in the following chapters. While it is possible to consider the expression “I am YHWH” (Lev. 18:2, 4, 5, 6 etc. up to and including 26:45) as a formula typical of H, one must also be aware that it occurs elsewhere (Exod. 6:7; 12:12; 29:46; Lev. 11:44; Num. 3:13, 41, 45; 10:10; 15:41).

Greater significance lies in the fact that chapters 18 and 20 contain doublets as well as evidence of a number of interpolations. Lev. 19:5–10, for example, would appear to interrupt the cohesion between the surrounding verses while the references to the calendar and the bread offerings in 24:1–9 constitute something of a Fremdkörper in the accepted collection. Similarly, the midrash in 24:10ff. concerning the punishment due for blasphemy is clearly a late interpolation (cf. Num. 15:32–36). Some segments of H, such as the prohibitions against incest (chapter 18), the determination of punishment in cases of incest (chapter 20) and the prescriptions found in 19:3–4, 11–12, 13–18, may indeed have originally existed as independent tractates. The command “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” or a related formulation thereof is lacking in chapters 23–26, although it has a parallel in Lev. 11:45 (outside H).

There would appear to be sufficient reason to doubt whether the Holiness Code ever existed as an originally independent collection that was later to be redactionally incorporated into P, let alone, as is often claimed, as a programme of reformation (written in the spirit of Deuteronomy). Besides the fact that it nowhere presents itself as such, H is clearly too irregular, too incomplete and (given the doublets) too confusing to be so considered. Eerdmans (1912) was thus inclined to reject the suggestion that Leviticus 17–26 may have been written to provide the community returning from exile in Babylon
with a programme for post-exilic worship in Jerusalem. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he likewise rejected the idea that H had ever functioned as an independent legal corpus. Elliger (HAT commentary, 1966) and Wagner (1974) later followed suit (cf. also Vink, *Leviticus* [BOT], 1962, p. 67 and Gerstenberger [ATD], 1993).

Elliger (commentary 1966) envisaged the origin and development of Leviticus 17–26 in four stages in line with which he distinguished four literary layers (P\^1–P\^4). Wagner (1974) considered H to be part of a literary unit running from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 26 (Exodus 25–31: sanctuary construction plans and inventory; Leviticus 1–7: rituals; Leviticus 11–22: cultic impurity; Leviticus 23, 25: sacred days; Leviticus 26: conclusion). Unable to find a distinct caesura in Leviticus 17, he rejected H as a once independent document.

While the exhortatory segments of H exhibit certain agreements with Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic preaching, agreements with Ezekiel are nonetheless of particular interest, especially those found in Leviticus 26 (cf. Lev. 26:4–13 with Ezek. 34:25–31; Lev. 20:2–6 with Ezek. 14:1–11). It is for this reason that H (if one prefers to uphold the idea of an independent collection) has been frequently dated in the period of the Babylonian exile (recognising at the same time that much older elements have been integrated therein; cf. Jagersma [1972]). It would appear, however, that Ezekiel was already familiar with Leviticus 26 and thus dependent on H (cf. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* 1 [BK], 1969, pp. 70* ff. and Milgrom).\footnote{J. Milgrom, “Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel”, in: C. A. Evans and S. Talmon (eds.), *The Quest for Context and Meaning* (FS J. A. Sanders), Leiden-New York-Cologne 1997, pp. 57–62.} A pre-exilic dating for the Holiness Code is thus more or less certain: Leviticus 17–26 contains (with the possible exception of Lev. 24:10–16) no compelling indications that might force us to date these chapters during or after the Babylonian exile. The presupposed prophetic influence on a number of chapters of H together with its resistance against ‘Canaanisation’ of Israel’s religion and cult, in particular the polemic against the worship of Molech (18:21; 20:1–7; cf. 2 Kgs 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; cf. Dronkert 1953), are easily explained as a reaction to the downfall of the Northern Kingdom and the cultic practices current in Judah at the time. Several segments of H may thus stem from the
seventh century BCE (cf. Eerdmans 1912). Ezekiel’s use of Leviticus 26 and the influence of Deuteronomistic circles on H allow us to conclude that the content of the Holiness Code stems in its final redaction from the last decennia of the Judean monarchy.

A number of scholars are inclined to focus in this regard on the period shortly after the reform of King Josiah (622 BCE), an event that must certainly have influenced priestly circles in Jerusalem. In the meantime, however, questions have been raised as to whether one should read Lev. 17:1–9 against the background of Deuteronomy 12:15–16, 20–25, in which the profane slaughter of cattle, sheep and goats is permitted under certain conditions. Given the reference to desert sacrifices to goat-demons (Lev. 17:7), Lev. 17:1–9 is clearly written from the perspective of Israel’s wilderness period. In the present author’s opinion, one should not read the said verses as a reference to the cultic centralisation prescribed by Deuteronomy and realised by King Josiah. The ordinance that cattle, sheep and goats were to be ritually slaughtered in the vicinity of the sanctuary (Lev. 17:3–9) can be explained simply as a measure insisted upon with Jerusalem as a city state in which the distance to the sanctuary was negligible (J. G. Vink, BOT 1962). The dominant theme in Leviticus 17, moreover, is that of blood and how one should treat it.

Lev. 17:1–16 decrees that every slaughter ought to take place in the vicinity of the altar of Yahweh so that its blood can be dashed against the altar and its fat burnt thereupon. It likewise forbids the consumption of blood (“for the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement”: v. 11). Those who hunt down a pure wild animal or bird are to pour out its blood and cover it with earth (vs. 13).

Leviticus 18 contains decrees against incest, certain forms of marriage and perverse sexuality that enjoy deep tradition-historical roots. The various laws in 19:1–20:27 sometimes exhibit parallels with texts from the Book of the Covenant and from Deuteronomy 12 and 26. The penal laws of 20:10–21 constitute, for the most part, a doublet of chapter 18. The stipulations found in 19:3–4 and 11–12 are reminiscent of the Ten Commandments and begin with the command to honour one’s father and one’s mother. It is possible, but far from

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182 It is not necessary to presuppose the situation after the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE) when Judah was reduced to a much smaller territory as R. Smend jr. does (p. 62).
certain, that we may be dealing here with a sort of “children’s deca-logue” (Vriezen). Chapter 21 contains holiness regulations for the priests who, in like fashion to the sacrificial animals, are not permitted to have any form of physical handicap. Chapter 22 follows with various provisions concerning the use of ‘sacred donations’ and chapter 24 contains a festival calendar. Lev. 24:17–22 deals with the right of retaliation or reprisal (jus talionis). Leviticus 25 contains various ordinances concerning the sabbath and the jubilee year. Leviticus 26 speaks, by way of conclusion, over blessing and curse. Chapter 27 contains reference to the redemption of different forms of vow and should be considered an appendix.

7. Various levitical and priestly laws (Numbers 5–6, 8–10, 15, 18–19, 27–30)

See the commentaries referred to under e. above.

R. Rendtorff, Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift, Göttingen 1963; D. Kellermann, Die Priesterschrift von Numeri 1,1 bis 10,10 literarkritisch und traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht (BZAW 120), Berlin 1970.

The laws we encounter in the book of Numbers are highly varied and, as a rule, of a late date. They follow upon an elaborate description of a census among the Israelites (Numbers 1) and the encampment of the tribes (2), together with a detailed report on the census of the Levites (3–4; cf. also Numbers 26 [Hebr. 25:19–26:65]).

Num. 5:1–4 contains the ordinance that “lepers” (cf. Leviticus 13), those with a flow of blood and those persons who had become impure by coming into contact with a corpse are to be expelled from the camp. Num. 5:5–10 goes into further detail on the offence of coveting another person’s property already mentioned in Lev. 6:1–7. Exhibiting the characteristics of a compilation, the text segment 5:11–31, the so-called “jealousy law”, describes the procedure that is to be followed in the event that a man should suspect his wife of adultery but lacks the necessary evidence to follow the usual legal proceedings. In order to determine her guilt or innocence, the woman is to submit herself to an ordeal whereby she is to drink water mixed with dust. As with the following law concerning the Nazarites

(6:1–21), this segment of the text at least contains a number of very ancient prescriptions.

Num. 6:22–27 contains the now familiar priestly blessing:

\[
yhwh \text{ bless you and keep you;} \\
yhwh \text{ make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;} \\
yhwh \text{ lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.}
\]

Chapter 7 concerning the sacrifice at the dedication of the tabernacle, 8:1–4 on the calendar, 9:15–23 on the columns of smoke and fire that cover the tabernacle, and 10:1–10 concerning the trumpets, provide a complement to the tabernacle laws in Exodus and clearly belong to the youngest traditions in this regard. From the literary perspective, Num. 9:1–14 would appear to be a late provision concerning “the second Passover”, dealing with the question as to what should happen when a person is unable to participate in the normal Passover period because of impurity or absence on a long journey.

Num. 15:1–16 constitutes a late edition of an ancient sacrificial table detailing the various grain offerings that were to accompany certain animal sacrifices. Vv. 17–21, which ordain that the first loaf from the first batch of dough is to be given to yhwh as a gift, is clearly an addition. Vv. 22–31 deal with the offerings to which the congregation or an individual is bound in the case of unintentional sin and form a possible older parallel to Lev. 4:1ff. Text segments that are probably to be considered young from the literary perspective include Num. 15:32–36, the narrative of the man who violated the sabbath rest, and 15:37–40 that commands the making of tassels on the corner of one’s garment as a reminder of the commandments


of the Lord, although the custom of making such tassels must have its roots in the pre-exilic period (cf. Deut. 22:12).

Numbers 18 determines the obligations and income of the priests and the Levites while Numbers 19 contains the legal prescriptions relating to the unusual and probably very old “ritual with the red heifer”, which was to be burned in its entirety and its ashes used for the waters of purification.\(^{186}\)

Following the narration of Israel’s second population census (chapter 26), 27:1–11 offers a midrash concerning the right of inheritance of daughters (cf. also chapter 36) while Numbers 28–29 contains a young sacrificial table detailing the obligatory sacrifices that were to be made each day and on specific feasts.

In an equally young tractate, Numbers 30 deals with the validity of vows made by women.

In spite of the fact that the laws of the book of Numbers tend, from the literary perspective, to be young, their content frequently harks back to very old customs and provisions.

g. Deuteronomy

You shall love \(\text{yhwh}\) your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might (6:5)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

The book Deuteronomy takes its name from the Greek term *deuteronomion* (“second Law”), which constitutes the Septuagint’s inaccurate translation of the Hebrew basic text of Deut. 17:18 (cf. also Josh. 8:32) which reads “copy of the Law (for the king)”. Chapters 12–26 of the document consist of an elaboration, reissue and actualisation of earlier laws, especially of several of those found in the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21–23) to which they continually refer. In its current form, Deuteronomy presents itself for the most part as Moses’ farewell discourse, made in the fields of Moab on the opposite side of the Jordan (1:1,5; 34:1; cf. Num. 22:1). Exceptions to this include the ethnographical and geographical records found in 2:10–12,20–23; 3:9,13 (conclusion)-14; 10:6–7, the designation of the free cities in 4:41–43, Deuteronomy 27 (composed of several different components and interrupting the cohesion of the surrounding chapters), passages in chapter 31 and the narratives from the book of Numbers continued in Deut. 32:48–52 and Deuteronomy 34.

These latter segments to one side, the remainder of the book exhibits an entirely unique character on account of its style, choice

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187 For a list of parallels between Exodus 21–23 and Deuteronomy see the commentary of G. von Rad (ATD), p. 8.
of terminology, composition and characteristic preaching and forms the central core of Israel’s historical writings. Deuteronomy 1–3(4) not only recapitulates the period in the wilderness from Horeb to the boundaries of the promised land, it also looks forward to the content of the books that follow, functioning thereby as a canonical bridge between the preceding books of the Torah and those of the Former Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings).

Deuteronomy is justifiably referred to as “the middle point of the Old Testament” (G. von Rad) and as “the middle point of biblical theology” (S. Herrmann 1971). Given the reworking of a considerable number of historical and prophetic books by Deuteronomists writing in the spirit of Deuteronomy, the “reformatory theology” expressed in the book has enjoyed significant and widespread elaboration.

The document consists of the following segments:

1:1–4:43 Superscription of the book (1:1–5) and historical prologue spoken by Moses in the form of a recapitulation of events since the departure from Horeb together with an exhortation to observe God’s law (4:1–40)\(^\text{188}\) and an interpolation concerning the free cities on the east side of the Jordan (4:41–43)

4:44–11:32 Introductory exhortations with a view to the laws offered thereafter in chapters 12–26

12–26 The laws of Deuteronomy

27 Addition relating to the memorial stones and altar on Mount Ebal; blessing on Mount Gerizim, curse on Mount Ebal

28 First concluding discourse: curse and blessing

29–30 Second concluding discourse: exhortation and words of comfort

31–34 Moses’ final ordinances, the song (32) and blessing of Moses (33) together with the description of his departure

A striking characteristic of the laws of Deuteronomy (12–26) is that they are presented within the framework of Mosaic speeches that exhibit a clearly homiletic flavour and an evidently exhortatory style: Deuteronomy does not offer a legislative codex in the strict sense of the term but rather a sermon concerning God’s commandments.

The book of Deuteronomy has been the subject of intensive research in the last two hundred years (for the history of research see Baumgartner 1929, Nicholson 1967, Loersch 1967, Seitz 1971). The literary and historical-critical approach to the book came to prominence after de Wette’s dissertation of 1805 and continued to set the trend throughout the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, reaching its high point in the work of Steuernagel (commentary 1900) and Hempel (1914). Form-critical and tradition-critical approaches to the book of Deuteronomy likewise exemplified in the publications of Welch (1924, 1932), Horst (1930) and Alt (1959), culminated in the impressive contributions of Von Rad (1929, 1948). Von Rad was of the opinion that the book contained allusions to a repeated cultic event and argued (together with Welch and Alt, among others) in favour of locating its origins in Northern Israel. In line with G. Mendenhall, others made reference to a deed of covenant or Bundesformular (Baltzer, McCarthy, Kline etc.). Scholars maintained that parallels were evident with Hittite and neo-Assyrian vassal treaties with their historical prologue, the obligation to remain faithful to the supreme lord, their legal stipulations and their blessing and curse formulas. Support for this hypothesis was sought in the fact that the vocabulary of Deuteronomy was frequently reminiscent of such treaties and that certain segments of the book (especially chapter 28) exhibited a degree of kinship therewith. In spite of the apparent parallels, however, the hypothesis has remained the subject of debate since it tended to ignore the differences between the vassal treaties and Deuteronomy. The suggestion of a close relationship between the two has thus been seriously undermined.

Recent decades have witnessed the emergence of a series of redaction-critical studies of Deuteronomy whereby the intentions of those who cast the book in its final form tend as a rule to be afforded greater interest than the endeavour to disentangle its preceding stages (Plöger 1967, Merendino 1969, Seitz 1971, Mittmann 1975).

The research of Noth and Perlitt has had a significant influence on the study of Deuteronomy. In his Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien of 1943 the former defended the thesis that Deuteronomy 1–3(4) constituted the introduction to the Deuteronomistic history and Deuteronomy 5–11 the laws of Deuteronomy. Perlitt (1969) denied the hypothesis that the covenant between yhwh and his people had been a central datum of Israel’s faith from the beginning and argued for the initial emergence of a covenant theology at the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the sixth century BCE.

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190 K. Baltzer, Das Bundesformular (WMANT 4), Neukirchen 1960.
as a Deuteronomistic response to the crisis initiated by the fall of Israel’s northern kingdom and the threat confronting the southern kingdom. Nicholson\textsuperscript{194} has correctly pointed out, however, that the prophet Hosea was already familiar with such a covenant theology in the eighth century BCE (cf. Hos. 6:7; 8:1).

The thesis once defended by Wellhausen and Steuernagel, for example, which claimed that Deuteronomy had existed in two different editions (chapters 1–4, 12–26, 27 and 5–11, 12–26, 28–30) and that the laws of chapters 12–26 had thus been provided with a \textit{double introduction} and \textit{epilogue}, has largely been abandoned. Such is clearly the case with respect to those who, together with Noth, consider Deuteronomy 1–3(4) as the introduction to an independent Deuteronomistic history spanning from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings. Childs (1979, pp. 213–215) has argued with a degree plausibility, however, that chapters 1–4 in the present text have the following legislation in mind (see also 1:5). Moses, in his opinion, recapitulated Israel’s history from the departure from Horeb in order to draw attention to the new and critical situation of the moment: a new generation, a new leadership (Joshua) and a new land (Canaan). During the period in the wilderness the older generation did not maintain its faith in the promised land and as such it was not allowed to enter it (1:19–2:15). The new generation, which had experienced God’s leadership and the defeat of the kings to the east of the Jordan (2:16–3:21), had to observe God’s commandments in Canaan (4:1–22) if it wanted to avoid dispersion among the nations (4:23–31). The aim of Deuteronomy was thus to actualise the law of the covenant in the aforementioned new situation.


Deut. 4:44–11:32 serves as an introduction to the legal stipulations found chapters 12–26. After reference to the establishment of a covenant on Mount Horeb (5), the new generation of the people are reminded in the so-called Shema (“hear”: 6:4) of the confession fundamental to Israel’s religion “\(\text{yhwh}\) is our God; \(\text{yhwh}\) is one” (6:4), called upon to love God (6:5) and to keep his commandments (6:6–9). A number of other exhortations follow: a warning not to follow other gods (6:10–19) and to pass on God’s statutes to future generations (6:20–25), to live as a people chosen and sanctified by \(\text{yhwh}\) (7:7–11) and to disassociate themselves from the peoples of Canaan (7:1–6; cf. vv. 17–26), not to forget God while enjoying the prosperity of the promised land (8) and not to insist on their own righteousness (9:4–6). Indeed, as history has repeatedly proven, Israel is a “stubborn people” (9:7–10:11). A comprehensive final exhortation (10:12–11:32) concludes the segment with a promise of blessing in response to obedience and an announcement of curse in response to disobedience to God’s commandments.

The above description of the content of chapters 5–11 does not preclude the possibility that they have a complicated literary and redactional history and that they exhibit evidence of literary-historical layers (Ploeger 1967, Seitz 1971, Lohfink 1990, 1991). Deuteronomy 5, Deut. 9:7b–10:5 (which further explains 9:7a) and 11:2–32 thus leave the impression that they stem from a later Deuteronomistic hand (R. Smend jr.).

The core of the book of Deuteronomy is formed by the laws of chapters 12–26, which doubtlessly contain a significant number of commandments stemming from a variety of periods with a complicated history. Scholars locate the original emphasis of these chapters either in liturgical purity (Reinheit) or in cultic centralisation (Einheit). The present text, nevertheless, explicitly demands the latter, once God has given his people rest from their enemies on every side and it lives in security (12:10, 14, 21, 26, cf. also 14:22–29; 15:19–23; 16:1–17; 17:8–13; 18:1–8).

One can broadly subdivide Deuteronomy 12–26 into stipulations concerning the cult (12:1–16:17), prescriptions concerning official ministries and institutions (16:18–18:22) and laws of various types (19:1–26:15). Much time and effort has been spent on disentangling the literary and redactional layers that can be distinguished in these chapters. Evidence of the fact that the collection of legal prescrip-
tions does not stem from one and the same author is provided by the doublets (e.g. 12:5–7, 12:11–12, 12:15–17 and 12:20–25) and irregularities (16:21–17:7, for example, interrupts the cohesion between 16:18–20 and 17:8–13).

Scholarly efforts to determine the relationship between the laws of Deuteronomy and those of the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21–23) have noted somewhat surprisingly that roughly half of the latter reappear in the former. The recurring material consistently tends to be formulated in a more detailed fashion in Deuteronomy than in the Book of the Covenant and would appear to be adapted to fresh socio-economic conditions and ethical insights. The suggestion that Deuteronomy was intended to replace the Book of the Covenant or even to suppress it (see Eissfeldt) lacks support. It is more likely that Deuteronomy presupposed Exodus 21–23 as binding law (Fohrer) and only offered those stipulations that required supplementation, correction and concretisation (Rendtorff).

For a survey of the older layers and constituent collections that can be found in Deuteronomy 12–26 cf. Preuss, *op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 112–132. See in addition the work of Merendino (1969) referred to above. The criteria that have resulted in the present composition of Deuteronomy 12–26 are not entirely transparent. This is particularly the case with respect to chapters 19–26. It is possible to ascribe the lack of consistent presentation in the material in part to the use of existing collections (see Merendino 1969 and Seitz 1971) and to later redactional interventions. In the context of distinguishing older and younger layers in the text of Deuteronomy 12–26 and in the preceding chapters, those who make use of the change in number from second person singular to second person plural and vice versa—so characteristic of the book—as an incontestable criterium for literary analysis (Hospers 1947, Braulik) must be placed on the same level as those who consider the same datum to be an exclusively stylistic feature. Indeed, the later Deuteronomistic segments of the book would appear for the most part to employ the plural (cf. esp. Minette de Tillesse 1962).

Chapters 28 and 29–30, however, which conclude the Mosaic discourse initiated in Deut. 1:6, also exhibit traces of considerable evolution.196 Chapter 27 has its own unique character, speaks of Moses

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in the third person and, from the literary perspective, forms a redactionally composite text. It includes the command to inscribe the Law on the memorial stones on Mount Ebal (cf. Jos. 8:30–35) and to build an altar there for ʾywhʿ,197 followed by the commission to perform a ritual of blessing and curse on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (cf. Deut. 11:29–30).198

The blessing and curse texts of chapter 28 constitute an appropriate conclusion to the preceding commandments of chapters 12–26 (cf. Leviticus 26).

After a new introduction (29:2; Hebr. 29:1) chapters 29–30 place the emphasis on the renewal of the covenant and announce the devastation of the land and the deportation of its inhabitants should the hearts of the people turn to the worship of foreign gods (29). At the same time, however, the prospect of liberation from exile after repentance is held up to the people and they are confronted with a fundamental option between blessing and curse (30).199

Chapters 31–34 relate the final deeds and instructions of Moses as well as his death. They constitute a considerably Deuteronomistic reworking of material borrowed from JE (and P ?). The Song of Moses (32)200 and the Blessing of Moses (33)201 are considered later additions.

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199 Song 7 of the Dutch *Liedboek voor de kerken* represents a masterful poetic rendition of Deut. 30:11–16 by Jan Wit.
Contemporary scholarship consistently dates the former to the period of the Babylonian exile. Such a hypothesis, however, is difficult to reconcile with the apparent fact that this substantial poem once enjoyed an independent existence: according to Eissfeldt’s202 “what is no people” (v. 21) refers to the Philistines and not to the neo-Babylonians, thus implying a considerably earlier date. In any event, the song now functions as “a witness against the Israelites” (31:19,21) to warn them of the consequences of abandoning Yahweh while assuring them that God will turn to his people (32:36–43). The Blessing of Moses (33) consists of (frequently ancient; cf. Genesis 49) tribal proverbs203 placed within the framework of a song from the period of the early monarchy that praises the magnificent deeds of Israel’s God.204 Deuteronomy 34 relates how Moses was allowed to see the promised land from afar but did not enter it. He died in the fields of Moab and no one “knows his burial place to this day” (34:6). “Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses” (34:10–12).

According to 2 Kings 22–23 a book of the law was found by the High Priest Hilkiah in the temple in Jerusalem, a discovery that led to the religious reform of King Josiah in 622 BCE. In addition to the centralisation of the liturgy, this reform led, among other things, to cultic purification of Jerusalem’s temple, to the deconsecration of the “high places” (in which syncretistic religion had continued to thrive) and to the destruction of the altar at Bethel (2 Kgs 23:4–20). Following de Wette’s dissertation in 1805, the hypothesis that the book of Deuteronomy (at least in its oldest form) was identical with the book of the law discovered in the temple at the time of King Josiah has continued to enjoy considerable support.


Even if one is inclined to accept the information provided by 2 Kings 22–23 to be historically reliable, however, the question of the origins and date of (proto-)Deuteronomy continues to lack a definitive response. It is clear in any event that the core of the work offers a renewal of the Book of the Covenant found in Exodus 21–23. In one perspective, however, it goes a step further than the Book of the Covenant, at least in principle, namely with respect to the centralisation of the cult in the place chosen by יהוה (cf. Deuteronomy 12 together with Exod. 20:24). At the same time, when compared with the Book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy characteristically reinforces the emphasis on humanitarian and social legislation in a fashion that would appear to bear the mark of prophecy and Wisdom (22:1–4; 23:9–10, 15–16, 19–20; 24:6–22; 25:13–16; cf. also Deut. 5:14–15). Deuteronomy’s fervent insistence on obedience to the commandments and the love of God “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5) is likewise impressive.

While a number of exegetes prefer to see Deuteronomy either as a consequence of Josiah’s reform or as the precursor thereto, there would appear to be good reason (with the recognition of later Deuteronomistic reworkings) to locate the origin of the document in an early period. Indeed, more or less every period in the history of Ancient Israel has been proposed as the point of origin of the book or at least significant parts thereof. While they may not go so far as to ascribe Deuteronomy directly to Moses, conservative scholars are inclined to date it roughly to the period in which he lived and to see it as a covenant charter that was later reworked and expanded in the spirit of Moses (Craigie, commentary 1976; Kline 1963). Others have proposed the period of the judges (Wijngaards, commentary 1971) or of Samuel (Oestreicher 1923, Welch 1924, 1932) as the time at which at least the core of the book came into existence. Kinship between the preaching of Deuteronomy and the traditions of the Elohist (E), the Elijah narratives and Hosea (cf. also Deut. 27:12–26) has led a considerable number of scholars (including Bentzen 1926, Alt 1953, von Rad, commentary 1964) to locate Deuteronomy as a whole or for the most part in the Northern Kingdom, based

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on the argument that the book was brought to Jerusalem after the fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE) by refugees from the north in like fashion to the book of Hosea. Others still are inclined to ascribe the authorship of the core of the book to court scribes from the time of King Hezekiah who had been influenced by Wisdom literature (Weinfeld 1972, Lohfink 1963, Braulik 1988, Preuss 1982), while a further group consider the work to be a reaction to religious decline and syncretism rooted in a protest movement among those who had remained faithful to יְהֹוָה at the time of King Manasseh (Steuernagel, commentary 19232; Lindblom 1971). Some locate the origins of the book among Judean circles “the elders of the land” (see Bächli,206 cf. also Albertz).207

If one is not inclined to envisage the discovery of the book of the law in the temple during the reign of King Josiah as a deliberately staged event (pia fraus), then (proto-)Deuteronomy must have been absent from public view for a considerable period of time in Judah in the first three quarters of the seventh century BCE. The present author thus prefers to give priority to the thesis that Deuteronomy stems for the most part from Northern Israel. Affinities with the Elohist (E), the Elijah narratives and Hosea support such a proposal together with the ancient traditions evident in the book.

While it is likely that the document was enlarged by Deuteronomistic writers in the spirit of Deuteronomy after the reforms of King Josiah, distinction between the segments introduced in the course of such a redaction and those introduced when the document was published as a discourse of Moses continues to be a matter of dispute.208

Deuteronomy places considerable emphasis on God’s covenant with and election of Israel (Deuteronomy 5 and 7:7–10). While these concepts may not owe their origins to the book of Deuteronomy, they remain determinative for the spiritual framework in which the preaching of the book is presented. The relationship between יְהֹוָה and his people is founded on God’s gracious election and the covenant of the promise, ratified by the exodus from Egypt and the gift of

206 O. Bächli, Israel und die Völker. Eine Studie zum Deuteronomium (AThANT 41), Zurich 1962.
208 Cf. G. Braulik, in: E. Zenger u.a., Einleitung in das Alte Testament, Stuttgart 19982, pp. 132–35. An attempt to designate the various literary layers of Deuteronomy can be found in Preuss, op. cit., 1982, pp. 46–61, see also pp. 33ff.
the land (7:7ff). Deuteronomy aspires to the goal of one single people in the service of the one God who has made it his own, one single liturgy in the one place יְהֹוָה has chosen for himself, and loving and God-fearing obedience in the land that He has given to Israel. The obedience called for serves as the unequivocal response to יְהֹוָה’s salvific deeds. The election of Israel from among the nations does not only imply the absolute rejection of every form of idolatry, magical practice and impurity. Aware of Israel’s history, it also demands an unremitting engagement on behalf of the socially vulnerable, those bound to slavery and those who shared the land. Even if one is inclined to locate the codification of Deuteronomy in the seventh century BCE, one is unable to escape the impression that the book serves to actualise extremely ancient Israelite religious and ethical values that may indeed have their roots in the time of Moses.

h. Joshua

The story might easily have been told as an epic of national achievement; but it is told, not to the glory of Israel, but to the glory of Yahweh (G. W. Anderson)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


The book of Joshua forms a continuation of the conclusion to the book of Deuteronomy (cf. Josh. 1:1) and takes its name from the primary figure featured in the book, Joshua the successor of Moses. In line with his predecessor, Joshua exhorts the people to sanctify...
themselves prior to important events (Josh. 3:5; 7:13; cf. Exod. 19:10), offer prayers of intercession for Israel (7:6–9; cf. Exod. 32:11–13; Deut. 9:25) and addresses the leaders of the people in a farewell discourse prior to his death (23:1ff.; cf. Deut. 31:1ff.). In spite of the similarities, however, he is clearly not a second Moses. He is obliged to follow the instructions of his predecessor (1:7,13; 4:10; 8:30–31; 11:15) and adhere to the Law of Moses (1:8; 8:31,34). Such details evidently stem, however, from a Deuteronomistic source and are of little assistance in our efforts to trace the historical Joshua.

The book of Joshua recounts the conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan and the subdivision thereof among the tribes of Israel (for the territories assigned to the Trans-Jordanian tribes of Ruben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh see Numbers 32; Josh. 13:8ff.; 17:1). The primary narrative line of the text portrays the fulfilment of the promise of the land from Deuteronomy, which is coupled in its turn with the promise of the land found in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis (Deut. 30:20). The book consists of three principle parts:

a. the conquest of the land (1–12)
b. the subdivision of the land (13–21)
c. the concluding chapters (22–24).

After the introduction, in which Joshua is ascribed the task of taking possession of the land (1), the narrative recounts how two Israelite spies arrived in Jericho where they were protected from arrest by the prostitute Rahab (2), how the people crossed the Jordan with the ark of the covenant (3–4), how the men of Israel were

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circumcised at Gibeath-haaraloth (Hill of Foreskins) and how they kept the Passover (5:1–12),211 how the commander of the army of yhwh appeared to Joshua (5:13–15), how Jericho was miraculously occupied (6)212 and Ai (after initial defeat on account of Achan’s misappropriation of the ‘devoted things’)213 conquered214 (7:1–8:29), how Joshua built an altar for yhwh on Mount Ebal and read out the Law of Moses215 (8:30–35), how the Gibeonites were spared dispersion on account of their cunning (9),216 how Joshua came to the assistance of Gibeon against the five kings, killed the latter217 and occupied their territory (10) and how a Canaanite coalition was defeated in the north by the waters of Merom and Hasor was destroyed218 (11).


218 A. Malamat, “Hazor, the Head of All Those Kingdoms”, JBL 79 (1960),
The entire segment is rounded off with a survey of conquered territories and a (potentially old) list of defeated kings (11:16–12:24).219

After mention is made of the as yet unconquered territories (13:1–7) and the subdivision of the Trans-Jordanian territories is recounted (13:8–33) the greater portion of chapters 14–19 offer a detailed survey of the inheritances of the tribes (Levi does not receive an inheritance but rather a few cities and pasture for their flocks and herds [4:14], for “the offerings to יְהֹוָה” and “יְהֹוָה, the God of Israel, himself” are their inheritance [see 13:14,33]; Joseph is subdivided into Ephraim and Manasseh). This sizeable portion of the text is followed by a series of stipulations concerning the cities of refuge (20)220 and a list of Levite cities (21).221

For the content of chapters 22–24 see below.

The genesis and evolution of the book of Joshua is much disputed and difficult to determine. Distinction should be made between a literary-critical approach proposed, among others, by Wellhausen, Smend sr.,222 Eissfeldt and Fohrer who maintain that the sources encountered in the Pentateuch are also to be found in Joshua, and the tradition-historical view proposed by Noth (1943; following Alt) whereby the book in its present form is considered a component part of his postulated Deuteronomistic history. Both approaches are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, both draw attention to the fact that

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Given the fact that the proponents of classical source theory are inclined as a rule to ascribe only a few verses in Joshua 1–12 to P (4:19; 5:10–12; 9:17–21), several scholars prefer to speak in this regard of a redactor writing in the style of P rather than a continuation of the source as it is found present in the Pentateuch.

The material providing the basic foundations of the narratives found in chapters 2–11(12) is not infrequently ascribed to E, at least for the most part. Others have argued in favour of an original short narrative to be ascribed to J that has been reworked in the spirit of the Elohist (see, for example, Vriezen). The attribution of the foundational component elements of Joshua 2–11 to E is rooted, nevertheless, in a negative consideration. While it is maintained that Judges 1 presupposes that the conquest of Canaan was the result of the activities of individual tribes, Joshua 2–11 appears to presuppose a combined Israelite action. Scholars endeavour to ascribe Judges 1 to J, proposing it to be an extract from the latter’s narrative concerning the conquest of the promised land (whereby a number of fragments, exclusively located in Joshua 13–21 would appear to correspond at the level of content: Josh. 15:13–19 [par. Judg. 1:11–15]; 15:63 [par. Judg. 1:21]; 16:10 [par. Judg. 1:29]; 17:11–13 [par. Judg. 1:27–28]; 19:47 [par. Judg. 1:34–35]). As a consequence, E is considered to be the author of the greater part of the original material of Joshua 2–11. Considerations related to Judges 1 aside (see under Judges below), there would appear, nevertheless, to be no decisive content based arguments available in support of such a conclusion. Not even an approximate degree of consensus has been achieved concerning the relevant distribution of the material contained in Joshua 2–11 over the hypothetical source documents J and E proposed for the Pentateuch!

For these reasons, a significant number tend to opt for the alternative proposed by Noth with regard to the origins and evolution of Joshua 1–12. Within the framework of his proposed Deuteronomistic history, Noth was inclined to reject the idea that Pentateuchal sources had continued into the book of Joshua. He maintained the presence of a series of primarily etiological and ortsgebunden sagas in Joshua
that, with the exception of a few reports related to Shechem (8:30–35; cf. 24) and Hasor (11), all had their roots in the south. According to Noth, the sagas of Joshua 2–9 were coordinated with the traditions of Joshua 10–11 around 900 BCE by a Judean who related them in a secondary sense with the (Ephraimitic) figure Joshua.

As noted above, Noth’s thesis tends to reduce the Pentateuch to little more than a torso, given that a JE narrative concerning the Landnahme is lacking, which in light of the content and predisposition of the JE histories in Exodus and Numbers can scarcely be missed. Noth was forced to accept, therefore, that the JE narrative concerning the conquest of the land had worked itself loose and been misplaced in favour of the description of the same event in Joshua 2–11.

In line with Noth, scholars frequently refer to etiological Benjaminite traditions in the case of Joshua 2–9, related to locations near or in the vicinity of the sanctuary at Gilgal where they were transmitted in the context of the cult (the ruined walls of Jericho [6], the house of Rahab [2 and 6:22–25], the twelve stones taken from the Jordan and set up at Gilgal [4:20–24], the ruins of Ai [8:28], the services performed by the Gibeonites at the sanctuary [9] etc.). Others correctly insist that etiological elements do not tend to play a primary role in the origins of historical traditions.224 Traditions are not in the habit of originating from scenic or other phenomena or from customs. Etiological elements in historical traditions would thus appear to be consistently secondary (cf. Josh. 4:20–21). Nevertheless, traditions are ortsbunden in the sense that they have a Haftpunkt in a particular environment, e.g. a sanctuary (in the case of Joshua 2–9 that of Gilgal): they tend much more to be associated with individuals and groups, e.g. a people. The fact that the traditions found in Joshua 2–9 are located for the most part on Benjaminite territory does not as such provide conclusive proof that we are dealing with traditions originally associated with the sanctuary at Gilgal. The thesis that Joshua was related to these traditions at a secondary level is thus, at the very least, open to question.

If one is inclined to ascribe a secondary role to the etiological elements in the narratives of Joshua 2–9, however, the degree of historical reliability of the traditions that speak of violent actions on the part of the Israelites tends to increase significantly. Such an observation does not alter the fact that the conquest of the land of Canaan in a coordinated action of all the tribes

223 The term etiological is employed for a narrative that explains the origins of a custom, practice or specific geographical phenomenon: cf. 4:9 (the memorial stones); 5:9 (the name of Gilgal); 9:21,27 (the Gibeonites as lumberjacks and drawers of water).

of Israel under Joshua’s leadership ought to be understood as a late proposition based on evidence from elsewhere in the Old Testament. The image presented in Judges 1 of a gradual conquest of the land of Canaan by individual tribes spread over a considerable period of time and with only partial success suggests a greater degree of historical reliability than the theological conception thereof (with its own merits) presented in the book of Joshua. The inconsistencies observable in the Pentateuch are not infrequently also evident in Joshua 2–9. The crossing of the Jordan, for example, is referred to on two occasions (3:1–4:1; 4:10–11). According to Josh. 4:8 (cf. also 4:20) twelve stones were taken from the river Jordan and set up at Gilgal, while 4:9 speaks of the setting up of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan.\footnote{The Dutch NBG translation obscures the contradiction by translating “also” in 4:9, a term not supported by the basic text.} The narrative of the fall of Jericho (chapter 6), originally a liturgical text (Hertzberg), exhibits a whole series of irregularities (Soggin). According to 8:3 Joshua positioned thirty thousand men in ambush to the rear of Ai on the evening before the second attack on the city, while 8:12 states that he sent five thousand men to the same place on the following morning. Both 10:26 and 10:37 report the death of the king of Hebron. According to 10:38–39 the city of Debir was captured by Joshua, according to 15:15–17 (cf. Judg. 1:11–13) by a certain Othniel. Of course, while such inconsistencies and doublets do not prove that the sources of the Pentateuch continue into the book of Joshua, they do require us to account for the fact that the transmitted text exhibits evidence of literary layers.

All things considered, it remains difficult to make a choice between the claims of the supporters of the source hypothesis, who find evidence of JE (and P) in the book of Joshua, and those who insist that the Pentateuchal sources do not continue into Joshua. Should one be inclined to doubt the thesis proposed by Noth that the narratives are primarily etiologically determined, then it remains possible, at least in principle, that JE traditions lie at the foundations of chapters 2–11, all the more so if one considers that J and E are better understood as tradents rather than authors and that P can be identified elsewhere in the book. One the other hand, given the thorough Deuteronomistic reworking of the book, a JE substratum is not directly demonstrable.\footnote{G. Ernest Wright correctly points out in the commentary of Boling (AB): “As for the pre-Deuteronomistic material in chaps. 2–11 the question as to whether they are a continuation of Pentateuchal JE can only be raised; it cannot be answered” (p. 66). He himself is somewhat skeptical with respect to this possibility, however, since the formulation of the allusions to the passage through the Sea of Reeds in Josh. 2:10 and 4:23, for example, does not exhibit any agreements with Exodus 14.} It is the present author’s contention, therefore, that...
while pre-Deuteronomistic elements are present in chapters 2–11, these elements have been disguised to such an extent by a later Deuteronomistic redaction (under priestly influence) that they are virtually unrecognisable.

In earlier editions of the present volume Vriezen argued that one can detect evidence in the narrative of Rahab’s rescue of the spies (Joshua 2; cf. 6:22–25), the circumcision with stone knives (5:2–3; cf. Exod. 4:25), the manner whereby yhwh himself intervened in the battle (10:10–14) and the criticism that yhwh was not consulted in the deception of the Gibeonites (9:14) of Yahwistic features. On the other hand, however, he observed that a direct allusion to the promise of the land made to Abraham in the book of Genesis was lacking (which one ought to expect in relation to J) and that the governing role played by the Northern Israelite hero Joshua in the events of the book, together with the highly nationalistic predisposition thereof, explicitly argued against Yahwistic origins. Vriezen favoured a complete Elohist reworking of a short J narrative, whereafter Deuteronomists thoroughly reworked and supplemented the material as a whole along anti-Canaanite lines (cf. also R. Smend sr.) and priestly authors included further interpolations. As is often the case with respect to the Pentateuch, he was of the opinion that it was not always possible to distinguish segments reminiscent of E and J from one another.

Vriezen’s thesis is attractive in a number of ways. It allows one, for example, to accept priestly interpolations in chapters 3–6 in particular, in which the ark of the covenant has a central role to play, in spite of the fact that the Deuteronomistic redaction of the book contradicts the thesis that such interpolations were the last to be introduced (cf. also evidence of P in chapters 13–21 in Deuteronomistic context). Josh. 2:1 and 3:1 apparently presuppose Num. 25:1 (Shittim!). In light of Num. 27:12–29(P) and Deut. 31:14–17,23(E), the suggestion that Joshua (the Ephraimite!) acquired a leading role in the narratives of Joshua 2–9 at a later, secondary stage (see Noth) is open to question.

In addition to segments concerning the cities of refuge (20) and the cities ascribed to the Levites (21) in the context of the framing narratives (cf. 13:1–7 and 17:14–18; 18:1–10 and 19:49–51) chapters 13–21 describe the boundaries of the individual tribal territories and offer, in addition, a list of place names together with a number of short reports concerning the Canaanites who continued to live in the land.227 Both Alt (1927) and Noth (commentary 1938, 1953)

have argued that the boundary descriptions (in which Simeon, Dan and Issachar are missing) stem from the period of the judges. Alt (1925) maintained, furthermore, that the lists of place names belonging to Judah (15:21–62), Benjamin (18:21–28) and Simeon (19:2–8) as well as the brief references to Issachar, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali (Ephraim and Manasseh are missing) stem from the time of King Josiah (639–609). In recent decades, however, scholars have tended to date the boundary descriptions later than Alt and Noth had proposed and the lists of place names earlier. While Alt and Noth were similarly inclined to date the lists of the cities of refuge (20) and the Levite cities (21) during the time of King Josiah, more recent studies have revealed that the establishment of both traditions dates back to around the tenth century BCE.

Previous literary-historical criticism has found so many P elements in 13:15–32, 14:1–5 and segments of chapters 15–22 that it has become difficult to subscribe to Noth’s thesis that chapters 13ff. represent a Deuteronomistic text that made use of older material. P appears at this juncture, nevertheless, within the framework of a Deuteronomistic redaction.

Chapters 13–21 also exhibit a number of inconsistencies and discrepancies, which in turn point to the disparate origin of the segments in question and/or later reworking. In 15:60, for example, Kiriath-jearim is counted as part of the inheritance of Judah while 18:28 includes it among the towns of the tribe of Benjamin. Eshtaol similarly belongs to Judah in 15:33 and to Dan in 19:41. Territorial boundaries combined with lists of place names are not provided for every tribe while the allotment of territory to Caleb is described twice (14:6–15; 15:13–19).

Chapters 22–24 contain reference to the return of the Trans-Jordanian tribes after they had provided assistance in the conquest of Canaan together with the account of their construction of an altar in the

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region near the Jordan which the tribes west of the Jordan considered a rebellion against the Lord (chapter 22). While ancient sources would appear to have served as the basis of the chapter, a comprehensive Deuteronomistic reworking thereof is hard to refute. Chapter 23 contains the farewell discourse of Joshua (without specific location), which exhibits clear of evidence of Deuteronomistic authorship. Joshua 24, which narrates the so-called “alliance of Shechem” is evidently based on ancient traditions, especially in light of the fact that Joshua is not related to Shechem elsewhere in the book that bears his name (with the exception of 8:30–35; cf. Deut. 27:1–8). While the text gives the impression that the alliance took place immediately prior to Joshua’s death, the chapter nevertheless lacks a farewell discourse in the strict sense of the term. Indeed, it would appear more than anything else to consist of a self-obligation on the part of the people to serve YHWH. Some commentators argue that the chapters represent the reflection of a repeated cultic celebration of the renewal of the covenant in the tribal community. Recent research tends to be hesitant in supporting the once current and much defended position that we are dealing here with an E narrative enriched with Deuteronomistic interpolations. Chapter 24 concludes with reference to the death of Joshua and the location of his grave (24:29–30; cf. Judg. 2:8–9), a note alluding to Israel’s fidelity to YHWH during

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232 The supporting arguments would appear to have been undermined by M. Noth in his commentary on Joshua (pp. 138f.).

Joshua’s lifetime and that of the elders who outlived him (24:31; cf. Judg. 2:7), a report stating that the bones of Joseph transported from Egypt were buried at Shechem (24:32; cf. Gen. 50:24–25; Exod. 13:19) and a text concerning the death of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and the city of his burial (24:33).

The reworking of ancient literary traditions portraying the conquest and subdivision of the land in the book of Joshua exhibits clear evidence of Deuteronomistic theology. One the one hand, the unconditional divine gift of the promised land and its conquest as a whole is accentuated (cf. 1:3–5; 11:16–23; 21:43–45), while on the other hand the complete occupation thereof is made to depend on the people’s obedience to the Law of Moses (cf. 1:7–9a; 23:6–7) and reference is made to several regions that did not fall to the Israelites (cf. 13:1–7; 23; see also 15:63; 16:10; 17:11–13). Scholars remain at odds with regard to the possibility of a double Deuteronomistic redaction of the book on account of this discrepancy (cf. Smend jr. 1971). Childs (1979) maintains that chapters 1–12 of the book portray the period of Joshua as a paradigm for an obedient Israel and is unable to detect any internal contradiction with respect to texts such as Josh. 23:12–13.

Notwithstanding the fact that it offers a continuation of the narratives found in the Pentateuch, the book of Joshua ultimately separated itself from the latter, in spite of its profoundly Deuteronomistic reworking. Vriezen presumed that the priestly interpolations of cultic material in the Pentateuch had placed such a strong accent on Israel’s ancient liturgy and the classical period of revelation to Moses that the first part of Israel’s history had to be separated from the documents that had appended themselves thereto. His observations in this regard, however, have to do with a canonical development and as such have little to say with respect to the literary relationship between the Pentateuch and the texts that follow it.

i. Judges

The judges also, with their respected names, whose hearts did not fall into idolatry and who did not turn away from the Lord—may their memory be blessed (Sirach 46:11)
Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

The book of Judges takes its name from the six “major judges” and the six “minor judges” whose activities during the period prior to the emergence of Israel’s monarchy are not infrequently designated as “judging”:

234 Othniel (3:5–11), Ehud (3:12–30), Barak (together with Deborah: 4–5), Gideon (6–8), Jephthah (10:6–12:7), Samson (13–16) and Shamgar (3:31),


The book can be divided into three parts:

a) a survey of the military campaigns of the southern tribes and the house of Joseph (1:1–26) together with a list of territories not conquered by Israelite tribes (the so-called negative Besitzverzeichnis 1:27–36)
and the narrative concerning YHWH’s messenger at Bochim\textsuperscript{236} (2:1–5) [the “prologue”];

b) the narratives concerning the judges (3:7–16:31) preceded by an exhaustive Deuteronomistic introduction (2:6–3:6);

c) the establishment of the sanctuary at Dan (17–18) and the outrage at Gibeah together with its consequences (19–21) [the “epilogue”].

Sections a) and c) thus make no allusion to the judges.

Judg. 1:1–2:5 is often considered to be “an important chapter, an (albeit with later interpolations) historical source of the highest order” (Vriezen) and at the same time to be the conclusion to the Yahwistic history (J). The few agreements to be observed therein with specific texts from the book of Joshua (15:13–19; 15:63 [against which background it is suggested that Judg. 1:21 be corrected]; 16:10; 17:12) leave one with the impression that we are dealing in principle with an ancient document, an impression supported in part by the anecdotal characteristics the text exhibits in places (1:12–15, 23–26). The document offers a different image of the conquest of the promised land, however, to that represented by the book of Joshua: Joshua does not have a role to play, the tribes act independently and the “entrance” into the land is more of a gradual infiltration than a swift invasion; instead of an extermination of the local population the text speaks of an expulsion. This latter datum points in the direction of the spiritual disposition of J, which is more lenient towards the world of the nations than E and less particularistic. Whether we are thus entitled to consider Judg. 1:1–2:5 as the conclusion to the Yahwistic history or as an excerpt from the J narrative concerning the conquest of the land remains a question. In the present author’s opinion the character of the text is too heterogeneous to warrant such a conclusion. However one is inclined to interpret the relationship between Josh. 24:28–31 and Judg. 2:6–9 (repetition with a few minor differences), it has been firmly established that Judg. 1:1–2:5 was once an independent document that was added to the book at a later date.\textsuperscript{237} This addition probably took place in order to explain

\textsuperscript{236} Possibly to be identified with Bethel.

\textsuperscript{237} The words “it happened after the death of Joshua” (1:1a), which establish a link with the conclusion to the Book of Joshua, do not, however, form a part of the original document: the death of Joshua is only referred to in Judg. 2:8 and the texts that Judg. 1:1–2:5 has in common with the book of Joshua refer to events prior to the death of Joshua (Josh. 15:13–19,63; 16:10; 17:12).
how the Israelites had allowed themselves to be so strongly influenced by the cult of the Canaanites in the period of the judges. In contrast to what is implied in the book of Joshua, the book of Judges suggests that the Israelites were unable to totally eradicate the cult of the former inhabitants of Canaan. Judg. 1:19b and 1:27–36 are of particular historical significance because they serve to identify those regions that were still Canaanite in the early period of the kings.

The core of the book of Judges can be found in Judg. 2:6–16:31, a extensive portion of text that has undergone a complex evolution. It consists of a collection of narratives presented for the most part within a specific framework: Israel does what is evil in the eyes of YHWH (3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1), He surrenders them into the hand of their enemy (3:8; 4:2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1), the Israelites call out thereafter to YHWH (3:9,15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10), He raises up a deliverer for the Israelites (3:9,15), the enemy is humiliated (3:30; 4:23; 8:28; 11:33) and rest is restored to the land (3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28). This framework is only complete in the case of the narrative of Ehud (3:12–30) and as good as complete with respect to the narratives concerning Deborah and Barak (4–5) and Gideon (6–8). The framework is not original to the narratives themselves since it tends to deviate from the latter at both the linguistic and stylistic levels and locate the emphasis differently: while the narratives associate the actions of individuals and tribes with hostile threats, the framework blames the situation of distress on Israel’s sin. This does not detract from the possibility that the narratives existed as an independent collection, dominated by a pan-Israelite perspective and by the holy wars whereby YHWH delivered his people, prior to the imposition of the framework.

While the framework of 3:7–11 (in part); 3:12–15a (in part), 30; 4:1a, 2a, 3a, 23–24; 5:31b; 6:1–2a, 6b; 8:28, 33–35 (in part); 10:6–16 (in part) and 11:33b is often taken to be Deuteronomistic, Beyerlin (1963) has shown that we are in fact dealing with a pre-Deuteronomistic structure rooted in the admonitions of the covenant feast and reset in narrative-didactic style. In agreement with the origins of the traditions concerning the major judges, Beyerlin maintains that the framework (with the exception of 3:7–11) stems from northern Israel. 2:11–19 (to which 2:20–3:6 was apparently added at a later date) and 6:7–10, however, are evidently of Deuteronomistic authorship. Those who follow Beyerlin are obliged to accept that the Deuteronomistic redaction of the book was significantly more limited than is generally accepted.
A good example of the genesis and evolution of the narratives relating to the judges can be found in that concerning Ehud in Judg. 3:12–30. The core of the narrative (3:15b–25) is made up of a folk tale intended to glorify a local hero. The accent has shifted, however, on account of later interpolations, to focus on yhwh who brought about the unmitigated defeat of the Moabites through the mediation of Ehud. In the final phase of the tradition, the king of Moab becomes an instrument in the hand of God to punish Israel and Ehud’s intervention becomes a deed of divine clemency towards a sinful people.

Chapters 4 and 5 speak of Israel’s victory against the forces of Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, the “king of Canaan” who reigned in Hazor (cf. Josh. 11:1–15), under the leadership of Deborah and Barak. Chapter 4 is written in prose while chapter 5 (the well-known Song of Deborah) is written in poetry. While both chapters would appear in principle to be relating the same events, they are not identical in terms of content. The core of chapter 4 is to be located in the story, set in an historical context, of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who murdered Sisera in his sleep, thereby running counter to every Ancient Near Eastern rule of hospitality. Traces of literary growth are also evident in the Song of Deborah (chapter 5) that sings of the victory against Sisera: the core consists of 5:12–30, one of the oldest poetic pieces in Israel’s literature, while 5:2–11 and 5:31 transform it into a song of praise in honour of yhwh.

The Gideon narrative (6–8), with the ancient tradition concerning Abimelech of Shechem as its appendix (9), enjoys a double background in two traditions that have been reworked according to the capacity of the author to form a single unit. In one narrative the judge is named as Gideon who defeats the Midianites, calling out the men of Ephraim who kill the Midianite captains Oreb

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and Zeeb. In the other narrative (continued in chapter 9), however, the judge is referred to as Jerubaal who defeats the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna. In the latter account, which is possibly older than the former, the theme of kingship is treated: Gideon rejects it on theocratic grounds (8:23) while the so-called Jotham fable or the Parable of the Trees (9:8–15)\(^{240}\) contains a pointed satire on the value of the monarchy. In his book Das Königtum Gottes (1936)\(^2\) Martin Buber makes an appeal on the basis of Judg. 8:23 in favour of the ancient character of the idea of theocracy in Israel (cf. also Samuel 7–12; see below). Indeed, the possibility that the representation of YHWH as king arose in Israel under the influence of ancient traditions concerning El as god-king during the period of the judges cannot be rejected out of hand.

The narratives referred to thus far stem from northern Israel. The content of this Retterbuch (Richter 1964) is surrounded and enclosed by information concerning Othniel (3:7–11) and information concerning the minor judges (10:1–5; 12:7–15) associated with the Jephthah narrative (10:6–12:6) together with the narratives relating to Samson (13–16).

The narrative concerning Othniel lacks specific detail and would appear to be based on the framework accounts of the Retterbuch. Its Judean background (Othniel is presented as belonging to the tribe of Caleb: 3:9) is nevertheless clear and points in the direction of a Beispielstück (Wellhausen), intended to include Judah, which remained unmentioned in the deliverance accounts, in the events that took place in the period of the judges.

The narratives concerning Jephthah\(^{241}\) and Samson\(^{242}\) are introduced by a segment (10:6–16) in which the sin of Israel is expressed

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\(^{240}\) B. Lindars, “Jotham’s Fable: A New Form Critical Analysis”, \textit{JThS} 24 (1973), 355–366.


in greater detail than in the preceding framework deliverance accounts. This need not imply, however, that the interpolated and subsequently reworked narrative concerning Jephthah is of a later date. The same is true for the narratives concerning Samson which (preceded by the birth account of chapter 13) do not allude to deliverance by Yahweh in the two cycles of chapters 14–15 and chapter 16 but rather a folk tale concerning an individual who excelled in physical prowess, courage and attractiveness towards the opposite sex.

The list of “minor judges” (10:1–5; 12:7–15; see also 3:31) has been added together with the narratives concerning Jephthah and Samson. Once again this need not suggest that the list as such is of a later date. The reader would be better advised to consider the various references to the so-called “minor judges” as having been taken from ancient annals that evidently already existed in the period of the judges. According to Noth (1950), the minor judges were neither deliverers nor officials in service of Ancient Israel’s central liturgy. De Geus (1965–1966) describes them as local leaders and Mayes (1985, pp. 78–83) as judicial mediators. Their designation as judges has passed over to the deliverers described in chapters 3–8.

Various supporters of the new and the newest documentary hypothesis have argued that evidence of the old Pentateuchal sources—with the exception of P—can be traced in the book of Judges. The fragmentation of the narratives that has resulted from this suggestion together with the fact that characteristic features of J are lacking in 3:7–16:31 has led scholars to conclude that alternative literary-historical explanations ought to be explored. Noth has argued, for example, that the author of Judges is to be identified with the author of the Deuteronomistic history. In his opinion the latter made use of a list of judges (10:1–5; 12:7–15) and a collection of narratives concerning tribal heroes stretching from Ehud to Jephthah. According to Noth, the introduction in 1:1–2:5, the accounts relating to Samson and chapters 17–21 represent literary growth. Beyerlin, on the other hand, has argued that the book of Judges—notwithstanding a number of later interpolations—already existed as an independent document before it was subjected to a limited Deuteronomistic redaction. The hypothesis that an original book of Judges was later connected to the preceding text (by repeating, at least in principle, Josh. 24:28–31 in Judg. 2:6–10) tends to support Beyerlin’s point of view.

We have already noted above that (with respect to the term Judge)
we have reckoned with a northern Israelite Retterbuch (3:12–9:55—provided with a framework at a later date) from the early period of the kings to which the narratives concerning Jephthah and Samson together with the list of the minor judges was added and to which the Beispielstück (3:7–11) was provided as a supplement in a subsequent redaction. The historical-theological introduction of 2:11–3:6 (with various literary layers) would appear to have been added to the whole by a Deuteronomistic author.

The third part of the book (chapters 17–21) consists of two independent narratives, the first relating to the origins of the cult at Dan (17–18)\(^{243}\) and the second referring to the outrage at Gibeah (19–21;\(^{244}\) to which allusion is apparently made in Hos. 9:9 and 10:9) together with the consequent results for the tribe of Benjamin. The chapters in question clearly lack any evidence of Deuteronomistic reworking: the emphatic references contained therein to the period prior to the monarchy as a time of moral and social decay (17:6; 18:1; 21:25 “all the people did what was right in their own eyes”, cf. also 19:1) cannot be described per se as Deuteronomistic. The chapters exhibit a pro-monarchic disposition (cf. 18:1a and 19:1a) and tend to function more as an introduction to the books of 1–2 Samuel than as a conclusion to the book of Judges.

j. I–II Samuel

Commentaries:


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Monographs and articles:

The Septuagint (which, particularly with respect to 1 Samuel, frequently deviates from the Masoretic tradition)\(^{245}\) and the Vulgate designate the books of Samuel and Kings together as 1–4 Kingdoms (lxx: basileioon A–D; V: libri regnorum I–IV). The fact that the death of Samuel is already mentioned in 1 Sam. 25:1 (cf. 28:3) does indeed make the designation of the first two segments of the four as 1–2 Samuel somewhat unfortunate. The separation of the books of Samuel and the books of Kings can already be observed in the Dead Sea Scrolls and would appear to have been brought about by 2 Samuel 21–24, which exhibits the characteristics of an interpolation (cf. also 1 Chron. 29:29 in which “the records of the seer Samuel, the records of the seer Nathan and the records of the seer Gad” would appear to refer to 1–2 Samuel). The subdivision of Samuel into two books is of a later date and appears to be arbitrary on literary grounds and in terms of content: in spite of the reference to the death of Saul, there is no striking caesura between 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1 and 1 Kings 1–2 clearly ought to be reckoned as part of the family history of David (see below).

The books of 1–2 Samuel deal with the end of the period of the judges and the beginning of Israel’s monarchy under Saul and David. The contents thereof can be summarised as follows:

a. Samuel and Saul (1 Samuel 1–15)
   1–3 Birth and call of Samuel; prayer of Hannah (2:1–10); Eli and his sons
   4–6 (with 2 Samuel 6) Account of the ark
   7–12 The emergence of the monarchy
   13–15 Saul’s military campaigns and rejection

b. The appearance of David (1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 8)
   16 The anointing of David. David at the court of Saul
   17 David defeats Goliath

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18–20 Saul’s jealousy and David’s flight. Pledge between David and Jonathan
21–27 David as guerrilla. Nabal and Abigail. David among the Philistines
28 Saul consults a medium
29–30 David sent back by the Philistines. Revenge against the Amalekites
31 The death of Saul and of his three sons
1 David’s lament over Saul and Jonathan
2–4 David becomes king of Judah. Conflict with Saul’s son Ish-bosheb. Abner defects to David
5 David becomes king of Israel and conquers Jebus. Victory against the Philistines
7 The promise of Nathan. David’s prayer of thanksgiving
8 David’s victories. David’s officials
c. David’s family history (2 Samuel 9–20)
9 David and Mephibosheth
10 David’s conflict with the Ammonites and the Arameans
11 David and Bathsheba. The birth of Solomon
12 The punishment of Nathan and David’s penitence
13–14 Amnon and Tamar. Absalom’s flight and return
15–19 The revolt of Absalom
20 The revolt of Sheba
d. Appendices to the history of David (2 Samuel 21–24)
21 The Gibeonites and the house of Saul
22 David’s song of thanksgiving
23 David’s last words. David’s heroes
24 Census of the people and punishment. Construction of an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah

According to a significant number of scholars (although see Flanagan 1972, 1988 and Stoebe, commentary 1994), 1 Kings 1–2 also belongs to the family history of David. These chapters make reference to the revolt of David’s son Adonijah, the death of David, Solomon’s accession to the throne and the initial acts of his reign. After David’s death, Solomon arranged the assassination of his rival Adonijah, the military general Joab (who had ultimately sided with Adonijah) and Shimei, whom David had once cursed (cf. 2 Sam. 16:5–14) and who had ignored Solomon’s command to remain in Jerusalem. The king also sent the priest Abiathar into exile in Anathoth.

1 and 2 Samuel contain narratives that relatively rarely exhibit traces of Deuteronomistic reworking. According to several scholars, such
reworking ought to be restricted to segments of 1 Samuel 7, 8, 10, 12 (in this instance almost the entire chapter) and 2 Samuel 7.246

There can be little doubt that the annals of 2 Samuel 8 and 21:15–22 and the lists found in 2 Sam. 3:2–5, 5:13–16, 8:16–18, 20:23–26 and 23:8–39 once enjoyed an independent existence. Moreover, 1–2 Samuel have incorporated ancient laments of David over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17–27) and over the military general Abner (2 Sam. 3:33–34), together with the so-called Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1–10). Given the fact that the latter makes reference to the king, the anointed one of $\text{YHWH}$ (2:10), its provenance is probably from the Davidic-Solomonic period at the earliest, unless one is inclined to consider it rooted in Israel’s holy war tradition and one accepts 1 Sam. 2:10 to be a later addition. We find in addition David’s Song of Thanksgiving (2 Samuel 22, corresponding in principle with Psalm 18), which ascribes the king’s achievements to God’s intervention, and David’s Last Words (2 Sam. 23:1–7), in which reference is made to the “eternal covenant” established by $\text{YHWH}$ with the house of David. The date of these two lyrical texts cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

The remainder of 1 and 2 Samuel (together with 1 Kings 1–2) consists of a number of closely interrelated narrative cycles. 1 Samuel also exhibits traces, however, of more than one hand or at least evidence of the written form of diverse material from the oral tradition. This is supported by the presence of irregularities and doublets: cf., for example, 1 Sam. 16:14–23 (David at the court of Saul; cf. also 18:9ff.) and 17:55–58 (Saul does not know David); the twice-repeated rejection of Saul (1 Sam. 13:13–14 and 15:23–26). The contradiction between 1 Samuel 17 and 2 Sam. 21:19 (who defeated Goliath: David or Elhanan?, cf. also 1 Chron. 20:5) can be solved, however, by correcting 2 Sam. 21:19 in line with 1 Chron. 20:5.

In order to gain some understanding of the composition of 1–2 Samuel we can take the extensive segment known as the succession narrative or family history of David found in 2 Samuel 9–20 (to which many endeavour to include 1 Kings 1–2; 1 Kgs 2:13–46 is often taken to be secondary) as our point of departure. A significant number of Old Testament scholars are of the opinion that this material constitutes a literary unity and the historian Eduard Meyer (1855–1930) has described it as a pearl of Ancient Near Eastern narrative art

246 Veijola (1975), however, maintains a much more extensive threefold redaction by DtrH, DtrP and DtrN.
and a first order historical source. Von Rad\textsuperscript{247} characterised the author of this segment as a representative of the Davidic-Solomonic \textit{Aufklärung}, while Vriezen\textsuperscript{248} identified its possible author as Zabud, the son of the prophet Nathan (1 Kgs 4:5), who assembled his narrative on the basis of reminiscences with respect to his father (others have proposed Ahimaaz [2 Sam. 15:27] or Husai [15:32–37] as author). According to Rost (1926), Von Rad, Vriezen\textsuperscript{249} and many others, the goal of the historical narrative was to legitimate Solomon as David’s rightful successor (cf. 1 Kgs 1:20, 27), representing as such an historical-political apology. In recent years, however, more and more scholars have been inclined to doubt this hypothesis. After a brief mention in 2 Sam. 12:24–25, Solomon does not return to the stage until 1 Kings 1, a somewhat unusual feature for a succession narrative specifically focused on him. It is for this reason that many prefer to speak of the “court-” or of the “family history of David”. Some are of the opinion that we are dealing here with a defence of the legitimacy of David’s kingship, which was not to be called into question on account of the latter’s sins (Bathsheba!) nor the revolt of his own son (Absalom!) or others (cf. the revolt of Sheba: 2 Samuel 20). Others have formed the opinion that the chapters in question are directed against David and Solomon. Such an interpretation is difficult to defend, however. While it is true that the deeds of King David are related openly and in no uncertain terms, including the highly reproachable manner with which he took Bathsheba as his bride (2 Samuel 11–12), it is stated nevertheless that after David repented and did penance, yhwh “loved” Solomon, the son that Bathsheba bore to David after the death of their first child (2 Sam. 12:24–25). In spite of the fact that the writing of David’s family history exhibits a “profane” character, it is explicitly stated that yhwh guided the events thereof (2 Sam. 17:14; cf. also 11:27; 12:1, 15; 1 Kgs 2:15). Others still consider the \textit{Thronfolgegeschichte} to be a narrative that originally criticised David and Solomon and only later presented them in a more favourable light after redactional intervention (Würthwein 1974, but see the critique of Kegler 1977). Such

\textsuperscript{247} G. von Rad, \textit{Theologie des Alten Testaments} I, Munich 1957, pp. 56ff.
\textsuperscript{249} Vriezen insists that the historical narrative draws attention in part to the right of the house of David to the throne in contrast to that of the house of Saul.
observations would appear, however, to have paid little attention to the possibility that an historical narrative that places implicit praise side by side with personal failures, need not necessarily be taken as evidence of a literary product that can be explained on the basis of redactional layers.

In addition to Würthwein, Veijola (1975) and Langlamet (1976) similarly argue in favour of redactional layers. The characterisation of the succession narrative as a Wisdom document (Whybray 1968), wherein David is presented to Solomon as an example in the form of a critique of the monarch cast in chokmatic terms (Crüsemann 1978, pp. 180–193), is not without its problems. Wisdom and counsel would appear to function in the Thronfolgegeschichte in a far too different fashion than one would be inclined to expect of a Wisdom book (cf., for example, 2 Sam. 13:3–5; 20:22; 1 Kgs 2:5–6 and see esp. Gordon [commentary 1986], pp. 42–43).

It is not only on the basis of content but also for literary reasons that one is inclined to wonder whether the expression Thronfolgegeschichte, which suggests a distinct literary composition, is in fact a fortunate choice of terminology. It is impossible to conceive of the succession narrative disconnected from the narratives related to the rise of David in 1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 5 (Aufstiegsgeschichte). The fact that commentators delimit the Thronfolgegeschichte and the Aufstiegsgeschichte of David in different ways reinforces the suspicion that we are dealing in this instance with a single narrative cycle (some begin the succession narrative in 2 Samuel 5 or 6 [Rost (1926) in 6:16, 20–23; 7:11b, 16], Gunn (1978) in 2 Samuel 2–4, others as late as 2 Samuel 11). Most significantly, however, chapters 2 Samuel 9ff. presuppose knowledge of 1 Samuel 16ff.: the same characters appear on several occasions in both the Thronfolgegeschichte and the Aufstiegsgeschichte (Mephiboshet, Joab and Abiathar). It is probable, therefore, that the literary complexes in question stem, at least in principle, from one and the same hand and, as a minimum, have been layered together. Their dissimilar character can be explained from the fact that the Aufstiegsgeschichte harks back to traditions of a different nature to those found in the family history of David.

The Aufstiegsgeschichte of David aims at showing that he became king in an absolutely legitimate manner by insisting that he was not a usurper and that he did not lay violent hands on King Saul (he spared his life on two occasions: see 1 Samuel 24 and 26): God
himself had rejected Saul on account of the latter’s disobedience and it was He who brought about the rise of David. Weiser (1966) dates the *Aufstiegs geschichte* of David in the Solomonic period. Grönbæk (1971) considers it to contain a Judean protest against the territorial division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon.

From the literary perspective, a substantial portion of the narratives concerning Saul in 1 Samuel 9–15 must have preceded the *Aufstiegs geschichte* of David in 1 Samuel 16ff., the former serving to herald the latter to a significant extent. While chapters 13–14 (which contain reports of the military successes of Saul and his son Jonathan) and 15 (Saul’s conflict with the Amalekites) are written with a degree of sympathy for Saul, they reveal nevertheless that he was a tragic failure and that another would have to complete what he had started (cf. 1 Sam. 13:14; 15:28). Reference is made in 1 Sam. 13:7f. to a command that Samuel had given, according to 10:8 to Saul, making it clear that chapter 10 at least (and chapter 9 which cannot be separated therefrom) must have preceded the *Aufstiegs geschichte* of David.

Chapters 7–12 speak of the institution of the monarchy in Israel and have been the subject of much discussion. Since Wellhausen, scholars have endeavoured to argue in support of pro-monarchic and anti-monarchic (*königsfreundliche* and *königsfeindliche*) literary layers in these chapters consisting of 9:1–10:16; 11:1–15 and 7:2–8:22; 10:17–27; 12:1–25 respectively, whereby the pro-monarchic segments are considered to be the oldest. According to Wellhausen, the anti-monarchic segments represent a late Deuteronomistic perspective from the period in which the monarchy no longer existed. In his opinion they thus stem from the exilic or post-exilic period. The information provided by 11:1–15 is considered to be the most historically reliable. More recent research has shown, however, that this standpoint requires some revision.

In earlier editions of the present volume Vriezen distinguished three narrative series concerning Saul’s kingship and its downfall in the aforementioned chapters and those that follow. He locates the first series in the narrative concerning Saul’s victory (seized by the Spirit of God) over the Ammonite Nahash after which he was acclaimed as king by the people at Gilgal (11:1–11,15). The continuation of this narrative, according to Vriezen, is to be found in the military activities of Saul and Jonathan against the Philistines (13:2–5; 13:16–14:46). No reference is made to Samuel in this regard nor is there allusion to any immediate guilt on Saul’s part with respect to his own downfall. The reason for the latter is stated in 16:14ff.:
the Spirit of God departed from Saul and an evil spirit from God descended upon him. For the author, Saul is clearly a tragic figure. The remaining two series, in Vriezen’s opinion, owe their existence to later reflection on Saul’s kingship and his downfall. According to him, the second series is formed by 1 Samuel 9 and 10:1–16, whereby 13:3b, 4, 6ff. form a continuation. Saul was anointed by Samuel at God’s command and ordered to go to Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel who intended to offer sacrifice there. The latter put the king to the test by appearing so late that Saul offered sacrifice himself. It was by reason of this disobedience, therefore, that Saul was rejected.

Vriezen argues that the third series consists of (7); 8:6–22; 10:17–27; 11:12–14 and chapter 15, in which disobedience is repeatedly stated as the reason for Saul’s rejection (“to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams”, 15:22).

Vriezen maintains that the institution of the monarchy in the second series stems from God and that while the third series is in conflict with the Yahwistic ideal it is nevertheless permitted by God. The latter represents the standpoint of Judean farming circles in the period following Solomon’s harsh administration, the former later prophetic considerations in which it is possible to recognise the hand of an E author.

In Vriezen’s opinion the Deuteronomist changed little of the text he transmitted: he was only responsible for rewriting 1 Samuel 7 and 12 and for the introduction of v. 13, for example, into 2 Samuel 7.

Weiser (1962) and Hertzberg have defended the thesis that we should account for the presence of traditions stemming from different cultic centra that have been associated with one another at a secondary stage (e.g. 8:1–22 is said to stem from Ramah and 10:17–27 from Mizpah). In contrast to Wellhausen and his followers, Weiser ascribed the anti-monarchical texts to an early phase of the tradition (followed therein by Ishida [1977] and Crüsemann [1978] among others). The fact that Israel did not have a monarchical form of government in the early stages of its history and that the monarchy did not even enjoy undivided support in the period of David and Solomon, tends to reinforce the suggestion that criticism of the monarchy may indeed have stemmed from an early period.

According to current theory (albeit not unanimous), 1 Samuel 7 is a Deuteronomistic creation, which (in contrast to 9:16, 10:5 and chapters 13–15) portrays the unexpected and definitive defeat of the Philistines (7:13–14). The chapter would appear to be intended to show that the theocracy of the period of the judges was sufficient to protect Israel from external dangers. The designation of the Ebenezer stone set up by Samuel (“Thus far the Lord has helped
us”: vs. 12) suggests within the said framework that a king was not necessary for Israel’s well-being and salvation (Gordon, commentary 1986). In the present author’s opinion, 1 Samuel 7, which leans heavily towards the narratives of the judges, should not be referred to as Deuteronomistic, but should be understood rather as a reaction to northern Israelite critique of the monarchy clothed in an historical style and analogous to that of the prophet Hosea.

The aforementioned critique is also placed on the lips of Samuel in the following chapter, although not without historical reasons. Chapter 8 has preserved ancient traditions whereby Samuel’s negative portrayal of the monarchy in 8:11–18 can be read as a description of the way Ancient Near Eastern kings endeavoured to behave rather than a retrospective projection of experiences during the reign of Solomon.

1 Sam. 9:1–10:16 present a completely different atmosphere in which the story is told of Saul who was anointed king by Samuel at God’s command while searching for the lost donkeys of his father Kish. The textual segment 10:17–27, which narrates Saul’s appointment as king by lot during a gathering of the tribes at Mizpah, would appear to have been reworked in part. Once again, however, the suggestion that we are dealing here with Deuteronomistic redaction instead of northern Israelite commentary remains unconfirmed.

Chapter 11 narrates how Saul, inspired by the Spirit of God in like fashion to the judges, saved the inhabitants of Jabesh in Gilead from the Ammonite king Nahash and was proclaimed king at Gilgal (11:1–11, 15). The latter fact is not entirely in conflict with Saul’s appointment as king during the tribal gathering at Mizpah (10:17–27) and points to a different tradition that would appear to be continued in 13:2 with the reference to the military undertakings of Saul and Jonathan against the Philistines (13:2–5; 13:16–14:46). It would seem that Samuel did not figure in the original tradition. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that 11:12–14 should be considered a secondary harmonisation with 10:17–27.

According to the majority of commentators, chapter 12 exhibits, for the most part, Deuteronomistic features. It is here that the monarchy is finally accepted, while the people are encouraged to have faith in יהוה with all their heart in the context of the new civil order. The chapter is in line with 1 Sam. 8:6–9, 19–22; 10:17ff.; 11:12–14 and chapters 7 and 15. As was the case with chapter 7, however, we might consider the possibility that chapter 12 (vv. 3–5 of which
clearly do not exhibit a Deuteronomistic style) may have its roots in northern Israelite preaching rather than in Deuteronomistic redaction. With the exception of the later reworked chapters 7 and 12 the remaining segments of 1 Samuel 7–12 leave the impression that they hark back to ancient traditions that were confined to writing no later than the Solomonic period or shortly thereafter. They clearly form the prelude to the Aufstiegs- and Thronfolgebungeschichte, which stem from the same period.

The Shiloh traditions (1 Samuel 1–3) and the traditions concerning the ark (1 Samuel 4–6) precede the abovementioned chapters. Chapters 1–3, which refer to the birth of Samuel and his ministry before the Lord at Shiloh, the depravity of the sons of Eli and Samuel’s vocation, also contain the exceptional segment 2:27–36 (cf. 1 Kgs 2:27, 35b) in which an anonymous man of God predicts to Eli that his generation is to come to an end and to be replaced by a “reliable priest” (Zadok). It remains to be seen whether we are dealing here with a Deuteronomistic interpolation.

In line with Rost (1926) many consider the history of the sacred ark250 to be an originally independent tradition describing the fortunes of the said cultic object—which was usually present in Shiloh—in the land of the Philistines and after its return to Israel. Scholars endeavour as a rule to associate 2 Samuel 6 therewith. Rost considered the narrative to contain the cultic legend of the temple in Jerusalem in which the ark finally came to rest. It should be borne in mind, however, that 1 Samuel 4–6 places the emphasis on the contrast between the God of Israel and the gods of the Philistines. The plague with which the latter were confronted is reminiscent of the fate of the Egyptians in the book of Exodus (cf. 4:8). If a distinct ark tradition ever existed it has now been integrated in its entirety in the text of the books of Samuel (cf. 7:2) and associated with the history of Eli and his sons Hophni and Phinehas.

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

The books of 1–2 Kings, which constitute one single document from the outset, can be subdivided as follows:

a) the history of Solomon (1 Kings 1–11);

b) a report of the vicissitudes of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time of the division of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom (1 Kings 1, 14–25).
12–2 Kings 17), into which the narratives concerning the prophets Elijah and Elisha have been integrated;
c) the last days of the kingdom of Judah, the governorship of Gedaliah, his assassination by Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, and the release of King Jehoiachin by Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon (2 Kings 18–25).

While the later division of Kings into two books would appear to have taken place on account of the size of the document, it is nevertheless an arbitrary division.

1–2 Kings contain information from a variety of different origins. Particular mention can be made in this regard of the book of the history of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:41), the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah (14:29; 15:7, 23, etc.) and the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel (14:19; 15:31 etc.). A number of narrative cycles are also in evidence:

a) the description of the end of David’s reign and the accession of Solomon to the throne (1 Kings 1–2), which is generally considered to be the conclusion of the family history of David (see further 1–2 Samuel);
b) the Elijah cycle (1 Kings 17–19, 21251 and 2 Kings 1–2), a northern Israelite prophetic account interrupted by narratives concerning King Ahab;252
c) the Elisha cycle (2 Kings 2–8, 13);253


d) an Ahab source (1 Kings 20 and 22:1–38), potentially stemming from northern Israelite prophetic circles (cf. 20:35–43; 22:5–28);  

e) an Isaiah source (2 Kgs 18:13–20:19), which (with the exception of 18:14–16 and the addition of the “prayer of Hezekiah” [Isa. 37:14–20]) is repeated in Isaiah 36–39.  

Several Vorlagen, which would have been available to the authors from the oral tradition or in written form, can also be traced. These include prophecies of Ahijah the Shilonite (1 Kgs 11:29–39; 14:1–18), of Shemaiah (12:21–24) and of an unidentified prophet (12:33–13:34), a report of the war between Ahab and Ben-hadad (1 Kings 20), the history of Jehu (2 Kings 9ff)254 together with archival information on the construction of the temple and its vessels (1 Kings 6 and 7). 

The various sources have been collected together as a whole by Deuteronomistic writers and placed in an historical framework. Cross255 and Nelson256 presuppose a double redaction of the books of Kings (cf. also Provan 1988): a Josianic (Dtr1) and an exilic (Dtr2), a position already defended by Keunen and Wellhausen in the preceding century. Partly in line with Jepsen (1953), who accounted for a priestly, prophetic and Levitical reworking, Smend jr. and his followers Dietrich (1972) and Veijola (1978) distinguish three redactions in the so-called Deuteronomistic history and also, as such, in the books of Kings: an initial historically oriented work (DtrH), a redaction by a prophetically disposed redactor (DtrP) extended, remodelled and cast in its present form by “nomistic” writers (DtrN) paying particular attention to Mosaic legislation.257 

The place in which the material came into existence is the subject of dispute. If one is inclined to accept a Josianic redaction 

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together with Cross and Nelson then one will be likely to consider Judah as the point of origin of at least part of the work. Such a perspective, however, leaves the question of the exilic final redaction, which some locate in Babylon, unanswered. Several commentators allude in this regard to circles of survivors who had remained after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (587 BCE).

In contrast to the narratives concerning David in 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1(3)-11 harks back to a portrayal of the character of Solomon behind the narratives concerning the events of his reign and his work in spite of its many superlatives and its glorification of the person of the king. It would already appear at this juncture that the contents of the books of Kings cannot be placed on a single line with those of 1–2 Samuel. This does not detract from the fact that the books of Kings also contain a number of splendid accounts, namely the Elijah-Ahab narratives and the Isaiah-Hezekiah narratives.

The history of Solomon (1 Kings 1–11) begins with the narrative of his accession to the throne (1) and the elimination of his rivals (2) by assassination (Adonijah, Joab, Shimei) or exile (the priest Abiathar). A central place in the history is given to the construction of the temple with the preparations and dedication in chapters 5–8. Solomon’s prayer of dedication of the temple (8:22–53)\(^{258}\) constitutes a classic example of Deuteronomistic theology. Solomon, however, is not only presented as the founder and protector of the temple cult, but also as a wise king who asked \textit{yhwh} for an “understanding heart” on the first occasion God appeared to him at Gibeon (3:4–15)\(^{259}\) and received riches and honour in addition to what he had asked. The many proverbs and songs ascribed to Solomon, together with his knowledge of flora and fauna (4:29–34; Hebr. 5:9–14), bear witness to his wisdom. His impressive judicial competence (3:16–28), however, much praised by the visiting Queen of Sheba (10:1–13, esp. v. 9), also serves as proof thereof. Reference is made in the aforementioned textual segment and elsewhere (4:21–28, Hebr. 5:1–8; 9:10–28; 10:14–29) to the power of the king and the opulence with which he had surrounded himself, particularly with respect to his building activities (5–7; 9:17–19). The second occasion upon which God appeared

\(^{258}\) E. Talstra, \textit{Solomon’s Prayer. Synchrony and Diachrony in the Composition of 1 Kings 8,14–61} (CBET 3), Kampen 1993.
\(^{259}\) M. Görg, \textit{Gott-König-Reden in Israel und Ägypten} (BWANT 105), Stuttgart etc. 1975.
to Solomon (9:1–9) follows his prayer at the dedication of the temple and explicitly attaches the condition of obedience to God’s commandments and ordinances to the promised blessing made to Solomon and his descendants. The segment looks forward in the present context to 11:1–8, which relates how the king allowed himself to be tempted into idolatry in his later years by his many foreign women. The kingdom was only spared being torn apart during Solomon’s lifetime “on account of David” (11:9–13). The events that followed took place, nevertheless, while Solomon was still in power: the king not only faced external threat from the Edomites (11:14–22) and an Aramean (11:23–25) adversary, but also on the internal front from his servant Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (11:26–28). The latter was supported in his opposition to Solomon by the Shilonite prophet Ahijah who, by way of a sign act, tore his garment into twelve pieces and gave ten of them to Jeroboam (11:29–39). While the break up of the kingdom into ten and two tribes was deferred on account of Jeroboam’s flight to Egypt until after the death of Solomon, the account of 11:29–39 nevertheless forms a *trait d’union* with the following narratives (cf. further Debus 1967).

The details related in the *history of the kings of Israel and Judah* after the break up of the kingdom tend as a rule to be located in an identical framework whereby virtually every king is given a parallel introduction and the report of his fortunes is rounded off with a stereotype concluding formulation. The aforementioned framework relating the fortunes of the individual kings contains chronological data whereby the beginning of a king’s reign is given together with the duration thereof. Use is made in addition of synchronistic dating (as long as the Northern Kingdom continued to exist; cf. 1 Kgs 15:1,9,25,33 etc.). Where the kings of Judah are concerned, information is often added concerning the age of a particular king when he acceded to the throne and the name of the queen mother (cf.

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e.g. II 8:25–26; 11:21–12:1, Hebr. 12:1–2; 14:1–2). A religious evaluation follows with respect to each king which, in the case of the kings of Israel, is usually negative because they did “what was evil in the sight of \( \text{耶和华} \), walking in the way of Jeroboam and in the sin that he had caused Israel to commit” by setting up golden calves in the sanctuaries of Bethel and Dan together with the construction of temples (houses) on sacrificial high places (1 Kgs 12:25–32; cf. 1 Kgs 15:26,34 etc.). Among the many kings of Judah, Asa (1 Kgs 15:1ff.), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:43), Jehoash (2 Kgs 12:2), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Azariah (Uzzia) (2 Kgs 15:3ff.) and Jotham (2 Kgs 15:34) are given a positive evaluation, in spite of reference to the fact that the sacrificial high places continued to exist during their reign. The kings are frequently held up against the example of King David. The appraisal of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3–6) and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2; 23:5) is unashamedly positive, especially on account of the fact that they got rid of the sacrificial high places. The portrayal of the deeds of the various kings is rounded off (as noted above) with a stereotype concluding note, which refers the reader for further information to the chronicles of the kings of Israel (c.q. Judah), together with a mention of their death and an allusion to their successor (cf. 1 Kgs 14:19–20,31; 15:7–8,23–24 etc.).

Information on the respective kings provided within the framework is not infrequently summary in fashion, being consistently limited to relatively short records of sickness (2 Kgs 15:5), a conspiracy to which a particular king fell victim (2 Kgs 15:10, 14, 25, 30; 21:23–24), important international events (2 Kgs 15:19–20, 29, 37), internal Israelite hostilities (1 Kgs 15:6,16ff.) or good relations (1 Kgs 22:45). It is evident that history has been written here from a religious perspective, whereby accents are placed in a fashion unfamiliar to modern historical writing (cf., for example, the information provided concerning King Omri who was undoubtedly extremely powerful from the political point of view: 1 Kgs 16:21–28; cf. Timm 1982).

Substantial narratives in which prophets emerge predicting the downfall of the kings together with their descendants bear particular witness to the aforementioned tendency. As a rule, the prophecies contained in such narratives take the form of an announcement

\footnote{261 Cf. J. Debus, \textit{op. cit.}, 1967.}
of judgement with a message formula (“thus says יְהֹ韦ָה”), a motivation and a notification of judgement (cf. 1 Kgs 14:7–11 [Jeroboam I], 16:1–4 [Baasha], 21:20b–24 [Ahab], see also 2 Kgs 9:6–10). Where the predicted misfortune has already taken place, the text explicitly states that the latter is entirely in line with the word of the prophet in question (cf. 1 Kgs 15:29; 16:12; 22:38; 2 Kgs 9:36; 10:17). While they have clearly undergone Deuteronomistic reworking, these narratives may stem from among the followers of Elijah, especially in light of the fact that they represent the northern Israelite standpoint that viewed the division of the kingdom as a divine judgement against the house of David. The Elisha narratives have their own specific character: Elisha is not only a miracle worker, he also engages in politics (2 Kgs 8:7–15; 9:1ff.; 13:14–19). These narratives may likewise stem from among the pupils of the respective prophet.

Information on the final century of the kingdom of Israel and the contemporaneous history of Judah is plainly sparse. Reference to the fall of Israel in 2 Kgs 17:7–23, however, contains a comprehensive theological interpolation on the part of a Deuteronomistic author in which the fall of the Northern Kingdom is firmly blamed on Israel’s sins, in particular the construction of the sacrificial high places and idolatry. In spite of continuous prophetic warnings, the people had not maintained their trust in יְהֹ韦ָה, had shown contempt for his ordinances and had rejected his covenant. The foundational indiscretion is to be located in the “sin of Jeroboam I”, who had led Israel astray from the true service of יְהֹ韦ָה (cf. Becking 1975).

The Isaiah narratives found in the history of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:1–20:21)262 are more substantial and focus in particular on the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (701 BCE). With the exception of the report found in 18:14–16 concerning Hezekiah’s payment of tribute to Sennacherib (borrowed from annals), events are narrated in a twofold version (18:17–19:9a, 36–37 and 19:9b–35), the second of which places particular emphasis on Hezekiah’s piety (cf. his prayer in 19:15–19). A similar emphasis on the king’s fidelity to God is expressed in the account of his illness and recovery in 20:1–11. His reception of a Babylonian delegation in 20:12–19 tends, on the other hand, to place him in a less favourable light.

Accounts narrated in the books of Kings reach their climax in 2 Kings 22–23 in which reference is made to the discovery in the temple of the book of the law and the cultic reformation of King Josiah (see further under Deuteronomy).

Once again, information on the last king of Judah and even on fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE tends to be limited. It is striking that no allusion is made to the prophet Jeremiah. The oft expressed opinion that the latter maintained a dismissive stance with respect to the reforms of Josiah is probably incorrect.

Based on a comparison between the concluding chapter of 2 Kings and the largely analogous Jeremiah 52 one can conclude that the second, augmented edition of Kings originally ended with 2 Kgs 25:21 (cf. Jer. 52:27) to which a segment from Jeremiah 40 concerning the fortunes of Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 25:22–26) and the report of the amnesty granted by King Ewil-merodach to King Jehoiachim (2 Kgs 25:27–30) were added during the Babylonian exile (Jer. 52:28–30 offers a survey of the prisoners deported by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597, 587 and 581 prior to the allusion to the aforementioned amnesty). If the second version of Kings originally ended with 2 Kgs 25:21, then one can accept that the books came to light shortly after the deportation into exile (an allusion to the deportation of 581 [cf. Jer. 52:30] is lacking). They endeavour to explain why the people of God, who had been set apart as His inheritance (1 Kgs 8:53), had been confronted with such catastrophic punishment on account of their sins against yhwh in disobedience to the Law of Moses and the witness of the prophets.
CHAPTER NINE

THE PROPHETIC LITERATURE

a. Introduction

The books of the prophets constitute a unique and independent literary complex within the Old Testament and, in fact, within the Ancient Near Eastern world as a whole. While there is some evidence of prophetic activity outside Israel, the prophecy of the Old Testament bears a singular character on account of its dimensions, its strikingly ethical-religious message and the vigorous personalities who express themselves therein.

The use of the expression “Writing Prophets” for Israel’s classical prophets, whose preaching has been passed down to us in codified form, should not lead us to imagine that these individuals were primarily authors. On the contrary, their prophecies, as a rule, were oral communications. Their preaching was written down for the most part by others and the books that bear their name provide consistent and significant evidence of additions and supplementations (c.q. actualisations) introduced at a later date.

Prophets and prophetic texts are also to be found to a limited extent in the Ancient Near Eastern world that surrounded Israel. The Old Testament itself is familiar with the seer Balaam who worked at Pethor on the Euphrates (Numbers 22–24), reference to whom is also made in the inscription found at Deir 'Alla (cf. chapter I). Elijah engaged in a conflict with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Asherah “who ate at Jezebel’s table” (1 Kgs 18:19). The Mari letters dating from the eighteenth century BCE make reference to individuals who worked for the good of king and state, uttering prophecies of salvation as well as warnings and admonitions.1 A letter from Taanach dating from the fifteenth century BCE alludes to a “wise man of Asherah” from whom a sign and a word had been expected (see ANET, p. 490). The journey report of the Egyptian Wen-Amon dating from the eleventh

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century BCE speaks of a young man from Byblos who provided the king with divine instruction while in a state of ecstasy (see chapter II and ANET, p. 26). The stele of King Zakir of Hamat refers to “seers”, who addressed a prophecy of salvation to their king (see ANET, pp. 655–656) during a massive siege of his city Hatarikka (Hadarch, cf. Zech. 9:1).

It would thus appear from the information available to us that the uniqueness of the Writing Prophets of the Old Testament does not lie in the fact that a divinity allowed human messengers to announce his word but rather in the specificity of the message they conveyed. The king, for example, is seldom the addressee of a prophetic message in the Old Testament (in contrast to the texts outlined above). The message of the Writing Prophets consistently applied rather to a particular group among the people as a whole. In the pre-exilic period, their utterances frequently took the form of an unconditional prophecy of doom and judgement. Ancient Near Eastern prophecy is reminiscent of Israel’s court and cultic prophecy (cf. 1 Kings 22; Micah 3:11).

In contrast to the Old Testament’s understanding of the meaning of the term “prophet”, contemporary usage tends to limit the word to a person who predicts a future event. This semantic development is not only due to the Christian church, which not infrequently interpreted the prophets as individuals who forecast the coming of the Messiah, but also the fact that visitors to ancient Greek shrines such as Delphi generally expected to receive an utterance over the future from the resident prophètès. Messianic prophecies are nevertheless rare in the Old Testament. In addition, the Hebrew word employed most frequently for a prophet (nabî) means a person “called” by yhwh, while the Greek term prophètès originally meant a “spokesperson” for the divinity. Israel’s prophets were thus primarily mediators and preachers of a personal experience of divine revelation. From time to time, however, they were known to have given notice of pending disaster and to have announced future salvation.

An additional expression employed for a prophet in the Old Testament is “man of God”, a designation employed, for example, with reference to Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, whereby a person is said to have the gift of healing, miracles and/or divination (cf. 1 Sam. 9:6–10; 1 Kgs 17:18,24; 2 Kgs 1:9–13; 4:7,9 etc.). A similarly ancient term is the “seer” (1 Sam. 9:9; cf. also 2 Sam. 24:11; Amos 7:12), which referred to the visionary and auditory aspects of the divine revelation received by the prophet. Former prophets/prophetesses (Deborah, Samuel, Elijah), court prophets (Nathan, Gad) and younger Writing Prophets (Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah) are referred to with the designation nabî (feminine: nebî’a). The term was later applied to individuals who did not count directly as prophets (Abraham, Aaron, Miriam). The plural form of the term was employed for ecstatic groups of prophets and guilds of prophets as well as for the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:19f.).

The prophets composed their preaching as a rule in poetic language, although prose segments are far from lacking, especially among the
later prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah.

In spite of the fact that it is included among the prophetic writings, the book of Jonah is not a prophetic book in the strict sense since it consists of a legend about a prophet. It remains evident, nevertheless, that its location among the prophetic books is not without precise reason: perhaps as a key to the understanding thereof (see further below in our treatment of the book of Jonah). The book of Daniel, which figures among the Prophets in modern translations but among the Writings in the Hebrew canon, is similarly misplaced as distinctively prophetic literature. In its final redaction, Daniel represents a document from the second century BCE with an intense apocalyptic flavour.

The content of the prophetic books can be subdivided into prophecies, confessions and narratives relating to a particular prophet. The first of these consists of preaching addressed to a particular person or to a particular faction among the people, the second of personal outpourings related to the prophet’s call and the fulfilment of his ministry and the third of information concerning a particular prophet collected and written down by his disciples or another third party. These three literary genres tend to be rather unevenly distributed over the various prophetic books.

In addition to the entire book of Jonah, narratives about a prophet are to be found in Hosea (chapter 1), Amos (7:10–17), Isaiah (7; 20; 36–39) and Jeremiah (36–45). Evidence of the genre tends to be somewhat restricted in some of the remaining prophets and is entirely lacking in others.

Confessions can be further subdivided into two literary forms: autobiographical segments, which describe the call, visions and other experiences of the prophet, and lyrical outpourings. The latter are in fact restricted to the book of Jeremiah, sometimes taking the form of a prayer.

Prophecies, which run from short proverbial sayings to long sermons, reveal that the prophets considered themselves to be messengers of Yahweh. Their utterances are thus frequently introduced with the messenger formula borrowed from epistolary literature: “thus says Yahweh” (see chapter III). This did not exclude the possibility that a prophet might, on occasion, offer his own analysis of a particular concrete reality based on revelation he had received in the past without waiting for a new divine revelation (see, however, Jer. 28:ff.; 42:7).
The prophets not infrequently dressed their preaching in genres borrowed from everyday life or from the cult. The structure of Amos 5:2, for example, is based on the dirge or mourning song while that of Amos 4:4–5 clearly has its roots in priestly instruction. So-called ‘woe’ sayings (cf., for example, Isa. 5:20; Amos 5:18) were apparently borrowed from the funeral lament, portraying the addressees as condemned to death. Disputes found in particular in Deutero-Isaiah and Malachi, but also in earlier prophetic texts (cf. Amos 3:3–6,8; Jer. 13:23; 23:23ff.), tend to either imitate everyday controversies or to be based in terms of form on discussions common to Wisdom circles. Prophetic exhortations, which could take the form of a warning (e.g. Isa. 1:16) or a call to conversion (e.g. Jer. 3:22), tend in terms of form to have their background in daily life or in cultic prophecy.

Perhaps the most important prophetic genre is that of the announcement of doom. Following a formulation of the current state of affairs (Lagehinweis), such announcements continued as a rule with “therefore”, the messenger formula “thus says יְהֹוָה” (Botenformel) and a statement of impending judgement in the first person of the divinity (Drohwort; cf., for example, Micah 2:1–3; Amos 3:9–11; 4:1–3). Scholars have endeavoured in this context to associate יְהֹוָה’s announcements of judgement with lawsuits (cf., for example, Jer. 2:4ff.; Micah 6:1ff.) and to designate such material as Judgement Speeches c.q. covenant lawsuits. It remains a question, however, if we are dealing here with an independent genre. The material at hand never portrays an entire court case but tends to be limited to elements borrowed from court proceedings such as indictments (e.g. Isa. 1:2–3), defence statements (e.g. Jer. 2:29) and verdicts (e.g. Hos. 4:1–3). In addition, there is little if any evidence to suggest that we are dealing in such instances with formal court proceedings since the material tends to be limited to disputes or disagreements between two parties. The Hebrew term רִיב (“dispute [process]”) employed in this regard refers to an indictment on the part of יְהֹוָה against his people that has the potential to lead to a judgement, rather than to some kind of legal action.

As counterpart to the prophecy of doom we find the announcement of salvation, a proclaimed action rarely if ever motivated by human behaviour (cf., for example, Amos 9:11ff.; Isa. 11:1–10; Jer. 31:31–34).

While the Writing Prophets did not deny Israel’s salvific traditions, they tended as a rule to draw different conclusions therefrom.
to those of their contemporaries. Amos (3:2), for example, never doubted that יְהֹוָה had entered into a specific relationship with his people but rather he accentuated the fact that such a noble status obliged the people to fidelity to God’s commandments and did not afford them the right to presume themselves protected by a divinely guaranteed inviolability or to engage in national self-satisfaction (cf. Amos 9:7).

The relationship between the Writing Prophets and the monarchy and the cult deserves particular attention. While some prophets expressed reservations concerning the monarchy (Hosea, for example, stated that the kings were not appointed by God [Hos. 8:4]), the Davidic monarchy nevertheless provided material that gave shape to the prophetic expectation of a future salvific ruler and the dawning of a salvific kingdom (cf. Amos 9:11–12; Micah 5:1–3; Isa. 9:5–6, 11:1–9; Jer. 23:5–6, 30:9; Ezek. 37:15–28; Zech. 9:9–10). While the attitude of a number of the Writing Prophets towards the cult may, at first sight, have been negative (cf. Amos 4:4–5; 5:21–23; Isa. 1:12–15) and their critique of cultic personnel may, from time to time, have been vigorous (cf. Hos. 4:4–10; Micah 3:11; Ezek. 22:26; Mal. 2:1–9), their negativity did not tend to be focused on the cult as such (as some Old Testament scholars maintain), but rather on a liturgy characterised by Canaanite practices, laxity and vulgar self-interest.

With the exception of Amos, the pre-exilic Writing Prophets would appear not only to have announced doom and destruction but also to have offered the prospect of salvation and a prosperous future once judgement had passed (Isa. 29:1–8; Jer. 32:13–15; Ezek. 20:39–44; Hos. 3:1–5). Those who maintain that such prophecies of salvation in their totality must be considered “inauthentic” utterances stemming from during or after the Babylonian exile are guilty of being hypercritical.

In spite of the undeniably unique accent particular to each of the Writing Prophets, it remains striking that they exhibit a high degree of spiritual affinity with one another. While Isaiah would appear to have been influenced by Amos and Jeremiah, this does not sufficiently explain the effectively homogenous character of Israel’s written prophecy. One can reasonably infer that the Writing Prophets were firmly grounded in the Mosaic tradition alongside figures such as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Micaiah of Imlah and others, although they were more vigorous in rebuking social abuses, tended in their
reproaches to focus on particular factions or on the people as a whole rather than individual persons and were more intense in scrutinising the fundamental disorientation of God’s people than their predecessors.

One can affirm with conviction that the prophetic books were not written in their entirety by the individuals to whom they are ascribed (with the exception of Nahum?), although it is apparent from certain segments, such as the *Denkschrift* of Isaiah (Isa. 6:1–8:18) and Jer. 36:32, that the said prophets had begun to commit their words (or have their words committed) to writing. The primary content of the books that bear their names can, nevertheless, be recognised in principle as harking back to their preaching. In the present author’s opinion, the predominant contemporary tendency to limit the actual words (*ipsissima verba*) of the prophets to a minimum is not without difficulty, in spite of the need to account for the fact that the oral preaching thereof is often difficult to retrieve, will have undergone changes in the process of codification and will have been subject to significant interpolations and redactional activity in its written form.

b. The Major Prophets

The expression “Major Prophets” employed for Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel does not refer to the content or quality of their preaching but rather to the size of the books bearing their name. The collective expression “Latter Prophets” applied to them and the so-called Minor Prophets bears a canonical character and serves to distinguish the books of Isaiah to Malachi (with the exception of the book of Daniel, which appears in the Hebrew Bible under the Writings) from the historical writings of the “Former Prophets” (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings; see further chapter IV).

1. Isaiah

The book of Isaiah appears at first sight to constitute a small library in itself, apparently dividable into three major parts:

a) Isaiah 1–39 (Proto-Isaiah or First Isaiah), in which prophecies of the prophet Isaiah himself have, in part, been preserved;

b) Isaiah 40–55 (Deutero-Isaiah or Second Isaiah) stemming from the latter period of the Babylonian exile;

c) Isaiah 56–66 (Trito-Isaiah or Third Isaiah), a collection of prophecies from the post-exilic period.

One should bear in mind, however, that the aforementioned parts are clearly related to one another. In addition to other reworkings, Proto-Isaiah underwent a Deutero-Isaianic redaction (although commentators tend to locate the boundaries thereof in different places)\(^2\) and was evidently provided with an introductory chapter during the time of Trito-Isaiah. Some scholars maintain that Isaiah 34–35 together with 60–62 are Deutero-Isaian. Furthermore, one can consider Deutero-Isaiah in its present form in part as a *Fortschreibung* of Proto-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah as an actualising continuation of Deutero-Isaiah.\(^3\)

The book of Isaiah serves to open the series of prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, perhaps because it was the best loved and most popular of them all. The fact that the prophet Isaiah lived and worked before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, however, may have provided an additional chronological consideration in support of its location.

\(\alpha\) Proto-Isaiah (Isaiah 1–39)

If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all (7:9)


Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

According to the superscription of the book named after him, Isaiah ("YHWH grants salvation"; lxx: Ἐσαίας; V: Isaias), the son of Amoz, was apparently a (younger) contemporary of the northern Israelite prophet Hosea (cf. Isa. 1:1 and Hos. 1:1). He must have lived in Jerusalem from around 765 BCE to roughly 695 BCE. According to Isaiah 6, he was called to be a prophet in the year in which King Uzziah died (roughly 740 BCE). In addition to Uzziah, the
superscription also claims that Isaiah saw his vision in the days of kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He was also witness to the Syro-Ephraimitic war from 734–732 (cf. Isaiah 7), the Assyrian conquest of Damascus (732) and Samaria (722/721), the revolt of Ashdod in Philistea (713–711) and the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (701). Much in line with Nathan during the reign of King David, Isaiah was evidently familiar with the royal court (7:3; 37:5–7, 21–35; 38:1–8; 39:3–8) and was certainly well informed of the political manoeuvres of the leading circles in Jerusalem (cf. 29:5). Whether we would be justified in including him among the Wisdom circles of Judah remains a question. His knowledge of the themes and traditions surrounding the temple cult in Jerusalem, however, was clearly profound. His preaching turned around Mount Zion, the fate of Judah/Jerusalem and the house of David. According to a pre-Christian legend alluded to in a pseudepigraphical text entitled the Martyrium of Isaiah (see chapter XIII) the prophet is said to have been killed during the time of King Manasseh by being sawn in half (cf. Hebr. 11:37).

Isaiah was a married man. His wife, who was referred to as a prophetess (8:3), bore him sons who were given names foretelling deliverance: Maher-shalal-hash-baz (“The spoil speeds, the prey hastens”: 8:3–4) and Shear-jashub (“A remnant shall return”: 7:3, cf. 10:20–21). Several commentators also maintain that the figure Immanuel (“God with us”) referred to in Isa. 7:14 was also a son of Isaiah.

Isaiah is more than once referred to as the greatest of Israel’s prophets and not without justification. While his early preaching, in line with that of Amos, was turned against social mistreatment, his later prophecies also addressed the politics of the kings of Judah (cf. Dietrich 1976; Huber 1976).

Isaiah came to know of יְהוָה as the Holy One and the Almighty King (cf. chapter 6). He thus refers to God continuously as “the Holy One of Israel” (cf. Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 30:11 etc.), an expression apparently borrowed from him by Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14 etc.). While he preached the fall of Israel and

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Judah, he may also have announced the new kingdom that God was to establish under the authority of “a shoot from the stump of Jesse” (11:1) for the “remnant” of the people who had maintained their faith in Yahweh. If one is inclined to ascribe Isa. 2:2–5 and 11:1–9 to the prophet himself then it becomes evident that his future expectations were explicitly universalistic in character.

Chapters 1–39 of the book of Isaiah have undergone a long and complex evolution, only part of the prophecies contained therein being ascribable to the prophet himself. The codification of a number of his own statements may hark back to the prophet himself (cf. the first person style of Isa. 6:1ff.; 8:1ff.) or may have been the work of a secretary.


Reservations with respect to the proposals of Otto Kaiser and U. Becker, who are inclined to ascribe only limited portions of Isaiah 1–12 to the prophet himself and date a substantial portion of Isaiah 13–39 to the Hellenistic period, remain difficult to suppress.

Isaiah 1–39 can be divided into five distinct parts: Isaiah 1–12; 13–23; 24–27; 28–35 and 36–39. Our analysis of the content and character of the material will follow this subdivision.

Of the material contained in Isaiah 1–12, Isa. 2:6–4:1 (with the exception of later interpolations) together with 5:1–7 (the song of the vineyard) and the associated ‘woe’ sayings of 5:8–24 and 10:1–3(4) stem from the earliest period of the prophet’s activity. These segments contain prophetic declarations primarily condemning abuses within Judah.

The focus of the preaching ascribed to Isaiah in chapter 6 is described as the hardening of the people that had become fit for
God’s judgement. It contains the words employed in the liturgy of the Christian church, often referred to as the Sanctus (“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory”, 6:3). The chapter functions as a foreword to the so-called Denkschrift of Isaiah, a document dating from the period of the Syro-Ephraimitic war that may originally have been written as a whole in autobiographical style (Isa. 6:1–8:18). This memorandum, which was later supplemented with a number of additional prophecies (6:12–13; 7:8b, 15, 21–22, 23–24, 25), contains an explicit appeal (in chapter 7) on the part of the prophet addressed to King Ahaz inviting him to have faith in God in spite of the threat he is facing from Aram and Israel (“If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all”, 7:9b) together with the announcement of the birth of Immanuel (7:14; cf. Matt. 1:23), a passage of Scripture that has given rise to a whole series of commentaries, many of which take it to be a Messianic prophecy. The following chapter depicts the sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz (“The spoil speeds, the prey hastens”) as a prediction of


the sacking of Damascus and Samaria by the king of Assyria (8:1–4), a prophecy of doom concerning the mighty flood of Assyria that will sweep over Judah (8:5–10), an appeal to regard God as holy (8:11–15) and Isaiah’s decision to bind up his testimony among his disciples (8:16–18). The warning not to expect anything beneficial from consulting ghosts and familiar spirits (8:19–23a) stems from a later addition to the Denkschrift that may also stem from Isaiah himself. The familiar prophecy of salvation found in 8:23b–9:6, which speaks of a royal redeemer (“A child has been born for us, a son given to us”, 9:5a) and has developed an important role in the Christmas liturgy, cannot, however, be ascribed to the prophet. The verses in question probably date from the Josianic period.

Isa. 5:25–29(30) and 9:7–20, a prophecy of judgement against Israel with “for all this his (God’s) anger has not turned away; his hand is stretched out still” as a recurring refrain, stem from the final years of the Northern Kingdom. The Denkschrift and the additions attached thereto serve to separate the said segments and it would also appear that 9:7–20 originally preceded 5:25ff. The composition of Isa. 5:8–10:3 is thus extremely complicated, not only because the prophecy of judgement contained in 5:25ff. and 9:7–20 now surround the Denkschrift but also because of the fact that the likewise divided ‘woe’ sayings of 5:8–24 and 10:1–3(4) have been added.

It is probable that the ‘woe’ saying against the haughtiness of Assyria (10:5–9, 13–15a), the portrayal of the menace facing Jerusalem (10:27b–34) and possibly the prophecy of the Messiah and the coming kingdom of peace (the Isaianic authorship of which is not infrequently denied) found in Isa. 11:1–9 (“a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse”, 11:1) stem from the time of Ashdod’s revolt.

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11 Isa. 10:4 is secondary. 4a is intended to provide an answer to the questions posed in the preceding verse, 4b is borrowed from the refrain of the prophecy of 5:25–29(30) and 9:7–20.
against Assyrian authority (713–711) in which Judah also participated. Prophecies from the time of Hezekiah’s second revolt against Assyria (705–701) are taken up in chapters 28–33 (see below).

Up to this point we have left Isaiah 1 and 2:1–5 untreated. They both consist of a superscription, the first of which (1:1) can be explained as applying to the entire book of Isaiah, the second (2:1) as an introduction to the collection that is currently understood to end with Isaiah 12, or as a guarantee of the authenticity of 2:1–5 vis-à-vis Micah 4:1–5.

Isaiah 1 is considered to be a representative summary of the preaching of the prophet. While the chapter certainly contains utterances of Isaiah himself (with the exception of 1:27–28, 29–31), they would appear to have been collected together at the time of Trito-Isaiah as an introduction to the entire book, intended to inspire God’s people to strive after justice. It is probable that the material in question was originally to be found elsewhere in the book and was relocated to chapter 1 and partly supplemented for the aforementioned purpose. The incomprehensible foolishness of God’s unfaithful people is pointedly expressed: “an ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand”, 1:3.

Isa. 2:2–5 contains a prophecy concerning the pilgrimage of the peoples to Mount Zion, upon which God is to establish his kingdom of peace (parallel in Micah 4:1–5). While the Isaianic origins of this segment are the subject of much dispute, the present author is of the opinion that the hypothesis should not be dismissed outright. In the context of Isaiah 2–11, the prophecy functions as a word of comfort intended to draw the reader’s attention to the ultimate magnificence of God’s city and its temple.


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13 For a survey of scholarly discussion surrounding this text segment see R. Kilian, Jesaja 1–39, pp. 86–91.
The analysis we have offered of Isaiah 1–12 should not lead the reader to ignore the final redactional synthesis that these chapters clearly exhibit as a whole. Isa. 1:2–2:5 functions as an announcement of judgement but also as a promise: unfaithful Jerusalem shall once again become a city of justice and a faithful stronghold (1:16), to which the peoples shall come in pilgrimage (2:2–5). The prophecies of judgement concerning Jerusalem and Judah together with the critique of the prevailing temple liturgy and of idolatry found in Isaiah 1 are themes likewise employed by the author of Isaiah 66 (the final chapter) to form an inclusion around the entire book. Isa. 2:6–4:6 constitutes a judgement concerning human arrogance and Jerusalem’s future purification and divine protection. While the central segment, 6:1–9:6, portrays the failure of the Davidic dynasty under King Ahaz, its unwillingness to obey the prophetic word and the judgement that Assyria will execute, it also offers the promise of the enemy’s ultimate downfall and the coming of the Messianic prince. The segment is enclosed by the ‘woe’ sayings of 5:8–24 and 10:1–3(4) as well as the judgement prophecies of 5:25–29(30) and 9:7–20. The following segments (10:5–11:16) portray Assyria as a disciplinary scourge in God’s hand while simultaneously denouncing its arrogance and announcing its downfall (10:33–34), after which a Davidic prince shall arise and a period of beatific peace shall dawn (11:1–9[10]). The exiles shall then return in a new exodus to the promised land (11:11–16). The psalm added to chapter 12 depicts the transformation from judgement to salvation in summary fashion. The redactional synthesis of Isaianic and non-Isaianic prophecies in Isaiah 1–12 would appear to have been the result of a long process stretching from the time of King Josiah to the post-exilic period. As a consequence, therefore, it should not be dissociated from the genesis and evolution of the other parts of the book.

The lion’s share of Isaiah 13–23 consists of prophecies against the nations that tend with some consistency to be difficult to date. Among them we find the prophecy of doom against Babylon (13:1–14:23) with its biting derisive mocking song addressed to the Babylonian king (14:12–15). It goes without saying that this prophecy does not stem from Isaiah himself since the prophet lived about a century

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prior to the Babylonian domination of the Western Semitic world. The same can thus be said of the prophecy against Babylon in 21:1–10. While the Isaianic authorship of several other segments of the text is often called into question, there would appear to be good reason to accept that the prophecies against Assyria (14:24–27) and Philistea (14:28–31) as well as Damascus and Ephraim (17:1–6, 10–11), the statement concerning the peoples in 17:12–14, the prophecy concerning Ethiopia (18:1–6) and a part of that concerning Egypt (19:1–4, 11–14) ultimately stem from him. The same is true for the divine utterance censuring Jerusalem’s levity after the withdrawal of Sennacherib in 701 (22:1–14)\(^{15}\) and the prophecy concerning the arrogance of the steward Shebna (22:15–19).\(^{16}\) On the other hand, the account found in Isa. 20:2–5, which describes how the prophet wandered round for three years “naked and barefoot” during the period of the revolt of Ashdod (713–711) “as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia”, lands in which Judah had placed its political faith but which Isaiah maintained would become subject to Assyrian might, is evidently not to be ascribed to the prophet. With the exception of Isa. 19:16–25 and a number of minor additions, the prophecies against the nations were probably closed as a collection towards the end of the Babylonian exile or shortly thereafter. A redactor then supplemented the text with sayings of Isaiah familiar to him from (a) different source(s) whereby the collection as a whole was given the authority of the prophet (cf. 13:1).

Isaiah 24–27, which scholars tend to designate the apocalypse of Isaiah,\(^{17}\) contain universal/eschatological prophecies of doom and sal-

\(^{15}\) This segment has been significantly supplemented under the influence of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. The original prophecy of Isaiah can be found in 22:1–3,12–14.

\(^{16}\) The following segment (22:20–25) concerning Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, is based on Josianic redaction and interpolation from a later date (vv. 24–25).

vation as well as songs. Although difficult to date, the material would appear to stem from the period during and after the Babylonian exile. It is possible that the collection came into existence between 500 and 400 BCE on the basis of a document that was reworked in successive stages. The literary structure of these chapters has tended to be a source of significant problems. After the prediction of world judgement (Isaiah 24), the text continues with a song of thanksgiving for liberation (25:1–5) and the description of a festival meal that יְהֹוָה shall lay out on Mount Zion for all the peoples (25:6–10a). The downfall of Moab is forecast (25:10b–12) and the possession of a strong city together with the humiliation of an anonymous stronghold is celebrated in song (26:1–6; cf. 27:10). 26:7–21 contains an impressive yet formally atypical collective lament (26:7–18), followed by a prophecy of salvation (26:19) and an appeal to Israel to adopt the correct attitude during the pending judgement (26:20–21). Chapter 27, which foretells יְהֹוָה’s victory over the chaos monster Leviathan (27:1), predicts a period of salvation for Israel in which the latter is compared to a vineyard (27:2–5; cf. 5:1–7), promises a time of growth for God’s people (27:6–11) and announces the return of the exiles (27:12–13), is similarly complex. An allusion to the resurrection of the dead is encountered for the first time in the Old Testament in 26:19.

With the exception of a prophecy against Samaria (28:1–6) as well as later interpolations such as 29:17–24 and 30:18–26, chapters 28–31 of Isaiah 28–35 contain utterances from the final years of the prophet’s life. In 30:8 he is commanded to write down one of his most important prophecies as a sign for the people. Chapters 28–31 have preserved a number of Isaiah’s most inspiring and beautiful words of which 30:15: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength”, one of the prophet’s core statements in line with his conviction of the primacy of holding firm in faith (cf. 7:9), serves as a fine example.

With the possible exception of 32:9–14, chapters 32–35 cannot be ascribed to Isaiah. Isa. 32:1–5 (with vv. 6–8 as a later interpolation) and 32:15–20 probably constitute the conclusion of the Josianic redaction of his prophecies and serve as a witness to the expectation of a period of peace and well-being. While a number of commentators maintain that Isa. 32:9–14 contains the final words of Isaiah, others are more inclined to envisage these verses as among the earliest words of the prophet and others still consider them to
be a non-Isaianic lament over the fall of Jerusalem in 587. Chapter 33, a prophetic liturgy which speaks of Jerusalem’s hardship and liberation, is a text stemming from the time of the Babylonian exile, announcing the swift decline of Israel’s enemy and comforting Judah’s survivors with a festive future perspective in the midst of their distress. Chapters 34–35, occasionally referred to as “the minor apocalypse of Isaiah” on account of their affinity with Isaiah 24–27, are dependant on Deutero-Isaiah. They portray God’s judgement over the peoples, Edom in particular, and future salvation for Judah.19 The chapters probably stem from around 500 BCE.


Isaiah 36–37, which constitute a reflection on the threat to Jerusalem posed by Sennacherib in 701 BCE and the miraculous liberation of the city, stem from the time of King Josiah and exhibit significant traces of theological deliberation. While chapters 38–39, which deal with Hezekiah’s illness and healing together with the delegation from Babylon, were clearly added in order to show that city’s liberation had to do with a very unique king, they likewise imply that Jerusalem would not be spared in the same fashion from the Babylonians.

Influenced by the vision portrayed in chapter 6, Isaiah continues to be overwhelmed by the holiness and majesty of יְהֹוָה. The particular sinfulness and guilt of his people experienced by the prophet

20 2 Kgs 18:14–16 is an interpolation (narrative A), which is inconsistent with the context and is not to be found in Isaiah 36. The text of Isaiah 36–37 represents a compilation of two related narratives (narrative B 1: Isa. 36:1–37:9a plus 37:37–38; narrative B 2: Isa. 37:9b-36).
in light of this awareness accounts for his lack of hesitation in addressing them as rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah (1:10) and explains the absolute certainty of the divine judgement that characterises his preaching. Sin, for Isaiah, constitutes disloyalty (1:2), contempt (5:24) and mockery towards Yahweh (5:18–19) by a proud nation that had turned its back on God (17:10; 30:9–11). Given the name of his son Shear-jashub (“a remnant shall return”), however, the prophet clearly envisaged a remnant that would survive God’s judgement and was thus inspired to summon his listeners to conversion (30:15). It was his conviction that the sanctity of Yahweh called for tranquil and trusting faith in God with the exercise of justice and righteousness as its consequence. While Zion, as the dwelling place of Yahweh, played a prominent role in the preaching of Isaiah (6:36–37; 8:18; 14:32), it seems clear, nevertheless, that he did not share the conviction that God’s mountain enjoyed fundamental inviolability.22 The prophet was profoundly impressed by the awe-inspiring character of the counsel and deeds of the King of the world (28:29; 29:14), which implied both destruction and liberation.

β) Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God (40:1)

Commentaries:


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Monographs and articles:


Chapters 40–55 of the book of Isaiah, which are linked to the preceding chapters, do not stem from the prophet himself. No reference is made to him and the presumed historical situation is not that of the eighth century BCE: Jerusalem lies in ruins (44:26; 51:3), the addressees live in exile in Babylon (42:22; 48:20), the fall of Babylon is expected (46) and the Persian King Cyrus (Kores) serves as an instrument of liberation and restoration in the hand of God (45:1ff). While a number of points of contact are evident with respect to Isaiah 1–39 (e.g. the designation of God as the Holy One of Israel and Zion theology), essential differences are likewise observable: no allusions are made to a still prevailing Davidic dynasty and emphasis is firmly placed on the creative power of YHWH. In contrast, the author refers to earlier prophecies of Isaiah himself and explicitly accents the unicity of YHWH, besides whom no other god exists. The chapters are thus to be ascribed, for the most part, to an anonymous prophet who lived in exile in Babylon at the time of King Cyrus of Persia. Given the fact that his name is not known to us, scholars refer to him with the technical term Deutero-Isaiah.

The content of the prophecies ascribed to Deutero-Isaiah should be dated to the period 545–540 BCE: military conquests by Cyrus are presupposed (41:2–3, 25; 45:1), but not his victory over Babylon (539 BCE). The prophet announces the destruction of the latter city.

23 Cyrus incorporated Media into the Persian Empire around 550 and conquered Lydia in 546.
and the demise of its gods (46–47). In reality, however, Cyrus did not destroy Babylon nor did he bring an end to its cultic practices. As a consequence, there would appear to be no decisive reasons for dating chapters 49–55 and their predominantly salvific forecast of a positive future for Zion after the fall of Babylon in contrast to chapters 40–48.

Deutero-Isaiah can be characterised as a book of comfort (cf. 40:1 “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God”), and its author as the preacher of an imminent time of well-being (40:3–9). In light thereof, it is evident that Deutero-Isaiah’s response to the doubts and misgivings of his people living in exile did not tend to employ the genre of prophetic announcements of judgement but made use rather of literary forms frequently borrowed from the cult such as oracles of salvation whereby a priest or cultic prophet endeavoured to provide a comforting response on God’s behalf to a lament or prayer of entreaty of an individual (c.q. the community). In addition to his use of announcements of salvation, however, the prophet also employed the dispute genre in which he defended himself against those who challenged his preaching and drew attention to the sovereignty of YHWH. The hymns and hymn-like passages (cf. 42:10–13; 44:23; 45:8; 48:20–21; 49:13; 52:7–10), which scholars often employ to mark the end of a segment of Deutero-Isaiah (Schoors 1973), are also worthy of note.

The extent to which one can consider the text of Isaiah 40–55 as homogeneous remains the subject of scholarly dispute. Polemics against idolatrous images (40:19–20; 41:6–7; 42:17; 44:9–20; 45:16–17,20b; 46:5–8; 48:22) and the Songs of the Servant of YHWH (see below) are consistently ascribed to redactional reworking. Designation of the redactional layers to which these segments belong varies from person to person (cf. Schmitt 1979; Kiesow 1979; Merendino 1981; Hermisson 1989; Kratz 1991; Van Oorschot 1993).

Chapters 40–55 of the book of Isaiah are among the most impressive components of the Old Testament. The poet responsible for these chapters was inspired by a profound faith in his God, the Creator of heaven and earth, a God who would not abandon his

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people. yhwh is not only the God of nature but also the God of all peoples.
The so-called Songs of the Servant of yhwh (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12) enjoy a highly unique place within these chapters. Scholars are seriously divided, however, as to whether these songs should be considered older or younger than Deutero-Isaiah or whether they should be ascribed to Deutero-Isaiah himself. Further division is evident with respect to the cohesive unity of the material and the point at which it was integrated into the book. The identity of the Servant of yhwh, serves, if such be possible, as a source of even greater division.
The Songs of the Servant to one side, the expression “Servant of yhwh” functions particularly in Deutero-Isaiah’s oracles of salvation as a designation for Israel and the personification of the community waiting in hope for yhwh’s salvific intervention. In the songs themselves, the Servant has an active role to play. Gifted with the spirit of God, he shall bring about the establishment of a new system of justice and torah (teaching) for the peoples shall go out from him (Isa. 42:1–4; some commentators include vv. 5–7 of 5–9). It would appear from 49:1–6, in which the Servant speaks in the first person of his vocation from his mother’s womb, that his task is not limited

to the “the restoration of the tribes of Jacob and the return survivors of Israel” (49:6a). He shall also serve as “a light to the nations, that my (= God’s) salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (49:6b). It is striking that the Servant is explicitly identified with “Israel” in 49:3. In 50:4–9 he expresses his trust in God who has helped him “to remain courageous” in the exercise of his task in spite of the intense resistance he has had to face. In the fourth and best-known song (52:13–53:12) \( \text{YHWH} \) himself is first to speak, ascribing an exalted status to the Servant that will astonish even the kings (52:13–15). Individuals designated as “we” continue by stating that the Servant has been chastised by God, has suffered on account of their injustice and has undergone a punishment that “that makes us whole”. While the death of the Servant is alluded to thereafter, vv. 10b–13, in which \( \text{YHWH} \) speaks once again, return to the theme of the future glory of the Servant as recompense for the fact that he has borne the punishment due to others upon himself.

While no one should be surprised by the fact that the earliest Christian community had already associated Isa. 52:13–53:12 with the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf., for example, Acts 8:32–35), it remains evident that the author of these verses had a contemporary or earlier figure in mind when he wrote. Scholars continue to argue in this regard, however, as to the identity of the Servant: a personification of Israel (or a part thereof) or an individual. Those who favour the collective hypothesis generally appeal to the designation of the Servant as Israel in Isa. 49:3. This perspective is maintained for the most part by those who consider the Servant Songs to be linked at the literary level to the context. Others argue that Isa. 49:5–6 as well as 53:4–6 are difficult to reconcile with the identification of the Servant with Israel, pointing out that the Servant is portrayed as an innocent individual (a characteristic difficult to apply to Israel, cf. 40:2; 43:22–28) who is, albeit remarkably, not designated by name in the songs (with the exception of Isa. 49:3, in which “Israel” is probably a gloss). It is far from surprising, therefore, that some have interpreted the Servant as the “ideal Israel”, the righteous remnant, in contrast to the empirical Israel. Such a distinction within Israel as a whole, however, can be found nowhere else in Deutero-Isaiah. The individual interpretation of the Servant exhibits similar variety. Some are of the opinion that he represents a figure from Israel’s early history such as Moses or Jeremiah, while others recognise him as a messianic figure, a now
unknown contemporary of the author. Others still maintain an autobiographical interpretation: the Servant is Deutero-Isaiah himself who speaks in the first person without introduction. For those who maintain this hypothesis, clear parallels with the call and confessions of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5, 10 and 11:18–20; 15:10–21; 18:18–23; 26:14–15 respectively) and the description of Ezekiel’s sign acts in Ezek. 4:4–8 serve as supportive arguments. The liberation from hardship and suffering referred to in Isaiah 53 is thus seen as an allusion to Deutero-Isaiah’s liberation from the prison in which he found himself on account of his prediction of the fall of Babylon (cf. Jer. 40:1–6). Such an explanation requires us to interpret Isa. 53:7–9 in the figurative sense, in line with the terminology employed in songs of lament, and to interpret the statement that he had “borne the sins of many” as implying that the consequences of the sins of the people had been transferred to him. Given the terms and expressions found in Isaiah 53, however, such an explanation remains unconvincing, at least at first sight. Nevertheless, the objection that the Old Testament does not allude elsewhere to surrogate suffering is insufficient proof that such a notion is not being alluded to here at this high-point in the prophetic tradition.

Why and how chapters 40–55 came to be connected to the preceding chapters remains something of a mystery. Williamson has defended the thesis that Deutero-Isaiah never existed as an independent work and that it was always intended as a continuation of Proto-Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah, he argues, added his own words to the transmission of Isaiah because he considered the latter’s book to be sealed, as it were, until the time that God’s judgement belonged to the past and the day of liberation, of which the prophet considered himself the herald, had dawned. In this case Deutero-Isaiah is not only to be considered the final redactor of Isaiah 1–39 but also the one who brought the preaching of his predecessor into line with his own time, creating a harmonious whole by combining his own preaching with the prophecies of Isaiah. Williamson’s thesis, however, presupposes the literary unity of Deutero-Isaiah (including the Songs of the Servant of Yahweh). Others (including Hermisson 1989, Kratz 1991, Van Oorschot 1993) are more inclined to suggest points of contact between Proto-Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah in segments of Isaiah.

which they designate as *Fortschreibungen*, thus implying the existence of an originally independent Deutero-Isaiah. In addition, the material specified by Williamson in segments of Proto-Isaiah as Deutero-Isaianic reworking\(^{27}\) is far too disparate to have stemmed from one and the same hand.

\(\gamma\)  *Trito-Isaiah (Isaiah 56–66)*

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of yhwh has risen upon you (60:1)

Commentaries:

See the commentaries referred to under Deutero-Isaiah (with the exception of Elliger and North); W. A. M. Beuken (POT) IIIa–b 1989; J. Koole (COT) III 1996.

Monographs and articles:


\(^{27}\) For example, 8:21–23a, 11:11–16 and chapter 12 together with 2:5, 5:30, 13:1, 14:1–4a, 22–23, chapters 33 and 35.
Scholars have endeavoured to designate Isaiah 56–66 as Trito-Isaiah since the publication of Duhm’s commentary in 1892. While the technical term Trito-Isaiah accounts for the differences in literary style and historical background of these chapters when compared with Deutero-Isaiah, it does not offer an answer to the question of authorship: one or more authors or a redaction of material collected from a variety of different sources. Partly on account of the close relationship between Isaiah 55 and 56, scholars have become increasingly convinced that Trito-Isaiah never existed as an independent document and that it ultimately forms part of a gradual *Fortschreibung* of the book of Isaiah as a whole and of Deutero-Isaiah in particular. Indeed, Trito-Isaiah alludes continually to Deutero-Isaiah.

The hypothesis that the prophecies contained in Isaiah 56–66 stem from the period after the Babylonian exile is supported by the fact that Babylon is nowhere mentioned in the said chapters and the departure from the city of exile has been transposed into an entry into the sanctuary of Jerusalem. Problems related to the promised land are the focus of attention: the situation of the temple on Mount Zion and conflicts between the oppressed and the oppressors within the people of God itself (Beuken, commentary 1989). The question preoccupying Trito-Isaiah turns around the awareness that the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah had not been fulfilled and a reflection on why this had happened.

The core of Trito-Isaiah is formed by the announcements of salvation for Zion in chapters 60–62, which would appear to stem from a prophet who had functioned shortly after the Babylonian exile and before the reconstruction of the temple (520–515 BCE; cf. 60:13). The remaining prophecies tend to form, for the most part, a concentric circle around the core: the prayer of atonement in 63:7–64:12
constitutes the counterpart to the accusations of 56:7–59:21 (interrupted by promises of salvation), which is followed by 65:1–66:14, in which reference is made to the punishment of the godless and salvation for the faithful “servants of yhwh”.

Whether we can ascribe the prophecies of Trito-Isaiah to a single individual (according to Elliger [1933] a disciple of Deutero-Isaiah) or to a variety of figures stemming from different periods remains a question of dispute. The latter option is more likely since the prologue 56:1–8 (following closely on chapter 55), which grants access to the cultic community to foreigners and eunuchs, and the epilogue 66:15–24, which speaks of the coming of yhwh in judgement and his worship by all living things, would appear to stem from a different date than the core of Trito-Isaiah. In addition, 63:1–6 (yhwh’s announcement of vindication against the peoples) is evidently an interpolation in chapters 60–62 related to chapter 59.

2. Jeremiah

O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed (20:7a)

Commentaries:


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Monographs and articles:

The Old Testament text provides more information concerning the life and person of Jeremiah (probably best understood as “may Yahweh exalt [him]”; lxx: Jeremias; V: Hieremias) than of any other prophet.29 Many of his experiences and emotional reactions thereto have been passed on to us in the (auto)biographical and lyrical segments of the book that bears his name. The prophet, who suffered more than most under the task appointed him (cf. Jer. 15:10–18; 18:19–23; 20:7–9,14–18), had his roots in the Benjaminite town of Anathoth, a ten hour walk to the north-east of Jerusalem. According to Jer. 1:1 he was the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests of Anathoth. Commentators have frequently identified the latter group with the descendants of Abiathar, the priest exiled by Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 2:26–27), but it is equally possible that they are to be identified with certain individuals who had migrated south prior to or after the fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE; cf. further Herrmann [commentary 1986]). A degree of kinship between the prophecies of Jeremiah and those

29 R. P. Carroll is extremely sceptical about the possibility of knowing anything about the historical Jeremiah. He argues in his commentary (1986) that the Jeremiah of the book represents virtually nothing more than the literary product of the redactors. Cf., however, the considerably more positive approach in line with earlier commentators of S. Herrmann, op. cit., 1990 and K. Seybold, op. cit., 1993.
of the eighth century prophet Hosea who served in northern Israel
would tend to confirm this hypothesis\(^\text{30}\) (points of contact are also
evident between the preaching of Jeremiah and that of Ezekiel).\(^\text{31}\)

Jeremiah lived at variance with his own immediate family on
account of his preaching (cf. 12:6). In order to preach the words of
judgement assigned to him he was obliged to remain unmarried and
he was not permitted to enter a house of mourning or house of
feasting (16:1–9). From the moment he was called, his prophecies
were predominantly prophecies of judgement, although occasional
salvation preaching was not completely lacking (cf. 1:10). As a con-
sequence, he frequently crossed swords with his fellow villagers
(11:18–23), priests and prophets (18:18; 26:11) and even with King
Jehoiakim (chapters 26 and 36). Zedekiah sought his advice but by
then it was too late (37:17–21; 38:14–28). He received the support
Ahikam, the son of the influential writer Shaphan (cf. 26:24).

Prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, he was branded a trai-

tor, arrested, imprisoned and finally thrown into a pit, all on account
of his preaching. This would have been the end of him if he had
not be rescued on time, a deed to which King Zedekiah was privy
(37:11–16; 38:1–13; see also 20:1–6).

Another prophet named Uriah, who, like Jeremiah, preached his message
against Jerusalem and Judah and is frequently identified as his pupil, was
less fortunate. Uriah was put to death upon the instigation of King Jehoiakim
(Jer. 26:20–23).

According to Jer. 1:2 (cf. also 25:3; 36:2) Jeremiah was called as a
prophet in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (627/626 BCE), prior
thus to the latter’s cultic reforms in 622. Given that most of Jeremiah’s
prophecies appear to stem form the period after the death of Josiah
(609) and the lack of certainty as to whether he referred to the afore-
mentioned reform, commentators frequently maintain that he remained
silent between 622 and 609, impressed by improvements introduced
by Josiah (cf. Volz, commentary 1928, pp. XXIII–XXIV). A num-
ber of scholars have proposed alternative dates for the prophet’s call,


\(^{31}\) Cf. J. W. Miller, Das Verhältnis Jeremiaus und Hesekijus sprachlich und theologisch unter-
although none can be convincingly verified (cf. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, 1990, pp. 28–30). Some consider the thirteenth year of King Josiah to be the year in which Jeremiah was born (cf. Holladay, *commentary* 1986; Seybold 1993, pp. 46–47). It is thus argued that the Deuteronomistic author of the superscription to the book made a mistake and that Jeremiah only commenced his public activities as a prophet during the reign of King Jehoiakim (609–598). Several arguments run counter to this claim: a number of revelations during the time of Josiah are ascribed to Jeremiah (cf. 1:2; 3:6; 36:2); the announcements contained in chapters 3 and 30–31 were originally addressed to the Northern Kingdom (later also to Judah) and are thus difficult to relate to the period of Jehoiakim; the same announcements fit more appropriately in the context of Josiah’s political stance with respect to Ephraim; the “enemy from the North” to which Jeremiah refers (1:14–15; 4:6; 6:1 etc.) need not necessarily allude to a well-defined adversary such as the neo-Babylonian empire (that only served as a threat to Judah during the reign of King Jehoiakim). It seems reasonable to argue, therefore, that the prophet lived between 650 and 580 BCE.

Jeremiah lived during a devastatingly harsh period in the history of the Ancient Near East: the fall of Nineveh (612) and the decline of the Assyrian empire, together with the rise of neo-Babylonian domination under Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II. In his own land he was to witness the fall of Jerusalem in 597 under King Jehoiakim and that of 587 during the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the Davidic dynasty. After the murder of Gedaliah who had been appointed governor by the Babylonians, Jeremiah found himself forced to flee to Egypt together with his friend and secretary Baruch and a number of individuals who feared the reprisals of the Babylonian authorities (chapters 40–44). The curtain falls at this juncture over the remainder of his life. According to legendary information found in the *Lives of the Prophets* (see chapter XIII) he met his death by stoning in the land of the Nile at the hands of his own people.

The book of Jeremiah can be divided into the following main sections:

1–25 primarily prophecies of Jeremiah
26–35 primarily narratives about Jeremiah’s activities
36–45 primarily narratives about Jeremiah’s vicissitudes
46–51 prophecies against the foreign nations
52 appendix, largely corresponding with 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30

Following the superscription (1:1–3) and the account of the prophet’s call (1:4–10) Jeremiah 1–25 consist of two visions and a divine consolation speech (1:11–19), the motivation behind the fall of the Northern Kingdom, i.e. abandonment of יהוה (chapters 2–3) and the announcement of the attack upon Jerusalem and Judah by “the enemy from the North” (chapters 4–6). Chapters 1–6 as a whole reflect the prophet’s earliest preaching. Jeremiah’s temple discourse (7:1–15; cf. Jeremiah 26 which would appear to date this discourse in 609 BCE) serves to mark his first public appearance in Jerusalem. Jeremiah 8–20 are of particular interest for their presentation of the complaints of the prophet (8:18–9:22; 10:17–25), his extraordinary confessiones (12:1–4; 15:10, 15–18; 17:12–18; 18:19–23; 20:7–18)\(^{32}\) and his symbolic acts (the linen loincloth: 13:1–11; the potter’s vessel: 18–19).

Chapters 21–25 consist of words of judgement concerning Jerusalem and Zedekiah (21:1–10), the monarchy in general (21:11–22:9) and Shallum son of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Jehoiakin in particular (22:10–30), with additional material (following the woe saying concerning the iniquitous shepherds) containing a prophecy of salvation in relation to the Righteous Branch from the house of David (23:5–8); proverbs against false prophets (23:9–40); an autobiographical description of the two baskets of figs placed before the temple with a promise of salvation for the exiles of 597 and a prophecy of doom for those who had been spared in Jerusalem (24); the announcement of the fall of Judah under Babylonian aggression (25:1–11) and of the fall of Babylon (25:12–14). The remaining segments of chapter 25 would appear to serve as the introduction to the prophecies against the foreign nations of Jeremiah 46–51 which the Septuagint locates at this

juncture, albeit in a sequence that differs from the Hebrew text. Chapters 21–24 relate to Jeremiah’s preaching during the period of Zedekiah.

With the exception of chapters 30–31, often referred to as the Baruch Scroll, Jeremiah 26–35 contains, for the most part, narratives about the words of Jeremiah, some in the first person and some in the third person. Following the narrative of the prophet’s temple discourse (26; cf. 7:1–15) we are introduced to a description of a symbolic act: Jeremiah is to make a yoke of straps and bars and place it on his neck in order to preach submission to Babylon (27), thereby coming into conflict with the prophet Hananiah (28). Chapter 29 contains a letter addressed to those who had been deported to Babylon in 597 with a prediction that the exile was going to last seventy years (29:10).

Chapters 30–31 contain promises of restoration for both northern Israel and Judah. Jeremiah’s purchase of a field from his nephew Hanamel also makes use of promises of restoration and salvation (32–33). After an urgent warning addressed to Zedekiah informing him that Nebuchadnezzar II was about to conquer Jerusalem (34:1–7), reference is made to divine punishment as a consequence of the revocation of the former decision to set the Hebrew slaves free (34:8–22, in line with Exod. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12). Chapter 35 thereafter presents the Rechabites as an example for Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 36–45, the so-called Memoirs of Baruch, relate events in the life of Jeremiah: the burning of his first scroll of prophecies by King Jehoiakim (36), his encounters with King Zedekiah (37–38), the cap-

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33 His name is to be found as Berekjahu on one of the bullae stemming from the time of Jeremiah (cf. N. Avigad, “Baruch the Scribe and Jerahmeel the King’s Son”, BAr 42 (1979), 114–118; id., Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah. Remnants of a Burnt Archive, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 28–29: lbhkhw bn njhws kspf (“belonging to Berekjahu, the son of Nerijahu, the scribe”). Other bullae contain the name of Jerahmeel (cf. Jer. 36:26) and that of Seraiah, the son of Neriah, the brother of Baruch (Jer. 51:59).

ture of Jerusalem whereafter the prophet is released from his fetters (39:1–40:6), his forced departure to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah (40:7–43:7) and his preaching in Egypt (43:8–44:30). The chapters are written in the third person and constitute a sort of apology intended to show that in spite of the accusations of treachery Jeremiah was the opposite of a traitor and that he remained faithful to the people in spite of their rejections. The final chapter rounds off this segment of the book with a short prophecy of salvation from Jeremiah addressed to his secretary Baruch which reveals something of the latter’s spiritual struggle after he had wholeheartedly taken sides with the prophet (45).

The prophecies against the foreign nations (46–51) constitute a separate collection and are addressed against Egypt, the Philistines, Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, Damascus, Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, Elam and Babylon. The said prophecies stem from a variety of different periods and would appear either to be only partially attributable to Jeremiah himself or to have been significantly reworked at a later date (see, for example, the prophecies against Moab [48] and Edom [49:7–22]).

The concluding chapter 52 deals with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and contains reference to the number of exiles deported by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597, 587 and 581 (52:28–30), which is lacking in the largely parallel text of 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30.

Information on the genesis and evolution of the book of Jeremiah would appear to be more readily available than is the case with other prophetic documents. Jer. 36:1–4 informs us that the prophet allowed the prophecies uttered up to 605 to be written down by his secretary Baruch. Scholars have thus endeavoured to designate this collection as the primitive scroll. While we are also told that the latter was burned by King Jehoiakim, Jer. 36:32 informs us that the prophet dictated a more detailed version of his prophecies anew to Baruch. It would appear therefore that Jeremiah himself was responsible for the written codification of his preaching. This fact confirms our suspicion that other prophets were also responsible (either personally or via a secretary) for at least part of the written form of the books which bear their name and that the accounts of their

36 Cf. L. H. K. Bleeker, Jeremia’s profetieën tegen de volkeren, Groningen 1894.
preaching activities should not be ascribed exclusively to their followers or to later generations.

It remains virtually impossible to recover the contents of the so-called primitive scroll. Indeed, those who have endeavoured to do so generally arrive at differing conclusions. Allusion to the fact that the scroll was read twice by Baruch and thereafter in part (three or four columns) by a certain Jehudi on a single day (Jeremiah 36) makes it reasonable to assume, however, that it was relatively small.


Seybold (*op. cit.*, 1993, p. 31) considers it probable that other segments of the book of Jeremiah were originally codified by the prophet himself in the form of independent scrolls or folios, such as the prophecies concerning Judah’s monarchy (21:11–23:8), those concerning the prophets (23:9–40) and an early collection of prophecies against the nations (46–51; note the reference to a book in Jer. 25:13).

Besides poetic segments written in metric fashion, chapters 1–25 also contain lengthy passages in a prose style employed not only for narrative material but also for several prophecies. The relationship between the poetic and prose passages, however, remains an ongoing point of discussion. Duhm’s 1901 commentary ascribes a significant portion of the poetic passages to the prophet while considering the narrative prose segments (26–29; 32–45) to be the work of Baruch and the remaining material to be due to scribal interpolations from later centuries. In his *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* of 1914, Mowinckel made a distinction between four sources: A. the poetic segments ascribable to Jeremiah and composed in Egypt between 580 and 480 BCE; B. the narrative segments (19; 20; 26–29; 36–43), likewise written in Egypt, whereby Baruch’s authorship would appear to be uncertain; C. speeches stemming from Deuteronomistic circles in Babylon or Palestine around 400 BCE (7; 11; 18; 21; 25; 32; 34; 35; 44); D. anonymous prophecies of salvation (including chapters 30–31) dating from the late post-exilic period. Mowinckel later subscribed to the hypothesis that the prose segments of Jeremiah formed the writ-
ten accounts of the prophet’s followers who, under the influence of the reforms of Josiah, adapted and actualised his preaching along Deuteronomistic lines (cf. Nicholson 1970). Counter to this explanation several scholars have endeavoured to clarify the differences between the poetic and prose segments of the book from the perspective of historical linguistics: Bright (commentary 1965) maintains the existence of a unique style that emerged at the end of the seventh century and was employed by both Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. Weiser (commentary 1952–1953) and Reventlow (1963) argue that the combination has its origins in the cult and that it was employed in particular in priestly preaching. Hyatt (commentary 1956) and Thiel (1973, 1981), by contrast, adopt a redactional explanation, arguing that the prose segments of Jeremiah 1–25 together with the narratives about the prophet in chapters 26–45 were subject to a Deuteronomistic redactional reworking. Helga Weippert (1973), however, has convincingly pointed out essential differences between Deuteronomistic style and terminology and those segments of Jeremiah that have been designated Deuteronomistic. The reader would probably be best advised with respect to the prose segments to follow McKane (commentary 1986–1989) who favours the idea of a Fortschreibung of original prophecies of Jeremiah in a sort of Deuteronomistic style without insisting on a continuous and uniform Deuteronomistic redaction.

In line with Mowinckel, Seybold (op. cit., 1993, pp. 21ff.) distinguishes a (later reworked) layer A in Jeremiah 2–3, 4–6, 21–22, 23, 30–31 and 46–49, a narrative-biographical layer B consisting of chapters 26–45 that stems from Baruch and a Deuteronomistically inclined reworking of A and B (layer C). In contrast to Mowinckel, however, he considers layer D to consist of marginal comments incorporated for compositional reasons in the publication of the book as a whole.

The Septuagint version of the book of Jeremiah does not only locate the chapters containing the prophecies against the foreign nations in a different place (immediately after Jer. 25:13a; adopting in addition a different sequence) to that found in the Hebrew text (chapters 46–51), the Greek version of the book is also roughly 1/8 shorter than the Masoretic tradition. The discoveries at Qumran have

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37 E. Tov, The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch (HSM 8), Missoula MT 1976.
proven once and for all that the Greek text is based on a Hebrew Vorlage. Scholars are at odds, however, as to which Hebrew text should be considered the most original: the Vorlage of the LXX or the proto-Masoretic text. It seems reasonable to accept, nevertheless, that a first edition consisting for the most part of Jeremiah 1–51 (as preserved in the Septuagint with the prophecies against the foreign nations located after 25:13a) was put together by Baruch in Egypt (cf. the colophon LXX 51:31–35). A different edition (as preserved in the Masoretic text) would appear to have been composed in Babylon, perhaps by Seraiah, the brother of Baruch, who went there in 594/593 BCE (cf. Jer. 51:59–64).

3. Ezekiel

Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? (18:23)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

The fact that Ezekiel ("God strengthen [this child]"); LXX: Iezekièl; V: Hiezecihel), the son of Buzi, was a priest (1:3), explains his evident concern for the temple and its legislation as well as his style and use of terminology associated with the Priestly Codex (P). His preaching exhibits a degree of kinship with that of Jeremiah. Therefore, it is possible that he was familiar with the scroll written by Baruch in 605 BCE containing the prophecies of the latter (cf. Jer. 36:32).

Ezekiel was deported from Jerusalem to Babylon in 597 BCE where he received his prophetic call in 593 (cf. Ezek. 1:2). His preaching continued up to 571 (cf. 29:17; he dates his prophetic activity from the moment of his own deportation and that of King Jehoiachin). During the exile he predicted the downfall of Jerusalem. According to Ezek. 24:16ff., the prophet’s wife died during the siege of Jerusalem by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar II. Her death led to a period of silence on the part of the prophet, which only came to an end when he was informed by a messenger of the fall of Jerusalem in 587

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(33:21–22). After the fall of the city his penitential preaching made way for prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel.

The once popular hypothesis that Ezekiel’s activities should be located in part (cf. Bertholet, commentary 1936) or even entirely in Jerusalem (cf. Herntrich 1933) can no longer be defended with any degree of conviction and is no longer maintained by contemporary exegetes.

Ezekiel’s complex personality has been the subject of a variety of divergent evaluations. Some have described him as an ecstatic, others as suffering from catalepsy and others still as mentally ill. It cannot be denied that he was a highly sensitive individual, that he exhibited a profound preoccupation with the visions he had received, that he possessed a paranormal clairvoyance and that certain matters affected him to such an extent that he was literally struck dumb by them (cf. the death of his wife). Such observations, however, do not allow us to write him off as a sick individual. Deeply impressed by the majesty and righteousness of Yahweh as well as the insignificance of human beings, Ezekiel’s prophecies reveal a degree of personal clarity that allowed the prophet to summon his listeners to conversion and individual responsibility (18) and to represent his hope for the restoration of Israel in a lively and colourful fashion (37). It would thus be unfair to dismiss him as pathologically disturbed or (on account of his concern for the cult) as an epigone among the prophets.

Ezekiel did not hesitate at times to confront the truth concerning his people’s apostasy with pointed and sometimes even crude declarations: cf. the Bildreden concerning the apparently unfaithful foundling (Jerusalem; chapter 16) and the portrayal of Samaria and Jerusalem as the prostitutes Oholah and Oholibah (23). In addition to this, however, he has a left a number of magnificent songs to posterity (19: a lament over the princes of Israel; 28:12–19: a lament over the king of Tyre). He refers with some frequency to ancient biblical traditions and mythical representations (cf. the references to the Eden motif in the aforementioned lament over the king of Tyre [28:12–19], the allusion to the wise man Dan’el [14:14], with whom we are familiar from the Ugaritic tradition, and chapter 31 in which

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the Pharaoh is compared with a mighty tree). Reference should be made, in addition, to the magnificent allegories of the eagles and the vine (17) and the representation of Tyre as a splendid ship (27).

The book of Ezekiel contains only prophecies and descriptions of personal experience, the latter having been noted in a diary by the prophet himself. Indeed, the document that bears his name carefully dates each one. Narratives concerning the prophet would thus appear to have been excluded. With the exception of the secondary superscription found in 1:3 (and 24:24) the entire work is written in the ‘I’ style. The book can be divided into three main parts that can be arranged more or less chronologically:

1–24 prophecies of judgement concerning Jerusalem and Judah prior to 587
25–35 prophecies against the foreign nations (interrupted by 33–34)
36–48 announcement of salvation for Israel (interrupted by the prophecy against Gog in 38–39) dating from the period after 587

In addition to the call of the prophet and the task ascribed to him (1:1–3:27) the following elements of chapters 1–24 are worthy of particular attention: symbolic acts (4–5; 12:1–20; 21:11–12, 23–29; 24:1–24; cf. also 37:15–28), the temple vision (8–11), prophecies against false prophets and prophetesses (13), preaching related to the individual responsibility of the human person (18), Ezekiel’s teaching based on history (20) and the already mentioned allegories (17; 27) and Bildreden (16; 23).

The prophecies against the foreign nations in chapters 25–32 are addressed to Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines (25), Tyre (26:1–28:19), Sidon (28:20–26) and Egypt (29–32). Reference should

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46 F. Sedlmeier, Studien zur Komposition und Theologie von Ez 20 (SBB 21), Stuttgart 1990.
also be made, however, to the word addressed to Edom in chapters 35 and 36 and the prophecy against Gog of Magog in chapters 38–39 (not infrequently determined to be a later interpolation).\(^{49}\)

In addition to chapters 33 (Ezekiel is appointed as sentinel over the house of Israel), 34 (\(\text{yhwh}\) as the good shepherd)\(^{50}\) and 35 (God’s revenge concerning Edom), chapters 36–48 speak for the most part of future salvation. Israel shall be purified and established once again (36), shall rise again (37:1–14: the vision of the valley with the dry bones)\(^{51}\) and shall be reunified (37:15–28). The chapters containing the ‘blueprint’ of the temple (40–48),\(^{52}\) which apparently once circulated as a separate document, consists of a vision of the new temple (40–42),\(^{53}\) the announcement of \(\text{yhwh}\)’s return to his sanctuary (43; cf. 10:18–22), the laws of the sanctuary (44–46), the portrayal of the waters flowing from the temple (47:1–12) and a description of the boundaries whereby the land is to be divided (47:13–48:35).

Scholars tend to evaluate the \textit{historical evolution} of the book of Ezekiel in a variety of ways: as a redactional compilation of preaching that stems from the prophet himself; as the result of a later reworking of an original ‘primary’ document; as made up of several different layers that exhibit, at the level of content, either a priestly or prophetic character or are to be determined on geographical grounds (Palestinian or Babylonian); as \textit{Fortschreibung} of the prophet’s oral discourse and segments he himself committed to writing, to be ascribed in part to Ezekiel and in part to others (see, for example, Zimmerli, commentary 1969). The reader would be well advised to account for later expansions, reworkings and redactional glosses\(^{54}\) whereby the


\(^{50}\) B. Willmes, \textit{Die sogenannte Hirtenallegorie Ezechiel 34}, Frankfurt am Main 1984.


various accounts of Ezekiel’s personal experiences and his prophecies were collected together.

Hölscher (1924) ascribes only the finer poetic segments of the book and some prose passages (the call account and the description of prophetic actions and visions) to Ezekiel himself. In so doing, however, he restricts the authentic material to a mere 144 verses. C. C. Torrey (Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy, New Haven 1930, reprint New York 1970) considers the book of Ezekiel to be a pseudopigraphal document dating from around 230 BCE, arguing that the prophet should be understood as an invention of the actual author of the book. As already noted, Herntrich (1933) restricts the location of the historical Ezekiel to Jerusalem prior to the ultimate fall of the city and considers the exilic material to have its roots in the activities of a follower of the prophet.

In the first half of the twentieth century scholars were inclined to view the book of Ezekiel as problematic on a variety of grounds and their studies have given rise to a number of theories, concerning the person of the prophet and the historical evolution of the book that bears his name, which are no longer tenable. The said difficulties tended to have their roots in the representation of Israel’s religion predominant at the time, whereby a sharp contrast between a (highly praiseworthy) prophetic religion and a (less worthy) priestly religion was presupposed and the idea of an “ethical monotheism” that superseded cultic legalism was the order of the day. It remains difficult, however, to reconcile Ezekiel with such a perspective given the fact that he is presented as both prophet and priest simultaneously, exhibits legalistic tendencies and had a clear interest in cultic matters.

A radical change in scholarly perspective with regard to the person and book of Ezekiel emerged in the second half of the twentieth century in particular in the work of Fohrer and Zimmerli. In spite of mutual differences and points of disagreement with respect to accentuation, however, contemporary exegetes are agreed that Ezekiel was called to be a prophet while in exile, that the location of his preaching was restricted to Babylon, that a significant part of the content of the book that bears his name goes back to the prophet himself, that the distinction between prophetic and priestly elements lacks foundation and that the work has unmistakably undergone significant Fortschreibung. Form-critical and tradition-historical studies of the work, moreover, have tended to force decennia of purely literary-critical studies into the shadows. While some scholars, including Garscha (1974), have continued to account for substantial redactional segments, others (including Boadt 1980, Lang 1981, Greenberg, commentary 1983) have been inclined in more recent years to ascribe a significantly larger portion of the material to the prophet himself.

Recent studies have tended to focus less attention on the origin and historical growth of the book and more on the literary structure and stylistic characteristics thereof based on the so-called new literary methods (Boadt 1980 and 1990, Greenberg commentary 1983 and 1997, Bisschops 1994, Renz 1999).

The significance of Ezekiel, who was appointed by YHWH as sentinel over the house of Israel (cf. chapter 33), lies in the fact that he safeguarded his people in exile from syncretism, first by way of prophecies of judgement and then by way of prophecies of salvation. His emphasis on the celebration of the sabbath (apparent from 20:12,13,16,20,21,24; 22:8,26; 23:38; 44:24;46:3) and his preaching concerning the renewed temple liturgy (chapter 40ff.) constitute an important and substantial contribution to the religiosity of both early and later Judaism. His services to systematic theology later led him to be designated as the Calvin of the Old Testament.

The Septuagint text of Ezekiel differs in many respects from the Hebrew version. The latter is difficult and sometimes even impossible to translate in places on account of apparently frequent textual corruption.

c. The Twelve Minor Prophets


58 Important contributions to the textual criticism of Ezekiel can be found in J. Lust (ed.), op. cit., 1986, pp. 7–119.
The book of Ezekiel is followed in the Hebrew Bible by the *Dodekapropheton*, the book of the Twelve Prophets. The earliest allusion to the Twelve Prophets can be found in Jesus Sirach in his “Praise of the Fathers” (49:10), which dates from the beginning of the second century BCE. The Jewish tradition (also Jerome) considered the works ascribed to the twelve as a single document. In reality, however, we are dealing here with several different books, although recent scholarship has been more inclined to draw attention to mutual kinship between them than ever before.

The descriptive expression “Minor Prophets”, which can be found as early as Augustine (*De Civitate Dei* 18,29), relates to the limited size of the books in question and not to the religious content thereof: the significance of the preaching contained in these documents is not, as a rule, inferior to that found in the Major Prophets.

The Septuagint does not only locate the Minor Prophets prior to the Major Prophets, the sequence thereof differs from that found in the Hebrew Bible, the Vulgate and our modern translations: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum etc. (the remainder as in the Hebrew Bible, the Vulgate and modern translations). It would thus appear that a fixed sequence for the Minor Prophets only came into force at a relatively late date. A Greek manuscript found in the Judean desert and dating from the first century BCE, however, already

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59 Possible for chronological reasons since Amos and Hosea were active as prophets before Isaiah.
appears to follow the same sequence as that of the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{60}

The sequence of the Minor Prophets in the Hebrew Bible would appear to be based on chronological considerations as well as the length of a given book and/or its contents. As the oldest writing prophets Hosea and Amos come first and the rest follow. In spite of the fact that Hosea was a younger contemporary of Amos, however, the former’s book is clearly placed first on account of its greater length and perhaps also on account of Hos. 1:2a (“when \(\text{YHWH}\) first spoke through Hosea”). Joel would appear to be located prior to Amos because the conclusion of Joel and the beginning of Amos share the theme of \(\text{YHWH}\)’s judgement concerning the nations and the words “\(\text{YHWH}\) roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem” (Joel 3:16, Hebr. 4:16; Amos 1:2). Obadiah could be placed after Amos because both books deal with the theme of the Day of the Lord. It is possible that Jonah was located prior to Nahum because both books make reference to Nineveh. Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah prophesied during the second half of the seventh century BCE and would appear to be placed together for this reason. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, whose works conclude the Dodekapropheton, belong among the post-exilic prophets.

While the Septuagint would appear, for the most part, to have employed chronological considerations in ordering the Minor Prophets, the fact that Micah is located after Amos and prior to Joel suggests that length of the individual books also had a role to play.

1. Hosea

Si in explanationibus omnium prophetarum sancti Spiritus indigemus adventu... quanto magis in explanatione Osee prophetae orandus est Dominus et cum Petro dicendum: Edissere nobis parabolam istam (Jerome)\textsuperscript{61}

Commentaries:

K. Marti (KHC) 1904; W. R. Harper (ICC) 1905, 1953\textsuperscript{4}; A. van Hoonacker (Etudes Bibliques) 1908; W. Nowack (HKAT) 1922\textsuperscript{3}; E. Sellin (KAT\textsuperscript{1})

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. E. Tov e.a., The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr) (DJD VIII), Oxford 1990.

\textsuperscript{61} If we require the advent of the Holy Spirit in the explanation of all the prophets... how much more must we pray to the Lord and implore with Peter in explaining the prophet Hosea: Explain this parable to us.

Monographs and articles:

Hosea (abbreviation of Ḥoṣa‘ya: “yhwh has helped”; lxx: Osēe; V: Osee), the son of Beeri (1:1), prophesied from around 750–725 BCE in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) from which he originated. As such he is the only Writing Prophet (besides Nahum?, see below) who did not come from Judah in the south. As a younger contemporary of
Amos he was active in Samaria, Bethel and elsewhere some decades after the latter. While he is known to have lived through the Syro-Ephraimitic war (734–732; cf. 2 Kgs 16:5; Isaiah 7), it is probable that he was no longer around to experience the fall of Samaria in 722/721 BCE. It is striking that Hosea made use of the traditions concerning the patriarch Jacob and the exodus from Egypt (cf. 11:1; 12:4–6,13; 13:4). He shows great respect for the prophets who, from the time of Moses (12:14), had defined his people in their preaching according to yhwh (6:5; 12:11).

The core of Hosea’s message is turned against the excessive influence of the cult of Baal in the worship of yhwh (cf. 2:12, Hebr. 2:15; 2:15, Hebr. 2:18), a misleading priesthood (4:4–10), the disastrous foreign policy of the Northern Kingdom (5:13; 7:8–12) and catastrophic internal power struggles (7:3–7). For Hosea the only correct response to yhwh’s historical salvific deeds and the covenant He had established with Israel (6:7; 8:1) is knowledge of God expressed in the maintenance of the Law of yhwh and in steadfast love (4:6; 6:6). Hosea was evidently a strict, penitential prophet, although he would appear never to have abandoned his belief in the restoration of his people (cf. chapter 2; 11:8–11; 14:5–9).

The fact that Hosea was once described as foolish and even mad (9:7) can be explained as a hostile reaction to his judgement preaching. The hypothesis that he maintained a close relationship with prophetic-Levitical circles in the sanctuary at Shechem who were faithful to yhwh, opposed the priesthood of other temples and may have been responsible for the creation of Deuteronomy (Wolff 1956), deserves serious consideration although definitive proof thereof is lacking. The representation of the prophet as a Bedouin or as kin to the Rechabites (cf. 2 Kgs 10:15,23; Jeremiah 35) has been convincingly rejected by Vriezen (1941). Given the complexity of the problems surrounding the designation of material in the Pentateuch as Elohist (E), the proposed dependence of Hosea on this documentary source is fraught with difficulty. There would appear, nevertheless, to be good reason to represent the prophet as having inspired Jeremiah: he shares the latter’s portrayal of the period in

63 M. Schulz-Rauch, Hosea and Jeremiah. Zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Hoseabuches (Calwer Theologische Monographien 16), Stuttgart 1996, is unwilling to consider direct influence on the part of Hosea on Jeremiah, only shared themes that are elaborated in a different manner.
the wilderness as ideal courtship in the relationship between YHWH and his people (Jer. 2:2ff.; Hos. 2:14, Hebr. 2:17), a sense of anguish at the fact that Israel had abandoned its fidelity to God and had gone after the Baals (Jer. 2:5ff.; Hos. 2:6,12, Hebr. 2:9,15; 9:10), the knowledge that sin was so deeply rooted in the heart of the people that it no longer had the capacity to return to YHWH (Jer. 13:23; Hos. 5:4), but also the conviction that God would one day turn Israel’s fate around (Jer. 30:18ff.; 31:31; Hos. 2:14, Hebr. 2:17; 11:8ff.).

Little is known about Hosea’s life as such beyond what we find in chapters 1 and 3. It remains extremely difficult, however, to establish any kind of picture of what happened to him on the basis of this material. As a consequence, scholarly opinion on the contents of the said chapters is extremely diverse (cf. Davies 1993, pp. 79–92). According to chapter 1, Hosea was commanded by God to take a prostitute, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, as his wife.64 Together they had three children, a son and a daughter followed by another son, to whom symbolic names were given: Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah (“not pitied”) and Lo-ammi (“not my people”). According to chapter 3 he was later to take an adulterous woman (whom he had purchased for fifteen shekels) as his wife, refusing to allow her to have intercourse with other men and even refraining from having intercourse with her himself. Both marriages are interpreted symbolically. The first represents Israel’s service of the Baals, the names given to the issue thereof predicting God’s judgement of his people: Jezreel, marked by the blood of Jehu (2 Kings 9ff.), alludes to the imminent collapse of the monarchy (1:4–5), Lo-ruhamah to the end of God’s pity for the house of Israel (1:6) and Lo-ammi to the ruptured relationship between God and his people (1:9: “You are not my people and I am not your God [yours]”, cf. Exod. 3:14). The second marriage represents unfaithful Israel seeking to return to YHWH.

A number of exegetes are of the opinion that the woman of chapter 1, which speaks about Hosea, and that of chapter 3, which contains a first person singular autobiographical report by the prophet himself, should be identified with one another, arguing that Hosea must have taken his wife back after she had left him, turned to other men and finally ended up in

the gutter. This interpretation, however, is strongly influenced by Hosea 2 and runs counter to the reference to the purchase of a woman in 3:2. It is far from certain that we are dealing with a *marriage* as such in chapter 1, as is often argued.\(^{65}\) It seems likely, therefore, that the woman referred to in chapter 3 was not Gomer.

Chapter 2 can be considered a summary of Hosea’s preaching: יְהוָה is confronting his people with ruin on account of Israel’s infidelity in following after the Baals; having led them into the wilderness, however, he will entice his loved one once again and grant salvation. While the chapter is clearly made up of originally independent prophecies, they have been so closely woven together at the redactional level that it is now almost impossible to set them apart. The material here exhibits the characteristic features of a court case (as is often apparent in the remaining prophecies of Hosea), whereby יְהוָה adopts the position of prosecutor, judge and executor of punishment while striving all the while to reach a settlement.

While chapters 1–3 exhibit a degree of thematic cohesion, the following chapters are much more difficult to evaluate and sub-divide. Scholars frequently argue in favour of two literary complexes after chapter 3, namely chapters 4–11 and 12–14.

The first complex begins with reference to a lawsuit brought by יְהוָה against the inhabitants of the land (4:1–3) and concludes with an impressive announcement of salvation in which God declares that he cannot abandon his faithless people (11:7–11). The chapters consist in the first instance of two compositions, both of which are composed on the basis of a large literary unit and a smaller, parallel literary unit (4:4–19 plus 5:1–7; 5:8–7:16 plus 8:1–13). The said compositions are followed by words of judgement and doom on the part of the prophet and allusion to the resistance he had incited (9:1–9). The complex is rounded off (with the exception of the already mentioned verses 11:7–11) with a segment in which complaints and announcements of judgement are held up against the background of Israel’s past (9:10–11:6). In his 1983 commentary, Jeremias argues that the prophecies addressed against the perversion of Israel’s liturgy found in 4:4–5:7 should be located among Hosea’s earliest preach-

\(^{65}\) The verb “to take” would appear to refer to sexual intercourse in Hos. 1:2,3 as it does in Lev. 20:14,17,21 and not simply marriage (see, for example, NBG in v. 3).
ing while those of 5:8–9:9, which allude to Israel’s political activities as well as its religious apostasy, should be considered as stemming from the period of the Syro-Ephraimitic war.66 In his opinion, the material found in 9:10–11:11 should be dated to the final years of Hosea’s prophetic activity.

The authentic segments of the second complex, the once independent tradition of chapters 12–14 (14:10 is clearly a postscript added at a later date),67 would likewise appear to stem from the latter period. They contain a prophecy that exposes Israel’s deceitful behaviour from the time of the patriarch Jacob (12), an announcement that Ephraim is to be punished on account of his sins (13:1–14:1) and a call to repentance together with a promise of salvation (14:2–9).68

In his preface to the Twelve Minor Prophets, Jerome was among the first to note concerning the book of Hosea: Commaticus est et quasi per sententias loquens (It consists of short sections and speaks, as it were, in proverbs). It is often extremely difficult to trace Hosea’s own words in the highly compromised form transmitted by his followers and not infrequently fused with the language of the tradents’ Auftrittsskizzen (Wolff) of the prophet’s preaching.

The assembled collection would appear to be ordered according to both chronology and content. A written copy of Hosea’s preaching also accompanied the refugees who escaped to the Southern Kingdom during the siege and fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE) and was actualised thereafter for Judean readers by way of a variety of interpolations (cf. 1:7; 1:10–12 [Hebr. 2:1–3]; 4:15; 5:5 conclusion; 6:11; 8:14b; 12:1b).

While the majority of the book’s segments would appear to hark back both at the literary level and at the level of content to the

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68 While the Hoseanic authorship of the latter text is often denied (see Jeremias in his commentary of 1983), this is probably unjustified (see the commentary of Van Leeuwen [1984]). For the interpretation of 14:9 as a dialogue between God and Ephraim see A. S. van der Woude, “Bemerkungen zu einigen umstrittenen Stellen im Zwölfprophetenbuch”, in: A. Caquot et M. Delcor (eds.), Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles (AOAT 212), Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, pp. 483–485.
prophet himself (e.g. 2:1–14 [Hebr. 2:4–17]; 3:1–4), the genesis and evolution of the document we now have at our disposal can only be traced by way of approximation. The reconstruction of the redaction history proposed by Wolff in his 1961 commentary has not enjoyed widespread endorsement. The reworking of the book for Judean readers (Emmerson 1984) offers proof, however, that the document must have achieved its final form in the pre-exilic period (seventh century BCE).

The preaching of Hosea, the “prophet of love”, is characterised by its emotive style and its use of imaginative language. On the one hand he compares Yhwh’s wrathful behaviour with that of a wild animal (5:14; 13:7–8) while on the other he represents Israel’s God as a loving father whose heart is torn asunder at the sight of Ephraim’s infidelity and by what he is being forced to do to his people. It is here that we encounter the most profound secret of Hosea’s message: the people that worshipped Yhwh as a Baal, as a guarantor of fertility and prosperity, that denied God as its healer and expected restoration from Assyria (5:13), that responded to God’s salvific deeds in history with ingratitude, has no other hope in sight than God himself, who in his burning anger shows mercy towards his people (11:7–11). Hosea held firm to his belief that Yhwh would not allow his judgement of Israel to end in destruction and annihilation but rather in salvation and restoration for his people.

The Hebrew text of the book of Hosea is among the most difficult in the Old Testament and is not infrequently considered by scholars to be extremely corrupt. Apparent linguistic problems, however, need not necessarily have their roots in poor textual transmission, but may also (at least in part) have to do with our lack of knowledge with respect to the dialect characteristics of the Hebrew spoken in northern Israel. In his *Studien zum Hoseabuche* published in 1935 Nyberg was among the first to support the originality of the Hebrew text that has been handed down to us.

2. *Joel*

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (2:28)

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Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


Nothing is known about the life of Joel (“yhwh is God”); lxx: Iooêl; V: Iohel) let alone about that of his father Pethuel referred to in 1:1 (lxx: Bethuel). According to 2:1 the location of his preaching would appear to have been restricted to Jerusalem.
It is difficult to date Joel’s prophetic activity with any certainty. Scholarly opinion varies in this regard from the ninth to the second centuries BCE, thus making him for some the oldest writing prophet and for others the youngest. Contemporary exegesis tends to be divided into two opposing camps, the one considering Joel to be a cultic prophet who functioned in the final decades prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (Kapelrud 1948, Keller [commentary 1965], Rudolph [commentary 1971] and Van Leeuwen [commentary 1993]), the other locating him among the circles out of which the authors of Isaiah 24–27 and Zechariah 12–14 emerged and dating his prophetic activity around 400 BCE (see, for example, Wolff, commentary 1969). Those who support the latter hypothesis argue that Joel’s preaching employs motifs and quotations borrowed from Amos, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi (especially in the second part of the book), that a number of priests and elders are alluded to as leaders of the people (thus no reference to a king), that the language of the prophet is young and exhibits Aramaic influences, that the cult has an important place in his preaching, that he is to be located on the boundary between prophecy and apocalyptic and that his book presupposes the Babylonian exile (cf. 3:2–3, Hebr. 4:2–3).  

Problems surrounding the date of Joel’s appearance as a prophet are closely related to questions concerning the literary unity of the book that bears his name. The document can be divided into two parts. In the first part the prophet addresses himself to the people on the occasion of a catastrophic plague of locusts accompanied by scorching heat that is presented as a portent of Yahweh’s day of judgement. He calls upon the people to lament and insists thereby that the priests must organise a fast (chapter 1). Thereafter he alerts Jerusalem to the coming Day of Yahweh, appeals for conversion and renewed fasting, and calls upon the priests to utter a prayer of deliverance (2:1–17). In the following verses Yahweh has mercy on his people and offers them hope of a future filled with abundance and fertility (2:18–27, Hebr. chapter 2). The second segment prophesies
the future outpouring of God’s Spirit, whereby all the people of Israel are to be gifted with prophecy and salvation is to be found for the faithful on Mount Zion (2:28–32, Hebr. chapter 3). An announcement of yhwh’s judgement over the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat follows together with the promise of paradisiacal blessing for Judah and Jerusalem (chapter 3, Hebr. chapter 4).

Based on this arrangement of the content, Duhm (1911) has argued that the eschatological segment (2:28–3:21, Hebr. chapters 3 and 4) should be considered a later addition to the preceding text. In his opinion, allusions to the Day of yhwh in chapters 1 and 2 must have been added later when 2:28–3:21 (Hebr. chapters 3 and 4) were written. In the present author’s opinion, however, the references to God’s day of judgement in chapters 1 and 2 are too firmly anchored in the text to be considered later interpolations.

While associations evidently exist between Joel 1:1–2:27 (Hebr. chapters 1–2) and 2:28–3:21 (Hebr. chapters 3–4; cf. 2:27 with 3:17, Hebr. 4:17, and 2:10 with 3:15, Hebr. 4:15), and in spite of arguments to the contrary (see, for example, Prinsloo 1985), the present author is inclined nevertheless to consider 2:28–3:21 (Hebr. chapters 3–4) a later addition to and expansion of the preceding text. In addition to the observation that Joel 1:1–2:27 (Hebr. chapters 1–2) exhibits a prophetic character while the remainder of the book would appear to be eschatological-apocalyptic, and that the earlier restoration of the fertility of the land (2:23–27) would seem to prefigure the paradisiacal blessing as predicted in 3:18 (Hebr. 4:18), the primary argument in support of our thesis is the theme of the Day of yhwh, which is directed against Jerusalem/Judah in the first part of the book and against the nations in the second part. In the first part of the book, the Day of judgment is averted by fasting and repentance because yhwh is zealous on behalf of his people, roots out and dispels the “northern army” (2:20) and grants his blessing to Jerusalem/Judah (2:21–27). In the second part of the book, however, the Day of judgement is inescapable, is (as noted above) to a significant degree eschatological-apocalyptic (2:30–31, Hebr. 3:3–4;

72 The valley is geographically unknown. It probably represents a symbolic name meaning “yhwh gives judgement”.

73 For the various interpretations of “the northerner” see C. van Leeuwen, “The Northern One”, in: F. García Martinez e.a., The Scriptures and the Scrolls (FS A. S. van der Woude; SVT 49), Leiden 1992, pp. 84–99.
3:15–16a, Hebr. 4:15–16a) and is no longer a threat to Israel because \( \text{y} \text{h} \text{w} \text{h} \) will be “a refuge for his people and a stronghold for the children of Israel” (3:16b, Hebr. 4:16b; cf. 2:32, Hebr. 3:5). For these reasons it seems realistic to describe the second part of the book as a secondary addition, tying in with the prophecies found in Joel 1:1–2:27. It is not impossible that the latter are pre-exilic—on account of the reference to the “northerner”—and that Joel’s prophetic activity is to be dated to the first decades of the sixth century BCE. The remaining chapters should thus be dated to the period around 400 BCE and be ascribed, of course, to a different author.

The authenticity of 3:4–8 (Hebr. 4:4–8) has been called into question on account of the fact that they interrupt the cohesion between 3:1–3 and 3:9–17, refer to a number of nations by name (Tyre, Sidon and Philistia) in contrast to the rest of the context, and afford a significant role to the notion of retribution. The text, however, is probably no younger than 343 BCE, the year in which Sidon was destroyed by the troops of the Persian king Artaxerxes III. Joel 3:18–21 (Hebr. 4:18–21) is likewise considered by some commentators to be a later interpolation.

The religious sentiment of the book in its present form can be described as one of comfort and encouragement in the context of an economically and politically discouraged community whereby a future perspective of liberation is offered on the Day of \( \text{y} \text{h} \text{w} \text{h} \) and whereby paradisiacal fertility is presented as a genuine prospect (cf. Amos 9:13–15). Future salvation is set aside for the community and judgement awaits Israel’s enemies. Such a sentiment implies that the final redaction of the book took place in the post-exilic period.

Joel’s prophecy concerning the pouring out of the Spirit as described in 2:28–32 (Hebr. chapter 3) played a significant role in the early Christian tradition. Peter considered the prophecy to have been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:17–21).

3. **Amos**

Let justice role down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:24)

Commentaries:

W. Nowack (KHAM) 1897, 1922; K. Marti (KHC) 1904; A. van Hoonacker (Etudes Bibliques) 1908; W. R. Harper (ICC) 1905, 1953; E. Sellin (KAT)
Amos ("the one borne [by yhwh]"; lxx: Amoos; V: Amos) is the earliest Writing Prophet in the Old Testament. Thanks to the superscription of the book that bears his name and the account of his expulsion from the Northern Kingdom (7:10–17) we know more
about Amos than we do with respect to the other Minor Prophets. He lived in the eighth century BCE and came from Tekoa, a place located about 10 km south of Bethlehem. According to 7:14 he was a “herdsman and a dresser of sycamores” by trade. His prophecies leave one with the impression that he was an educated man, well acquainted with the traditions of his people, very interested in questions of geography, and familiar with the events that had taken place in the past in neighbouring lands.

The thesis defended by some that Amos functioned as a professional cultic prophet is contradicted by his own witness. It would appear from Amos 7:14–15 that he was not a prophet by profession and that he was taken by יְהוָה "from following the flock" in order to serve as God’s emissary in the Northern Kingdom (Israel), an activity which he undertook for a year (maximum) between 760 and 750 BCE during the reign of King Jeroboam II (cf. 1:1). He was humiliatingly expelled thereafter by Amaziah, high priest of the sanctuary at Bethel, on account of his preaching of judgement.

With the exception of the superscription and the account of the prophet’s expulsion from the Northern Kingdom (7:10–17), the book contains prophecies and confessions. The latter have been passed on to us in the form of visions experienced by Amos:

the locusts (7:1–3),
the devouring fire (7:4–6),
the plumb-line (7:7–9).  

the basket of summer fruit (8:1–3) and Yahweh standing beside the altar (9:1–4). 77

In the first two visions the prophet manages to persuade Yahweh not to execute punishment against Israel. In the third and fourth visions (as well as in the last, which differs from the others in terms of form), however, God’s judgement is definitive. 78 Written in autobiographical style and appearing to represent Amos’ religious experiences, the visions evidently represent the oldest segments of the book.

The prophecies collected in the book of Amos can be divided into three groups:

a) prophecies against the nations culminating in announcements of judgement for Judah and Israel (chapters 1–2);

b) prophecies against the Northern Kingdom (chapters 3–6; 8:4–14; 9:7–10);

c) two prophecies of salvation (9:11–12, 13–15).

The prophecies against the nations 79 found in chapters 1–2 are characterised by the stereotype formula: “For three transgressions of N.N., and for four, I [= Yahweh] will not revoke my punishment”. 80 While the announcements of judgement are directed against neighbouring nations and cities (Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab), they reach their climax in the punishment declared against the

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77 E. J. Waschke, “Die fünfte Vision des Amos-Buches (9, 1–4)—Eine Nachinterpretation”, ZAW 106 (1994), 434–445 considers the vision to be an actualising prophecy from the exilic period, harking back to the fall of Jerusalem.

78 It remains open for discussion whether we should follow V. Fritz, op. cit., 1989, and assume that the second and third visions are secondary and reflect the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722/721 BCE.


Southern Kingdom (Judah) and the Northern Kingdom (Israel). Based on form-critical considerations and on content, several commentators consider the prophecies directed against Tyre, Edom and Judah to be later additions to the original text. The present author remains unconvinced, however, especially if one considers that the prophecies constitute a rhetorical unit and without these elements the climax (the announcement of judgement over the Northern Kingdom in 2:6–16) is lost.

The prophecies against the Northern Kingdom in chapters 3–6 are introduced by a legitimation of Amos’ judgement preaching. Precisely because Israel is God’s people, YHWH shall punish it on account of its sins (3:1–2). The fact that He has spoken leaves Amos powerless to evade the task assigned to him (cf. Jer. 20:7; 1 Cor. 9:16b):

The lion has roared; who will not fear?  
The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy? (3:8)

In the following judgement prophecies (3:9–6:14; 8:4–14; 9:7–10) against the Northern Kingdom and in particular against its capital city Samaria the prophet expresses his disgust in often rather candid language concerning the oppression of the poor by the rich who live in luxury81 and the authorities who ignore God’s law.82 With similar bluntness he riles against liturgical practices that have been reduced to a formality and twisted for the personal gain of those who abuse justice (5:21 ff.).83 A further striking feature of Amos’ preaching is his announcement of the coming “Day of the Lord”

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83 6:1–7 should likewise be understood as referring to a religious institution rather than a luxurious private feast. The verses in question allude to a cultic-religious “brotherhood”, of the type familiar for centuries in the Ancient Near East, which aimed at achieving communion with the godhead by sharing a common meal with their honoured Lord.
Amos’ audience associated this day with a day of divine judgement for the foreign nations and thus with a day of salvation for Israel. The prophet, by contrast, portrays this day as one of punishment for God’s own people and protests against the idea that God’s election of Israel was to be understood as a guarantee of salvation (9:7; cf. 3:1–2).

The authenticity of the prophecies of salvation at the end of the book (9:11–12; 9:13–15) remains the subject of dispute. The first of these alludes to the restoration of the “the booth of David that is fallen” (for some referring to the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, for many to the end of the Davidic monarchy and for others to the temple in Jerusalem), while the second refers to future paradisiacal existence using vaguely mythological language. If one is inclined to deny the authenticity of these prophecies (the correct procedure in the mind of the present author), then one smoothes the way for describing Amos as a radical prophet of doom for whom the end of Israel was imminent (8:2). From the historical perspective, one can only associate salvific expectations on the part of the prophet with 5:5. The question remains, however, whether Amos actually expected Israel to have a change of heart that might indeed have been enough to ward off God’s judgement. The somewhat reserved prospect of salvation described in 5:6, 14–15 evidently stems from (an)other author(s). In the present text of the book 9:11–12 and 9:13–15 locate Amos’ radical judgement prophecy in the broader theological context of a God who did not forget his people in the midst of judgement and who offered them the prospect of salvation beyond judgement.

While scholars are likewise relatively consistent in considering the doxologies of 4:13, 5:8(–9) and 9:5–6 as later interpolations on account of their form, range of thought or presupposed lack of cohesion with the context, this perspective may nevertheless be unwarranted.

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Evidently borrowed from ancient Israel’s psalmody, the doxologies underline the incomparable power of \textit{yhwh} in creation and judgement within the framework of the so-called prophecies of doom.

Opinion is divided with respect to the origin and evolution of the book of Amos. Apart from 9:11–15 and the later reworked superscription (1:1), 1:2, 3:1b, 3:7, 5:13, 5:25–26, 6:9–10, 8:3,4–14 and 9:8b would appear to have been added to the text of the book. W. H. Schmidt (1965) has ascribed a number of these passages to Deuteronomistic reworking (cf. also Kellermann [1969]).

Although commentators have endeavoured to locate the spiritual background of the book of Amos in kinship wisdom (Wolff 1964), the cult (Reventlow 1962, Gottlieb 1967) or in the covenant renewal feast (Crenshaw 1968), their efforts tend to provide an imbalanced if not incorrect picture of the prophet.

The Hebrew text of the book of Amos is well-preserved and in better condition that the majority of other prophetic documents.

4. \textit{Obadiah}

\textit{Quanto brevius est, tanto difficilis} (Jerome)\textsuperscript{88}

Commentaries:


\textsuperscript{88} The shorter the more difficult.
Monographs and articles:


Nothing is known of the person of Obadiah (“servant of Yhwh”; lxx: Abd[e]ias or Obdeias; V: Abdias). While the hypothesis that he functioned as a cultic prophet (Wolff 1977) cannot be dismissed, it is clear nevertheless that the location of his prophetic activity must have been Jerusalem.

Difference of opinion with respect to the date of Obadiah’s prophetic activity has existed for a considerable period of time, some scholars locating him in the ninth century BCE, others in the post-exilic period. The conviction that he prophesied shortly after the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE) has justifiably gained ground in recent years. Indeed, he would appear to have personally experienced the collapse of the city and the temple and been forced to observe how Edom, a fraternal people, witnessed the catastrophe confronting Jerusalem and its sanctuary with malicious pleasure and how they added insult to injury by plundering Judean possessions and murdering refugees or handing them over to the Babylonians (Obadiah 10–14). The prophecy of Obadiah has been described as “a word of comfort on the ruins of Jerusalem for the downcast and shattered people that had remained there” (Oosterhoff).

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89 Obadiah is not to be identified with the Lord Chamberlain of King Ahab (1 Kgs 18:3), as a number of rabbis and some Church Fathers maintain, nor with the lieutenant-colonel of King Josaphat referred to in 2 Chron. 17:7. Neither of these individuals was a prophet. The suggestion that the figure should be identified with one of the Obadihas mentioned in the books of Ezra (8:9) and Nehemiah (10:5; 12:23) must be excluded for chronological reasons.
Sellin (commentary 1929–1930) dates Obadiah 1–10 to the time of King Joram (around 850 BCE) on the basis of 2 Kgs 8:20–24, arguing that Obadiah 11–14 were added in the early exilic period and that the remaining material should be dated around 400 BCE. In line with older commentators, J. Ridderbos (commentary 1930) dates the entire document in the period of Joram. A serious objection to this claim (and to that of Sellin) can be based on the fact that while 2 Kings 8 mentions a Judean defeat it does not speak of the collapse of Jerusalem (cf. Obadiah 11; 2 Chron. 21:16f., on the other hand, does mention the occupation of Jerusalem by Philistines and Arabs).

By considering Obadiah 2ff. to be a description rather than an announcement of judgement, Wellhausen was able to argue that Obadiah 1–14 should be dated in the fifth or fourth centuries BCE, when Edom was overrun by Arab tribes.

In line with the prophecies of Obadiah, allusions to Edom’s perverse pleasure at the fall of Judah and Jerusalem and its hostile behaviour towards its brother nation can be found in Ezek. 25:12ff., 35:1ff., Ps. 137:7 and Lam. 4:21.

The book of Obadiah consists of 21 verses only and is thereby the shortest book of the Old Testament. In spite of its diminutive size, however, the literary critical problems it presents are far from simple and in some instances impossible to solve with conclusive certainty.

Several commentators subdivide the book as follows:

1–14+15b announcement of judgement against Edom on account of its hostile behaviour towards its brother nation Judah on the occasion of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE
15a+16–18 God’s day of judgement over the nations, the deliverance of the rest of Israel and the destruction of Edom by the house of Jacob/Joseph
19–21 description of the future boundaries of the land of Israel and announcement of God’s royal dominion

Striking agreements are evident between verses 1b–5 and Jer. 49:9,14–16, a fact that has led some to argue in favour of Obadiah’s dependence on Jeremiah and others to favour the opposite hypothesis. The present author is of the opinion, however, that both text segments hark back to an older prophecy against Edom or to traditional liturgical material.

Written in prose and subject in part to deficient transmission, verses 19–20(21) link up with verse 17b (“the house of Jacob shall repossess its possessions”) and describe the reoccupation of the promise land together with the annexation of additional territories. The verses
in question would appear to be a later interpolation to 15a+16–18. The latter segment portrays the impending judgement of Edom in the context of the Day of the Lord that is about to overcome all foreign nations. Edom is thus presented as representative of the powers that endeavoured to endanger the salvation of God’s people. Their plans, however, were to no avail (“on Mount Zion there shall be escape”, v. 17a).

The prophet Obadiah should be counted among those Judeans who had remained behind in their fatherland after the fall of Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that he personally experienced the catastrophe that had overcome Jerusalem and his salvific expectations exhibit particularistic tendencies, the book does not focus on nationalistic feelings of hatred towards Edom but rather on divine justice:

As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head (v. 15b).

5. Jonah

Wenn . . . die Sammler des Kanon dieses Buch unter die kleinen Propheten gestellt haben, so kann dies nur geschehen sein, weil sie darin prophetische Wahrheiten in geschichtliche Form gekleidet erkannten (Keil)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


The book that has been passed on to us under the name of the prophet Jonah ("dove"); lxx: Ioonas; V: Ionas) differs considerably from the other books of the Old Testament that have been classified among the prophetic documents. Instead of a collection of prophecies it contains a narrative about a prophet.

The text recounts how יְהֹוָה commanded Jonah to ‘cry out’ judgement against the Ninevites on account of their wickedness. The
prophet endeavours to avoid his divine assignment by fleeing to Tarshish\(^90\) by ship. The ship encounters a mighty storm sent by God, which only subsides after the sailors find Jonah guilty by ‘casting lots’ and throw him overboard on his own advice. At this point Jonah is swallowed by a “large fish”, from the belly of which Jonah offers a prayer to the Lord. After the fish spews him onto dry land, the prophet is commanded once again to announce judgement over Nineveh. He spends a single day in the city, which would normally take three days to cross. His preaching (“Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown”, 3:4), however, appears to have its desired effect. On the instigation of the king and his nobles, a period of fasting is proclaimed and the people of the great city repent and God decides to spare them. Jonah is extremely displeased at this turn of events and he complains to God that His merciful kindness, slowness to anger and readiness to relent has prevented him from being consistent in carrying out the punishment he had announced. God asks Jonah if is anger is justified but he receives no answer (4:4). The explanation for Jonah’s silence is provided in the form of a flashback in 4:4–9. After he had preached judgement against Nineveh, the prophet had left the city in order to watch its destruction from a safe distance. He had intended to build himself a booth to protect himself from the heat of the sun (4:5),\(^91\) but God provided a “magic tree” (Heb. qiqayon—possibly a castor bean plant) that provided the necessary shade. By dawn the next day, however, God appointed a worm to attack the tree and it withered, leaving Jonah breathless and faint in the heat of the sun and unprotected against a “sultry east wind” that God had prepared. God once again asks Jonah if his anger, in this instance about the tree, is justified and the prophet answers frankly that he considers it madness to have deprived him of the shadow of the “magic tree”. Confronted with the same question with regard to the preservation of Nineveh (4:4) the prophet is then left speechless, aware that it makes little sense to complain for his own part of being deprived of God’s mercy while arguing that God should not have relented in punishing the Ninevites. God finally informs his prophet that it would have pained Him a great deal

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\(^{90}\) While the location itself is difficult to establish with any certainty, it probably refers to a Spanish port city.

more to have been forced to destroy a mighty city with all its people and animals than Jonah had experienced at the withering of a mere tree (4:10–11).

The evidently profound story of the prophet Jonah, which makes use of the style figure of the flashback (1:5; 1:10 conclusion; 1:16 conclusion; 3:6–9; 4:5–9)\footnote{Cf. H. W. Wolff, \textit{op. cit.}, 1965 and further A. S. van der Woude, “Nachholende Erzählung im Buche Jona”, in: A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch (eds.), \textit{Isac Leo Steigmann Volume}, Jerusalem 1983, pp. 263–272.} and frequently employs the same words (e.g. “to go down”, “large”, “to have command of”, “wickedness”), constitutes one of the most splendid examples of narrative art in the history of world literature and is clearly a unity. The so-called ‘psalm of Jonah’ (2:2–9, Hebr. 2:3–10)\footnote{A. R. Johnson, “Jonah 2:3–10. A Study in Cultic Phantasy”, in: H. H. Rowley (ed.), \textit{Studies in Old Testament Prophecy}, New York 1950, pp. 82–102; P. Weimar, “Jon 2,1–11: Jonapsalm und Jonaerzählung”, \textit{BZ} 28 (1984), 43–68.} is in origin an individual song of thanksgiving, which according to the norms of logic does not strictly belong in the book as a whole. It would appear, however, that the author incorporated it into his narrative because of its allusion to the underworld (2:2, Hebr. 2:3), a motif corresponding with the context: the “large fish” symbolises the kingdom of the dead. In the present author’s opinion, the oft defended thesis that the psalm was added to the book at a later date should be rejected.

The main figure of the narrative, Jonah, the son of Amittai, is referred to in 2 Kgs 14:25 as a contemporary of King Jeroboam II who predicted the restoration of Israel’s borders from Lebo-hamath in Syria as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Dead Sea). Jonah, however, cannot be identified as the author of the book that bears his name on account of the text’s apparent dependence on Jeremian-Deuteronomistic theology (cf. Jer. 18:7), the nature of the decree of the king of Nineveh and his ministers that refers to the Persian period together with the significant presence of Aramaisms. The book probably stems from the fourth century BCE (cf. 3:3, which states the Nineveh was a great city, implying that the author was only familiar with it from the tradition).

The literary genre of the book is difficult to establish with certainty since it does not appear to fit the categories of historical-biographical account, allegory, parable or satire, and in the last analysis cannot be identified as a midrash or a novella. While Fohrer refers to
Jonah as a midraschartige Lehrschrift, his designation nevertheless fails to match the apparent uniqueness of both the content and literary character of the book.

It is generally accepted that the author composed his work as a protest against a narrow-minded particularistic and nationalistic form of Jewish piety that desired to limit God’s salvific deeds to Israel alone. The fact that the book does not present Jonah as a representative of a bigoted form Judaism and does not thematically develop any notion of contrast between Jews and pagans, however, leaves such a perspective with little if any support (cf. also Rendtorff, p. 239). The central theme of the work is thus best understood as the relationship between God and his prophet. The latter is in agreement with the clearly two-sided perspective offered by the book: any attempt to avoid divine vocation is doomed to failure (1–2) and the preservation of human beings (as well as animals!, cf. 4:11) weighs a great deal more in God’s eyes than the stubborn execution of His already announced judgement (3–4; cf. also 4:11 together with Ezek. 18:23,32). It would appear therefore that the book of Jonah, with its allusion to the unavoidability of God’s call and the conditional character of announcements of judgement (cf. in particular Jer. 18:7–8) is intended to serve as a sort of guide for reading and interpreting the prophetic literature.


6. Micah

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (6:8)

Commentaries:

Monographs and articles:

As with Amos, Micah (abbreviation of Michaiah, “who is equal to YHWH?”; LXX: Michaias; V: Michaeas) was born and raised in the Judean countryside town of Moresheth, in the hill country southwest of Judah (1:1). Information on the period of his prophetic activity is to be found in Mic. 1:1 and Jer. 26:18. While the former text dates his activities to the time of kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, the latter restricts itself to the reign of Hezekiah. In the present author’s opinion, the author of the superscription of the book identified the Judean Micah from Moresheth with a figure of the same name from the Northern Kingdom who functioned as a prophet for around ten years and whose legacy is to be found in chapters 6–7 of the book (see below). The suggestion that Micah of Moresheth only prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah is confirmed by the content of chapters 1–5 of the book that bears his name. Micah 1 stems from the final years prior to the fall of Samaria (722/721 BCE). Chapters 2–5, on the other hand, should be dated from the time of the Assyrian king Sardon’s expedition against Ashdod in Philistia (712) rather than that of Sennacherib’s campaign against Jerusalem (701). In any event, they fall nevertheless within the period of Hezekiah’s reign.

In spite of frequent suggestion that Micah was influenced by Isaiah and may indeed have been a disciple of the latter (cf. Isa. 8:16), conclusive evidence to this effect is lacking (Stansell 1988). Micah’s perspective with respect to Zion (cf. 3:12), for example, clearly differs from that of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 14:32). While it is true that both prophets expressed vehement resistance to the social injustices of their day, their critique differs in both form and content. In the present author’s opinion, Mic. 4:1–3, which corresponds to a significant degree with Isa. 2:2–4, was not uttered by Micah himself but rather by his opponents. Apparent agreements between the preaching of Isaiah and Micah can perhaps best be explained on a tradition-historical basis rather than on the basis of the dependence of the latter on the former. Scholars endeavour to explain the book of Micah according to the schema prophecies of judgement-prophecies of salvation, dividing it thereby into the following parts:

- 1–3 prophecies of judgement
- 4–5 prophecies of salvation
Since Bernhard Stade (1881ff.), the majority of exegetes have been inclined to ascribe only chapters 1–3 (with the exception of 2:12–13 and a few glosses) to Micah himself. In addition, some consider 6:9–16 or 6:9–7:7 to be authentic. It is generally claimed that the remaining segments of the book date in part from the period immediately prior to the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE), in part from the exilic or post-exilic period. In our opinion, however, such a hypothesis is open to dispute from a variety of perspectives. The key to understanding the content of the book, rather, is to be found in the observation that chapters 2–5 represent the (possibly lightly reworked and actualised at a later date) rendition of a dispute between the prophet and his opponents and that chapters 6–7 stem from a northern Israelite divine messenger who also bore the name Micah. The confrontational character of Mic. 2–5 is not only suggested by the shifting content of the various pericopes but also by formal considerations in the sense of narrative markers (2:11c: “but this people continued to prophecy”; 3:1: “but I said”) and the use of “I” (Mic. 2:11; 3:1,8) and “we” (Micah’s opponents: 4:5; 5:4). If one is unwilling to accept the confrontational character of Micah 2–5, then one is forced to accept, particularly with respect to chapters 4–5, that the book consists of a more or less uncoordinated compilation of (frequently contradictory) prophecies of a variety of styles and dates.

The hypothesis that chapters 6–7 do not stem from Micah of Moresheth but rather from a northern Israelite prophet (of the same

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94 The subdivision of the text is not without its difficulties. The prophecies of judgement in chapters 1–3 contain a prophecy of salvation in 2:12–13, while the prophecies of salvation in chapters 4–5 contain elements alien to the genre (cf. 4:9–10,14; 5:4–5). The prophecies of 6:1–7:6 can only be characterised as prophecies of judgement with some degree of reservation, while verses 11–13 of 7:7–20 would appear to be more of an announcement of judgement against Assyria than a prophecy of salvation for Israel in which the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem and the return of the exiles are predicted (cf. our commentary on Micah (POT), pp. 253–258).

95 For a survey of the various explanations of these verses see W. McKane, “Micah 2:12–13”, JNSL 21 (1995), 83–91.

96 See also J. de Waard, op. cit., 1979.
name and from virtually the same period) is acceptable for a variety of reasons.\footnote{The thesis favouring a northern Israelite origin for these chapters was defended as early as 1926 by F. C. Burkitt, 	extit{op. cit.}, but has had virtually no recognition or response.}

a) agreements between the preaching of (the northern Israelite prophet) Hosea and that of the book of Micah remain limited to chapters 6–7;\footnote{Compare 6:1f. with Hos. 2 and 4:1 (dispute proceedings); 6:4 with Hos. 11:1f., 12:10, 14, 13:4; 6:5 with Hos. 5:2 (according to the corrected text read Shittim); 6:8 with Hos. 6:6; 6:11f. with Hos. 12:8f.; 6:14 with Hos. 4:10; 6:15 with Hos. 2:7f.; 7:2 with Hos. 4:1f.; 7:7 with Hos. 14:9.}

b) the geographical and historical data found in Micah 6–7 refer without exception to northern Israel: Gilgal (6:5), Bashan and Gilead (7:14), Carmel (7:14), together with Omri and Ahab (6:16, the beginning of which should best be read: “and the idols of Omri and the works of the house of Ahab shall be destroyed”). In contrast to Micah 1–5, chapters 6–7 do not make a single reference to Jerusalem, Zion or Judah\footnote{A dating in the exilic or post-exilic period leaves the presence of northern Israelite names and the absence of reference to Jerusalem, Zion and Judah more or less inexplicable. Commentators consistently ignore these matters.} (the further unidentified city in 6:9 would appear on the basis of 6:16 to be a reference to Samaria rather than Jerusalem);

c) as with Hosea, Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, the exodus, wilderness and entry into the land traditions have an important role to play in chapters 6–7 (6:4–5; 7:15), while the theme of Zion, so characteristic of Micah 1–5, is completely lacking;

d) the leaders of the people are referred to in completely different terms in Micah 6–7 than in Micah 1–5 (compare 3:1,9,11 with 7:3);

e) the use of language in Micah 6–7 differs considerably from that of the preceding chapters.

Based on the aforementioned considerations it is possible to distinguish three primary parts in the Book of Micah:

1 judgement preaching against Samaria, Jerusalem and southwest Judah (± 725 BCE)

2–5 dispute between Micah and his opponents (± 712 BCE)

6–7 	extit{Deutero-Micah}: prophecies from Northern Israel (± 740–730 BCE).
Chapter 1 constitutes a prophecy of judgement exhibiting a well-considered structure and unmistakeable climax written in the style of the prophecies against the foreign nations, Micah begins his preaching with the announcement of universal divine judgement (1:2–4), which is to befall in concreto Samaria (1:5–7), Jerusalem (1:8–12) and Lachis and its environs, the region in which Micah was born and raised (1:13–16). The prophet predicts the fall of Samaria and expects an (Assyrian) attack on Jerusalem and Judah from the north.

Chapters 2–5 contain, in the first instance, a prophecy of judgement against the social elite, who oppress the less prosperous (2:1–5). Counter to his opponents, who consider the covenant between God and his people to be a guarantee of salvation, the prophet exclaims that the promises of yhwh only apply to the righteous and not the oppressor (2:6–11b). Counter to their belief that the exiles deported after the fall of Samaria will return to Israel (2:11c–13), Micah insists in a speech addressed to the leaders of the people, whose social injustice and faith in false prophets he condemns, that Jerusalem and the sacred temple mountain shall be reduced to rubble on account of their misdeeds (3:1–12). A prophecy follows in 4:1–5 concerning the pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem and the establishment of the kingdom of peace. While the main lines of the prophecy run parallel with that of Isa. 2:2–4, it has nevertheless been adjusted in nationalistic terms. Although the text is generally considered to be a post-exilic interpolation, its nationalistic tone allows it to be read as a reaction on the part of Micah’s opponents to the latter’s announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem. The text of Mic. 4:6–7 (corresponding with 2:12–13), which announces the return of the exiles, and that of 4:8–9, in which the restoration of the undivided Davidic kingdom is predicted and an appeal is made to the inviolability of Jerusalem in an effort to assuage the population’s anxiety in face of the approaching enemy (cf. 3:11), would appear to stem from Micah’s opponents. In contrast to this salvific optimism, Micah predicts the exile of the population of the city and insists that the prospect of later divine redemption can only be considered after downfall and

100 In the present author’s opinion, J. M. Vincent’s arguments in favour of a late date for the text of 3:12 (“Michas Gerichtswort gegen Zion (3,12) in seinem Kontext”, ZThK 83 [1986], 167–187) lack justification.
ruin (4:10). His opponents appeal once again to the inviolability of the temple mountain and God’s wondrous deeds (4:11–13). Micah responds by stating that while the king of Judah is to be profoundly humiliated, God shall bring forth a new son of David from Bethlehem who will reign according to his will (4:14–5:3). Micah’s opponents declare that the present king shall remain unharmed, because an alliance will be formed with other nations in the event of Assyrian aggression in order to bring the invader to defeat within their own borders (5:4–5). Micah expects nothing of Judah’s military intervention, but translates the vision of God’s people as a source of blessing among the nations (5:6). His opponents cling nevertheless to the notion of Judah’s military supremacy (5:7–8). The following pericope (5:9–14) can be dated as pre-exilic on account of its content and may have been introduced by a Deuteronomistic hand in order to establish a bridge between the preceding chapters and Deutero-Micah.

The third primary segment of the text that, as outlined above, which would appear to stem from a northern Israelite prophet, describes a court battle between God and his people (6:1–8) on account of the apostasy of Israel. The final verse of this segment is extraordinarily impressive:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (6:8).

The prophecies that follow against social injustice (6:9–16) contain an announcement of judgement against an unnamed city, to be identified in light of 6:16 with Samaria. The announcement of judgement in 7:1–7 would appear to allude to the royal murders that characterised the final days of the history of the Northern Kingdom (cf. 2 Kgs 15:8–30).

In line with Gunkel (1924), a significant number of scholars consider 7:8–20 to be a prophetic liturgy composed on the basis of a song of trust (7:8–10), a prophecy of salvation (7:11–13), a prayer

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102 For this explanation of the opening words of 5:4 see our commentary on Micah (1985), pp. 173–174, cf. 2 Sam. 17:3 conclusion.

103 This text segment favours a dating during the time of Micah, in particular prior to 712 BCE, when Sargon II set out on an expedition to punish the Philistine city of Ashdod. An exilic or post-exilic dating would leave the verses unexplained since the possibility of a Judean collaboration with other nations (5:4–5) would have to be excluded in the Babylonian, Persian and Greek periods.
reminiscent of the *Volksklage* (7:14–17) and a hymn of the community (7:18–20). In the present author’s opinion, however, the segment 7:11–13 is closer to an announcement of doom addressed against the “enemy (f.)” referred to in 7:8, which should clearly be identified with the Assyrians.104 Given the fact that the song would appear to presuppose the annexation of large chunks of the Northern Kingdom, one is obliged to date 7:8–17 around 730 BCE (cf. Eissfeldt 1962), rather than in the period of Nehemiah or thereafter as is often the case.105

Endeavours on the part of Jeremias (1971), Willi-Plein (1971), Lescow (1972), Mays (commentary 1976), Renaud (1977) and Wolff (commentary 1982) to reconstruct the redaction history of the book of Micah have not resulted in any degree of unanimity. If our analysis of the book is correct, then the redaction history thereof is clearly less complicated than that proposed by the aforementioned authors. We support (setting aside a few glosses) a Deuteronomistic redaction during the reign of King Josiah, whereby chapters 6–7 were adjoined to the preceding chapters by means of 5:9–14, the superscription of the book received its final form and was added to the original text together with 1:5bc and 1:7aβ and possibly the concluding words of 6:16a and 6:16b. It is likewise possible that 7:18–20 represents a Deuteronomistically shaded supplement from the exilic period.

Micah’s powerful preaching against social injustice is frank and straightforward and often uses blunt and unreserved language. His emotional attachment to the people of the region of his birth comes to the fore in his frequent use of the expression “my people” (1:9; 2:9; 3:3,5). Counter to the salvation theology of his opponents, who expected the return of the exiles based on the promise of the land (2:12f.; 4:6f.), a glorious future for Jerusalem on account of the inviolability of Mount Zion (4:1ff.; 4:11–13) and the restoration of the one Davidic monarchy over an undivided kingdom (4:8), Micah’s preaching takes a situation of adversity brought about by the sins of the elite as its point of departure. He too expects salvation from God, but only in and through judgement (4:10; 4:14–5:3; 5:6).

104 For further detail see our commentary on Micah (1976, 19853), pp. 253–258.
105 A date during the time of Nehemiah links up with 7:11 in which reference is made to the (re)construction of the walls. The term used for “walls” in the basic text, however, cannot refer to the city walls of post-exilic Jerusalem (cf. Willi-Plein, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–108).
Micah is well known for the messianic prophecy found in 5:1–3 and often claimed as inauthentic, which is alluded to in Mt. 2:6 in relation to the birth of Jesus (albeit in a slightly modified version):

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days (5:1).

7. **Nahum**

Ex omnibus minoribus prophetis nemo videtur acquare sublimitatem, ardorem et audaces spiritus Nahumi (Robert Lowth)^106

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


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^106 None of the minor prophets would appear to equal the loftiness, fervency and spiritual dauntlessness of Nahum.
Direct information concerning the person of Nahum (“comforter”; lxx: Naoum; V: Nahum) and the period he was active as a prophet are not available to us. The superscription of his book (“oracle concerning Nineveh”: 1:1a) makes it clear, nevertheless, that he must have been at work prior to the fall of the Assyrian capital (612 BCE). Nah. 3:8 alludes to the conquest of the Egyptian Nile city of No-Amon (Thebes) by the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal in 664 BCE. Given the fact that the Egyptians were able to regain their independence fairly quickly, the reference to the fall of Thebes would appear to serve as an example of what was about to happen to Nineveh (3:8–10) and would only have been meaningful if it were not written too long after 664. Such a conclusion is in harmony with the fact that the power of the Assyrians was still unbroken at the time of Nahum (1:12; 2:13, Hebr. 2:14; 3:1ff.). It is possible that the revolt of the Babylonian king Shamashshumukin against his

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107 See also W. Maier, The Book of Nahum, St. Louis 1959, p. 36.
brother Ashurbanipal (652) was the occasion of Nahum’s prophecy concerning the fall of Nineveh (see Goslinga 1923).

Scholars consistently refer to Nahum as a cultic prophet from Jerusalem. Spronk (commentary 1997) describes him, however, as a talented writer who was familiar with Assyrian vassal treaties and court annals. In his view Nahum is a pseudonym that alludes to the goal of his writing: to comfort the people of Judah in its suffering under Assyrian tyranny. There are no convincing reasons to consider the, at the time common personal name Nahum as an assumed name. For this reason, the suggestion already proposed by Ewald that Nahum belonged to the exiles from the Northern Kingdom deserves serious consideration and is supported by the following: according to Jerome (Corpus Christianorum 76A, 526) Elkosh, Nahum’s place of origin (cf. 1:1b), should be sought in northern Galilee; the book contains many Assyrian loan words; the prophet was clearly familiar with the city of Nineveh (its canals: 2-8; its Ishtar cult: 3-4; its walls of bricks and mortar 3:14f.), but is silent on the religious and social situation in Judah. If Nahum did indeed belong among the (descendants of the) deportees from the Northern Kingdom, then one is at liberty to interpret his book as a letter, sent to Judah from exile in order to comfort his co-religionists (cf. 1:1b; Van der Woude 1977).

In line with the superscription of the book, Nahum’s preaching is devoted to the impending downfall of Nineveh and the Assyrian empire. The first main subdivision (1:2–14) is introduced with a hymn to יְהֹוָה who punishes his enemies and brings redemption to his people (1:2–8). The song exhibits the features of a limited acrostic extending only as far as the middle letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is probable that we are dealing here with a northern Israelite psalm (cf. 1:4b) that has been reworked by the prophet. The song is adapted to the actual situation: Judah must not abandon its trust in יְהֹוָה, for the Assyrian empire is doomed to destruction (1:9–11). The appeal is substantiated by a divine oracle, containing a prophecy

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of salvation for Judah (1:12–13) and an announcement of judgement for the king of Assyria (1:14).

In the second main subdivision (1:15–2:13, Hebr. 2:1–14), Judah is called upon in two parallel text segments to celebrate a feast, because the enemy is no longer to set foot in the land (1:15, Hebr. 2:1) and יְהוָה is about to restore “the majesty of Jacob” (2:1–2, Hebr. 2:2–3). An artificial description of the fall of Nineveh follows based on the prophet’s vision thereof (2:3–10, Hebr. 2:4–11), which is concluded with a mocking song against Assyria and its king (2:11–13, Hebr. 2:12–14).

The third main subdivision contains a second poem concerning the fall of Nineveh (3:1–19) in which the following can be distinguished: a woe cry over the Assyrian capital as a city of bloodshed, deceit and plunder, the nakedness of which God will expose before the eyes of the nations (3:1–7); an announcement of doom in which the fate of Nineveh is compared with that of No-Amon (Thebes; 3:8–17); a mocking song against the king of Assyria (3:18–19).

Although scholars have frequently denied the literary unity of the book of Nahum (Seybold 1989, Lescow 1995 and in an extreme fashion Schulz 1973), their arguments remain unwarranted (cf. Spronk, commentary 1997, pp. 3–5). It is implicitly recognised by Humbert (1932) and others, who consider the book to be a liturgy intended for the Israelite New Year’s feast in memory of the destruction of Nineveh. Without challenging their explicit appeal in support of the literary unity of the document, it should be stated nevertheless that the liturgy hypothesis misunderstands the prophetic-visionary character of chapters 2 and 3.

The poetic language and style of the book of Nahum has been praised from every side. The prophet reveals himself to be “a man of rare poetic talent, warm emotion, captivating imagination and with an extraordinary gift for depicting what he had seen with his prophetic eye” (Goslinga 1923, p. 116).

Nahum is often described as a nationalistic prophet of salvation and, as such, a forerunner of the opponents of Jeremiah. By representing the enemy of his people as the adversary of יְהוָה and predicting the downfall of the Assyrian empire because it terrorised the

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109 The text is perhaps best translated: “I will make your grave into a rubbish heap” (cf. Assyrian kiqillatu).
world and abused human rights, however, his preaching is in line to a significant degree with the prophecies against the foreign nations, as found elsewhere in the Writing Prophets. It is revealing that the prophet, having described the fall of Nineveh from the Judean perspective (chapter 2), returns to the same theme in chapter 3, only this time from a universal viewpoint. Nahum’s preaching is extremely vertical in its orientation to God (cf. 1:3b–5), whose hand he sees at work in world events. Rooted in such a conviction he was able to offer comfort to his people in circumstances that appeared at first sight to leave little if any room for hope and ultimate liberation.

8. Habakkuk

The righteous shall live by their faith (2:4b)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

We know nothing more about the person of Habakkuk than what we can determine from the book that bears his unusual name (lxx: Ambakoum/Abbakoum; V: Habacuc/Abacuc), which designates a garden plant in Assyrian. Many consider him to have been a cultic prophet associated with the temple in Jerusalem, basing themselves on the presence of the term “prophet” (nabî) in the superscriptions of 1:1 and 3:1, the manner whereby he received his revelations (2:1; 3:2, 16) and associations with cultic poetry evident in the text of the book. None of the aforementioned arguments, however, provides conclusive proof that Habakkuk belonged among the professional prophets in Jerusalem.\(^{110}\)

In the document that bears his name, emphasis is placed on the prophet as individual, struggling with the problem of how God can look upon and tolerate the suffering of the righteous. While his book bears witness to profound human lament and visionary experience, it nowhere states that the revelations he received were to be passed on to others orally as was commonly required of other prophets.

A variety of opinions exist with respect to the period in which Habakkuk lived. Duhm (commentary 1906) and others considered him to be a contemporary of Alexander the Great, but were only able to maintain their hypothesis by scrapping the designation

“Chaldeans” as a reference to the Babylonians in Hab. 1:6 and changing it to read “Kittites” as a reference to the Greeks. Research initiated by Humbert (1944) into the vocabulary and linguistic usage of the prophet, however, has demonstrated convincingly that Habakkuk’s visionary experiences took place around 600 BCE and that his style exhibits both prophetic and liturgical characteristics. Such a dating is confirmed by 3:16c, which alludes to “the people who attack us in hordes”. Reference is clearly being made at this juncture to the raids carried out by the Babylonians and others against Judah following Johoiakim’s defection from King Nebuchadnezzar II (cf. 2 Kgs 24:2). Habakkuk remains silent, however, concerning the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians during the reign of Jehoiakim in 597 BCE. The content of chapters 1–2 probably stems, therefore, from around 604, that of chapter 3 (with the exception of the concluding verses) from around 600 BCE.

After the superscription (1:1), the book can be subdivided as follows:

1:2–4 a complaint addressed to יְהֹוָה on account of the injustices that prevail in Judah
1:5–11 a divine oracle concerning the advent of the invincible Chaldeans
1:12–17 a second complaint addressed to יְהֹוָה on account of the high-handed and cruel behaviour of the Chaldeans and their king
2:1–20 God’s response to the preceding complaint and the demise of the Chaldean ruler
3:1–19 a vision granted to the prophet at a later date that was transformed into a song of the community.

The pericopes of the book outlined above form a literary unity and can be read in a logical sequence. Following the complaint concerning the social abuses that prevailed in Judah during the reign of King Jehoiakim (1:2–4), God announces the arrival of the much feared Chaldeans who are to punish the nations and Judah in particular as the rod of His discipline (1:5–11). The prophet responds with a further complaint, arguing that he cannot understand how God could make use of such a cruel king as that of the Babylonians,

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who was well-known for his inhuman deeds, as his instrument (1:12–17). While waiting in his watch tower for an answer from yhwh he is granted a revelation and told to write it down on a large tablet so that those who were able to read could read it. The revelation announces the downfall of the cruel leader and the preservation of the righteous that remain faithful to God (2:1–5).

The fall of the Babylonian king is elucidated in the following verses in the form of a number of woe cries placed on the lips of the gathered nations (2:6–20). These verses should not, therefore, be disconnected from those that precede them (cf. Otto 1977; otherwise Jeremias 1970). Of the five woe cries, the third (2:12–14) and the fifth (2:18–20) stem from a later date, lacking the threat addressed against the oppressor and the word-play that characterises the other woe cries.

Chapter 3, the “psalm of Habakkuk”, is in origin a rendition of the vision granted the prophet a number of years later. In addition to Habakkuk’s reactions to the actual event and the vision (3:2, 16) it describes the epiphany of God from the south (Teman and Mount


Paran; 3:3–7), his struggle with the adversary (clearly the Babylonians; 3:8–12), and his ultimate victory (3:13–15). Given the superscription, the doxology and the liturgical term selah, the vision would appear to have been used later by the community as a song and given an eschatological interpretation. It would also appear that 3:17–19, an impressive expression of faith in God at a time of need and the threat of famine, was added to the text at around the same time.

The literary analysis we have offered of Habakkuk runs counter to the hypotheses of Sellin and Humbert who maintain that the document represents a prophetic liturgy. If the latter were the case then the various references to the “godless” (1:4, 13; 3:13) c.q. “proud” (2:4, 5) would have to be identified with one and the same figure. Such an explanation, however, remains unacceptable. While most references to the “godless” may indeed allude to the king of the Chaldeans, the use of the term in 1:4 refers to the unjust in Judah.

Some commentators identify “the godless one” with King Jehoiakim (Humbert 1944, Nielsen 1953). It remains difficult, nevertheless, to argue that the said king had plundered many nations (2:8). In addition, the godless in 3:13 are explicitly distinguished from the anointed one of Israel. Jeremias (1970) identifies the godless with the unjust in Judah, thus considering the woe cries of 2:6–20 as originally addressed against internal Judean enemies and seeing chapter 3 as a description of Yahweh’s struggle against the godless in Judah. Such an explanation can only be justified if one sets 2:1–4(5) apart from the following woe cries. Furthermore, the content of 2:8 and 3:13 contradict the explanation. The majority of commentators are thus inclined to consider the godless as a designation for a foreign enemy, whereby some opt for the Assyrians (Budde, Eissfeldt), others for the Babylonians (Wellhausen, Sellin, Elliger, Keller, Rudolph) and a few for Alexander the Great (Duhm) or even the Seleucids. The vocabulary of Habakkuk alone is sufficient to exclude the latter two possibilities. Significant objections have also been raised against identification with the Assyrians. The pericope 1:12–17 presupposes 1:5–11, in which reference is made to the coming of the Chaldeans (Babylonians). The expression “the godless one” in 1:13 must thus refer to their king. The same is true for chapters 2 and 3 that constitute a response to the complaint of 1:12–17.

J. Jeremias (1970) has suggested that the announcement of judgement against the great oppressor in 2:6–20 represents the result of an exilic reworking of the original prophecy of Habakkuk: 2:5b and 2:8, 10b, 13–14, 17–18, 19b, 20 should thus be considered as having been added to the text during the period of the Babylonian exile.

The question that so troubles Habakkuk, namely how God can allow the suffering of the righteous, serves as a cohesive force binding
together the themes of his book (the contestation of faith and the acceptance of faith). While his protest against godlessness in Judah is fiercely emotional (1:2–4), the prophet’s resistance to the lawless and self-aggrandising Chaldeans as the rod of God’s punishment (1:12) is even more demonstrative. While the divine response to his complaint offers no reason to explain the *why* of this incomprehensible event, it does nevertheless offer prospects for the future:

> Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them,  
> But the righteous live by their faith (2:4).

The second segment of the quoted verse was of unique significance in its support for the apostle Paul’s preaching concerning justification by faith (in Christ; Rom. 1; 17; Gal. 3:11; cf. also Hebr. 10; 38).114

The book of Habakkuk has enjoyed renewed interest since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls among which a commentary on the book together with the text of the first two chapters and an interpolated actualising interpretation related to the history of the Qumran community and the eschaton have been found (see further chapter XIV).115 The manuscript is of exceptional importance for text-critical reasons and for the eschatological explanation ascribed to the preaching of the prophet among certain Jewish circles around the beginning of the Common Era.

9. Zephaniah

Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the Lord’s wrath (2:3)

Commentaries:


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According to the superscription to the book that bears his name, the prophet Zephaniah ("yahweh has protected"; LXX and V: Sophonias) was the great grandson of a certain Hezekiah. Based in part on the unusually long genealogy provided by Zeph. 1:1, scholars have endeav-
oured to identify the latter with King Hezekiah of Judah. The fact, however, that the designation “the king of Judah”, normally employed elsewhere in the prophetic books, is lacking at this juncture and that the name Hezekiah is written in Hebrew in Zeph. 1:1 in a different fashion to that found in the superscriptions to Hosea and Micah, makes such an identification improbable.116 The long family tree is most likely intended to avoid any misunderstanding with respect to the prophet’s Judean pedigree since his father’s name, Cushi, can potentially be interpreted as “Ethiopian”.

The superscription also tells us that Zephaniah was active as a prophet during the reign of King Josiah (639–609 BCE). The content of the book serves indirectly to confirm and specify this date: the power of the Assyrians is still undiminished (2:13–15) and Assyrian culture still has a hold on Jerusalem (1:8–9). Syncretism prevails in the city (1:4–5) to a degree unacceptable after the cultic reforms of Josiah (622 BCE). The royal palace is governed by ministers and princes (1:8–9), but outside the superscription the king remains unmentioned and one is left with the impression that the governance of city and land was in the hands of some form of privy council during the period of Zephaniah’s prophetic activity. It seems logical, therefore, that we should date the prophet’s public appearance to around 630 BCE, when Josiah was still a minor (cf. 2 Kgs 22:1).117 The suggestion that Zephaniah prophesied in Jerusalem is confirmed by the explicit reference in 1:4 (“this place”) together with the prophet’s familiarity with the topography of the city (1:10–11).

The composition of the book gives rise to a number of problems for which no easy answer can be found. Several commentators explain the book on the basis of a number of short pericopes that were later brought together to form larger units. It remains possible, however, that text segments containing different literary genres, motifs and accents, need not necessarily be the responsibility of later redactors and may indeed be ascribable to the prophet himself.118 Bearing

117 The suggestion proposed by J. P. Hyatt (“The Date and Background of Zephaniah”, *JNES* 7 [1948], 25–29) that the prophet enjoyed a period of activity during the reign of King Jehoiakim remains unlikely. L. P. Smith and E. R. Lachman’s argument that the book represents a pseudepigraphal document from around 200 BCE (“The Authorship of the Book of Zephaniah”, *JNES* 9 [1950], 137–142) is to be rejected on canon-historical grounds.
this in mind, we can subdivide the book as follows (excluding the superscription):

1:2–2:3 God’s judgement concerning Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatry and lack of righteousness, with special emphasis on the coming Day of the Lord, culminating in a call to humility and conversion

2:4–15 prophecies against foreign nations (Philistines; Moab/Ammon; Ethiopians; Assyrians)\(^{119}\)

3:1–8 judgement concerning defiant Jerusalem

3:9–20 promises of salvation for Israel

The fact that the book of Zephaniah has undergone a number of redactions cannot be denied. The traces thereof are to be found in particular in the prophecies against the Philistines (2:4–7) and Ammon and Moab (2:8–10). Whether the salvific prophecies of 3:14–20, which are strongly reminiscent in style of Deutero-Isaiah, should be considered inauthentic remains to be seen (see, for example, Vlaardingerbroek, commentary 1993). Whatever the case, 3:20 should be understood as exilic in origin.

In light of the fact that Zeph. 3:3–4 is already presupposed in Ezek. 22:23–31, one is obliged to account for the possibility that the book was codified by the prophet himself or shortly after his appearance.

The announcement of the day of יְהֹוּד judgement enjoys a central place in the preaching of Zephaniah. While the prophet’s conception of the Day of the Lord does not differ in essence from that of Amos (5:18–20) and Isaiah (2:10–22), it nevertheless exhibits sharper contours. The familiar Dies irae, dies illa ascribed to Thomas of Celano (died ± 1225) is based on the representation of the Day of the Lord found in Zeph. 1:14–16.

While the judgement of the foreign nations (2:4–15) is not further motivated in the book of Zephaniah, the reasons for the judgement of Jerusalem and Judah are clearly and explicitly stated: idolatry (1:4–5), conformity to worldly standards (1:8), self-sufficiency (1:12–13), violence and deceit (1:9; 3:3), the infidelity of Jerusalem’s prophets and the sacrilegious behaviour of her priests (3:4).

In the last analysis Zephaniah believes that the intervention of a merciful God will ultimately bring salvation by triumphing over human pride (cf. Isa. 2:12). YHWH will give his people\textsuperscript{120} “other, pure lips, so that all of them may call on the name of the Lord” (3:9), and He will leave a “humble and lowly people” in Israel’s midst, and they shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord (3:12).

10. **Haggai**

Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins? (1:4)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


\textsuperscript{120} The original reading would appear to be “my people” rather than “peoples”; cf. Vlaardingerbroek, *op. cit.* (commentary) 1993, p. 190.
In spite of the fact that the prophet Haggai ("festival child"; lxx: Aggaios; V: Aggaeus) is spoken of elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Ezra 5:1; 6:14), we still know virtually nothing about him. In contrast to his fellow prophet and contemporary Zechariah, Haggai probably belonged to the population group that had remained in Judah after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. While his designation as a "prophet" (nabi?; 1:1,12; 2:2, Hebr. 2:1) makes it possible that he was a cultic functionary, this is far from certain.

A great deal more detail is available to us with respect to the time and place of Haggai’s prophetic activity. It would appear from his prophecies that he preached between 29th August and 18th December 520 BCE, thus in the second year of the reign of the Persian king Darius I (522–486). Beyond Jerusalem no other options have been suggested for the place in which he was active as a prophet.

Haggai devoted himself with heart and soul to the reconstruction of the temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 587. Shortly after permission was granted by the Persian king Cyrus (Kores) for the return of the Judean exiles, the altar of burnt offerings was restored to use (cf. Ezra 3:1ff). The weak economic situation in
Judah and Jerusalem, however, prevented the complete rebuilding of the temple. Haggai interpreted the economic situation of the city as a consequence of the people’s reluctance to restore the house of YHWH, while they themselves “hurry about for their own houses” (1:9). The prophet is successfully able to inspire the governor Zerubbabel and the High Priest Joshua together with the people to set about the reconstruction of the sanctuary, foreseeing the salutary return of YHWH to his people after the temple had been restored (1:8; 2:20, Hebr. 2:19).

With its 38 verses, the Book of Haggai is among the shortest books of the Old Testament, indeed only Obadiah is shorter. It contains four prophetic speeches:

1:4–11 a call for the reconstruction of the temple preceded by a complaint addressed to Zerubbabel and Joshua concerning the people’s opinion that the time for reconstruction had not yet come

2:1b–10 an exhortation to set about the work of rebuilding the temple with fervour accompanied by a promise that the nations will bring their treasures there and that the glory of the new temple will overshadow the temple of Solomon (Hebr. 1:15b-9)

2:16–20 the promise of material blessing after the beginning of the reconstruction of the temple walls attached to a request for priestly guidance in matters of purity and impurity (Hebr. 2:15–19)

2:21–24 a prophecy concerning the overthrow of the kingdoms of the nations and the designation of Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiakin as future messianic king (Hebr. 2:20–23)

The publisher of the book located the prophecies of Haggai within a redactional framework, thus giving the present document the character of an historical report concerning the prophet’s activity and a first reaction to his preaching (1:12–2:1a, Hebr. 1:12–15a). We consider it highly likely that the work, in its present form, came into existence prior to the completion of the reconstruction of the temple in 515 BCE, because the salvific expectations associated with the restoration of the sanctuary and with Zerubbabel expressed therein did not come about.
While some have been inclined to consider the book of Haggai as an excerpt from a construction chronicle, it contains too little detailed information on the reconstruction of the temple to be understood in this way. A further hypothesis that suggests we read the text as a piece propaganda in support of the reconstruction of the temple “in order to help the Jewish community to hold firm in the years ahead” (Koole, commentary 1967) is equally unconvincing since the book was published by a redactor and not the prophet himself. Likewise, the thesis of Rudolph (commentary 1976), which sees the document as an apology for Haggai directed against his fellow prophet Zechariah “whose activities caused such a furor that there was a danger that the role of Haggai would be underestimated”, lacks sufficient support from the text we have at our disposal.

The thesis defended by Rothstein (1908) and supported by many that Hagg. 2:16–20 (Hebr. 2:15–19) was originally located after 2:1a (Hebr. 1:15a) and that the expression “this people, this nation” in 2:15 (Hebr. 2:14) referred to the Samaritans must be rejected (cf. Koch 1967). Hagg. 2:16–20 (Hebr. 2:15–19) does not fit after 2:1a (Hebr. 1:15a), because “now then” (2:16, Hebr. 2:15) always represents the turning point in an argument and thus requires the preceding description of a certain situation. In addition, Haggai never makes an appeal in the style of 2:16 (Hebr. 2:15) at the beginning of a prophecy (cf. 1:5 and 2:5, Hebr. 2:4). Koch (1967) has convincingly argued that form-critical considerations support the literary unity of 2:11–20 (Hebr. 2:10–19) and that the expression “this people and that nation” refers to the population of Judah and Jerusalem.

A constitutive element of Haggai’s preaching is represented by his call to renewed obedience to Yhwh made concrete in his listener’s actual engagement in the reconstruction of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The prophet endeavoured to breathe new life into the theology of the temple and thereby employed points of association in his preaching, albeit interpreted in an eschatological way, with pre-exilic Zion theology. While his Naherwartung of the kingdom of salvation remained unfulfilled, he was nevertheless able to offer a discouraged people with all their material concerns the perspective of a new future. On account of his engagement on behalf of the temple, together with Zechariah he offered Judaism a powerful source of spiritual vigour that was to be of decisive significance for the national and religious unity of Israel in the period they were about to face.

11. Zechariah

The preaching of Zechariah (“YHWH has remembered”; LXX: Zacharias; V: Zaccharias) is only found in chapters 1–8 of the book that bears
his name. Chapters 9–14, which is often referred to as Deutero-Zechariah (“Second Zechariah”), were written by different authors and stem from a later period to that of the prophet of 1–8. For this reason both segments of the book deserve to be treated separately.

\(\alpha\) Zechariah 1–8

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit (4:6)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:

The prophet Zechariah was a younger contemporary of Haggai who, like the latter, dedicated himself to the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16; 4:9; Ezra 5:1–2; 6:14). According to Zech. 1:1 and 1:7, he was the son of a certain Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo. Elsewhere he is referred to as the son of Iddo (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; cf. Neh. 12:16). This need not imply a contradiction since the Hebrew term for “son” in the Old Testament can also be used for grandson. It is possible, however, that the designation “son of Iddo” is a reference to the priestly family from which Zechariah stemmed (cf. Neh. 12:4,16). The latter is confirmed by the prophet’s interest in the High Priest Joshua (3:1ff.), his portrayal of the purification of the temple precincts (3:8ff.) and his prediction of a diarchic leadership of High Priest and messianic king in the future time of salvation (4:14; 6:13). Based on the list of priests and Levites returning from the Babylonian exile recorded in Neh. 12:1–5, which also includes the name Iddo, we can conclude that Zechariah was born in the diaspora and returned to Jerusalem with his family after the fall of the Babylonian empire.

The information available to us suggests that Zechariah not only prophesied from 520 (Zech. 1:1) to 518 (Zech. 7:1), but also a couple of years later: the prophecy of Zechariah 3 seems to stem from the period immediately after the dedication of the temple in 515 BCE.

The content of Zechariah 1–8 can be subdivided into three segments, each with its own date:

1:1–6 a call to repentance (October/November 520)
1:7–6:15 the nocturnal visions (February 519)
   I the horsemen
   II the four horns and the four blacksmiths

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It will be apparent from the above that the major part of Zechariah 1–8 consists of the prophet’s nocturnal visions.121 The latter are written in an I-style cycle of seven visions to which the present fourth revelation, which differs from the others in terms of form, was added at a later date. The original seven visions exhibit a strikingly symmetrical structure surrounding the central vision (V) with its uncharacteristically static formulation: the first three are addressed centripetally to Jerusalem, the final three centrifugally to the foreigner; the final vision is the pendant of the first. In terms of composition, the nocturnal visions of Zechariah, with their depiction of the content of the vision followed by an explanation, are reminiscent of the visions granted to Amos (7:1ff.) and Jeremiah (1:13ff.), although the elaboration thereof is much more extensive. Moreover, Zechariah’s nocturnal visions offer a central place to the interpreting angel (angelus interpres) who represents Yahweh’s messenger and the prophet’s dialogue partner, responding to the questions raised by the prophet in response to the vision.

In contrast to current theories, the present author is of the opinion that the prophecies of 1:16–17, 2:6–13 (Hebr. 2:10–17), 4:6aβ–10a and 6:9–15 should be considered an integral part of nocturnal visions I, III, V and VIII respectively, and not as later statements stemming from the different periods of Zechariah’s prophetic activity. There is reason enough to accept that he experienced all seven visions in a single night (1:7–8) and that he published them himself in a memoir written by his own hand.

The nocturnal visions bear witness to the unconditional salvation that God desires to realise on behalf of his people. God is filled with zeal for his own, although external signs thereof are not immediately clear (I: 1:8–17). The world powers that have scattered Judah shall be cast to the ground (II: 1:18–21, Hebr. 2:1–4). Jerusalem shall provide enough space for those who return to her: God shall protect the city as a wall of fire while the nations shall submit to Israel and many shall join themselves to the Lord (III: 2:1–13, Hebr. 2:5–17). As Yahweh’s dwelling place, Mount Zion shall become the centre of the world, in which the High Priest and the king shall reign in the time of salvation (V: 4:1–14). Hidden evil shall be punished (VI: 5:1–4) and the stain of sin shall be removed from the land (VII: 5:5–11). Heavenly armies shall set forth in order to submit the world to God, and those who live far off shall be driven by His Spirit to come and assist in the construction of the messianic temple, once the messianic king and the High Priest of the coming time of salvation have appeared (VIII: 6:1–15).

Our opinion that the prophecies of 1:16–17, 2:6–13 (Hebr. 2:10–17), 4:6αβ–10a and 6:9–15 should not be detached from nocturnal visions I, III, V and VIII deserves further explanation. The pericope 1:16–17 harks back to the preceding text and constitutes the point of the first vision. The composition of 1:14–17 exhibits remarkable parallels with 8:2–8 (Petitjean 1969). The pericope 2:6–13 (Hebr. 2:10–17) is barely thinkable without the preceding text, since it would appear from 2:8 (Hebr. 2:12) that the interpreting angel is speaking and not Zechariah. The text of this verse only fits appropriately on the lips of the former (“to obtain glory He [= God] sent me regarding the nations that plundered you”). The following statement: “Then you shall know that the Lord of Hosts sent me (to you)’” (2:9, Hebr. 2:13; 2:11, Hebr. 2:15; cf. 4:9; 6:15) likewise stems from the interpreting angel. The pericope 4:6αβ–10a, which scholars endeavour to explain as a collection of prophecies of Zechariah inserted, according to the majority of commentators, into the original text of the fifth vision, belongs in fact to the nocturnal vision. Without it several elements of the said vision would be impossible to explain. As Beuken (1967) has demonstrated, the

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122 An alternative explanation of the vision is offered by H. Gese, op. cit., 1970, p. 29: “Der kultische Leuchter ist das zeichenhafte Sein der göttlichen Epiphanie... und die beiden Gesalbten repräsentieren die neue Kultgemeinde, den Priester und den davidischen Tempelbauer, den neuen Kultus, durch den Gott seine doxa in die Welt ausstrahlt”.

expression “this is the word of Yhwh to Zerubbabel” (4:6) is not used elsewhere as the introduction to an independent prophecy but always refers that which precedes it. If one is inclined to consider 4:6a–10a as a later interpolation then one will be obliged to emend 9b “then you (s) shall know” to read “then you (pl) shall know”, since “you (s)” only has meaning if the prophet himself is being addressed and not if he is the speaker. The text fits perfectly in the context, however, if the formula employed in 9b stems from the interpreting angel (cf. also 2:9, 11, Hebr. 2:13, 15). In light of the fact that the same formula returns in 6:9–15, one is obliged to argue that the speaker is the interpreting angel here also and not God (who naturally cannot be sent). Furthermore, the final vision would be left with an unsatisfactory ending if one maintains the conclusion thereof in 6:8. The basic text raises serious grammatical objections to the frequently proposed interpolation of 6:15a to 6:8.

If one dates the nocturnal visions (with the exception of the fourth) to the first part of 519 BCE, then the “sermon for the fast” of chapters 7 and 8 must have been preached roughly two years later. It offers a response to a certain Sharezer from Bethel who asks the prophet whether it is necessary to continue fasting in memory of the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE now that the restoration of the temple is in sight. The prophet declares that obedience to the will of God is better than fasting, whereby a person only serves himself, and that the days of abstinence are to be transformed into festival days because God shall turn to his people once again. With the exception of 8:8–13, verses reminiscent of the preaching of Haggai, it is possible to understand the “sermon for the fast” as a literary unity, although the majority of exegetes consider it to be a redactional collection of prophecies stemming from a variety of different times. The Deuteronomistic style, recognisable in a number of passages of the “sermon for the fast”, has led several scholars to argue that it does not stem from Zechariah, at least in its present form. While it cannot be denied that parts of chapters 7 and 8 do indeed exhibit traces of redactional reworking, there is nothing to prevent us from ascribing the greater part of the “sermon for the fast” to Zechariah himself, especially if one is willing to accept the possibility of Deuteronomistic influence in his preaching style. The same is true for the call to conversion in 1:2–6. The fact that chapters 7–8 make the preservation of God’s gift of salvation dependent on a life of obedience to God’s commandments needs to stand in contrast to the unconditional character of the granting of salvation promised in the nocturnal visions (cf., for that matter, 6:15b).
The content of Zechariah’s preaching can be summarised in a single sentence: the time of God’s anger, expressed in exile and socio-economic misery, is going to make way for a time of God’s merciful beneficence in which the nations will also share. In line with Haggai, Zechariah harks back thematically to pre-exilic Zion theology, which he likewise interprets in eschatological terms.

In the present author’s opinion, the suggestion that the prophet initially considered Zerubbabel to be the messianic king is based incorrectly on 6:11ff. From the very beginning, Zechariah was convinced that a future Davidic king would stand at the head of the new kingdom together with the High Priest (4:14; 6:13; see further Van der Woude 1988).

In the present author’s opinion, the hypothesis that 6:11 originally spoke of the coronation of Zerubbabel and that the text was changed “after the latter’s disappearance”, whereby the High Priest Joshua appeared with the crown on his head, should, in our opinion, be rejected. As a matter of fact, 6:11 states that the (royal) crown was placed at the disposal of Joshua (Van der Woude 1988). The crown was to be preserved in the temple (6:14) until the coming of the messianic king. The symbolic actions and words found in 6:11b–13 allude to the latter; the temple now being constructed is to be rebuilt by him as a messianic temple.124

In the present author’s opinion, “the two anointed ones” (literally “the sons of the oil”) referred to in 4:14, do not allude to Joshua and Zerubbabel, as is often argued, but to the king and the High Priest of the coming time of salvation (cf. 6:13).125

b) Deutero-Zechariah (Zechariah 9–14)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (9:9)

Commentaries:

K. Marti (KHC) 1904; A. van Hoonacker (Etudes Bibliques) 1908; H. G. A. Mitchell (ICC) 1912 (1961); W. Nowack (HKAT) 1922; G. Smit (TU) 1926; E. Sellin (KAT') 1930; H. Junker (HSAT) 1938; K. Elliger (ATD) 1949, 1982; J. Ridderbos (KV) 1952; D. Deden (BOT) 1956; R. C.

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124 The belief that the temple would be rebuilt in the end time has found its way into the tradition; cf. Tobit 14:5; Jub. 1:17; 1 Enoch 90:28f., 91:13; Mt. 26:61 par.
125 See further A. S. van der Woude, op. cit., 1988.

Monographs and articles:


The fact that Deutero-Zechariah (Zechariah 9–14) does not stem from the prophet responsible for chapters 1–8 is evident from the large number of differences between both main parts of the book of Zechariah. In spite of the apparent points of contact between Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14, the suggestion that the significant differences between the two segments can be explained by the hypothesis that the material from the latter segment represents the preaching of the prophet at an advanced age remains unsatisfactory.126

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The differences between Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14 are striking. In contrast to Zechariah 1–8, Deutero-Zechariah lacks any reference to the date of the prophecies. There is no mention of the construction of the temple, nothing is said of Joshua or Zerubbabel and there are no allusions to events or persons from the time in which the prophet lived and worked. The characteristic formulae of Zechariah 1–8 “then came the word of the Lord to me” and “thus says the Lord of hosts” are entirely absent from Deutero-Zechariah. According to Zechariah 9 and 10, eschatological liberation shall not be brought about by God’s heavenly armies (cf. 6:1ff.), but by Judah and Ephraim (9:13–15) or by Judah alone (10:3–5), albeit with Yahweh’s help (9:14; 10:3ff.). The joint governance of the High Priest and the messianic king, which would appear to be a matter of some importance to the prophet (4:14; 6:13), is not alluded to in the announcement of the coming of the messianic king in 9:9–10 nor is it spoken of elsewhere. The prediction of the destruction of two-thirds of the community (13:8), the scattering of the flock when its shepherd is struck (13:7) and the purification of the remainder (13:9) completely contradict the witness of Zechariah. The prophecy of the conquest of Jerusalem (14:1–2) is likewise virtually impossible to ascribe to Zechariah. The walled city of 14:10 runs counter to the openness of Jerusalem referred to in Zech. 2:4–5 (Hebr. 2:8–9).

If we can agree that Deutero-Zechariah does not stem from the priest-prophet responsible for Zechariah 1–8, it is likewise evident that the material of 9–14 was not written by a single author nor does it represent a literary unity. Indeed, the superscriptions of 9:1 and 12:1 already leave one with the impression that chapters 9–11 and 12–14 (the latter being referred to on occasion as Trito-Zechariah) represent two anonymous collections. The content of each only serves to confirm this impression. The eschatology of the first part of Deutero-Zechariah is prophetic-messianic, while that of the second part (especially chapter 14) has apocalyptic overtones. Attention is focused in chapters 9–11 on Judah and Ephraim (accounting for the return of the exiles), while 12–14 focuses on Jerusalem (lacking any reference to Ephraim and the reunification of Israel’s tribes). The geographical boundaries of the promised land in 9–11 stretch far beyond the historical boundaries of Judah and Israel (9:1–8), while

127 The suggestion proposed by K. Elliger (“Ein Zeugnis aus der jüdischen Gemeinde im Alexanderjahr 332 v. Chr.”, ZAW 62 [1950], 63–115) and M. Delcor
12–14 only speaks of Southern Palestine (14:10). It is also apparent that the anonymous collections of 9–11 and 12–14 do not in themselves constitute literary unities. The differences between 9:1–10:2 and 10:3–11:3, for example, are too conspicuous to be able to ascribe them to one and the same author. Chapter 12’s emphasis on the inviolability of Jerusalem is difficult to reconcile with the conquest of the city referred to in 14:1–2.

Deutero-Zechariah thus represents an amalgamation of material brought together from different times and different authors. The majority of chapters, moreover, would appear to have been reworked at a later stage: the content of 9:13, which makes reference to the Greeks, together with that of 11:8, serves to support the conviction that the final redaction of Deutero-Zechariah did not take place until after the arrival of Alexander the Great and should thus be dated in the last decades of the fourth century BCE. While Otzen’s (1964) dating of Zechariah 9–10 in the time of King Josiah and Zechariah 11 immediately prior to the Babylonian exile provided once widespread pre-exilic hypotheses on the dating of the material with a new lease of life, more recent exegesis has nevertheless been inclined to follow Stade’s (1881–1882) arguments in favour of a late date. This need not imply that the text of the said chapters did not, in places, preserve pre-exilic elements (Horst, commentary 1964; cf. esp. 9:1–11:3).

The two anonymous collections can be subdivided and dated, albeit approximately, as follows:

Zechariah 9–11
9:1–10:2 The messianic kingdom with a description of the promised land, the advent of the messianic king, the return of the exiles, the defeat of the world powers and future blessing (possibly from the fifth century BCE)
10:3–11:3 Judah’s struggle for freedom and the return of the exiles from the Northern tribes (possibly from the fifth century BCE)

(“Les allusions à Alexandre le Grand dans Zach. ix, 1–8”, VT 1 [1951], 110–124) that we should associate Zech. 9:1–8 with Alexander the Great’s expedition in Syro-Palestine remains open to question (cf. the commentaries of W. Rudolph [1976] and A. S. van der Woude [1984]): the summary of territories and cities does not square with the route taken by Alexander. The text is perhaps better understood as a realisation of the promise of land once made to the patriarchs.
11:4–17 The so-called shepherd allegory, which apparently describes an attempt to maintain relationships between the worshippers of יְהֹוָה living in Samaria and the community in Judea (possibly from the fifth century BCE)

Zechariah 12–14

12:1–13:6 Defeat of the enemies of Jerusalem and Judah, a lament for the ‘Pierced One’ and the elimination of idolatry and false prophecy (possibly around 400 BCE)

13:7–9 The stricken shepherd and the purified remnant (possibly around 300 BCE)

14 The deliverance of plundered and looted Jerusalem at the appearance (theophany) of יְהֹוָה and the universal kingship of יְהֹוָה (around 300 BCE?)

It is striking that Deutero-Zechariah continually harks back to ancient traditions. In a remarkable hermeneutical process we are presented with an ever increasing priestly scribal expertise, which placed long treasured traditions concerning Zion, the messiah, holy war etc. at the service of a portrayal of the coming time of salvation, the central theme of Deutero-Zechariah as a whole. One is still faced with the question as to whether one should accept that this represents a conscious opposition to the theocratic structure expressed in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah (see Plöger 1959): theocracy and passionate eschatological expectation are not per se mutually exclusive.

12. Malachi

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me (3:1)


129 The identity of the mysterious Pierced One, over whom a lament is to be raised, is much disputed. Hanson and Lacocque offer a collective explanation: an eschatological group suffering under a hierocratic faction (Hanson) and a righteous Judah suffering under Jerusalem (Lacocque). Individual interpretations include Isaiah, Zechariah ben Jehoiada (cf. 2 Chron. 24:20–22, cf. Mt. 23:35), King Josiah, Zerubbabel, the priest Joshua who was murdered by his brother in the temple precincts around 410 BCE (cf. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities XI, 297ff.); alternatively a figure from the second century BCE: the High Priest Onias III, Simon the Maccabean or a martyr from the Maccabean period. The reference is reminiscent of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, who was initially despised and rejected and later wounded/pierced (Isa. 53:5).
Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


According to its superscription, the last prophetic book of the Old Testament is ascribed to Malachi (“my messenger”; lxx: Malachias; V: Malachi[as]). Based in part on the fact that the Septuagint in 1:1 speaks of “his (= God’s) messenger” instead of Malachi (“my messenger”), scholars have often expressed the opinion that the book should be understood as an anonymous document (in line with Zechariah 9–11 and 12–14). The designation “Malachi” is thus said to have been borrowed from Mal. 3:1 (“see, I send my messenger”). Given the fact that the latter text alludes to a heavenly figure and in light of the possibility that Malachi can be understood as a proper name (although it is not found elsewhere), however, an increasing number of scholars have been inclined to consider the designation as a personal name (cf. the commentaries of Rudolph 1976, Verhoef 1987, Deissler 1988 and Graf Reventlow 1993).

The person of the prophet and the period in which he lived are so well hidden behind his preaching that it is impossible to determine the time of his prophetic activity with any degree of accuracy. The mention of a governor (appointed by the Persians) in Mal. 1:8 and the fact that the regulations imposed by Ezra and Nehemiah against mixed marriages between Jewish men and pagan women do not yet appear to be presupposed, more or less confirm a dating of Malachi to the first half of the fifth century BCE (around 470). In any event, the prophet clearly lived in a period of enormous socio-economic
tension, which gave rise to fierce differences of opinion within Israel’s post-exilic community (cf. Neh. 5:1–5) and increased religious scepticism (3:14) brought about by natural disasters (Mal. 3:11).

Setting aside the superscription and the appendix to the conclusion of the work (4:4–6; Hebr. 3:22–24), the book contains six prophecies:

Mal. 1:2–5 The love of יְהוָה for Israel, illustrated by the fate of Edom

Mal. 1:6–2:9 Condemnation of laxity in the liturgy and unworthy priests

Mal. 2:10–16 Condemnation of marital infidelity by entering into mixed marriages, whereby the former wife is set to one side and the identity of the covenant community is endangered

Mal. 2:17–3:5 The coming judgement

Mal. 3:6–12 Call to conversion

Mal. 3:13–4:3 Comfort for those who have been impeached with a view to the coming day of יְהוָה’s judgement (Hebr. 3:13–21)

All six prophecies are discursive in style and based on the schema proposition—counter proposition—motivation of the proposition, whereby the preaching of Malachi acquires its vigorous character. This unique literary form probably reflects the nature of the prophet’s speeches addressed to the priests and the people.

While Malachi draws particular attention to cultic misdemeanours, he is nevertheless inspired by the spirit of traditional prophecy: he points to the love of God for his people (1:2–5), which stands in bleak contrast to the liturgical decline brought on by the priests (1:6–2:9), the miserliness of the sacrificial offerings (3:8–10), the arguments that draw God’s righteousness into question (2:17; 3:13–15) and the marital infidelity, inspired by covetousness, which undermines morale and the unity of the cultic community (2:10–16). For this reason the prophet believes that the day of judgement is at hand (3:5; 4:1, Hebr. 3:19) and he sees the messenger of God appearing to prepare for the advent of יְהוָה’s judgement (3:1).130 Malachi explicitly insists that the day of יְהוָה’s judgement will bring to light the difference between the righteous and the godless (3:18).

The pastoral character of the prophet’s preaching is determinative of its specific outreach: the spiritual needs of the cultic community in Jerusalem and Judea in the first half of the fifth century BCE. While Malachi understands יְהֹוָה to be a universal God, the prophet’s preaching does not exhibit universalistic characteristics. Where the latter are evident in the book they clearly represent a later hand (e.g. 1:11).

The Hebrew text of the book of Malachi occasionally confronts us with serious difficulties (cf., for example, 2:12,15).

The character of the evidently late concluding verses of the book, in which an appeal is made to remember the Law of Moses and the activities of the prophet Elijah as precursor of the Day of יְהֹוָה are sketched (4:4–6, Hebr. 3:22–24; cf. also Mt. 11:14; 17:11–12; Mk. 9:11–13; Lk. 1:17), remains the subject of discussion. Some consider the verses to be a conclusion to the book of Malachi, others as a concluding note to the Minor Prophets, others still as a sort of epilogue added to the textual complex Joshua-Malachi when the latter became canonical. The latter option is the most likely.
CHAPTER TEN

THE REMAINING LITERATURE (THE WRITINGS)

A third of the Hebrew Bible, referred to as the Writings (Ketubôt), consists of a number of poetic and historical books, the majority of which stem from the period after the Babylonian exile. A portion of the Writings, namely the Psalms and Proverbs, includes more ancient poems and sayings. The date of the book of Ruth is disputed. The book of Lamentations came into existence shortly after the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE).

a. The Psalms

Da sihestu allen heyligen yns hertz (Luther)

Commentaries:

Monographs and articles:

Available literature on the Psalms is immense and can only be represented in part at this juncture. A detailed bibliography can be found in the commentary of K. Seybold (1996).

The book of Psalms (Hebr.: (šefer) tehillîm, “(book of) laudations”; LXX: psalmoi, “songs sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments”; V: Psalmi) constitutes one of the best-known and much loved segments of the Old Testament. More than any other biblical document, it has found a place of significance in the liturgy of the synagogue and the Christian churches. Through the centuries it has formed a source of spiritual inspiration for many and it remains so to the present day. Its frequent allusion to the highs and lows of human experience has served as a point of attraction and personal support for countless individuals and communities, especially in times of difficulty, sadness and oppression. At the same time, it has provided human beings with expressive words of praise of God, glorifying his marvellous works in nature and in history. It is far from surprising, therefore, that the book of Psalms has given rise to a vast number of commentaries, articles and monographs.

Scholarly research into the Psalms has led to a multiplicity of divergent opinions concerning the origins and significance of this collection of songs in addition to the dating of its constituent parts. In the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth the Psalms tended for the most part to be considered as stemming to a significant extent (according to several scholars) from the second century BCE. Opinions on the matter changed considerably after the discovery of Babylonian psalm literature dating back as far as the third millennium BCE. Scholars gradually came to the conclusion that the Psalms were much older than had hitherto been presumed and that a serious portion thereof should be dated to the
pre-exilic period. While Duhm, for example, was inclined to con-
sider Psalm 137 as dating from the Babylonian exile and the oldest
of the Psalms, later commentators ultimately came to consider it one
of the youngest songs in the collection!

The hypothesis that the majority of the Psalms date from earlier periods
is supported indirectly by songs stemming from the century immediately
prior to the beginning of the common era, which tend as a rule to be less
formal in structure when compared with the poetry of the Old Testament
and to exhibit increasingly the features of the so-called Mischgattungen (mixed
genres). Examples can be found in the Psalms of Solomon (cf. chapter XIII)
and in the documents of Qumran (cf. chapter XIV).

While it is reasonable to assume that the Psalms of the Old Testament
were influenced by the poetic works of Israel’s Umwelt, it is also fair
to say that the Psalm literature of Ancient Israel followed its own
unique trajectory. Frequent agreements at the level of form and
imagery with Ancient Near Eastern liturgical poetry, in particular
Babylonian poetry, to one side, Israel’s Psalms exhibit a materially
unique character on account of the fact that they are driven by a
unique religious spirit. Old Testament scholars such as Begrich¹ and
Driver,² together with orientalists such as Falkenstein and von Soden,³
have underlined this observation time and again. Direct influence
derived from Sumerian-Akkadian psalmody is di-
ficult to prove. While
it is clearly impossible to fully comprehend Israel’s lyrical works in
separation from the West Semitic tradition, Canaanite and, in par-
ticular, Ugaritic influence should not be overstated. It is possible,
nevertheless, that Psalm 29, for example, harks back to a Canaanite
poem dedicated to the thunder God Hadad-Ba’al, and Ps. 139:8
may be reminiscent of a letter from El-Amarna (264:15f.):

If we ascend to heaven
or descend to the kingdom of the dead—
our head is always in your hands.

¹ In H. Gunkel – J. Begrich, op. cit., 1933.
³ A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete,
Zurich 1953, pp. 18–56 (= P. H. A. Neumann (ed.), Zur neueren Psalmenforschung,
Egyptian influence on Israel’s psalmody is occasionally evident, as would appear to be the case with respect to Psalm 104 and its similarity to the sun hymn of Akh-en-Aton (1364–1347 BCE).⁴

In the twentieth century Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932)⁵ is particularly well known for his Gattungsforschung, an approach that introduced a new impulse into psalm research. Gunkel was unique among his peers in insisting that one should seek the origin of the psalms in terms of their function rather than their history, exploring the background (Sitz im Leben) of the songs, establishing strict distinctions between the various psalm genres and drawing particular attention to the relationship between the psalms and the cult. While Gunkel accounted for songs with a cultic background as well as songs employed in a more personal spiritual context, the Norwegian scholar Sigmund Mowinckel (1884–1965) was more inclined to ascribe a cultic setting to virtually all of the psalms.⁶ Mowinckel associated a significant number of the psalms with a presupposed New Year Feast (reconstructed for the most part on information borrowed from Babylonian texts), the autumnal celebration of YHWH’s “accession to the throne”, at which, according to Mowinckel, God’s acceptance of power over creation was celebrated. He also considered a number of the psalms, especially those containing prayers petitioning liberation from the enemy, as directed against evil-minded magicians. In contrast to Mowinckel, Birkeland⁷ interpreted the “enemy” in the Psalms as political adversaries of the king. In the present author’s opinion N. H. Ridderbos has made it clear that “those who bring about injustice” in the Psalms should be understood as the godless rather than as magicians.⁸ Many scholars are likewise correct in arguing that, given the character of Ancient Israel’s religion and conception of God, a hypothetical feast celebrating YHWH’s accession to the throne is difficult to support.

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⁵ W. Klatt, Hermann Gunkel. Zu seiner Theologie der Religionsgeschichte und zur Entstehung der formgeschichtlichen Methode (FRLANT 100), Göttingen 1969.
⁸ N. H. Ridderbos, De “werkers der ongerechtigheid” in de individuele Psalmen, Kampen 1939.
While Mowinckel associated a great many psalms with the New Year Feast, Artur Weiser (commentary 1935) defended the hypothesis that the *Sitz im Leben* of several songs was to be located in the *Feast of the Covenant*. Under the influence of the work of S. H. Hooke, primarily Scandinavian psalm research became enthralled with the so-called *Myth and Ritual School*, which placed great emphasis on the role of the king in the ritual of the Western Semitic *Autumn Feast*. The suggestion that the king in Ancient Israel had a decisive role to play in a cultic celebration structured around an Ancient Near Eastern *pattern*, however, was correctly called into question by Martin Noth in 1950 (see *op. cit.*).

It seems reasonable to presume, therefore, that a large number of the psalms were not composed for cultic purposes, especially those that exhibit an utterly personal character and bear witness to individual piety. Such psalms can be distinguished from the Babylonian psalms, which generally exhibit a more liturgical style. Indeed, it is the personal character of the majority of Israel’s psalms that makes them immortal and accessible to every generation and every individual. These personal songs were later incorporated into the liturgical hymnals of the Jewish community and thereby placed at the service of the cult.

The book of Psalms consists of a selection of songs from a variety of different times and origins. Scholars continue to categorise the psalms according to a series of *genres*:

a) *hymns*, cf. Psalms 33, 65, 67, 68, 100, 103, 104, 113, 117, 135, 136, 145–150; *songs lauding the kingship of YHWH* such as Psalms 47, 93, 96–99 constitute a specific subdivision of the *Hymn* genre;
b) *royal psalms*, cf. Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 110, 132;
c) *laments of the people*, cf. Psalms 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 90;
d) *individual laments*, cf. Psalms 3, 5, 6, 22, 38, 39, 42–43, 51, 61, 69, 86, 88, 102, 130, 140–143;
e) *psalms of blessing and curse*, cf. Psalms 28, 134, 137;
f) *pilgrimage psalms*, cf. Psalms 120–134, together with Psalm 84;
g) *victory songs*, cf. Psalms 46, 66, 76;
h) *individual songs of thanksgiving*, cf. Psalms 9, 18, 32, 116;
i) *Israel’s songs of thanksgiving*, cf. Psalm 124, 129;
j) *historical psalms*, cf. Psalm 78, 105, 106, 114;
The above classification, borrowed for the most part from Gunkel and Begrich (1933), must frequently be understood as bearing a merely relative character since several psalms, especially those of later date, are mixed in terms of genre. Several authors have detected an exaggerated style compulsion in the work of Gunkel and his followers and have preferred to reduce the number of genres to a minimum. Westermann (1953), for example, combined the hymns and the songs of thanksgiving into a single genre, which he referred to as *psalms of praise*. He then divided the latter into *berichtendes Lob* and *beschreibendes Lob*, the first instance lauding God’s salvific deeds, the second lauding God himself. In addition, Westermann distinguished *laments of the individual* and *laments of the people*. In his opinion the addressation of God in the psalms vacillates between the two poles of lament and praise. In his 1971–1975 commentary Van der Ploeg likewise offered a much simplified genre subdivision: lyrical poems (consisting of songs of praise and prayers) and non-lyrical psalms (consisting of didactic poems and narrative poems).

The Septuagint (followed by the Vulgate) exhibits a different subdivision of the Psalms when compared to that of the Hebrew Bible, correctly considering Psalms 9 and 10 as a single psalm and incorrectly combining Psalms 114 and 115. In addition, Psalms 116 and 147 are each subdivided into two songs. The comparative result can be seen in the following schema:

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For the apocryphal Psalm 151 see chapter XIV.

In addition to the songs collected in the book of Psalms, several other books of the Old Testament contain poetic material: cf. the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2), the Song of Jonah (Jonah 2) and the Prayer of Hezekiah (Isa. 37:15–20). Psalm 18 has a parallel in 2 Samuel 22, Ps. 105:1–15 in 1 Chron. 16:8–22 and Psalm 96 in 1 Chron. 16:23–33.
A number of psalms or parts thereof are virtually repeated word for word within the book of Psalms itself: Psalm 14 = Psalm 53; Ps. 40:14–18 = Ps. 70:2–6; Ps. 57:8–12 plus Ps. 60:7–14 = Ps. 108:2–14. Such parallels serve as proof that the book of Psalms is based on several individual collections. A small number of psalms would appear to consist of more than one independent song: cf. Ps. 19:1–7 and 19:8–15; Ps. 24:1–6 and 24:7–10. Psalms 9 and 10, on the other hand, together with Psalms 42 and 43 constitute single poems.

The division of the Psalter into five books (Psalms 1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106; 107–150) is based on the presence of doxologies (expressions of praise) at the end of Psalms 41, 72, 89 and 106. Psalm 150 constitutes a concluding statement of praise with respect to book 5 and the Psalter as a whole. The division dates back to the final redaction of the book of Psalms at the earliest and would appear to have been introduced by analogy with the division of the Pentateuch. The quantitative disparity between the various books and the different expressions employed in the characteristically liturgical doxologies serve to support the idea that we are dealing with a secondary division introduced at a later date. The latter runs counter to the original collections upon which basis the Psalter was compiled. The following divisions can thus be made:

a) the first Davidic Psalter 3–41. With the exception of Psalm 33, the superscriptions of these songs ascribe their authorship to David;

b) the so-called Elohist Psalter 42–83, in which the divine designation יְהוָה is replaced for the most part by אֱלֹהִים (= God; cf. the parallel Psalms 14 and 53). This compilation would appear to be based on a series of originally independent collections: the Psalms of Korah 42–49 (concluded by a Psalm of Asaph 50); the second Davidic Psalter 51–71 (with the addition of the Psalm of Solomon 72); the Asaph Psalms 73–83. A non-Elohistic appendix is to be found in Psalms 84–89, consisting of Korahite songs (84–85 plus 87–88), a prayer of David (86) and a didactic poem of Ethan (89);

c) Psalms 90–118, sometimes referred to as the Mosaic Psalter (cf. Ps. 90:1), which is likewise further divided into smaller units including: the Yahweh is King Psalms 93–99, the third Davidic Psalter (101; 103; 108–110) and the “Egyptian Hallel” (113–118), which belonged to the liturgy of Passover (cf. Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26);

d) the pilgrim psalms 120–134, a sort of vademecum for pilgrims to which Psalms 135–136 or the “Major Hallel” are appended;
e) the fourth Davidic Psalter 138–145, which consists to a large extent of prayers;

f) the Minor Hallel 146–150, a series of hymns.

With the exception of Ps. 72:20, we continue to lack both external and internal information on the formation of the book of Psalms as we now know it. The majority of hypotheses in this regard tend to be speculative (cf. Whybray 1997). In spite of this, organisational principles can be observed nevertheless with respect to smaller subdivisions of the book: Psalms 50 and 51, for example, would appear to have been consciously located together because they both place the sacrifice of the heart above that of animals, while Psalms 34 and 35 both allude to the angel of YHWH. Psalms 3–5 belong together as morning and evening prayers, Psalms 20 and 21 as petitioning victory for the king and giving thanks thereafter.

It remains difficult to determine with any certainty if the final redaction of the book of Psalms was eschatologically motivated and programmatically reflected in the introductory Psalms 1 and 2 in the sense that the messianic time of salvation and preservation during the final judgement were made dependent on obedience to the Law. The hypothesis that the sequence of the Psalms corresponds with the weekly recitation of a portion of the Torah during the tri-annual (Palestinian) cycle of Law readings in the synagogue is likewise open to serious doubt. Indeed, such an association would leave the original small collections of Psalms unexplained.

While opinions on the goal of the Psalm collection are divided, it is reasonable to presume that they were not only intended as devotional literature. Indeed, it would seem that their primary purpose was to serve as the hymnal of the temple cult. A number of the superscriptions allude to this fact: e.g. Psalm 100: “a song for the praise offering”; Psalms 38 and 70: “at the memorial offering”; Psalm 92: “a song for the Sabbath Day”. Other superscriptions, including “for the choirmaster” (translation uncertain) and references to certain Levitical guilds of singers (Korahites [42ff.], Asaph [73ff.]) bring us into the domain of sanctuary liturgy. A further text from Qumran (David’s poetical works = 11QPsᵃ XXVII 2–11) ascribes a number of songs specifically intended for the cult (for the daily burnt offering, for the offerings on the Sabbath and for those of the new months and all feast days together with the Great Day of Atonement) to David together with several other psalms.
It is perfectly clear from Amos 5:23 that songs had been sung in the context of the temple liturgy from of old. The same verse also alludes to the fact that the said songs were sung to musical accompaniment. Indeed, several of the superscriptions offer indications as to the manner with which a song was to be accompanied: e.g. Psalms 4 and 6: “to stringed instruments”; Psalm 5: “to the flute”. The superscriptions often add in addition some indication as to the way in which a psalm was to be sung or recited: e.g. Psalm 22:1: “according to ‘the hind of the dawn’”; Psalm 45:1: “according to ‘the lilies’”.

Eerdmans explained various superscriptions on the basis of the content of the text. He maintained, for example, that ‘al mût labben (Ps. 9:1) should not be understood as “according to ‘the death of the son’”, but rather “on the death of N.N., by the son”. In his opinion the psalm was thus intended to be sung at the death of a father. Eerdmans related the superscription of Psalm 30 to the dedication of the home and was able to draw significant support from the superscription of Psalm 102 for his hypotheses. While the psalm superscriptions are known to be redactional additions, a number of the terms employed therein remain something of a mystery: e.g. maškil (32, 42, 44–45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88–89, 142; NBG: “didactic poem”), miktam (16, 56–60; NBG: “precious/jewel) and ıggayon (7:1; NBG: “lament”). A satisfactory explanation of the term sela found in no less than forty of the psalms remains to be given. Scholars have associated the word with musical accompaniment (pause, musical interlude or repeat), as well as with the liturgical actions of the community (silence, kneeling).

The date of origin of the individual Psalms can, as a rule, no longer be determined. Only a few thereof, such as Psalms 126 and 137, which must have been composed in haste after the Babylonian exile, exhibit clear historical characteristics. The superscriptions are secondary and do not as such offer a satisfactory basis for resolving issues of date. Under normal circumstances internal evidence should provide some indication with respect to dating the material but the available information is of such a general character that it does not allow us to draw historical conclusions. In spite of these limitations, it is reasonable to assume that royal psalms such as Psalms 2, 20–21 and 72 stem from the pre-exilic period. Psalm 110 has a potential date of origin in the Davidic or Solomonic period. On account of their apparent kinship with Canaanite hymns and their antiquated style Psalms 29 and 68 can be taken as somewhat older. On the other hand, songs that exhibit a clearly didactic character are usu-
ally considered to be younger. The hypothesis that some of the Psalms date from the Maccabean period is undermined by the fact that Jesus Sirach already understood the book of Psalms to be sacred scripture around 180 BCE. The manuscripts of Qumran likewise tend to confirm the book’s canonical status rather than counter it. It is probable that the book of Psalms achieved its definitive form in the third century BCE.

The frequently employed superscription “of David” ascribes a great many of the Psalms to the king of Israel who was a poet according to 2 Samuel 1 and a musician according to Amos 6:5. While it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a number of the Psalms do indeed stem from David, the aforementioned superscription (the Septuagint version of which differs on more than one occasion from the Hebrew text) in principle does not allow us to draw historical conclusions. The hypothesis defended by a number of Scandinavian scholars, among them I. Engnell, that ledavid (“for David”) should in fact be interpreted as “for the king” has turned out to be incorrect. It is evident from both the New Testament and the manuscript discoveries of Qumran that, next to Deuteronomy and Isaiah, the Psalms must have belonged to the most read literature of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. The textual transmission of the Psalms (especially the older Psalms) is occasionally deficient. The Psalm Scrolls from Qumran exhibit (albeit minor) variants when compared with the Masoretic tradition. The Psalm Scroll from Cave 11 of Qumran published by J. A. Sanders⁹ not only exhibits a variant Psalm sequence to that found in the Old Testament but also contains songs not found therein including Psalm 151 and two poems known to us from the Syriac tradition: Psalms 154–155.¹⁰

b. *Job*

Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad also? (2:10)

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¹⁰ For these Psalms see A. S. van der Woude, “Die fünf syrischen Psalmen”, in: *JSHRZ* 4, pp. 29–47. For the first Psalm Scroll from Cave 11 of Qumran see P. W. Flint, *op. cit.*, 1977.
Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


From the literary perspective, the book of Job (Hebr. *Iyyôb = Akkadian Ajjâbu, “where is the [divine] father?”11 lxx: Ioob; V: Iob) constitutes something of a high point in the Old Testament. It is universally considered one of the most magnificent poetical works of world literature. The content of the book is also remarkable, its profoundly human qualities giving it an almost timeless character. Indeed, the fact that the book belongs among the Old Testament documents that can only be dated by approximation serves to underline its agelessness.

The book introduces us to a pastoral society, strongly reminiscent of the period of the patriarchs.12

12 Typical of this period is the use of the term qešîta, “a piece of silver”, only found elsewhere in Gen. 33:19 and Jos. 24:32 (42:11), Job’s great age (42:16) and the expression “old and full of days” (42:17, cf. Gen. 25:8; 35:29).
Job, the main character of the document, is described in Ezek. 14:14 and 14:20 side by side with Noah and Dan’el (familiar to us from Ugaritic texts) as a pious and blameless individual from bygone days (cf. Job 1:1). He is not portrayed as an Israelite but rather as a man of substance and property who lived among the inhabitants of the East (1:3) in the land of Uz (1:1). While the territory in question is difficult to locate with any certainty, it seems more likely that it should be traced to the mountain region of the Druze with its foreshore to the east of the Lake of Galilee than to Edom.\textsuperscript{13} The place of origin of the document itself, however, remains unclear. Given the fact that the author considers Job to be one of the inhabitants of the East, it is probable that he once lived in Canaan and may indeed have been an Israelite.

The author of the book was an original and deeply religious figure who had clearly struggled with the problem of (undeserved) human suffering. Some have described his work as a theodicy but such a designation might occasion misunderstanding. It was not the author’s intention to provide a theoretical justification for God’s governance or to contradict the tradition of retribution. The book of Job is rather a reflection on how one should live with the suffering that can suddenly, and without identifiable reason, overcome a person in the context of one’s relationship with God.

Although the book of Job is rightly included among the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, its poetic quality goes far beyond that of traditional proverbial wisdom. Indeed, the very fact that it calls one of the core concepts of Wisdom literature into question, namely that God rewards good and punishes evil, sets it apart. While Job’s friends can do nothing more than argue on the basis of their long held conviction that suffering is the result of sin, Job himself is not aware of any misdemeanour on his own part. He denies in front of his friends that the suffering with which he is being confronted is punishment for some secret wrongdoing. He therefore accuses the Almighty in no uncertain terms that He is unjust (9:22–24), reproaches God for denying him his rights (27:2) and complains that the Almighty

\textsuperscript{13} Localisation in Bashan-Hauran has been proposed (cf. Gen. 10:23; 22:21) or a territory between Edom and Arabia (cf. Lam. 4:21). J. C. de Moor, \textit{The Rise of Yahwism} (BETHL 91), Leuven 1997\textsuperscript{2}, pp. 131–162 has argued strongly in favour of identifying Job with the king of Ashteroth in the Bashan region mentioned in the El-Amarna letters (256 and 364).
has become his enemy (6:4; 7:12; 9:17–18; 16:9–14 etc.). While strong protests and pointed challenges are laid at God’s doorstep, Job arrives Nevertheless at a profound faith in God in spite of God who “bears the visage of Satan” (cf. 16:18–22; 19:25–27). In the last analysis Job withdraws nothing of what he has said (the translation of 42:6 is often incorrect in this regard). His encounter with the Creator (chapter 38ff.), however, ultimately deepens his knowledge of God: “I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee” (42:5). Job recognises the limited nature of his knowledge of the Almighty (42:3) and confesses his lowly stature in the face of God’s majestic creative authority:

Therefore I recognise my insignificance and consider myself dust and ashes (42:6).

The problem of the suffering of the innocent together with the theme of divine justice has been the focus of attention on more than one occasion in the Ancient Near Eastern world.14 Perhaps the closest example thereof to the content of the book of Job can be found in the Sumerian tractate referred to by S. N. Kramer “Man and his God. A Sumerian Variation of the Job Motif”.15 After an exhortation that human beings should praise their god at all times, the author tells the story of a young man who had lived an exemplary life and who had suddenly been confronted with sickness and misfortune. His lament takes up the largest part of the unfortunately fragmentary text that we have at our disposal. At the end of his prayer to his personal god he confesses his sins and is liberated thereafter from all his misery. The difference with the biblical text is clear: the Sumerian poem is aimed at the glorification of the divinity, the Israelite document the justification of the person Job; in the former the main character confesses his sins, in the latter Job maintains his innocence to the end. The dialogue between a believer and a sceptic found in the so-called “Babylonian theodicy”,16 and the renowned Luddil bel nemeqi (“Let me praise the lord of wisdom”)17 are even further removed from the book of Job. In

15 See ANET, pp. 589–591.
the “Babylonian theodicy” the unfortunate individual accuses the gods of injustice in their governance of the world while his friend accuses him in turn of lacking respect for the divine disposition. A solution to the problem of suffering is not given. The latter poem, which is aimed at the glorification of the god Marduk, the lord of wisdom, offers a cultic solution confirmed by the petitioner’s visit to the temple of the godhead. The only similarity with the book of Job is to be found in the lament over undeserved suffering. The difference between the response to suffering offered by the Babylonian and the biblical author can be seen as follows: the former maintains that evil in the world has been introduced by the gods and that the human person must resign him or herself to this fact. Human persons can only survive by piously seeking divine favour. In spite of the cutting accusation of 9:22–24 and aware of his innocence, Job appeals to God’s justice and maintains that God shall be his keeper and redeemer (16:19–21; 19:25–27); if a human person justifies the majesty of God in all His deeds, the Almighty shall justify the faithful in return. Given the incidental character of the parallels with the Babylonian poetic texts, it seems reasonable to assume that the latter did not influence the author of the book of Job.

Considerable lack of agreement exists as to the actual question being raised by the book of Job. Is Job being portrayed as one who continues to honour יהוה in good times and in bad (1:21; 2:10), as one who is convinced that God is his defender, guarantor and redeemer (16:19; 19:25), or as one who has to learn that anyone challenging God (in court) will ultimately be forced to taste defeat (9:15)? Is he being offered insight into the fact that God’s intentions for any human life are never completely fathomable (11:7–9; 15:8), that mortal men and women cannot fully grasp the meaning of things, but are called rather to fear the Lord (28:1–28) and to recognise the majesty of the Creator and Keeper, a recognition that renews human life? Commentators may be obliged to account for all of these aspects in reading Job, especially in light of the fact that the document itself does not intend to be a theoretical essay. Job represents a slice of life, an attempt to respond to the problem of the suffering of good people. It is stated that Job, in spite of (or better: thanks to) his rebellion and bitter protests and in contrast to his friends, “spoke of me (יהוה) what is right” (42:7). Job does this “in the uniqueness of his confessions in the prologue, in his vehement

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laments and profound accusations, in his challenging God and his faith in God against God, the Lord, who is witness, guarantor and redeemer, as well as in the determination of his own place in the encounter with God who presents himself as the Creator” (E. Noort, in: Siertsema (ed.), op. cit., 1996, p. 18).

The book of Job consists of a narrative prose frame with 1:1–2:13 as prologue and 42:7–17 as epilogue surrounding a number of dialogues in poetic form. The prologue relates how Satan (the accuser) calls Job’s piety into question, arguing that it is dependent on his riches, and is given leave by God to take everything from him. Although Job is faced with the loss of his property and, in addition, the loss of his own children, he perseveres nevertheless in his piety (1:21). Satan is then granted leave in a second round to afflict Job with an arduous illness. In spite of his wife’s exhortation to curse God, however, Job continues to trust in the Lord and he allows no such unseemly words to pass his lips (2:10). Job’s friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come to visit him and are initially stunned into silence by his suffering. After a bitter complaint on the part of Job in which he curses the very day of his birth (chapter 3), three series of dialogues follow (4–14; 15–21; 22–27) between Job and his friends. Eliphaz and Bildad present their arguments on three occasions (chapters 4–5, 15, 22 and 8, 18, 25 respectively), Zophar on two occasions (chapters 11, 20), each of which is followed by a response on the part of Job.

The dialogues contain several elements reminiscent of Wisdom literature, the lawsuit and psalmody (particularly the individual lament). They present the reader/audience with a progressive, step by step portrayal of the discussion between Job and his friends, the interventions of the latter varying from consolation to cutting accusation, and of the former from lament to a declaration of personal innocence in the form of an “oath of purification” (31). Each of Job’s friends reacts to the situation in his own way and with his own specific points of emphasis: “Elifas, der Würdevolle, der Weise vor andern, der sich auf seine Lebenserfahrung und selbstempfangene Offenbarungen beruft, Bildad, der eitle Schönredner, der sich auf Zeugnisse und Überlieferung stützt, Zofar, der rohe Polterer, der mit Allerweltsweisheiten und Gemeinplätzen um sich wirft” (Budde).

The third series of dialogues is a significant source of difficulty: the segment is shorter than the two preceding segments; a third argument on the part of Zophar is absent; Bildad’s third speech (25:2–6) consists of a mere five verses; certain passages ascribed to Job would appear to fit more appropriately on the lips of his friends (24:18–25; 27:7–10,13–23) or would appear
to be digressions (24:1–15; 26:5–14). While it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that portions of these chapters have been misplaced, the reconstruction of the third series of dialogues in its original form remains a precarious task. Scholarly attempts to do so have led to a variety of quite distinct proposals, most of which are strongly hypothetical. Eaton (1985) has suggested, for example, that 27:7–23, which portrays the punishment of the godless, is an ironic warning on Job’s part addressed to his friends in response to their unjust accusations (cf. 27:11–12). Other scholars have presupposed that the third series of dialogues was introduced by a redactor who ascribed a more orthodox vision of the problem of innocent suffering to Job than is found in the preceding chapters.

The Targum of Job from Cave 11 of Qumran (11QtgJob; see further chapter XIV) presupposes the present Hebrew text.

After Job’s friends present their arguments and Job offers his responses, the text continues with a Wisdom Song (28) and the “last words” of Job (29:1–31:40), at the conclusion of which he declares his innocence under oath and challenges the Almighty to give answer. The text then introduces the reader to a certain Elihu (32:1–6a), who takes offence at the words uttered by Job and his friends, which he attempts to counter with a five-fold argument (32:6b–22; 33; 34; 35; 36:1–37:24). Job offers no response.

In chapter 38 the Almighty answers Job “out of the whirlwind” (38:1), not to condemn him but rather to bring him to an awareness of the majesty of God who manifests himself in creation in a manner that human persons cannot comprehend (chapters 38–41). Job is at first humbled by God’s response (39:34–38, Hebr. 40:1–5) and then brought to confess his own nothingness (42:1–6). The story concludes with a report of Job’s vindication in front of his friends and the return of his many earthly possessions (42:7–17).

While the framework narrative would appear to have its roots in ancient tradition, its unity with the dialogues should be upheld

21 V. Maag, op. cit., 1982 distinguishes two sources: an independent novella concerning an Aramean (1:1–2:10 and 42:10–17) and a narrative concerning an Edomite Job that constitutes the surrounding framework of the poetical dialogues (2:11–13 and 42:7–9). Maag’s thesis is not convincing since, given the evidence of the present prologue and epilogue, much material must have been lost from both narratives when they were later combined.
nevertheless, in spite of evident tensions between them at the level of content and form. Written in a refined style, the framework narrative is insufficient without the dialogues and is a necessary prerequisite thereof. In addition, 8:4 would appear to hark back to the reference to the death of Job’s children in the prologue, while the mention of Job’s friends in 42:7–9 clearly alludes to the preceding chapters. The framework narrative ultimately serves to intensify the dialogues: “God is duelling with Satan and Job knows nothing about it” (Noort). Support should therefore be given to the hypothesis that the poet of the dialogues had an ancient saga concerning Job’s prosperity, trials, faith in God and ultimate reinstatement at his disposal, a tradition that served as the point of departure for his own work. The originality of the Satan scenes (1:6–12; 2:1–7) has been called into question.

The occasionally defended opinion that Job 42:12–17 is lacking in the Targum of Job found in Cave 11 at Qumran (11QTgJob) can no longer be maintained on account of the vague yet still legible remains of letters to be found in the damaged document. Differences between the Masoretic Text of 42:1–6 and that of the Targum can be explained on theological grounds. The author of the latter does not allow Job to speak “without insight” (42:3) nor does he allow him—in line with later ideals of piety—to recognise his own nothingness (42:6).

What we have said so far does not take away from the fact that the book of Job contains a number of interpolations. Commentators consistently include the Song of Wisdom in Job 28 among the latter (in addition to certain segments from the third series of dialogues; see above), a chapter that impressively describes how humanity is incapable of finding the way to Wisdom’s dwelling in spite of its technical skills: the path to Wisdom is known to God alone. God has nevertheless revealed wisdom to human beings, the only wisdom they need to live meaningful lives: “Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (28:28). Given the fact that Job had indeed lived his life in such a fashion, the

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22 Cf., for example, the patient Job of the prologue and the impassioned Job of the dialogues.

23 The framing narrative employs יוהו as a rule, while the dialogues tend to speak of “God” or “the Almighty”.

song—which may have been borrowed from an Ancient Israelite
treasury of songs—is clearly located in a functionally appropriate
place after the dialogues in which Job pleads his innocence and his
speech in chapters 29–31 in which he challenges the Almighty to
answer him.

The speeches of Elihu (32–37)\textsuperscript{25} are also evidently secondary, interrupting the cohesion between chapters 31 and 38 and exhibiting a
different tone to the preceding chapters in terms of form (a monologue), poetic style (inferior to that of the dialogues) and language (more Aramaisms than in the preceding chapters). In addition, Elihu
is not mentioned in the preceding or subsequent chapters. In terms of content his speeches repeat many of the ideas already raised by
the three friends and anticipate what follows to such an extent that
one is obliged to consider either chapters 32ff. or 38ff. as secondary.

It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that chapters 32–37 are a
later addition. In addition to their emphatic insistence on God’s jus-
tice, interpolation speeches focus in particular on the proposition that
the suffering of the righteous is intended to bring him or her to a
sense of his or her own sinfulness, to protect him or her from reck-
less aberrations and to call him or her to conversion (36:8–10). An
echo of detachment is more evident in the words of Elihu than in
the dialogues, leaving one with the impression that the text repres-
ents a polemic against doubts emerging among later generations as
to God’s righteousness. In spite of the fact that Elihu’s speeches do
not appear to belong to the original text of the book of Job, they
nevertheless enjoy a functional place in the text. By speaking of a
wisdom that is aware of the boundaries God has set for her and by
drawing attention to the association between wisdom and creation,
Elihu’s words establish a bridge between the dialogues that precede
them and the \textit{Gottesreden} that follows.

Several scholars are also inclined to consider the description of Behemoth
(hippopotamus/primeval monster) in 40:10–19 (Hebr. 40:15–24) and
the description of Leviathan (crocodile/sea monster) in 40:20–41:25 (Hebr.
40:25–41:26) as later additions. The poems in question are much

more detailed than those referring to other animals (cf. 39:1–33 [Hebr. 38:39–39:30]). In addition, they would appear to interrupt the cohesion between 40:1–9 (Hebr. 40:6–14) and 42:1–6. Other scholars defend their authenticity (Keel 1978, Kubina 1979).

The suggestion that the *Gottesreden* of 38:1–39:33 (Hebr. 38:1–39:30) and 40:1–41:25 (Hebr. 40:6–41:26) together with Job’s responses in 39:36–39 (Hebr. 40:3–5) and 42:1–6 may be due to redactional intervention has elicited a variety of reactions. Some explain the verses in their totality as secondary while others support their originality. Others still steer a middle course, taking a single *Gottesrede* and a single response on the part of Job as their point of departure. The latter are identified for the most part in 38:1–39:35; 40:2–9 (Hebr. 38:1–40:2,7–14) and in 39:36–39 (Hebr. 40:3–5), 42:1–3αββ,5–6 respectively. In the present author’s opinion, however, the verses referred to from chapter 42 serve as a climax to the book of Job and cannot be missed from the book as a whole. It is likely, therefore, that at least one *Gottesrede* originally preceded this segment of the text.

It would be incorrect to consider 42:10–17, which relates how Job’s perseverance in faith is justified in concrete terms with the restoration of earthly property and the birth of children, as a secondary interpolation. It is sometimes argued on (false) theological grounds that the segment in question is “worldly” and thus inappropriate in the context of the book’s elevated character. For an ancient Israelite, however, justification only becomes true reality when restoration is made manifest in earthly blessings. It is for this reason that 42:10–17 cannot be removed from its place after the prologue and the dialogues.

Setting the abovementioned interpolations to one side, the establishment of the date of origin of the original book remains a complicated task. The apparently archaic portrayal of the environment and the treatment of the theme of retribution (cf. Psalms 37, 49 and 73; Jer. 12:1–2; Ezekiel 18 and 33) do not as such exclude the possibility of codification prior to the period of the Babylonian exile. Linguistic data does not support the establishment of definitive conclusions. On the other hand, the representation of Satan as a sort

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of heavenly prosecutor (cf. Zechariah 3), the determined rejection of
the traditional notion of retribution together with the Krise der Weisheit
(Schmid), to which the book as a whole bears witness, and the
dependence of Job 12:9b on Isa. 41:20 signalled by Van Selms (commentary 1982, p. 109) argue for a date of origin after the Babylonian
exile, probably in the fourth century BCE.

The book of Job has exercised continuous influence in both the
Jewish and Christian world. Indeed a number of expressions in which
the word Job is employed have found their way into modern usage
(e.g. ‘the patience of Job’). Countless theologians, philosophers and
men/women of letters have praised its excellence and visual artists
of every kind have found in it a source of great inspiration.

c. Proverbs

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom (9:10a).

Commentaries:

G. Wildeboer (KHC) 1897; W. Frankenberg (HKAT) 1898; C. H. Toy
(ICC) 1899; H. Wiesmann (HSAT) 1925; B. Gemser (TU) I 1929, II 1931;
id. (HAT) 1937, 1963; V. Hamp (EB) 1949; W. H. Gispen (KV) I 1952,
II 1954; J. P. M. van der Ploeg (BOT) 1952; C. T. Fritsch and R. W.
Schloerb (IB) 1955; H. Ringgren (ATD) 1962, 1980; A. Barucq, Le livre
des Proverbes (Sources Bibliques), Paris 1964; R. B. Y. Scott (AB) 1965, 1985;
W. McKane (OTL), 1970, 1980; R. N. Whybray (CNEB) 1972; O. Ploger
(BK) 1984; L. A. Snijders (TT) 1984; A. Meinhold (ZBK) I–II 1991; R. N.

Monographs and articles:

G. Kuhn, Beiträge zur Erklärung des salomonischen Spruchbuches (BWANT III, 16),
Stuttgart 1931; W. Baumgartner, “Die israelitische Weisheitsliteratur”, ThR
5 (1933), 259–288; J. Fichtner, Die allorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-
judischen Austrägung (BZAW 62), Berlin 1933; G. Boström, Proverbiastudien. Die
Weisheit und das fremde Weib in Spr. 1–9 (LUÅ I, 30/3), Lund 1935; H. Gese,
Lehre und Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit. Studien zu den Sprüchen Salamos und
dzu dem Buche Hiob, Tübingen 1958; U. Skladny, Die älteren Spruchsammmlungen
in Israel, Göttingen 1962; R. N. Whybray, Wisdom in Proverbs. The Concept of
Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 (SBTh 45), London 1965; id., The Intellectual Tradition


The book of Proverbs (Hebr. mišle (Šelomo): “the [skilful] proverbs (of Solomon)”; lxx; paroimiai: “proverbs/sayings”; V: proverbia), which is located in the Septuagint, the Vulgate and in modern bible translations between the Psalms and the book of Qoheleth, represents the biblical wisdom book par excellence. While Job and Qoheleth both belong to the Old Testament’s Wisdom literature as such, they differ
considerably from the book of Proverbs in terms of form and content. Furthermore, Job and Qoheleth stem, at least for the most part, from one specific author, while Proverbs is a collective work that represents Israel’s traditional ‘school’ wisdom.

Wisdom (chokma) in the Ancient Near Eastern world represented a highly respected branch of spiritual-cultural life. Almost universally considered the property of the gods, wisdom was understood as their gift to human beings (cf., however, Gen. 4:20–23) to allow mortal men and women to succeed in life and achieve happiness. In addition to magic/mantic capacities (cf. Exod. 7:11ff; Daniel), wisdom consisted of technical skills/crafts (cf. Exod. 35:30ff) as well as the art of governance, the capacity to make ethical distinctions between good and evil, conducive and damaging, true and misleading etc. Common sense and worldly wisdom, however, held pride of place in biblical wisdom. The concept achieved technical significance through the work of certain groups who devoted themselves to the formulation and collection of rules for daily living, which they passed on to their pupils.


Exercised of old in Mesopotamia and Egypt, wisdom was strongly associated in such contexts with official government circles, with the palace and the temple (which in essence belonged together), with priests and civil servants (the “scribes”) and with the king as sacral figure, who served as the final instance in legal matters (cf. 2 Sam. 14:17,20; 1 Kings 3).

While practical kinship wisdom and conventional (popular) wisdom must have existed and functioned for a long time, court wisdom only made its appearance in Israel when Solomon organised his kingdom along Ancient Near Eastern lines with its elaborate civil apparatus. Jer. 18:18 reveals that in later centuries wise individuals served as advisers to Israel’s leadership side by side with priests and prophets. Wisdom not only exercised a profound influence on Israel’s historical writings and the Psalms, it also left its impression on Israel’s prophetic preaching.31

Primarily in the Egyptian context32 but also in the Babylonian-Assyrian world (cf. Achikar)33 wisdom was practiced among the more senior court officials. It goes without saying that highly civilised nations such as Egypt, Assyria and Babylon employed an extensive network of minor officials who served the king in the midst of the people, ensured the collection of taxes, kept the court informed of local issues and perhaps also engaged in teaching. Senior officials in the capital cities and particularly those involved in the court tended to be assigned more important duties, serving as secretaries to the major civil services up to and including chancellor. Such individuals also served as scribes, recording the annals of the king and taking care of correspondence with foreign courts. It is more than likely that many among them will have been familiar with foreign affairs on account of their many trips abroad or of their foreign birth.

In spite of the fact that very little literary evidence is available to us concerning the world of civil administration in the Old Testament, we have enough information to confirm that scribes existed in Israel from the time of Solomon.34 The extent of Israel’s civil service remains unknown. If we account for the fact that Israel existed without a monarchy for a considerable period of time, forming a national community under the leadership of

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31 Cf. the contributions of various authors in J. Day e.a. (eds.), op. cit., 1995, pp. 94ff.
of family chiefs, it is possible that its civil service was fairly limited. It is apparent from Jer. 36:12, however, that the influence of the ‘wise’ was far from insignificant. Indeed, Jer. 8:8–9 refers to them in the same breath as the scribes. While this need not imply that all civil servants were scribes skilled in the art of living, they belonged nonetheless to intellectual circles among whom a universal form of moral learning was held in high esteem. The international character of the wisdom tradition is also apparent from the book of Proverbs, which includes typically Israelite popular and spiritual wisdom side by side with proverbs that clearly exhibit Egyptian influence (esp. 22:17ff.). It is evident from the content of wisdom literature as a whole and the book of Proverbs in particular that the scribes in question were responsible for the education of the children of the wealthier classes. The style of the book of Proverbs, for example, bears witness to the fact that in many respects the practice of wisdom had a pedagogical function: teachers address themselves to their audience or refer to their readers with the words “my son” (Prov. 1:8,10,15 etc.) or “children” (4:1).

Israel’s wisdom is Eastern, i.e. rooted in religious/theological concerns. In spite of the fact that it is often oriented towards the human person and his or her happiness, it does not exhibit an exclusively humanistic character nor does it value a fundamentally philosophical life option detached from anything religious. Should one wish to compare biblical wisdom with a particular domain from among the contemporary sciences then the closest parallel would have to be that of (theological) ethics. One should bear in mind, however, that Ancient Near Eastern wisdom, including that of Israel, addressed itself to reality as a whole.

What we have noted so far does not detract from the fact that Israel’s wisdom literature enjoyed its own characteristic features. While Egyptian wisdom tended for the most part to be associated with court officials, Israel’s wisdom is more democratic, addressing young

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people in general. The teaching of Israel’s wise individuals is more ethical and less intellectual in nature when compared with its Egyptian counterpart. It does not promote a morality of class distinction, places explicit emphasis on the obligations of children towards their parents, respects the place of women and condemns adultery and immoral behaviour, treasures friendship and stresses the importance of caring for the poor and the weak. All these characteristics can be explained against the background of Israel’s unique religious heritage. In addition to its clearly ethical-religious character, Israel’s wisdom also placed an emphasis on divine retribution in the here and now. The books of Job and Qoheleth bear witness to the fact that the latter not infrequently occasioned difficulty. Israel’s monotheism also exercised significant influence on its wisdom literature.

For further information on the literary form of the wisdom saying see chapter VI.

Following its introductory verses (1:1–7) the book of Proverbs consists of a variety of collections, almost all of which are provided with a superscription:

a) detailed exhortatory lessons introducing and commending wisdom (1:8–9:18); 36
b) proverbs of Solomon (10:1–22:16);
c) words of the wise (22:17–24:22) with
d) appendix (“these also are sayings of the wise”: 24:23–34;
e) proverbs of Solomon copied by the “the officials of Hezekiah” (25–29);
f) the words of Agur son of Jakeh (30:1–14), followed by numerical aphorisms (30:15–33);
g) the words of Lemuel, king of Massah, taught to him by his mother (31:1–9);
h) an alphabetical poem praising the virtues of a capable wife (31:10–31). 37


The greater part of the documents assembled together in the book of Proverbs thus constitute two collections ascribed to Solomon (10ff. and 25ff.), to which an introduction and a number of appendices have been added.

The fact that we are dealing with a variety of collections is indirectly confirmed by the Septuagint. The lxx not only differs significantly from the Masoretic Text in several places or exhibits a longer text, it has also consistently incorporated the smaller collections in different places: 22:17–24:22e + 30:1–14 + 24:23–34 + 30:15–33 + 31:1–9 + 25–29 + 31:10–31.

Solomon was considered the father of wisdom in part because he was held to be the wisest king Israel had known (cf. 1 Kgs 4:29–31 [Hebr. 5:9–11]; 10:1–10) and in part because of his marital associations with the Egyptian court (11:1). The designation is not without reason and there can be little doubt that he contributed to the development of the practice of chokma in Israel. According to 1 Kgs 4:32–33 (Hebr. 5:12–13), he himself composed countless songs and sayings. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the book of Proverbs is ascribed to him (1:1) in spite of the fact that he was not its author.

The extent to which the aforementioned collections contain proverbs dating from the time of Solomon is difficult to determine. According to 1 Kgs 4:33 (Hebr. 5:13) the subjects of Solomon’s proverbs were taken from the world of flora and fauna.

There are few points contact that might assist us in dating the verses preserved in the book of Proverbs. While scholars frequently date the collections without exception to the post-exilic period their advice remains inaccurate: Wisdom literature across the board is no younger than the Pentateuch and the Prophets. There is likewise no sound reason to doubt the statement found in Prov. 25:1, which maintains that “the officials of Hezekiah” collected together those proverbs associated with the name of Solomon. In addition, it is clear that some proverbs presuppose the monarchy (16:10, 12–13; 20:8, 26, 28; 21:1; 22:11; 25:2–7). A pre-exilic origin for several proverbs is also supported by striking similarities between the short collection found in 22:17ff. and the Egyptian proverbs of Amenemope (roughly 1000 BCE). Together with Gemser (commentary 1963),

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it seems reasonable to date the primary collection (10ff.) in the period between Solomon and Hezekiah and that of 25–29—in line with the superscription of 25:1—during the reign of the latter. The same is true for “the words of the wise” (22:17–24:22).

While the remaining appendices are more difficult to place chronologically, the alphabetic poem found in 31:10–31, which is familiar to us as “the praise of a capable wife”, may well stem from pre-exilic times on account of its Palestinian flavour and the rural character reflected in its content. The chronological location of the words of Agur (30:1–14) and Lemuel (31:1–9), names that suggest non-Israelite origin, are even more difficult to determine. It is possible that both individuals came from Massah (30:1 [if one reads “those from Massa” instead of “an oracle”]; 31:1), which, according to Gen. 25:14, was located in northern Arabia.

The introductory chapters 1–9 would appear to be younger. Their edifying style and their personification of wisdom are reminiscent of later wisdom books such as Jesus Sirach and the Sapientia Salomonis. Efforts have been made to date wisdom on theological grounds. While some have favoured pre-exilic origin on the basis of evident kinship with Ancient Egyptian wisdom literature (Kayatz 1966; or partly pre-exilic [Whybray 19672]), it seems probable, therefore, that the chapters in question, at least with respect to their final redaction, stem from the period after the Babylonian exile.

Following the superscription and the prologue associated therewith in Prov. 1:2–7, which would appear to be intended as an introduction to the entire book as well as to chapters 1–9, the said chapters consist for the most part of admonitions and wisdom poems. The text warns against the company of the wicked (1:8–19), followed by a poem in which the inexperienced are urged to turn to wisdom (1:20–33). A second admonition (2) concerning the profit to be gained from wisdom deals with the correct attitude one should maintain with respect to God and one’s fellow human beings and points out the dangers of associating with the godless and ‘strange’ women. The latter themes are further elaborated in succession in chapters 3–7 (interrupted by a wisdom poem 3:13–20 and exhortations 3:21–35; 4:1–9; 6:1–19). The theme of the ‘strange’ woman is afforded particular attention. Lady wisdom introduces herself in an elaborate poem (8), appealing to her children to listen to her. She is portrayed as having been called into existence before all created things as God’s “little child” (8:30). A further wisdom poem (9), containing the invitation of Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly, is linked with the preceding chapter.
The book of Proverbs as a whole should be dated after the Babylonian exile, stemming perhaps from the fifth or fourth century BCE. The text of the Septuagint (as noted above) does not consistently follow that of the Hebrew tradition. It contains forty proverbs that are not represented in the Masoretic Text and lacks twenty proverbs to be found in the latter. There is thus clear evidence to suggest that the book was subject to revision over a long period of time.

In summary, the book of Proverbs situates us among the urban elite that was clearly in contact with the manual workers and farm labourers. Familiar with court and king, the said elite practiced wisdom as a sort of stewardship and their words contain an explicitly ethical component: the wise are righteous and the foolish are wicked. Wisdom functioned in every day life as a sort of guide, which one could only make one’s own by honouring \( \text{yhw} \). Happiness and misfortune, life and death, were in his hands (cf. Prov. 16:9): “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom” (Prov. 9:10a, cf. 1:7a).

d. The five megilloth (scrolls)

Immediately following the book of Proverbs, the Hebrew Bible contains five relatively short documents: Ruth, Song of Songs, Qoheleth, Lamentations and Esther. In later centuries these documents were read in the synagogue at specific times: the Song of Songs on the feast of Passover, the book of Ruth during the feast of Shavuot, Qoheleth during the feast of Succoth, Lamentations during the fast in commemoration of the destruction of the temple on the ninth day of Ab and Esther on the feast of Purim. The ancient practice of reading from parchment scrolls during the liturgy, a practice maintained to the present day with respect to Esther, led to the books in question being referred to as the megillot, the Hebrew term for “scrolls”.

The Mishnah was already familiar with reading the book of Esther during the feast of Purim from a scroll, referred to simply as megilla “scroll” that did not contain any other biblical book. Synagogal reading from other megillot is not mentioned in the Talmud and would thus appear to be a custom peculiar to later centuries. According to b. Baba bathra 14b, the

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sequence of the Writings followed the Babylonian tradition: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Qoheleth, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles. The Palestinian tradition, by contrast, employed a different sequence: Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Qoheleth, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah. While the latter sequence thus groups the megillot together they do not follow the chronological order employed in synagogal/liturgical usage (Ruth is placed prior to Song of Songs; in spite of the fact that the ninth of Ab occurs prior to the feast of Succoth, Lamentations nevertheless follows Qoheleth because Jeremiah wrote after Solomon!). As a matter of fact, the order followed by the manuscripts of the megillot continued to differ for several centuries. A liturgically determined sequence is only evident in medieval German manuscripts.

The fact that the megillot are included among the Writings (Ketubim) in the Hebrew Bible tends to suggest a late date with respect to their point of origin. This, however, need not necessarily be the case. There are good reasons to support the dating of the book of Ruth, for example, to pre-exilic times. The Song of Songs, in addition, contains elements that probably stem from the period prior to the Babylonian exile. The book of Lamentations was evidently composed shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.

The Septuagint, the Vulgate and modern translations do not group the megillot together: Ruth follows Judges, Song of Songs follows Qoheleth, Qoheleth follows Proverbs, Lamentations follows Jeremiah and Esther follows Ezra-Nehemiah. It is thus evident that (presumed) historical and tradition-historical factors had a role to play in their location among the books of the Old Testament.

The present volume will treat each of the megillot separately according to the order found in the Hebrew Bible.

1. Ruth

Das lieblichste kleine Ganze . . ., das uns episch und idyllisch überliefert worden ist (Goethe).

Commentaries:

A. Bertholet (KHC) 1898; W. Nowack (HKAT) 1902; A. Schulz (HSAT) 1926; G. Smit (TU) 1932; C. J. Goslinga (KV) 1938, 1976; W. Rudolph

40 In modern editions of the Vulgate, Tobit and Judith are located between Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther.
Monographs and articles:


The four chapters of the Book of Ruth occupy either the first (cf. the Codex Leningradensis) or the second place among the megillot in Hebrew manuscripts depending on whether one takes the presumed age of the document or the sequence of synagogal feasts as one’s point of departure. The Septuagint, the Vulgate and modern translations locate the book after Judges because the narrative takes place ‘in the days when the judges judged’ (1:1).

The story is told of how Elimelech, a Bethlehemite, his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion were forced to seek refuge in the land of Moab in order to escape a famine in ‘the land’. After an undetermined period in Moab both Elimelech and his two sons—both by this time married to Moabite women Ruth and Orpah (cf. also 4:10)—died. Accompanied by her daughters-in-law, Naomi returns after some time to her fatherland, insisting on the way that Ruth and Orpah go back to Moab and seek a new future there. After some persuasion Orpah finally listens to her mother-in-law but Ruth refuses to abandon Naomi (“Your people shall be my people and your God my God”, 1:16). Arriving back in Bethlehem, Ruth proceeds to seek work as a gleaner according to the rights of the poor in the fields of Boaz, a relative of her father-in-law Elimelech, and she is well received. Upon Naomi’s suggestion, Ruth visit’s Boaz by night at the threshing floor where she reminds him of his obligations as her next-of-kin. Boaz declares his readiness to marry her on
the condition that a kinsman more closely related to her pass on his obligation to him. After the fulfilment of juridical formalities (4:7–8) that had already been in disuse for a significant period of time prior to the composition of the story, the transfer of obligation (right to redeem) takes place the following morning and Boaz marries Ruth. Their marriage is blessed with a son, Obed, who was to become the grandfather of King David. The book concludes with a genealogy of David (4:18–22; cf. 1 Chron. 2:5–15), composed in priestly style, which evidently constitutes a later interpolation.

The book of Ruth is a gem of Hebrew narrative art. As a short novel, it exhibits sound literary associations with Genesis 24, the Joseph narrative and segments of the family history of David, although it differs significantly from the legendary and fairy-tale like narratives found in Esther, Tobit and Judith. The narrator is interested in the everyday ups and downs of ordinary people, their struggle to survive, their joys and sorrows. The book is edifying in the best sense of the word. It explicitly and implicitly reveals God’s providential guidance of history and shows how his blessing rests on those who have a sense of responsibility (cf. 2:12).

The conclusion of the narrative (cf. 4:17b) consciously associates the family of David with the Moabite Ruth. While a great deal has been written concerning this segment of the text and a number of commentators continue to maintain its secondary character at the literary level, it is almost certain that their arguments are unfounded: it is difficult to imagine how a later generation would have ascribed a Moabite great-grandmother to David if no ancient tradition had ever made mention of such a family history. Other scholars, therefore, are more inclined to see 4:17b as the very climax to the story.

41 The fact that we are dealing at this juncture with a later interpolation is confirmed by a comparison of 4:18 and 4:12, in which the house of Boaz and that of Perez are clearly placed side by side. Boaz’ descent from Perez is thus not presupposed in 4:12, in contrast to the genealogical list in 4:18–23. The family tree is probably not borrowed from 1 Chron. 2:3–15 (see Würthwein, commentary 1969), but harks back rather to a collective, possibly pre-Deuteronomistic source (for the arguments see J. A. Loader’s commentary in Tekst & Toelichting (1994), p. 12). See also C. McCarthy, “The Davidic Genealogy in the Book of Ruth”, Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association 9 (1985), 53–62.

42 See, for example, O. Kaiser in his Einleitung in das Alte Testament, Gütersloh 1984, p. 196. While O. Eissfeldt initially considered v. 17 to be secondary (Einleitung in das Alte Testament, Tübingen 1964, pp. 648f.) he nevertheless revised his opinion on the matter at a later date (see op. cit., 1965).
protesting against later particularistic tendencies to exclude Moabites from the Jewish community, \(^{43}\) as was demanded by the stipulations of Deut. 23:3 and the ordinances of Ezra and Nehemiah against mixed marriages: if the great King David had Moabite ancestors then there is no good reason to adopt such an attitude towards foreigners! Such an interpretation, on the other hand, remains unsupported by the fact that the theme of particularism is not particularly evident in the book as a whole. The words of 4:17b would appear to represent a sort of final exclamation mark on the part of the author rather than a polemic against Jewish particularism.

Linguistic arguments (e.g. the use of Aramaisms)\(^{44}\) in favour of dating the book in the post-exilic period have turned out to be inconclusive. The classical style of the document, akin to early Israelite narrative, the description of the untroubled relationship between the Moabites and the Judeans (cf. 1 Sam. 22:3; but see also Deut. 23:3) and the later addition of the probably pre-exilic genealogy of 4:18–22\(^{45}\) strongly favour dating around 700 BCE (cf. the commentaries of Rudolph 1962 and Campbell 1975; an alternative date is proposed Gerleman 1965 and Loader 1994).\(^{46}\) Such a date is in agreement with the fact that Naomi had a right to the land belonging to her deceased husband (4:3), a state of affairs in harmony with 2 Kgs 8:1–6 (alluding to the ninth century BCE) but running counter to the later stipulations of Num. 27:8–11.

2. *Song of Songs*

Love is strong as death (8:6)

Commentaries:

K. Budde (*KHC*) 1898; C. Siegfried (*HKAT*) 1898; A. Miller (*HSAT*) 1927; B. Gemser (*TU*) 1931; M. Haller (*HAT*) 1940; J. Fischer (*EB*) 1949;

\(^{43}\) Thus, for example, Th. C. Vriezen in the ninth edition of the present work (p. 284), a hypothesis that clearly presupposes a post-exilic dating for the book of Ruth.

\(^{44}\) The number of Aramaisms once identified in the book has been reduced in recent studies to a minimum; cf. the commentaries of Rudolph (1962) and Campbell (1975).

\(^{45}\) See J. A. Loader (commentary 1994, p. 12).

\(^{46}\) While the terminology employed in 4:7 argues against a too early dating of the book of Ruth, it need not necessarily imply a dating in the exilic or post-exilic period.
Monographs and articles:


The Hebrew title šīr haššūrîm, “the song of songs”, implies that the song in question is the most beautiful, transcending all others (lxx: Aisma aismatoon; V: Canticum canticorum). The superscription, which constitutes a later addition, ascribes the work to Solomon (1:1), who is represented in 1 Kgs 4:32 (Hebr. 5:12) as having uttered three thousand proverbs and as having composed one thousand and five songs. While he is referred to by name in the Song of Songs itself on a number of occasions (3:7,9,11; 8:11–12), the allusions in question never identify him with the author of the song.

It is possible that the book acquired canonical status on account of the fact that it was ascribed to Solomon. The scriptural character of the work was in fact the subject of lengthy dispute in early Judaism (together with Esther and Qoheleth). The allegorical explanation of the content—traceable to the first century CE—as an image for the love between YHWH and Israel and as a reflection of salvation history, however, gradually came to settle doubts within Judaism as to the canonicity of the book. The Christian church followed this interpretation, reading Christ as the bridegroom and the church, the soul of the individual or the Virgin Mary as the bride. While Luther tended as a rule to reject an allegorical explanation of Scripture that sought to find a higher, spiritual meaning behind the text, he accepted it nevertheless where the literal interpretation clearly led to

47 The Hebrew text of the superscription can also be understood, however, as “concerning Solomon” or “belonging to Solomon”.
48 The reference to “the king” in 1:4,12 (cf. also 7:5, Hebr. 7:6) is apparently an evocative allusion to the young man.
49 In the meantime, it is far from certain that the allegorical interpretation actually led to the inclusion of the Song of Songs in the canon. The renowned rabbi Aqiba (circa 50–135 CE) was disgusted by those who chanted the Song of Songs in wine houses (Tosefta Sanhedrin XII 10), a custom that was apparently in vogue at the time.
illogicality (evidens absurditas). In his opinion the latter was the case with respect to the Song of Songs. The allegorical interpretation has, in the meantime, more or less faded into disuse among Protestant exegetes, surviving only in orthodox Jewish and conservative Roman Catholic circles.51

Based on the interchange of scenes and speakers, some scholars have characterised the Song of Songs as a drama (cf. G. Pouget and J. Guitton 1948) in which three individuals have a role to play: Solomon, the Shulammite (6:13, Hebr. 7:1) as shepherdess and her beloved shepherd (cf. Ewald).52 It is suggested that the shepherdess was taken to the royal palace to form part of the king’s harem, but Solomon’s endeavours to win her love failed and he was obliged to let her return to marry her beloved shepherd. An unforced explanation of the Song of Songs, however, only allows us to speak of a single lover. In addition, any intentionally dramatic structure whereby the lovers ultimately “have one another”, is lacking: the intimate relationship between them both is already mentioned in 1:6,16.53

The so-called cultic-mythological explanation (cf. Meek 1922/1923, Wittekindt 1926, Haller commentary 1940, Waterman 1948, Schmökel 1956, Kramer 1969) offers a completely different perspective on the text, taking for granted that the songs (albeit in their present much mitigated form) originally enjoyed a place in a cultic festival celebrating the sacred wedding between Tammuz-Adonis and Ishtar. The explanation of the Song of Songs, however, nowhere demands any form of allusion to mythical origins. Even if one is inclined to insist that the liturgical language of the fertility cycle had an influence on the composition of love poems, one will also be obliged to admit that the opposite may also have been the case. It is hard to imagine that Ancient Israel borrowed liturgical songs from the pagan cult, transformed them into its own songs and then included them among its sacred literature.

The Song of Songs is a collection of profane love songs. The oft-suggested hypothesis that their origins are rooted in the celebration of weddings, whereby the bridegroom is addressed as king (1:4.12; 3:11;

51 A detailed survey of the history of research into the Song of Songs can be found in M. H. Pope’s commentary (1977, pp. 89–229).
52 In his 1867 commentary.
53 The thesis that the Song of Songs should be interpreted as a theatre piece or play has been defended by A. Hazan, Le Cantique des Cantiques enfin expliqué, Paris 1936.
c.q. as Solomon [3:6–11]), finds little if any support in the songs themselves.

The Song of Songs expresses the lovers’ profound desire for one another together with their unique physical attractiveness by way of a multiplicity of images and comparisons. The text speaks of the lovers’ surrender to and deep longing for one another. The songs are particularly akin to the love poetry of Ancient Egypt (cf. White 1978 and Fox 1985) and have been associated by Wetzstein54 with love songs employed up to the present day in Syria in honour of a bride and groom, celebrating them as queen and king respectively.

While recognition of the profane character of the love songs is not misplaced, scholars are more and more convinced that the Song of Songs represents a well-considered literary composition. Significant interest has thus been focused in more recent years on the structure of the book and arguments supporting its literary unity have been frequently proposed (see, for example, Murphy 1979).

J. C. Exum (1973) maintains that the Song of Songs is the work of a single author and that parallel songs 2:7–3:5//5:2–6:3 and 3:6–5:1//6:4–8:3 are to be located within the framing texts 1:2–2:6 and 8:4–14, which summarise the book’s motif. Goulder (1986) proposes a sequence of fourteen scenes that describe the arrival of an Arabian princess at the court of Solomon up to and including her elevation to the status of most beloved wife. Convinced of the integral unity of the text in terms of both form and content, Landy (1983) has argued that love and death represent its dominant motifs: the Song of Songs does not so much eulogise the praise of marriage but rather that of sexuality and virginity. Rendtorff55 pictures the Song of Songs as the song of a woman who plays a dominant role and clearly enjoys the last word.

Striking features of the Song of Songs include: the ample space ascribed to nature and the landscape surrounding the love scenes, the wholesome and subdued yet simultaneously warm and sincere manner with which the love between two young people is portrayed (differing considerably from much of what Ancient Near Eastern literature has to offer in this regard), the equality of the man and the

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woman and the emphasis placed on the fact that maturity and mutual affection are essential elements of love:

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or the wild does:
Do not stir up or awaken love,
until it is ready (2:7; 3:5; 8:4).

The description of the Song of Songs as a set of popular songs or as an extremely articulate poetic composition stemming from educated (e.g. Wisdom; cf. Würthwein, commentary 1969) circles remains a question of some dispute. The highly polished literary form of the poems with their characteristic use of images and comparisons, copious allusions to flora and fauna and numerous geographical allusions, tend to support the latter alternative.

In many respects, the timeless character of the songs makes it enormously difficult to date them with any degree of accuracy. Mention of the northern Israelite royal city of Tirzah (cf. 1 Kgs 15:33; 16:8,15) in addition to Jerusalem in 6:4 would imply an early date for the verse complex 6:4–7. It is possible that other individual songs should likewise be traced to an early date. The presence of Aramaicisms and words borrowed from Persian\(^56\) and possibly Greek,\(^57\) however, would tend to favour a post-exilic date for the composition as a whole, probably around 400 BCE. It would appear that the individual songs underwent a long tradition history prior to their compilation in a single collection. The fictitious ascription of the Song of Songs to Solomon together with the repeated allusions to the daughters of Jerusalem (1:5; 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8,16; 8:4) point with a fair degree of certainty to Jerusalem as the place in which the work first saw the light of day in its definitive form.

Awkwardness and indeed embarrassment among Jewish and Christian circles with respect to the profane character of the love songs contained in the Song of Songs, and the fact that this has led to a misplaced allegorical interpretation thereof, ought to be set aside: the book represents a song in praise of erotic love, a love that deserves its proper and unquestioned place in the lives of believers.


\(^{57}\) The term *apparyôn*, “palanquin” (3:9), can probably be linked with the Greek *phoreion*. 
3. *Qoheleth*

What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun? (1:3).

**Commentaries:**


**Monographs and articles:**

Referred to by Luther as “Der Prediger”, recent scholarship has tended to employ an anglicised version of the Hebrew designation Qoheleth. The Greek and Latin versions use the term Ecclesiastes. The name given to the book suggests a title given to a functionary whose task it was to call the community to assembly and in certain instances to address them. Although added at a later date, the superscription refers to Qoheleth as “son of David, king of Jerusalem” (1:1; cf. 1:12). Such an allusion can only refer to Solomon, an identification clearly supported by the content of 1:12–2:26 in which the I-form is employed to portray the wisdom and enormous wealth of the author. The writer’s fictitious self-identification as a king who teaches wisdom is akin to Egyptian examples (e.g. that of Amen-em-het [ANET, pp. 418–419] and Meri-ka-re [ANET, pp. 414–418]). When even a king with all his property and servants finally reaches the conclusion that everything is “vanity and chasing after the wind” (2:11), then the same must be true for other, materially less well-endowed individuals! The royal fiction, however, has no further role to play in the book.

The fact that King Solomon is in reality not the speaker in the book of Qoheleth has been adequately demonstrated on the basis of the content (cf., for example, 8:2–4) and style of the work, and in particular the language in which it is written (Schoors 1992). The latter tends to follow a middle path between classical and post-biblical

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38 The designation of the book as “Der Prediger” is inappropriate since it contains wise reflections, exhortations and proverbs but no preaching.
Hebrew and contains numerous Aramaisms\textsuperscript{59} as well as a few Parseeisms\textsuperscript{60}, which has inclined scholars to look for a date in the period of early Judaism. The author lived in the Hellenistic period and, given his use of language and allusions to the temple liturgy, resided most probably in Jerusalem (cf. 4:17; 9:2) and not in Egypt as some have argued. He would appear to have been a scribe and teacher of the young, a scholar well-versed in Israel's wisdom tradition (11:9–12:7).

While Qoheleth enjoys an exceptional place in the Old Testament on account of its contemplative character, it would be incorrect to refer to it as a philosophical work since it employs neither inductive nor deductive arguments. Instead of presenting his thoughts in a logically developed fashion the author simply advances his various theses. With the exception of 1:3–3:15 the texts does not exhibit a clear line of progression.

In addition to a number of short statements (\textit{Aussageworte}) and exhortations (\textit{Mahnworte}), the book consists for the most part of the author's personal reflections. With the experience of a learned scholar he enters into dialogue with the convictions of traditional wisdom and structures his deliberations in terms of polar opposites (Loader 1979). He frequently quotes traditional sayings and proverbs only to either reject their content, expose their limitations or use them to support his own opinions. The book thus constitutes a collection of aphorisms and maxims although it is built, nevertheless, upon a single idea. It clearly represents more than a randomly put together collection of sayings, a fact underlined by the author's declaration of the meaninglessness of things repeated almost word for word in 1:2 and 12:8, which serve as an inclusion to the original textual whole. The first poem (1:3–11) has the character of a prologue, followed significantly by the passage portraying the "king’s" search for wisdom and foolishness (1:12–2:26). The statements contained in 3:1–4:16 are typical of the period in which the text was written and deal with the things that happen to men and women on occasion;

\textsuperscript{59} The numerous Aramaisms in the book have led some scholars, including Ginsberg (1955), to argue that it was originally written in Aramaic. The suggestion, however, has been justifiably rejected. Dahood's insistence (1952; 1966) that orthography, grammar and vocabulary point in the direction of Canaanite-Phoenician has likewise lacked support.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. pardes ("paradise, garden of delight") and 2:5 and pitgam ("verdict") in 8:11.
5:9–6:9 turns its attention to the vanity of riches and 6:10–8:1 addresses human ignorance and lack of experience, whereby compromise and the middle path are the subject of praise and recommendation. In 8:10–9:12 the author repeats once again that human persons cannot comprehend God’s ways and that everyone faces the same fate. The segment 11:9–12:7 speaks of youth and old age.61

The original document underwent a double redaction, traces of which can still be clearly detected in particular at the conclusion of the book. The textual segment 12:9–11 stems from a redactor who evidently held Qoheleth in the highest esteem (he “sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly”: 12:10). The superscription of 1:1a together with 1:2 and 12:8 probably stem from the same individual. By contrast, however, 12:12–14 clearly stem from a second redactor who ascribed the book to Solomon (1:1aβ) and focused on the fear of God and the maintenance of his commandments with a view to the judgement to come (he would also appear to be responsible for a number of interpolations, e.g. 3:17a; 8:5; 11:9b).

Perhaps the most all-embracing notion represented by Qoheleth is his conviction that the human person can gain no permanent profit from his toils ‘under the sun’: the finite character of human life and the disappearance from memory of all that human persons once were and did, place irrevocable limitations on all his/her endeavours. Since no one is certain of the future and no one has control thereof, we should simply be happy in life with the good fortune God has granted us. In contrast to traditional wisdom, Qoheleth was unable to see any significance or meaning in world events and he doubted in practice the existence of an ethical world order. His words confront us with the Deus absconditus, the hidden God whose work on behalf of human persons remains mysterious and inscrutable. The Deus revelatus, the revealed God, disappears beyond the horizon in Qoheleth, his work lacking any allusion to Israel’s salvation history and God’s revelation of the Law. Qoheleth speaks for himself as an individual and engages in a personal search for practical understanding. In the last analysis, however, he sees human life as much

more unfathomable than traditional wisdom has led us to believe. This does not mean that we should write him off as a sceptic and a pessimist: Qoheleth clings to God as the controller of world events and giver of every good gift and advocates the fear of God (3:14; 5:6). He does not underestimate the possibility of human happiness and should certainly not be portrayed as an agnostic.

Whether and, if so, to what extent Qoheleth was influenced by Egyptian wisdom literature and popular Hellenistic philosophy (Braun 1973) remains a subject of dispute. It is certain, however, that he was unable to wrestle himself free from the Hellenistic spirit of his time. Nevertheless, he remains in terms of his faith a Jew, albeit a modern Jew. His book should be dated to the third century BCE.\textsuperscript{62}

4. \textit{Lamentations}

The Lord has become like an enemy (2:5)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


\textsuperscript{62} This dating is supported by fragments of a manuscript of Qoheleth discovered in Cave 4 at Qumran and stemming from the first half of the second century BCE (4Q109 = 4QProv\textsuperscript{a}); cf. J. Muilemburg, \textit{BASOR} 135 (1954), 20–28.
The book of Lamentations contains five poems spread over five chapters and is referred to in the Hebrew Bible by the word with which it begins, namely 'eča (“how!” 1:1; cf. also 2:1; 4:1). The Babylonian Talmud (Baba bathra 14b) and other early rabbinical documents, however, allude to the book as qînôt (“lamentations”). The name employed by the Septuagint (thrènoi) and the Vulgate (Threni idest Lamentationes) are in line with the latter.

Bearing in mind the preamble of lxx (“It happened that, after Israel was deported in chains and Jerusalem was destroyed, Jeremiah sat and wept and uttered this lament over Jerusalem and said . . .”), it would thus appear that the songs of Lamentations were ascribed at an already early date within Judaism to the prophet Jeremiah (cf. also b. Baba bathra 15a). The Christian tradition has generally tended to follow this standpoint. In addition to Jer. 9:1 (Hebr. 8:23), the said tradition may have its origins in 2 Chron. 35:25, which alludes to a lament of Jeremiah over King Josiah. Rabbinic tradition has (incorrectly) identified the anointed one of yhwh referred to in Lam. 4:20 with the latter king of Judah (cf. also Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 10, § 78).

With the exception of chapter 5, the individual songs each follow the form of an alphabetic acrostic. Chapter 5, on the other hand,

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63 The word “how!” (or 'ečḥ) is characteristic of the beginning of a woe-cry (cf. 2 Sam. 1:19; Isa. 1:21; Jer. 47:17).
has 22 verse lines in agreement with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapters 1, 2 and 4 are written for the most part in the qînah meter (3 plus 2 beats), while chapter 3 is only written as such in a limited fashion. Chapter 5 does not employ the qînah pattern.

In terms of literary genre, chapter 5 would appear to be a collective song of lament while chapters 1, 2 and 4 represent political dirge songs. Chapter 3, on the other hand, is clearly an individual lament interrupted by a Wisdom Psalm (vv. 25–39), a collective confession of faith and a song of complaint (vv. 40–47).

Based on form and content, scholars have associated Lamentations with Sumerian laments over the downfall of a mother city. Agreements observed between the said texts and the content of the book of Lamentations would appear, however, to have been determined by similar experience of disaster and conventional Ancient Near Eastern literary style.

The Jeremian authorship of the songs must be rejected. The text of Lamentations makes no allusion to the prophet as its author. While it is true that Jeremiah witnessed the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon’s temple in 587 BCE, he is known to have left the city shortly thereafter. A number of texts, in addition, tend to run counter to claims of Jeremian authorship. Lam. 4:17, for example, which speaks of the people watching in vain for help from another nation (Egypt), does not resonate with Jeremiah’s resistance to alliances with foreign nations and his appeal to the people to submit themselves to God’s will by acquiescing to the Babylonians (cf. Jer. 2:18; 37:5–10 and 27:12–15). The immense expectations placed according to 4:20 on the shoulders of King Zedekiah run counter to Jer. 37:17. Lam. 4:19 suggests that the poet was among those who accompanied the fugitive king (2 Kgs 25:4–6): he cannot thus be identified with Jeremiah who was being held in prison at that moment in time (Jer. 38:28). Based on 5:7 we can conclude that the author belonged to the generation after the fall of Jerusalem.

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If Jeremiah was not the author of Lamentations then one is forced to ask if the songs should be ascribed to a single author or to several authors. The latter alternative deserves preference. Chapter 5 would appear to stem from a different period to the remaining poems (cf. 5:7). In contrast to the acrostic in chapter 1, the acrostics in chapters 2–4 locate the pe-verse prior to the ‘ayin-verse. The fact that chapter 1 does not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem has led some commentators to suggest that it describes the circumstances in the city shortly after the Babylonian conquest in 597 BCE during the reign of King Jehoiakin.

It is more or less certain that the songs were written in Jerusalem or at least in Judah: chapters 2 and 4 contain elements that can be deemed to be eyewitness recollections of the fall of the city. While the authorship of the songs is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty, the suggestion proposed by Renkema (1983; commentary 1998) that they were written by levitical temple singers deserves serious consideration. The hypothesis that the songs functioned as part of the liturgy on the day of mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Zech. 7:5) is open to question. The suggestion that they were written as a sort of polemic against the prophet Jeremiah (Brunet 1968) is highly unlikely. Insufficient arguments exist, however, to date Lamentations to the early years of the Babylonian exile (580 BCE).

The songs bear witness to a profound crisis into which the fall of Jerusalem, the city of the temple of יְהוָה, had forced the faithful of Israel. While those who had remained behind in dismay recognise that God’s predicted judgement (2:17) was justified, they also explicitly claim to have been misled by their own spiritual leadership (2:14). In the midst of their misfortune, however, they upheld their conviction that God would not reject them forever (3:31–33), in spite of the fact that He appeared to have become their enemy (2:5). It is for this reason that albeit hesitant expressions of hoped for restoration (3:29) and an earnest prayer to יְהוָה appealing for his return (5:21) are not absent from Lamentations.

J. D. Barthélemy (Les dévanciers d’Aquila (SVT 10), Leiden 1963, pp. 138–160) and F. M. Cross (HThR 57 (1964), 233) have ascribed the Greek version of Lamentations to the kaige recension.

In the Roman Catholic Latin liturgy, Lamentations has been given a place during matins on the last three days of Holy Week. As such they give
expression to the misfortune of Jerusalem as a consequence of the crucifixion of Christ.

5. Esther

Ich bin dem Buch (= 2 Maccabees) und Esther so feind, daß ich wollte, sie wären gar nicht vorhanden; denn sie judenzen zu sehr und haben viel heidnische Unart (Luther)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


The book of Esther (lxx: Estèr; Vulgate: Hester) represents a stirring tale, much celebrated on account of the author’s narrative skill, yet subject to considerable theological discussion. Scholars have characterised it as a short story, a historical novel (Gunkel, 1916) or a historicised wisdom narrative (Talmon, 1963). While the book of Esther in its present form functions as the legend behind the feast of Purim, explaining its origins and significance, it nevertheless represents a great deal more. The meaning of the narrative, set in the Persian court, is to be located in the first instance in the complementarity of God’s hidden presence and human actions.

The origins of the feast of Purim are surrounded in mystery. Indeed, while scholars have defended Persian, Babylonian as well as Jewish roots for the feast (for a survey of the various theories see Loader’s 1991 commentary, pp. 139–143), our knowledge thereof is actually limited to the information that can be gleaned from the book of Esther: a Jewish feast upon which all Jews commemorate the deliverance of the people from the threat of

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complete annihilation on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar (the last month of the year) with great joy, sumptuous banquets and the exchange of gifts.

The two Greek translations of the book—the LXX (B-text) and the so-called Lucianic version (A-text)—contain extensive additional segments when compared with the Hebrew text (see further chapter XII).

The story narrates how King Ahasuerus (= Xerxes I, 485–465 BCE) rejected Queen Vashti after she had refused to appear before him at the end of a banquet he had given for all the people present in the citadel of Susa (chapter 1). In search of a new queen, the king chooses Esther, the beautiful niece and stepdaughter of Mordecai, as his wife without knowledge of her Jewish origins (2:1–18). Mordecai hears of a plot against the king on the part of two of his courtiers and passes the information on to Ahasuerus via Esther, whereafter the guilty parties are hanged on the gallows (2:19–23). Mordecai comes into conflict with Haman, the king’s senior minister and confidant, having refused the sovereign’s order to kneel down before him and prostrate himself to the ground. Haman, called the Agagite, plans to take his revenge for Mordecai’s refusal against the entire Jewish people living in the Persian Empire and is given permission by the king to kill all the Jews and seize their possessions on the 13th of Adar (chapter 3). When Mordecai hears of Haman’s plan he tries to motivate Esther to present herself to the king unrequested and use her influence in his favour. Esther acquiesces (“if I perish, I perish”, 4:16) to her stepfather’s request (chapter 4). She invites the king together with Haman to attend a banquet she will give on their behalf. At table she invites both men to dine with her the following day, promising to present her petition to the king which the latter in turn had promised to grant (“even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled”, 5:6). Haman, highly honoured by Esther’s

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invitation, is nevertheless so infuriated at Mordecai’s refusal to show the prescribed deference to his person that he orders a gallows to be set up for him, spurred on by his wife and friends (chapter 5). Haman’s plans are doomed to failure, however. Unable to sleep that night, the king gives orders for the book of records (annals) to be read to him and comes to realise that Mordecai has never been rewarded for warning him against his courtiers’ plot and for thereby saving his life. The following morning he asks Haman what he, as king, should grant to someone he desired to honour in a special way. Haman, who thinks that he is the person the king has in mind, offers a number of suggestions only to be ordered to carry them out to the full in favour of Mordecai (chapter 6)! The denouement follows in chapter 7. During the second banquet, Esther petitions the king to allow her people to live and to counter Haman’s threat. The king then realises what is going on and has Haman hanged on the very gallows he had set up for Mordecai. The ministry hitherto entrusted to Haman is then passed on to Mordecai and Esther asks the king to repeal Haman’s written edict. Instead, Mordecai is given liberty to enlist the officials of the empire to defend the Jews on the thirteenth of Adar, the latter being allowed to take revenge against their enemies (chapter 8). The reprisals lead to the death of thousands in Susa and in the entire Persian Empire, including the sons of Haman. The festival of liberation was celebrated in the countryside on the fourteenth of Adar and in Susa on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, days prescribed by Mordecai as festival days for all the Jews in Persia (chapters 9–10).

The author of the book of Esther would appear to have been familiar with the boundaries of the Persian empire (1:1), the topography of the palace in the citadel of Susa (1:5–6), Persian civil administration (1:14) and postal service (3:13; 8:10), as well as the customs of the royal court.68 On the other hand, the book contains too many inaccuracies to consider it an historical chronicle. The Persian Empire did not consist of one hundred and twenty-seven satraps (provinces; 1:1), but twenty. If Mordecai is to be counted among the Jewish exiles of 597 BCE (2:6), he would have been far more than a hundred years old during the reign of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) and his niece and stepdaughter Esther would no longer have been an

attractive young woman. Furthermore, the allusion to the gathering of Persian officials for a feast that lasted six months (1:4) and the reference to the royal proclamation declaring that every man should be master in his own house (1:22) both seem far-fetched. While we know that the consort of Xerxes I was Amestris (Herodotus IX 109–112), there are no historical references at our disposal alluding to a Queen Vashti (1:9) or to Esther herself. One would be making a virtue out of a necessity if one were to consider both women to have been concubines of the king: they are both explicitly referred to as queens. Indeed, the very suggestion that the Persian king would have given his permission for a civil war in his own empire (8:8; 9:11ff.) is virtually unthinkable.

We are clearly dealing with a narrative stemming originally from the Persian Jewish diaspora that is based on reminiscences of an intended pogrom against the Jews. The presence of Parseeisms in the book point in the direction of a date in the last decades of the Persian Empire in the middle of the fourth century BCE. Several scholars date the book, nevertheless, in the third century.

Based on reasons of content and style, the textual segment 9:20–10:3, which narrates the institution of the feast of Purim and contains a eulogy praising Mordecai, is frequently taken to be secondary (both the 14th and the 15th of Adar are prescribed as festival days, while 9:19 speaks of a celebration in the countryside on the 14th of the month without naming the feast in question). One might consider the fact, however, that the word pur (Babylonian puru = lot), from which Purim is derived (9:24,26), is already mentioned in the first narrative (3:7)\footnote{One is obliged to admit that 3:7 is, to a degree at least, out of context.} and that there is already mention of a feast in 9:17,19. The attribution of 9:20–10:3 (or parts thereof) to a later author thus runs into serious problems, in spite of the fact that the textual segment raises questions in terms of its content and literary style.

Gerleman has argued that the narrative of Esther is modelled on the narrative of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. His thesis is nevertheless problematic. His presupposition that the book was written to propagate the replacement of Pesach by Purim by Jews contentedly established in the Eastern diaspora, remains highly unlikely.

In his The Esther Scroll. The Story of the Story Clines (1984) has endeavoured to reconstruct Esther’s prehistory by suggesting that an Esther and a Mordecai
source were combined in a pre-Masoretic narrative, which did not contain the “appendix” chapters 9–10, of which the Greek A-text represents a witness. In his opinion the original narrative ended in 8:17. The hypothesis that the A-text harks back to a Hebrew narrative older than the Masoretic Text remains a problem, however, since it would force us to accept that the religious references represented by the Additions to the Book of Esther (see chapter XII) and present in the A-text would have been eliminated in MT.

It is striking that the Dead Sea Scrolls do not contain fragments of the book of Esther and that the Qumran community did not appear to have celebrated the feast of Purim. A first potential reference to the latter may be represented by 2 Macc. 15:36(37), thus at the beginning of the first century CE, where allusion is made to a “day of Mordecai”.70

The book of Esther belongs among the documents that represent the threatened situation of the Jews in diaspora and refer to individual Jews who had attained positions of importance and influence in royal courts and were able to use their positions to support their compatriots (cf. Daniel). The feast of Purim, which celebrates the evasion of a pogrom planned against the Jews, is a secular event, albeit with religious undertones. While the book of Esther makes no direct reference to God, allusion to guidance from above can nevertheless be read between the lines (4:14; 6:1ff.). Scholars have rightly indicated parallels with the story of Joseph in this regard (Rosenthal 1895, 1897; Berg 1979; cf. Gen. 50:20).

Although the book only achieved its place in the canon of the Hebrew Bible with some difficulty, initial objections ultimately made way for high praise in Jewish circles of later centuries. Early attempts were made to fortify the religious content of the document by the additions in the Greek versions. In the Christian world the book frequently ran into serious resistance, particularly among several of the Eastern Church Fathers. While Luther continued to include Esther among the canonical literature, his ambivalence towards the book is well known: “Ich bin dem Buch (= 2 Maccabees) und Esther so feind, daß ich wollte, sie wären gar nicht vorhanden; denn sie judene zu sehr und haben viel heidnische Unart”. Setting aside the antisemitic tone of Luther’s words, the intrigues and bloodthirsty reprisals

70 Cf., however, H. Bardtke, “Der Mardochäustag”, in: G. Jeremias e.a., Tradition und Glaube (FS K. G. Kuhn), Göttingen 1971, pp. 97–116, who offers a number of critical observations with respect to the identification of this day with the feast of Purim.
alluded to in the book of Esther (cf. esp. 8:11) would appear, nevertheless, to represent a serious obstacle to the full consideration thereof as canonical, i.e. a book normative for faith and life. It should be added, however, that the book represents an unequivocal appeal on the part of the Jewish people for recognition and the right to a dignified existence in the face of misunderstanding and the threat of pogroms, an appeal that deserves our full endorsement. It bears witness, moreover, to the fact that God comes to the aid of his people in hidden yet remarkable ways in moments of dire need. In conclusion, the book also refers to the ancient struggle between יְהוָה and Amalek (cf. Exod. 17:14,16; Deut. 25:17–19), Israel’s primeval enemy, by portraying Haman as the descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites (3:1; cf. 1 Sam. 15:8–9), and by leading Mordecai’s family tree back to (the father of) Saul (2:5). The work is thus more profoundly rooted in Israel’s faith and traditions than is often suggested.

e. Daniel

The kingship and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High (7:27a)

Commentaries:


Monographs and articles:


In the Hebrew Bible the book of Daniel is included among the Writings (Ketubim), while lxx, the Vulgate and modern translations locate it among the prophetic books (after Ezekiel). The latter is in line with an ancient tradition, evident already in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QFlorilegium II 3), the New Testament (Mt. 24:15) and Flavius Josephus (Jewish Antiquities 10, § 266ff.; cf. also Contra Apionem 1, 38–41), whereby Daniel is portrayed as a prophet. 71 The location of the text among the Writings in the Masoretic tradition is due to the fact that it represents the youngest book of the Old Testament; during its final redaction in the second century BCE the canon of the prophets had already been closed (see chapter IV).

The Greek tradition of the Book of Daniel contains a number of significant additions (see further chapter XII). It should be noted, moreover, that the ancient Greek version (lxx) came to be replaced by that of Theodotion at a relatively early date within the Christian church. The lxx is only available to us in a couple of manuscripts: in hexaplaric recension in the codex Chisianus (ms. 88),72 in Syriac translation in the Syro-Hexapla of Paul of Tella73 and in the Chester Beatty papyrus codex 967 (end of the second or beginning of the third century CE) with a pre-hexaplaric text discovered in 1931 in the Egyptian Aphroditopolis (the manuscript contains segments of Ezekiel, Esther and Daniel). Portions of this papyrus are currently being held in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, in Cologne and in Barcelona. The text is available in five publications.74 The manuscript locates

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71 K. Koch (“Is Daniel Also Among the Prophets?”, in: J. L. Mays and P. J. Achtemeier [eds.], Interpreting the Prophets, Philadelphia 1987, pp. 237–248) has defended the thesis that rabbis relocated the book from the Prophets to the Writings prior to the fifth century CE.

72 Cf. A. Bludau, Die alexandrinische Übersetzung des Buches Daniel und ihr Verhältnis zum massoretischen Text (Biblische Studien 2), Freiburg im Breisgau 1897.

73 Cf. A. M. Ceriani, Codex Syro-hexaplaris Ambrosianus (Monumenta sacra et profana 7), Milan 1874.

chapters 7 and 8 prior to chapters 5 and 6 and places Susanna after Bel
and the Dragon. Together with several others, Montgomery (commentary
1927) was inclined to consider the hypothesis that the Vorlage of the ancient
Greek translation originated from an earlier period than the Masoretic Text
unfounded, but his opinion has recently been called into question by Albertz,75
and Wills.76 The substantial differences between LXX and the Masoretic
Text of Daniel 4–6 are quite striking and in many respects remain a mys-
tery (cf. R. Albertz, op. cit., 1988). For further details see the commentary
of Collins in the Hermeneia series (1993, pp. 4ff.).

Fragments of a number of manuscripts of Daniel, which tend as a
rule to confirm the consonantal text of the Masoretic tradition, have
been discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The oldest of these
manuscripts is no more than a half-century younger than the final
redaction of the book (165 BCE).77 This has led scholars to believe
that the book as a whole already enjoyed canonical status at a rel-
atively early stage, a hypothesis further supported by the fact that
the oldest part of the book would appear to have had an authori-
tative character in the third century BCE or earlier. In addition, the
book’s apocalyptic and martyrological features seems to have satisfied
the spiritual needs of pious Jews in the crisis period during and after
the Maccabean revolt (167–164 BCE). The work accentuates God’s
leadership in world history and predicts the immediate establishment
of the salvific kingdom.

The book of Daniel consists of a narrative segment ( chapters 1–6)
and a visionary segment ( chapters 7–12). The former speaks in the
third person of the wise, pious and single-minded conduct of Daniel
at the Babylonian and Median-Persian court and of the uncompro-
mising religious fervour of his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego. The latter contains three (partly symbolic) visions granted
to Daniel, whereby the visionary introduces himself in the first per-
son. In terms of content they span the period of the neo-Babylonian

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75 R. Albertz, Der Gott des Daniel. Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4–6 in der Septuagintafassung
sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches (SBSt 131), Stuttgart 1988.
76 L. M. Wills, The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends
empire up to and including the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE).

In the first main part of the book we are told how King Nebuchadnezzar II had young men of aristocratic blood, from among the Israelites who had been deported to Mesopotamia, trained in his own culture to serve in his palace as well-educated courtiers, changing their Hebrew names to Babylonian names: Daniel became Belteshazzar and his three friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah became Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Daniel is able to make sure that he and his friends are only served (cultically) pure food during their training, after which the four turn out to be physically and mentally superior to the other young courtiers (chapter 1).

The wisdom with which Daniel in particular is gifted allows him to explain a dream of Nebuchadnezzar and to remind the king of the content thereof, which he had forgotten. The text plainly states that Daniel was only able to do this by divine revelation. In his dream the king saw a statue made of gold, silver, bronze, iron and iron mixed with clay representing the empire of Nebuchadnezzar and the empires to follow, of which the last was to be weak. The statue is struck by a stone, cut out from rest “without human intervention” (2:34), which grows into a great mountain and fills the whole world, symbolising the eternal kingdom God shall establish upon earth (chapter 2).

Chapter 3, which makes no mention of Daniel, narrates how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to worship a golden statue set up by Nebuchadnezzar. As punishment for their refusal the three are cast into a fiery oven but, with the help of an angel, they remain unharmed. Having witnessed their escape the king recognises the power of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and decrees that no one in his empire should utter blasphemy against him.

Chapter 4 relates a second dream of Nebuchadnezzar: he sees how a magnificent tree is cut down and its branches cut off until only the stump remains. Daniel explains the dream once again: the tree is Nebuchadnezzar who shall be driven away from human society and shall live with the wild animals of the field. Although the king proclaims proudly: “Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and for my glorious majesty?” (4:30) Daniel’s prediction comes true. After a period of time, however, Nebuchadnezzar regains his reason, his majesty
is restored to him and he praises God, the Most High.78

Chapter 5 brings us to the final days of the neo-Babylonian empire. During a feast, King Belshazzar has his guests drink from the vessels that had been taken as booty from the temple in Jerusalem. At this juncture the fingers of a human hand are seen to write on the wall of the banqueting room in which the king and his guests are feasting. Daniel is then called upon to interpret the mysterious script, which he reads as mene, mene, tekel, and parsin. He explains that Belshazzar’s days “are numbered”, that the king has been “weighed in the scales” and found wanting, and that his kingdom is to be “divided” and given to the (Medes and the) “Persians”.79 That very night Belshazzar is killed.

Just as chapters 4 and 5 serve as a counterpart to one another, the same can be said in a certain sense about chapters 3 and 6. The latter relates how Daniel is threatened by government officials, jealous of his position at the royal court, during the reign of King Darius the Mede.80 The officials are able to persuade the king to issue a decree stating that anyone who makes appeal to any god or human person other than the king within a period of thirty days is to be thrown into the lions’ den. In spite of the decree, Daniel continues to pray to God three times a day, as was his practice. Caught

79 The repetition of the term mene in Dan. 5: 25 would appear to be based on a scribal error. The words mene tekel uparsin designate weights (c.q. monetary units): a mine, a shekel and two half shekels (parsin is a dual form), which probably appeared on the wall in abbreviated form as mtp. Daniel explains the latter with words that have the same consonants in Aramaic as those of the weights: mene as “numbered”, tekel as “weighed” and parsin as “divided” and as “Persians”. For this explanation and a survey of earlier literature see J. P. Lettinga, “Mene Tekel Upar-sin”. For the rendition of ‘the writing on the wall’ in a bible translation see J. H. F. Schaeffer e.a. (red.), *Nuchtere noodzaak. Ethiek tussen navolging en compromis* (Afscheidsbundel J. Douma), Kampen 1997, pp. 209–216.
80 The identification of this figure with an individual known to us from non-biblical tradition still awaits confirmation. Several scholars have argued that Darius the Mede should be taken as an historical fiction. Other scholars propose a variety of identifications: Cyrus (Wiseman, in: D. J. Wiseman e.a., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, London 1965, pp. 9–16); the last Median king Astyages (B. Alfrink, *Biblica* 9 [1928], 316–340); Cyrus’ general Gobryas (Gubaru), who conquered Babylon and became its governor (K. Koch, “Dareios, der Meder”, in: C. L. Meyers and M. O’Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (FS D. N. Freedman), Winona Lake 1983, pp. 287–299) etc.
doing so by the government officials, and much to the dissatisfaction of the king, Daniel must face the prescribed punishment. Once inside the lions’ den, however, Daniel remains unharmed and is set free thereafter by the king. His opponents are then cast into the den together with their families and eaten alive by the lions. Having witnessed these events Darius offers praise to the God of Daniel.

The visions segment of the book of Daniel begins with chapter 7. While allusion is made to the theme of chapter 2, the worldly empires are now symbolised by four great animals.81 After their destruction, “the Ancient of Days” (God) grants dominion to “someone like a son of man” (v. 13f.), later designated as “the people of the holy ones of the Most High” (v. 27).

Chapter 8 brings the history of the worldly empires closer to the time of the author. It relates how a male goat (the Greek empire) defeats a ram (the Persian Empire), the “great horn” of the victor later being broken and replaced by four little horns (the Diadochian empires). Another horn emerges from one of the latter, capable of great violence and determined to rise up against God and his service (the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes).

Chapter 9 relates how Daniel, after reading from the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jerusalem shall be ruined for seventy years (cf. Jer. 25:11; 29:10), confesses the shame of his people and prays for clemency, whereafter the angel Gabriel explains to him that the seventy years stand for seventy weeks, of which seven plus sixty-seven and a half have already transpired.

Chapters 10:1–12:3 describe a new revelation whereby the angels initiate Daniel in the struggle in which the patron saints of the world powers are engaged against one another, and into the content of “the book of truth” (10:21) that predicts the history of the Persian and Greek empires and, in particular, the conflict between the Ptolomies and the Seleucids up to the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes: the Jewish community shall fall into religious apostasy, but “the peo-

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ple who are loyal to their God” shall stand firm and take action (11:32). In a period of great distress, Israel’s guardian angel Michael shall rise up on behalf of the faithful and the righteous deceased shall rise from the dead (12:1–3). Chapter 12 ends with a dialogue between the angels about the end time and an appeal to Daniel to go to meet his death with the promise that he shall rise up at the end of time to receive his reward. The additional verses 11–12 of chapter 12 hark back to 8:14 and extend the period of distress from 1150 days to 1290 and 1335 days respectively.

The narrative chapters 1–6 exhibit reciprocal tensions and contradictions. While chapter 1 is necessary for a clear understanding of the following chapters, the reference to the three year training period required before the young men are able to enter into the service of the king (1:5, 18) is in conflict with 2:1, which states that Daniel was already in service as a courtier in the second year of King Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. The measures taken by the king as related in chapter 3 are somewhat out of place after his confession of 2:47. After it is stated in 2:48 that Daniel was appointed chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon, it is curious that the king does not consult him first in chapter 4. In 2:48 we are told that Daniel was appointed as rule over the whole province of Babylon while it would appear that King Belshazzar does not yet know of his existence in chapter 5. In light of these tensions and contradictions it seems reasonable to argue that chapters 2–6 are based on originally independent traditions that were apparently combined as early as the third century BCE and provided with an introduction on the basis of chapter 1. While the pre-history of the narratives cannot be reconstructed with any degree of certainty, the fragments of “the prayer of Nabonidus” discovered in Cave 4 of Qumran (cf. further chapter XIV) represent a tradition-historical preliminary stage of the information in chapter 4: a tradition originally associated with Nabonidus was later applied to the better known Nebuchadnezzar II.82

Scholars offer a variety of opinions as to the genesis and evolution of the book of Daniel. J. J. Collins (commentary 1993), for example, considers chapters 1–6 to be the oldest segment, to which chapters 7 and 8–12 were

added at a later date. In his opinion, chapters 1–6 have their origins in the eastern diaspora and the remaining material stems from Jerusalem. E. Haag (1983; commentary 1993) argues that the oldest layer consists of two narratives from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, which portray Daniel as a wise and righteous man (the core of 4:1–24, 31–34; 6:1–29), and two descriptions of the disintegration of Babylon as a world power (the core of 4:25–30; 5:1–30). He maintains that the core of chapters 1–3 and 7–8 were added at a later date and argues that the book was reworked again after 167 BCE and chapters 9–12 were written. J. C. Lebram (commentary 1984) favours the idea of two redactions of an originally Aramaic book (chapters 2–7), the first of which he associates with chapter 1 and parts of chapter 8 (which in his opinion originally referred to Antiochus III). In the second redaction, he argues, chapters 8 was reworked to relate to Antiochus IV and chapters 9–12 were added. R. G. Kratz (1991) supports a three layer hypothesis: the oldest to be dated after 539 BCE (the core of 1:1–2:4a and 2:4b–49 together with chapters 3–6), the second in the third century BCE (parts of chapter 2 and 7:1–28) and the third between 168 and 163 (parts of chapters 2 and 7; chapters 8–12). All these hypotheses take the gradual evolution of an original text (Aufstockungshypothese) as their point of departure, leaving behind the fragmentary hypothesis (the book consists of originally independent segments) and the unitary hypothesis (the book was written in its entirety by a Maccabean author).

In order to clearly understand chapters 7–12, it is important that we have some knowledge of the history of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires and in particular of the Maccabean revolt that broke out against the regime of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Certain additions to chapter 7 and much of the content of the following chapters will remain unclear if one does not have some grasp of the background of the Maccabean revolt that resulted from the desecration of the altar of burnt offerings in the temple in Jerusalem. For those who had held firm in their faith in God, this event served to reinforce the sense of apocalyptic expectation that echoes throughout chapters 7–12.

The book of Daniel has been passed down to us in two languages: 1:1–2:4a and chapters 8–12 are written in Hebrew while the remaining material is written in Aramaic. This means that the literary subdivision into narrative (chapters 1–6) and visionary (chapters 7–12) does not run parallel with the language employed therein (one would expect 1:1–2:4a to be in Aramaic and chapter 7 to be in Hebrew). The solution to this problem can be found in the origins and evo-
ution of the book. One can accept that the narrative segments, to 
which chapter 7 was added at a later date, stem from an earlier 
period than the apocalyptic chapters 8–12, which have their roots 
in the period of the Maccabean revolt. It is more or less established 
that the narrative segments were written in Aramaic in Babylon in 
early Hellenistic, if not, at least in part, even earlier times, and that 
they were later reworked in Palestine in order to have already achieved 
canonical status at the end of the third century BCE. When the 
visions of chapters 8–12 were added at this juncture during the 
Maccabean revolt, Dan. 1:1–2:4a was translated from Aramaic into 
Hebrew\(^{84}\) in order to transfer the authority that the originally Aramaic 
book possessed to the newly rendered book we now have before us 
by employing the sacred Hebrew language. The actualising inter-
polations inserted in the originally Aramaic chapter 7 were thereby 
too limited in size to warrant translating the entire chapter into 
Hebrew. In addition, the text of 2:4a offered a welcome occasion to 
maintain the Aramaic text of the main part of the narratives: the 
verse in question states that the servants of King Nebuchadnezzar 
responded in Aramaic!\(^{85}\) It is thus possible to consider the history of 
the origins of the book of Daniel as an example of the way in which 
Jewish authors frequently went about their work: they incorporated 
their own contributions into existing documents that already enjoyed 
some degree of authority and were able thereby to more readily gain 
canonical acceptance for their work.

The genesis of the final form of the book of Daniel in 165 BCE 
is more or less certain since the final editor-collector appears to have 
had no knowledge of the re-consecration of the temple (desecrated 
during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BCE [cf. 8:14; 
12:11–12]) under Judas Maccabeus. He would also appear not to 
have been informed of the death of Antiochus in 164 BCE (cf. Dan. 
11:45).

The origins and evolution of the book outlined above and the 
proposed dating thereof run counter to the hypothesis (stated in the

\(^{84}\) It is possible that this introductory segment was originally shorter and that it 
was later expanded to include, in particular, the theme of Daniel and his friends’ 
refusal to eat impure food when it was translated into Aramaic.

\(^{85}\) Cf. further A. S. van der Woude, “Die Doppelsprachigkeit des Buches Daniel”, 
in id. (ed.), *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (BEThL 106), Leuven 1993, 
pp. 3–12.
work itself) that it was written during the final days of the neo-Babylonian empire and the initial years of the Persian empire. If the latter were true, however, it would be virtually impossible to explain why the document made use of both Hebrew and Aramaic. It would likewise be impossible to explain why the description of the history of the Persian, the Greco-Macedonian and, in particular, the Seleucid empires is based on historically accurate information while the sketch of the end of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:40–45) does not conform to historical reality. The author clearly made use of the style figure *vaticinium ex eventu* (“prophetic hindsight”).

The figure of Daniel (“God has rendered justice”), who plays such an important role in the book that bears his name, is surrounded in mystery. He is not to be identified with the figure from the murky past referred to in Ezek. 14:14 and 28:3 who is synonymous with King Dan’el familiar to us from Ugaritic texts. There are good reasons to presuppose, therefore, that Daniel should indeed be considered an historical figure who had successfully acquired a position of influence at the royal court during the neo-Babylonian empire. The suggestion that the narratives surrounding Daniel and his three friends stem already from the early Persian period (see M. A. Beek 1935; cf. also Kratz 1993) remains a possibility, although the texts in question have clearly been reworked at a later date.

Given the additions to the narratives in the Septuagint (see further chapter XII) and the pseudo-Daniel documents discovered at Qumran, it is clear that the Daniel traditions enjoyed enormous popularity in early Judaism. The book occasioned the so-called four kingdom doctrine (cf. chapters 2 and 7) and exercised a significant influence on medieval historical perception whereby, in line with Jewish interpretation, the fourth kingdom was identified with the Roman empire and the empires that emerged therefrom.

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86 For problems associated with the style figure *vaticinium ex eventu*, which cannot be written off as mere humbug, see A. S. van der Woude, “Prophetic Prediction, Political Prognostication, and Firm Belief”, in: C. A. Evans and S. Talmor (eds.), *The Quest for Context and Meaning* (FS J. A. Sanders), Leiden-New York-Cologne 1997, pp. 63–73 and the literature referred to therein.

87 For this figure see H. P. Müller, “Magisch-mantische Weisheit und die Gestalt Daniels”, *UF* 1 (1969), 79–94.


89 For a survey of the reception history of Daniel within the Christian church see J. G. Gammie, “A Journey Through Danielic Spaces: The Book of Daniel in
The figure of the “son of man” (7:13) referred to in the collective sense in Daniel 7 as “the holy ones of the Most High” (the members of the heavenly council and the Jews faithful to ΥΗΩΘ) is interpreted in the New Testament, in the Parables of 1 Enoch and in 4 Ezra as an individual and identified with the Messiah.

f. The Chronistic history

In light of the fact that the final verses of 1–2 Chronicles (2 Chron. 36:22–23) and the initial verse of the book of Ezra (Ezra 1:1–3a), which forms a single document with the book of Nehemiah, sound much the same, that the content of Ezra-Nehemiah offers a continuation of the historical narrative of Chronicles and that a variety of linguistic and stylistic agreements can be illustrated between the said books, scholars have broadly tended in the last two centuries to speak of 1–2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah as a single historical work referred to as the Chronistic history.

A number of objections to this hypothesis have been raised in recent decades, in particular by Sara Japhet (1968) and Hugh G. M. Williamson (1977; see literature under Chronicles). Their linguistic and content based arguments objecting to the thesis that the books in question constitute a single historical work would appear, nevertheless, not to offer a decisive solution to the issue. Their linguistic arguments in particular lose much of their power of conviction if one considers that the author(s) of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah made ample use of written sources (cf. Mosis 1973; see literature under Chronicles). In addition, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah share many words and expressions that are either characteristic of both documents or occur exclusively therein. Should such linguistic data already point in the direction of a single historical work then the same can be said with respect to the content. The fact that David has a significant role to play in Chronicles but appears to be afforded little attention in Ezra-Nehemiah is determined by the character of the individual documents, both of which nevertheless represent the king in his role as founder of the cult. The extremely limited space...
afforded in Chronicles to the traditions of exodus and entry into the land has to do with the history being treated in the document. The fact that the aforementioned traditions are to be found in Ezra-Nehemiah has its roots in the interpretation of the return from exile as exodus and *Landnahme*. On the other hand, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah do indeed have a lot in common in terms of content, especially with respect to the temple and the temple cult. The literary unity of both documents is convincingly demonstrated by the virtually identical commentary offered by each in relation to historically incisive cultic events (cf. 2 Chron. 30:26 and 35:18 with Neh. 8:18 [Hebr. 8:17]).

Willi (1972) and Welten (1973) (see literature under Chronicles) adopt an intermediate position by arguing that Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah are two independent works written by one and the same author.

Surprisingly enough, Ezra-Nehemiah precedes Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible, in spite of the fact that it deals with an historical period that took place after that which is described in 1–2 Chronicles. Scholars presuppose, therefore, that Ezra-Nehemiah was granted canonical status prior to Chronicles, the latter containing a significant amount of material that can already be found in Samuel and Kings. It is argued, therefore, that Chronicles received a place in the Scriptures at a later date as a sort of appendix. The latter hypothesis tends to be undermined by the fact that Chronicles is located prior to the Psalms in some manuscripts and that there are no convincing arguments to explain why Ezra-Nehemiah should have been afforded canonical status prior to Chronicles.

If one continues to insist on the redactional unity of Ezra-Nehemiah then certain compositorial problems become clear, including the possibility that Nehemiah 8, a segment that deals with Ezra, could have been incorporated in the text. The fact, nevertheless, that Ezra-Nehemiah was later subject to interpretation as two books can be afforded a simple explanation: the book of Nehemiah begins anew with the detailed memoirs of Nehemiah.

The unity of both books is further underlined by the nomenclature employed by the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the former speaking of Esdras β (Esdras α represents the apocryphal book often referred to as 3 Ezra in line with the Vulgate [cf. chapter XII]), the latter of 1 Ezra (= Ezra) and 2 Ezra (= Nehemiah).
The Chronistic history offers an entirely new attempt to approach Israel’s past when compared with the work that extends from Genesis to 2 Kings. The latter locates Moses and the Law in central position whereas the former places David and his cultic institutions at the core of historical consideration. In the later stages of the emergence of Israel’s historical masterpiece (Genesis-Kings), cult and Law tended to be given more and more priority. The contribution of the Priestly Codex (P) in particular, served to underline both elements throughout Genesis-Kings. The canonical establishment of the documents in question, however, made it impossible for the author of the Chronistic history to introduce his ideas into this great work. By writing his own history, moreover, he was at liberty to allocate sufficient space to the period after the Babylonian exile, a period in which he was particularly interested. His work had a political-religious ambition, namely the representation of the post-exilic Jewish community clustered around the temple in Jerusalem as the restored community of Ancient Israel (Nehemiah 8–9). Temple, cult and Law served for the author as the pledge of true communion with Yahweh. While it was true that the temple had been founded by David, the great king of Israel is portrayed nevertheless as the initiator of the construction of the sanctuary buildings (1 Chronicles 13–17; 22–29; see esp. 28:19). The theocratic monarch, seated as chosen one on the throne of Yahweh’s kingship over Israel (1 Chron. 28:5) and from whose generations the messiah was to be expected, served as the actual founder of the religious Jewish community gathered around the cult.

1. Ezra-Nehemiah

These books aim to present the various phases of the restoration as parts of a single act of God, who had moved to re-establish the post-exilic community as the legitimate heir and successor of pre-exilic Israel (H. G. M. Williamson)

Commentaries:

D. C. Siegfried (HKAT) 1901; A. Bertholet (KHC) 1902; L. W. Batten (ICC) 1913 (1949); A. van Selms (TU) 1935; A. Noordtzij (KV) 1939; W. Rudolph (HAT) 1949; M. Rehm (EB) 1954; K. Gallling (ATD) 1954 (1958); H. Schneider (HSAT) 1959; J. de Fraine (BOT) 1961; H. Grosheide (COT) 1963 (= Ezra); J. M. Myers (AB) 1965; F. Michaeli (CAT) 1967;

Monographs and articles:

The acknowledged literary unity of Ezra-Nehemiah justifies the treatment of both books together. We can summarise the primary elements of content as follows:

**Ezra 1–6**  
Cyrus’ edict facilitates the return of the exiles. The temple is reconstructed in spite of opposition. The temple is rededicated and the Passover feast celebrated.

**7–10**  
Ezra is mandated by the Persian king Artaxerxes to take charge of the temple service in Jerusalem. We are told of his journey to Jerusalem and his measures against mixed marriages.

**Neh 1–7**  
Nehemiah’s mission to reconstruct the walls of Jerusalem. The restoration of the walls in spite of opposition and Nehemiah’s measures against the poor.

**8–10**  
Ezra’s reads out the Law and the feast of Succoth is celebrated followed by a day of penance and prayer. Charter concerning agreed obligations.

**11–13**  
Repopulation of Jerusalem, register of priests and Levites, festal dedication of the city walls and Nehemiah’s passion for the Law.

As with the book of Daniel, Ezra also contains segments in Aramaic (4:8–6:18; 7:12–26). In this instance, however, the use of the latter can be afforded a simple explanation: the text employs Kingdom Aramaic, the diplomatic language of the Persian Empire, quoting from written letters and providing connecting text. In his description of the return from exile in Babylon (538) and the opposition of
the neighbouring peoples to the reconstruction of the temple, the author of Ezra 1–6 was able to make use of a number of sources: the edict of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2–4; cf. 6:3–5 and 5:13–15), an inventory of temple vessels transported by Nebuchadnezzar II from Jerusalem to Babylon (1:9–11), a list of “returnees” (2:1–67), which enjoys a parallel in Neh. 7:6–68, together with the aforementioned collection of official letters written in Aramaic and lacking chronological order (4:9–16,17–22; 5:7–17; 6:3–12; 7:12–26).

The narrative relating the Persian king Cyrus’ permission for the return of the Jews from exile, the return of the temple vessels and the list of “returnees” (1–2) together with the restoration of the altar of burnt offerings and the laying of the temple foundations (3) is characterised by a telescoping of events that actually took place years apart. The list of “returnees” in chapter 2, for example, would appear not to have anything to do with the repatriation of exiles from Babylon, neither in 538 nor at some later date (cf. Zech. 6:9). Conditions in the promised land at that moment in time would not have been able to accommodate such a large flood of returnees as the text purports (more than 40000, cf. 2:64f.). The reported number of exiles, moreover, is in conflict with the number of those deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar II and alluded to in Jer. 52:28–30 (4600). It is probable that the list is based on a register of the cultic community dating from the time of Nehemiah (around 450) consisting of different groups of returnees and those who had remained in the land who considered themselves the legitimate successors of pre-exilic Israel. In the context of the present composition of Ezra-Nehemiah, the list in Ezra 2 serves to demonstrate that the exiles responded unanimously to the edict of Cyrus and that in Nehemiah 7 to illustrate how the said exiles took part as one group in the religious gathering referred to in Nehemiah 8 under Ezra’s leadership. By contrast, the return of the temple treasures probably already took place in 538 BCE or shortly thereafter. The laying of the sanctuary foundations in Jerusalem is ascribed in Hagg. 2:19 (Hebr. 2:18) and Zech. 4:9 to Zerubbabel during the reign of King Darius I (522–486) and is said to have taken place in 520 BCE.

The fact that allusion to a complaint from the time of Xerxes I (= Ahasuerus [486–465]) and an exchange of letters with Artaxerxes I (= Artachshasta [465–425]) have been added in 4:6 and 4:7–23 respectively to the segment dealing with external opposition to the

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90 The suggestion that we are dealing at this juncture with a separate source is not without dispute (cf. Williamson, op. cit., 1987, pp. 34–35).
91 A typical example can be found in the fact that figure of Sheshbazzar mentioned in Ezra 1:11 is not included in the list of 2:1–2.
reconstruction of the temple (4:1–5) is particularly confusing. The exchange of letters refers to the reconstruction of the city walls and not that of the temple. The narrative in 4:1–5 is continued in 4:24–6:18 with the report of the restoration of the sanctuary in Jerusalem (520–515) and its dedication, followed in 6:19–22 by the description of the first Passover feast celebrated after the return from exile.

In line with Williamson (1987, pp. 44f.) it seems justifiable to accept that the segment 4:6–23, which interrupts the narrative of Ezra 4:1–5 and 4:24–6:18, constitutes an excursus. The latter serves in the present form of the text to show that the offer of participation in the reconstruction process made by יהוה worshiping northern Israelites (cf. 4:1–3), was rightly rejected. Many consider the documents referred to in 4:7–6:12 to be essentially authentic (see, for example, Cross 1975), while others either call their authenticity into question (see Gunneweg in his 1985 commentary) or deny it altogether (see Kaiser).

More than half a century had transpired between the dedication of the restored temple (515 BCE) and Ezra’s arrival in Jerusalem in 458 BCE (Ezra 7:8). After a general introduction Ezra 7–10 begins with an edict of King Artaxerxes I (7:12–26), which can be considered, at least for the most part, to be authentic. The edict gives Ezra “the scribe of the Law of God of heaven” (7:12,21) permission to bring the exiles back to Jerusalem, to transport treasures gifted by the king and others to the temple, to set up an inquiry into Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of God at Ezra’s disposal and at the same time to appoint magistrates and judges “to speak judgement over all the people in the province Beyond the River”, in other word over those “who know the laws of your God”. The chapters go on to provide a detailed description of the preparations for the journey from Mesopotamia and of the arrival of Ezra and the other exiles in Jerusalem, which is followed by a report of Ezra’s

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92 Schaeder, op. cit., 1930, considers this description as an official Persian title, thus implying that Ezra served as secretary of state for Jewish affairs to the Persian court. The available sources, however, do not allow us to conclude more beyond the fact that Ezra played an important role in the Jewish community in Babylon.

93 The Persian satrapy to the west of the Euphrates to which Judah also belonged is intended here.

94 The significance of the commission is disputed. It may refer to the teaching of the Law on behalf of Jews who lived far from Jerusalem.
measures against mixed marriages. Lists are incorporated into the text as a whole relating to the exiles who returned with him (8:1–14) and those in Jerusalem who had entered into a marriage with a foreign woman (10:18–43).

The chapters in question are written in both the first (7:27–9:15) and the third person (7:1–26; 10:1–44). The use of the first person has justifiably led scholars to postulate the existence of a Memoirs of Ezra (also referred to as the Ezra source) that was reworked at a later date by the author of Ezra-Nehemiah.95

Nehemiah 8 is likewise presumed by several commentators to be part of the Ezra source. The chapters narrate Ezra’s recitation of the Law he had brought with him from Babylon and the adjoining feast of Succoth. Scholars endeavour to argue that Nehemiah 8 has been redactionally relocated from after Ezra 8 (or 10). It is difficult indeed to understand why Ezra would have waited for the arrival of Nehemiah (445), twelve years in total, before reciting the Law.96 In addition, the chronology encountered in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah tends to confirm the hypothesis that Nehemiah 8 originally belonged after Ezra 8: when Ezra 8:31 (cf. 7:9) remarks that Ezra and his companions left Babylon in the first month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (458; cf. 7:8) and Ezra 7:8 states that they arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month, the seventh month referred to in Neh. 8:1 would appear to allude to the same year; Ezra 10:9, furthermore, makes reference to the ninth month in connection with Ezra’s measures against mixed marriages (Ezra 9–10).

Nehemiah 9, which tells of the day of penance following Ezra’s recitation of the Law (9:1–5) and contains an extended prayer (9:6–37), is similarly ascribed by a considerable number of scholars to the Memoirs of Ezra. While this is probably justifiable with respect to 9:1–5, the same cannot be said for 9:6–37. The latter text segment runs counter to the spirit of the Ezra source and stems, according to some, from among those who had remained in the land after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. Boda has recently shown,

95 In spite of the I-style, Noth (1943) and In der Smitten (1973) argue that these segments are the work of the Chronicler.
96 Neh. 8:10a (Hebr. 8:9a) is consistently considered to be a later gloss. The simultaneous activity of Ezra and Nehemiah is also presupposed in Neh. 12:26,33,36. The data, however, are open to a redactional explanation and do not serve to support the simultaneous activity of Ezra and Nehemiah in the historical sense (see below).
however, that Neh. 9 has its origins in an early post-exilic community in Yehud.\footnote{M. J. Boda, Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9 (BZAW 277), Berlin-New York 1999.}

C. C. Torrey (Ezra Studies, Chicago 1910, reprint New York 1970) has concluded on the basis of the style of the material found in Ezra, which he considers to be the same as the author of Chronicles, that an independent Ezra source never existed. According to Noth (1943) there is nothing in Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8 that the author could not have borrowed from the documentary sources available to him. He argues that the description of Ezra’s journey to Jerusalem (Ezra 8) and his introduction of the Law (Nehemiah 8) could have been derived from the edict of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:12–26) and the list of Ezra 8:1–14. The measures against mixed marriages ascribed to Ezra (Ezra 9–10) may have been borrowed from the memoirs of Nehemiah (Neh. 13:23–25). Several elements in the text, however, tend to undermine the argument that the Ezra material is based exclusively on the aforementioned documents (cf., for example, Ezra 8:15, 17, 24–30, 32–34; 10:9, 13). If Nehemiah 8 did indeed originally stand after Ezra 8, this presupposes a redactor who relocated a segment of an existing document. The arguments based on style proposed by Torrey and others against the existence of an independent Ezra source thus remain difficult to defend and the interchange from first to third person and vice versa in Ezra 7–10 is easy to explain even if one accepts the proposed redaction of an original document authored by Ezra.\footnote{See Williamson, op. cit., 1987, pp. 23–24.}

The analyses of Torrey and Noth clearly place the historical reliability of Ezra 7–10 and, in particular, Nehemiah 8, under considerable pressure. We should not be surprised by the fact that in addition to both denials of an independent Ezra source some scholars are inclined to portray Nehemiah 8 as an “edifying church history” without historical value. Such an evaluation stands in sharp contrast to opinion that the reconstitution of the Jewish people was the moral accomplishment resulting from Ezra’s (“the founder of Judaism”) labours. According to Vriezen,\footnote{See the ninth edition of the present work, p. 302.} Ezra “saved the diminutive Jewish people from the perils of syncretism and from intermingling with the Samaritans and others by the introduction of the Pentateuch and by the measures he upheld against foreign women and held them back from activistic messianism, moreover, by restoring the Torah to the centre of its spiritual life”.

Commentators are at odds as to whether the Law recited by Ezra (Nehemiah 8) should be identified with the Pentateuch, the Holiness Code, Deuteronomy or the Priestly Codex. The document is referred to as “the book of the Law of Moses” (Neh. 8:2, Hebr. 8:1; cf. Ezra 6:18; Neh. 13:1) c.q. “the Law of God” (8:9, Hebr. 8:8; 10:29; cf. Ezra 7:10,11,14).

Rendtorff (1984) is inclined to reject the identification of the “law” referred to in the edict of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7) with that of Nehemiah 8, arguing
that the former is an example of civil law and the latter of religious law. Ezra 7:26 ("the law of your God and the law of the king"), however, allows one to conclude that both possibilities were not mutually exclusive.

Houtman (1981) has demonstrated that Ezra 6:18 exhibits no particular parallel with any of the prescriptions in the Pentateuch, that Neh. 10:30, 31b (Hebr. 10:31, 32b) exhibits no authentic parallel therewith and that Neh. 10:31a, 32 (Hebr. 10:32a, 33) similarly lacks any point of agreement. The same is true, he maintains, for the wood-offering referred to in Neh. 10:34 (Hebr. 10:35). He is thus more inclined to relate the Law of Ezra to the comparable collection of prescriptions ascribed to Moses and contained in the Qumran Temple Scroll (see chapter XIV) rather than to the Pentateuch as such. Nehemiah 10, however, from which Houtman gathers most of his evidence, remains a problem in itself. The contract alluded to therein, signed by Nehemiah and other leading figures in Jerusalem, is related to matters referred to in Nehemiah 13 (mixed marriages, cf. 10:30, Hebr. 10:31, together with 13:23–30a; sanctification of the sabbath, cf. 10:31a, Hebr. 10:32a, together with 13:15–22, the provision of wood for the altar, cf. 10:34, Hebr. 10; 35, together with 13:31; the presentation of the firstborn, cf. 10:36–37, Hebr. 10:37–38, together with 13:31; the tithes of the Levites, cf. 10:38–39, Hebr. 39–40, together with 13:10–14) and must therefore stem from 432 or a few years thereafter. Clines has demonstrated that the stipulations in Nehemiah 10 should be understood as actualisations of the traditional Mosaic Law in a new period and under new circumstances. It was necessary, for example, to ensure the provision of wood for the wood-offering in line with Lev. 6:8–13 (the fire on the altar had to be maintained) now that the Gibeonites were no longer available for that purpose (cf. Josh. 9:27). It was thus possible for the contract of Nehemiah 10, although it belonged historically after Nehemiah 13, to be ascribed a place in the final redaction of Ezra-Nehemiah (together with Nehemiah 9) in which it could serve as an endorsement of the Law of Ezra referred to in Nehemiah 8. This implies, however, that the Law of Nehemiah 8 is to be identified with the Pentateuch.

The so-called memoirs of Nehemiah, written in the first person and otherwise referred to as the Nehemiah source (Nehemiah 1–2 together with the added list found in chapter 3; 101 4–6; 7:1–5[72]; 102 12:31–43; 13:4–31), constitutes a source document of enormous historical value.

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101 The chapter clearly looks back to the reconstruction of the walls, including the gates: Neh. 6:1 leaves the gates without doors. Nehemiah must thus have added the list of chapter 3 to his memoirs at a later date (cf. “their lord” in 3:5).

102 Scholars lack agreement as to whether Neh. 7:6–72 belonged to the memoirs of Nehemiah. For a discussion of the issue and the genre of the work see Williamson, *op. cit.*, 1987, pp. 15–19.
According to the tradition, the first part of the document alludes to the years 445–433 BCE (cf. 5:14; 13:6), while the second (13:4–31) describes events in 432 or shortly thereafter (cf. 13:6). The document does seem to have been passed on in its original form and exhibits traces of a possible later reworking by Nehemiah.

The text relates how King Artaxerxes I gave permission to his wine carrier Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem for a determined period of time in order to repair the citadel adjacent to the temple and the walls of the city. After having inspected the damage by night, Nehemiah presents his plans to the people of Jerusalem who then set about the reconstruction of the walls and gates of the city (1–3). Opposition from neighbouring rulers and peoples, including the Samaritan Sanballat and the Ammonite Tobiah (Neh. 2:10; 4:1ff), is effectively countered and the selfless Nehemiah is likewise able to ward off internal social tensions (4–5). In spite of every form of deception, intimidation and treachery, the work is ultimately brought to completion (6). The wall around Jerusalem is dedicated (12:31–43) and Nehemiah institutes a series of religious measures, especially during his second stay in the city (cf. Neh. 13:6). He thus purifies the temple chambers of foreigners (13:6–9; cf. 13:28), promotes the donation of tithes (13:10–13) and the celebration of the sabbath (13:14–22), and forbids marriage with foreign women (13:23ff.). Nehemiah gives account of his deeds and asks the Most High to remember him for the good that he had accomplished (Neh. 5:19; 13:14; cf. 13:22b, 31), although he confesses that it was all done “with the help of our God” (6:1619). It is evident from texts such as Neh. 4:4–5 (Hebr. 3:36–37), 6:14 and 13:29 that Nehemiah faced enormous opposition from both external and internal adversaries to the measures he had taken and that the extent of his achievements should not thus be underestimated.

Nehemiah 11:1–2 does not belong to the memoirs of Nehemiah. Scholars are in the dark with respect to the origins of the interpolated list of new inhabitants of Jerusalem (11:3–20; cf. 1 Chronicles 9) as well as the lists that follow (including that of the priests and Levites [12:1–26]). Nehemiah’s own report of the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem in Neh. 12:31–43 has been supplemented by material written by a different author (12:27–30; 12:44–13:3).

Since Van Hoonacker hypothesised (1890) that Ezra’s seven year visit to Jerusalem took place during the reign of Artachshasta II
(404–358) thus in 397, and not during that of Artachshasta I (= Artaxerxes I: 465–425), thus in 458, opinions have been divided as to whether one should date Ezra before or after Nehemiah. In the present author’s opinion, the problem is best solved by accepting the chronology proposed by the author of Ezra-Nehemiah whereby the arrival of Ezra (458 BCE) precedes that of Nehemiah (445 BCE).

Grosheide (commentary 1963, pp. 35–47) and Kellermann (Erwägungen, 1968) offer considerable support to our arguments concerning the relative dating of Ezra and Nehemiah. See also F. M. Cross, op. cit., 1975, Williamson, op. cit., 1987, pp. 55–68 and our own considerations in Bijbels Handboek 2a (Kampen 1990), pp. 155–156.

428 BCE has also been proposed as the year in which Ezra came to Jerusalem (cf. J. A. Emerton, “Did Ezra Go to Jerusalem in 428 BC?”, JTSH 17 [1966], 1–19).

The extent to which the author of Ezra-Nehemiah has drawn up his own particular image of the history of the post-exilic community is apparent from the literary structure of the book and the concept that serves as its foundation. In the first scene (Ezra 1–6) we are told how the temple was restored in spite of the opposition of adversaries and that the achievement was rounded off with a celebration of the feast of Passover. The second scene (Ezra 7–10) then goes on to describe Ezra’s steadfast solicitude for the purified community and its fidelity to YHWH in the face of his antagonists. The third scene (Nehemiah 1–6) portrays the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem in the face of serious external and internal resistance, a work that was necessary to preserve the mother city of Judaism from threats to its spiritual liberty by neighbouring peoples. The building of the city walls is rounded off in Nehemiah 8–13 with the recitation of the Law, the celebration of the feast of Succoth and the removal of everything foreign that might injure the community of YHWH. Based on historical sources, the books of Ezra-Nehemiah thus present us with a theological legitimation of the post-exilic community of Jerusalem/Judah and with the diaspora associated therewith as the rightful heirs to those who had maintained their faith in YHWH in pre-exilic Israel. The said theology underlines the fact that God himself “stirred up the spirit” of the Persian kings (Ezra 1:1; cf. 6:22, 7:6; Neh. 2:8) and that opposition was overcome with his help (Ezra 3:3; 4:1–6:13; Neh. 2:10, 19–20; 4:1–3 (Hebr. 3:33–35), 4–5 (Hebr. 3:36–37), 7–8
(Hebr. 4:1–2); 6:1–14, 17–19). While the preaching evident in both books is not \textit{per se} inconsistent with the intentions of Ezra and Nehemiah, it has nevertheless telescoped the activities of both figures into one. Nehemiah would appear to have confirmed the spiritual achievements of Ezra with political measures. Ezra and Nehemiah deserve praise as individuals who served both the Persian king and their own people in an unimpeachable fashion and for standing up for Israel’s ancient traditions. Nevertheless, while the measures they introduced were designed to protect Israel’s identity under foreign occupation and external intimidation and the isolation of the post-exilic community in Jerusalem and Judah was perhaps its greatest asset at that time, it cannot be denied that the resulting side-effects of religious particularism and legalism led ultimately and by degrees to a number of serious crises.

The dating of Ezra-Nehemiah is the subject of dispute. Those who consider the books to be part of the Chronistic history are naturally inclined to date them alongside the book of Chronicles. Even if one is determined to distinguish Ezra-Nehemiah from Chronicles at the literary level, however, the combination of the memoirs of Ezra and those of Nehemiah together with their redactional reworking suggests a date between 400–350 BCE, which more or less coincides with the period in which Chronicles came into existence met.

2. \textit{Chronicles}

\textit{Chronicles} is a comprehensive expression of the perpetual need to renew and revitalize the religion of Israel (Sara Japhet)

Commentaries:

Monographs and articles:


The name of the book represents a translation of its Hebrew title dibre hayyamîm, “events of the days”, with which Jerome’s designation “chronicon totius divinae historiae” (chronicle of the entire divine history) is clearly in line. The Septuagint makes use of the term Paraleipomena (“the omitted”), because it considers the content of the document to be a supplement to Samuel and Kings. In so doing, however, it clearly misunderstands the intention of the author who wanted to show that the community of Jerusalem and Judah in his days represented the legitimate continuation of the pre-exilic national and cultic community that had been elected by God.

103 The Vulgate designates the work as verba dierum seu Paralipomena.
According to the Jewish-Babylonian tradition the book of Chronicles is located at the end of the Hebrew Bible although some Spanish manuscripts place it prior to the Psalms: the emphasis on the liturgy found in Chronicles makes it an appropriate introduction to the book of Psalms. The Septuagint, the Vulgate and modern translations locate Chronicles after Kings.

The books 1–2 Chronicles exhibit a consistent and clear structure:

1 Chron. 1–9 The prehistory of Israel prior to David in the form of genealogical lists ("die genealogische Vorhalle")
1 Chron. 10–29 The history of David
2 Chron. 1–9 The history of Solomon
2 Chron. 10–36 The history of Judah up to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE

After the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9, which frequently extend into the post-exilic period, the author begins his narrative with David, who for him represents the founder of Israel’s national community and its liturgy. Emphasis is placed in his portrayal of David on the latter’s cultic institutions and his preparations for the construction of the temple. Solomon is afforded in depth attention as founder of the sanctuary. The weaknesses and failures of both kings are left unspoken, apparently because they did not fit into the conceptual framework employed by the author of Chronicles. The division of the kingdom after Solomon is seen as northern Israel’s defection from the true religion of Yahweh as it is practiced in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chron. 11:13–17). In contrast to the books of Kings, Chronicles only deals in principle with the history of Judah and the deeds of its kings are measured against their fidelity to Law of Yahweh.

The author of Chronicles, who was evidently well acquainted with the content of the Pentateuch and, in particular, Deuteronomy, used the books of Samuel and Kings as his source, deriving additional information from ancient archives. Scholars are virtually agreed that

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105 Tae-Soo Im, Das Davidbild in den Chronikbüchern: David als Idealbild des theokratischen Messianismus für den Chronisten, Frankfurt am Main 1985.
The first edition of Chronicles was later supplemented but the nature and extent of the interpolations is still the subject of dispute. The material peculiar to Chronicles (not found in Samuel and Kings), which deals with construction works, armies and war scenarios, is often considered to be historically unreliable, although unjustifiably so. The material in question provides further information concerning the rulers of Judah in similar fashion to the books of Kings, information that deserves particular historical attention (cf. for example, 2 Chron. 11:5–12; 16:1–6; 32:30; 34:3–7). On the other hand, the exaggerated figures employed by the Chronist in the portrayal of armies (cf., for example, 1 Chron. 27:1–15; 2 Chron. 13:3) and sacrificial offerings (cf., for example, 2 Chron. 30:24) come across as highly implausible.

It is clear that the Chronist left his own impression on the material he wrote by dealing with his sources (primarily Samuel and Kings) in a highly selective manner. His main purpose was not historical but rather theological, using ancient history to appeal to his contemporaries to remain faithful to YHWH and the liturgy dedicated to Him. His interest in cultic and, in particular, liturgical matters is hard to miss, especially his fascination for the Levitical temple singers. It is possible, therefore, that he may have belonged to the latter circles.

Although scholars have often argued that the books of Chronicles exhibit identifiably anti-Samaritan tendencies, incontestable evidence in this regard tends to be lacking (cf. 2 Chron. 30:5ff., 18; 34:33). While it is true that the temple in Jerusalem is represented as the only legitimate cultic location, it remains nevertheless open to all Israelites (cf. 2 Chron. 30:10–12). The author of Chronicles is preoccupied with the realisation of a theocracy in the Promised Land, rooted in God’s gracious election of Israel, the dynasty of David and Jerusalem. With all his emphasis on the priestly hierarchy, the question as to whether the author was also driven by messianic expectations (cf. 1 Chron. 17:1–15), which he was only able to express in cloaked terms on account of the Persian occupiers, remains uncertain. Whatever the case, he clearly places particular emphasis—in line with the Deuteronomists—on the notion of divine retribution (Kelly 1996), which he repeatedly demonstrates with respect to the fate of Judah’s kings: sin leads to disaster, piety to salvation and blessing (cf. Jer. 18:7–10; Ezekiel 18). In his view, the praise of YHWH is the most important task of the cultic community.
Given the fact that scholars are generally inclined to accept the existence of later editions of the Chronist’s work, determining the period in which he himself wrote is far from simple. If one identifies him with the author of Ezra-Nehemiah then one might consider the period between 400 and 350 BCE as a possible date, all the more so in light of the fact that the book contains no evidence of Greek-Hellenistic influence. Information concerning the seven generations of the descendents of King Jehoiakin/Jeconiah (1 Chron. 3:17–24; cf. the five generations after the High Priest Jeshua up to and including Jaddua in Neh. 12:10–11) tends to point in the same direction if one counts every generation as roughly 30 years. The apparent influence of Aramaic on the language and style of the Chronist serves to confirm the aforementioned dating of his work.
C. THE LITERATURE OF EARLY JUDAISM
CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTRODUCTION

Kautzsch; Charles; JSHRZ; Sparks; see further (with the exception of note 1) under Apocrypha (chapter XII), Pseudepigrapha (chapter XIII) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (chapter XIV).


An impressive and virtually exhaustive bibliography relating to Jewish literature from the Hellenistic-Roman period can be found in A. Lehnardt, *Bibliographie zu den Jüdischen Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (Supplementa JSHRZ VI/2), Gütersloh 1999 (xvi and 502 pp.).

The blank page to be found in most bible translations between Malachi and Matthew serves as a symbol for the lack of knowledge that most readers of the bible suffer with respect to the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings of early Judaism. The arrangement of the books of the Old Testament often makes it difficult to comprehend that many of the documents contained therein were either written or cast in their final form after Malachi (first half of the fifth century BCE; see, for example, the Isaiah Apocalypse [Isaiah 24–27], Jonah, Deutero-Zechariah, Qoheleth, Esther, Daniel). Few people are well informed, furthermore, concerning the broad range of Jewish literature dating from the centuries prior to and shortly after the beginning of the Common Era. The apocryphal books, which were included in the oldest editions of the Dutch Authorised Version and served as a source of inspiration for many artists in the first centuries of the Reformation, were later removed from Protestant bibles and passed thereby into obscurity. The pseudepigraphal writings, which were fittingly omitted from biblical translations for canonical reasons, tend for the most part to be unknown territory, even for theologians.
While introductory studies of the literature of Ancient Israel have generally made much of the historical-critical approach in terms of methodology, they have consistently restricted themselves in terms of content to the study of the canonical books of the Old Testament. In so doing they have not only neglected to draw the necessary conclusions from the historical-critical option, but they have also created a situation in which the non-canonical literature of early Judaism has tended for the most part to be treated as theologially irrelevant. As a result, the Jewish background of the New Testament has been afforded little exposure for a considerable period of time.

The momentous discoveries made on the shores of the Dead Sea (since 1947) have served as a particular stimulus with respect to the study of the literature of early Judaism (after a brief period of interest around the beginning of the twentieth century). Responsible research into the manuscripts of the Dead Sea, however, would be virtually impossible without a thorough knowledge of the Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigraphal literature. The ecumenical movement together with increasing co-operation between denominational biblical societies has also contributed to the fact that recent bible translations have included the apocryphal (referred to in Roman Catholic circles as deuto-ro-canonical) books of the Old Testament. Interest in these documents, at least with regards to their content, has thus enjoyed something of a renewal.

The literature of early Judaism still tends to play only a minimal role in Jewish-Christian dialogue: the documents in question were already rejected by the rabbinate in ancient times and Christians, as a rule, know little about them.

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The fact that the various documents to be treated in the present section differ from one another extensively in terms of date of origin, genre and content makes it difficult to provide them with a fitting collective designative term. Scholars have endeavoured to speak of inter-testamentary, early or late Jewish literature, albeit with reference to documents from the period of the second temple. Under closer inspection, however, none of the latter can be considered as satisfactory. Strictly speaking, inter-testamentary literature should be restricted to those documents that came into existence between the final redaction of the youngest book of the Old Testament (Daniel) and the earliest book of the New Testament (1 Thes.), in other words between 165 BCE and 50 CE. A not insignificant portion of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature, however, stems from the period either before or after these dates. It goes without saying, in addition, that the term “intertestamentary literature” offers little with regard to the Jewish reader/scholar. The expression “literature of early Judaism” (Frühjudentum) suffers from the disadvantage that it should in fact include certain canonical books of the Old Testament since they stem from the same period as a number of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal documents. The expression “literature of late(r) Judaism” (Spätjudentum, bas-Judaïsme) is somewhat awkward because we refer to modern Jewish religion and culture as Judaism. “Literature of the second temple period” does not only set the limit at 70 CE, it also implies a significant portion of the canonical documents of the Old Testament (from 515 BCE).

In spite of its deficiencies, the designation “literature of early Judaism” remains the most attractive. Earlier editions of the present volume employed the expression “late flowerers” in order to show that while the material in question may have come into existence at a later date it is not thus, by definition, of a lesser literary value, and “offshoots” in order to show that the authors of the literature in question were—generally speaking—inspired by the Old Testament or certain portions thereof. Disqualification of the content of the books remains, as a rule, unjustifiable. While it is possible that they include works that are unlikely to tempt the modern reader in terms of content and style, their literary and religious-historical significance remains unaffected and indeed deserves our fullest attention. In addition, many of the said documents bear witness to a profound religious piety and an earnest endeavour to harmonise traditional knowledge of the divine with contemporary experience. The artistic
form in which the content of many of these documents has been cast makes their reading all the more stimulating, even to the present day. Whatever the case, an examination and exploration of the literature in question is necessary for those who would like to familiarise themselves with early Judaism and the background(s) of the New Testament.⁴

Prior to the further discussion of the literature to be treated in the coming pages (apocrypha; pseudepigrapha; Dead Sea Scrolls) we will turn our attention, albeit in brief, in the following three paragraphs to a number of important papyrus discoveries that provide us with more detailed information concerning Jewish religion and history in the Persian and early Hellenistic period.

a. The Elephantine papyri

Text editions:


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³ The works of Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus together with the earliest rabbinical literature are not treated in the present volume since they are not included among the pseudepigrapha. A survey of the literature in question can be found in J. T. Nelis, *Bijbels Handboek* 2b, Kampen 1997, pp. 167–191.
Monographs and articles:


Discoveries at Elephantine (Aramaic: Jeb), an island located in the Nile adjacent to Asswan (ancient Syene), include Egyptian, Greek and several Aramaic manuscripts that provide us with a picture of the religious and day to day life of a Jewish military colony stationed there. The colony must have been established by an Egyptian pharaoh prior to the Persian period with a view to defending Egypt’s southern border. In any event, it continued to exist up to the end of Persian supremacy over Egypt or shortly thereafter. It had its own temple in which sacrifices were offered in honour of Jahu (יהוה). The local authorities maintained occasional contact with the High Priest in Jerusalem and other leading figures in Jerusalem and Samaria.

The Aramaic papyri consist for the most part of letters, marriage contracts, purchase and rental agreements, petitions, official Persian state documents and lists of names (for a detailed description of the manuscript discoveries see B. Porten in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* II, pp. 447–454). The documents not only provide us with a degree of insight into the administrative activities of the Persian rulers and the particular law of the Jewish colonists, they also reveal the syncretistic character of the religion practised at Elephantine whereby other divinities were worshipped in addition to Jahu. Although the so-called Passover Papyrus (Cowley, nr. 21) is often considered an

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4 Cf. the works of Wagenaar 1928, Vincent 1937 and Van der Toorn 1992.
example of Persian interference in local liturgical practice, the document is perhaps better interpreted as a petition on the part of the Jewish community requesting official permission from the Persian authorities to (continue to) celebrate the feast of unleavened bread in Elephantine.\footnote{Studies of the text are best based on the reconstruction of B. Porten, “Aramaic Papyri and Parchments: A New Look”, BiAr 42 (1979), 74–104, cf. Porten-Yardeni, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 54–55.}

The discovered papyri are also important for our knowledge of Kingdom Aramaic, the international language of the Persian empire at the time, and for the information they provide with respect to the relative chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah’s activities in Jerusalem based on references they contain concerning senior officials in Palestine.

In addition to the aforementioned texts, which stem from the period between 494 and 399 BCE, two further documents, likewise discovered at Elephantine, deserve particular mention: the \textit{Bisitun inscription},\footnote{Text, translation and commentary in A. E. Cowley, \textit{op. cit.}, 1923, pp. 248–271. See also J. C. Greenfield and B. Porten, \textit{The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great} (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, Part I, Vol. V), London 1982.} an Aramaic copy of a text etched on a cliff face by the Persian king Darius the Great around 510 BCE, glorifying his military successes during the earliest part of his reign, and the \textit{Story of Ahikar},\footnote{Cf. A. E. Cowley, \textit{op. cit.}, 1923, pp. 204–248; P. Grelot, \textit{op. cit.}, 1972, pp. 427–452; ANET, pp. 427–430 (H. L. Ginsberg; lit.); F. Nau, \textit{Histoire et sagesse d’Ahikar l’Assyrien}, Paris 1909; F. C. Conybeare – J. Rendel Harris – A. Smith Lewis, \textit{The Story of Ahikar}, Cambridge 1913\textsuperscript{2}; J. M. Lindenberger, \textit{The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar} (John Hopkins Near Eastern Studies), Baltimore 1983; I. Kottsieper, \textit{Die Sprache der Ahikarsprüche} (BZAW 194), Berlin-New York 1990.} which is probably based on a Mesopotamian source. The latter relates how Ahikar, the wise chancellor of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, fell into disfavour on account of the intrigues of his adopted son Nadin and was condemned to death only to be saved and his honour restored on the intervention of an official. The narrative functions as an introduction to a collection of wisdom sayings. The fact that versions of the Story of Ahikar circulated in different languages leads one to presume that it must have been extremely popular in the Ancient Near Eastern world. The author of the Book of Tobit (see below under Apocrypha) was famil-
iar with the document (Tob. 1:21–22) and the figure of Achior serves as Ahikar’s counterpart in the book of Judith.

The *Hermopolis papyri* published by Bresciani and Kamil (1965–1966) and supplemented by Porten and Greenfield⁹ would appear to stem from non-Jewish sources and represent a family archive consisting of a number of letters.

b. The *Samaritan papyri*


Less extensive than the Elephantine documents, but nevertheless of sufficient importance to warrant serious attention, the so-called Samaritan papyri were discovered by a group of Bedouins about 15 km north of Jericho in 1962. Written in Aramaic, the documents can be dated roughly to between 375 and 335 BCE, the period directly prior to the conquest of Alexander the Great and the fall of the Persian empire. The discoveries are named after the place in which they were found—the Wādi ed-Dāliyeh papyri—as well as according to the place in which they came into existence—the Samaritan papyri.

Half of the original documents have only been preserved in one or two fragments and none of the papyri is complete. The content of the material is either juridical or administrative in character and alludes in particular to the sale of slaves.

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The papyri would appear to have been smuggled out of the city of Samaria by refugees fleeing the unsuccessful Samaritan revolt against the Greek-Macedonian authorities in 331 BCE. Having hidden themselves in a cave in Wadi ed-Dāliyeh, they were later trapped by Alexander’s troops and choked to death from the smoke of a fire kindled by the latter at the entrance to their hiding place.

The majority of the individuals referred to in the papyri bear Yahwistic names. The material is important, moreover, for the information it provides concerning the governors who resided in Samaria in the fourth century BCE.

A complete edition of the papyri is being prepared by F. M. Cross (DJD XXVIII) and D. M. Gropp (DJD XXXII).

c. The Zenon papyri


Archaeological discoveries tend to be the main source of our knowledge relating to the socio-economic and administrative circumstances governing Palestine during Ptolemaic rule in the third century BCE. The so-called Zenon papyri, discovered at the Egyptian oasis of Fayyum in 1915, represent an important example thereof. Apollonius, Ptolemy II's “minister of finance”, held a substantial country estate in the region that had been given to him in loan by pharaoh. Prior to his appointment as administrator of the estate, Zenon had been commissioned by Apollonius to carry out an expedition (260–258 BCE) in the Ptolemaic province of “Syria and Phoenicia”, which brought him, among other places, to the citadel of Tobias, a possible descendant of the similarly named adversary of Nehemiah (cf. Neh. 2:10,19; 3:35; 4:1 etc.), in Trans-Jordania. The purpose of his
journey was to undertake an administrative inspection of the said province and to establish trade relationships. Several of the papyri relate to his journey and offer us an, albeit indirect, picture of the civil, economic and social circumstances in Palestine at the time.
CHAPTER TWELVE

APOCRYPHA

Text editions:

Greek: Swete, Rahlfs and (incomplete) Brook-McLean-Thackeray (3 Ezra, Judith, Tobit, Additions to the Book of Esther) and the Göttinger Septuagint (3 Ezra, Tobit, Judith, 1–3 Maccabees, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus Sirach); Latin: Weber; Syriac: Vetus Testamentum Syriace, Leiden 1966 and the following years (still incomplete: II/2: the Wisdom of Solomon; III/4: Additions to the Book of Daniel, Bel and the Dragon; IV/3: Apocalypse of Baruch and 4 Ezra; IV/6: Prayer of Manasseh, Psalms of Solomon, Tobit, 3 Ezra). See further in relation to the individual books.

Concordance:


Translations:

Kautzsch; Charles; Riessler; JSHRZ. See, in addition, Roman Catholic bible translations (e.g. RSV/NRSV) and ecumenical bible translations (e.g. Good News Bible).

Introductions to the apocrypha, c.q. apocrypha and pseudepigrapha (cf. also Kautzsch; Charles; JSHRZ):


See, in addition, the introductions to the Old Testament by Bentzen, Eissfeldt, Weiser and Soggin as well as the bibliographical information provided below in relation to the discussion of the individual books.

**Bibliographies:**


The concept “apocryphal” enjoyed a variety of meanings in the course of the early history of the church. It was originally used in a polemical context against heretical teachers, among whom esoteric documents tended to circulate that enjoyed enormous respect and were referred to as “apocryphal”, i.e. “hidden” (Greek *apokryphon*). The Church Fathers consistently appraise the concept in negative terms: “hidden” on account of heretical content or unknown origin, accordingly counterfeit and thus excluded from the canon. The Fathers in question, however, were not referring to the components that are now to be found in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew Bible. According to the rabbis and the early church, the latter were neither heretical nor sectarian in origin. In spite of the fact that they enjoyed, at least in part, high esteem, early Palestinian Judaism, with its Pharisaic attributes, excluded the texts from the canon because they were post-prophetic in origin. Jerome (348–420) and later Luther employed the expression “apocryphal books” in the neutral sense as a reference to the components of the Septuagint (and the Vulgate) that were not present in the Hebrew canon.

The issue of the canonical status of these books preoccupied the Christian church for considerable period of time and gave rise to a variety of different responses. The Council of Trent (1546) recognised Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus Sirach, 1 Baruch (together with the Letter of Jeremiah), 1 and 2 Maccabees together with the Additions to the books of Esther and Daniel as canonical.
In order to make a distinction with the books that appear in the Hebrew Bible, Roman Catholic circles designate the books in question as deutero-canonical (the Vulgate had already placed 3 and 4 Ezra, the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151 and the Letter to the Laodiceans in an appendix). At the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, the Greek Orthodox church only accepted Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon and Jesus Sirach as having authority in addition to the books of the Hebrew canon. While Luther’s 1534 edition of the bible included the apocryphal books, the superscription he supplied to introduce them makes it clear that he did not consider them canonical in the full sense of the term: “Apokrypha, das sind Bücher, so der Hl. Schrift nicht gleichgehalten, und doch nützlich und gut zu lesen sind”. A similar distinction between canonical and apocryphal books can be found in article 6 of the Dutch Confession of Faith (Confessio belgica) drafted by Guido de Brès: apocryphal books are documents “that the Church is at liberty to read and to use as a source of teaching in so far as they agree with the canonical books; they do not, however, enjoy such a weight or capacity that their witness is able to confirm any part of the faith or the Christian religion. Far from it! Otherwise they would be in a position to undermine the authority of the other sacred books”. The employment of segments of the apocryphal books in the liturgy in certain Protestant circles led to their inclusion, in spite of resistance from a number of theologians, in the Dutch Authorised Version, albeit after the New Testament and with an introductory “caution” addressed to the reader. They were not considered canonical because “none of them was written by a prophet”, “they were written in Greek”,¹ “they have never been included among the divine books registered in the Israelite Church” and “most of the said books contain a variety of untrue, absurd, fabulous and contradictory matters that do not agree with the truth of the canonical books”. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that eighteenth century editions of the Dutch Authorised Version left out the apocryphal books in order to reduce printing costs and that the material in question was thus relegated to obscurity.

The historical developments outlined above led Protestant circles

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¹ In reality, a significant number of the apocryphal books were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic; cf., for example, Jesus Sirach and Tobit. This fact, however, was not known at the time.
(in line with Jerome and Luther) to designate the material that did not belong to the Hebrew canon, but was included (or in some instances continued to hold its place) nevertheless in editions of the bible next to the New Testament, as apocryphal. In light of the fact that the Roman Catholic church identified the said books as (deutero-) canonical, Roman Catholic circles continued to refer to those documents that fell outside the scope of the Septuagint and the Vulgate as apocryphal, documents referred to in turn by Protestants as pseudepigraphal. The result is a confusing mix of terminology (R.C. deutero-canonical = Prot. apocryphal; R.C. apocryphal = Prot. Pseudepigraphal). In recent years, however, Roman Catholic scholars have been tending more and more to favour the terminology employed in Protestant circles.

Variation in the inclusion of apocryphal material in the Septuagint manuscripts together with the historical developments outlined above have given rise to the fact that neither a limitation in terms of quantity nor an established sequence has been generally accepted as the norm with respect to the material in question. The present author takes his point of departure from the Dutch Authorised Version. 4 Ezra, however, which scholarly introductions endeavour to list among the pseudepigrapha, will not be treated.

In the Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgam Clementinam one can find Tobias (Tobit) and Judith (Judith) after Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah), Sapientia (the Wisdom of Solomon) and Ecclesiasticus (Jesus Sirach) after the Song of Songs, Baruch (together with the Letter of Jeremiah) after Lamentations, 1 and 2 Maccabees after Malachi and the Prayer of Manasseh as well as 3 and 4 Ezra in the appendix following the New Testament. The Additions to Esther and Daniel have been included with the respective books. Rahlfs’ edition of the Septuagint locates 1 Esdras (= 3 Ezra) prior to 2 Esdras (= Ezra-Nehemiah), Judith, Tobit and 1–4 (!) Maccabees after Esther, the Odes (including the Prayer of Manasseh) after the Psalms, the Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus Sirach and the Psalms of Solomon (!) after Job, 1 Baruch before Lamentations and the Letter of Jeremiah thereafter, Susanna before Daniel (which includes the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews) and Bel and the Dragon thereafter, and the Additions to Esther in the book of Esther. Luther’s edition of the bible integrated the following sequence: Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Jesus Sirach, 1 Baruch (together with the Letter of Jeremiah), 1 and 2 Maccabees, Additions to Esther and Daniel as well as the Prayer of Manasseh. The Dutch Authorised Version offers the following sequence: 3 and 4 (!) Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus Sirach, 1 Baruch (together with the Letter of Jeremiah), Additions to Esther and Daniel, the Prayer of Manasseh and 1–3 (!) Maccabees.
The apocryphal books were originally written in Greek (e.g. 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon) or in Hebrew, c.q. Aramaic (e.g. 1 Maccabees, Tobit). They bear witness to a variety of literary genres: historical writing (1 Maccabees), legend (2 and 3 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, 1 Baruch, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), poetry (the Prayer of Manasseh, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews) and wisdom literature (Jesus Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon). From the literary-historical perspective it would be best to present the apocryphal books together with the pseudepigraphal writings and several of the Dead Sea Scrolls, subdivided according to literary genre (e.g. historical and legendary narratives; teachings in narrative form, teachings in didactic form, poetic writings and apocalypses). An attractive alternative would be to treat all the said documents according to their religious-cultural and social Sitz im Leben, but such a subdivision is virtually impossible since the origins of several of the books is unknown or the subject of dispute. At the risk of losing sight of the literary-historical associations between the apocrypha and the pseudepigrapha, the present chapters will adopt the tradition that endeavours to treat both series of documents independently.

a. III Ezra

Magna est veritas et praevalet

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes, commentary:

Charles I, pp. 1–58 (Cook); Kautzsch I, pp. 1–23 (Guthe); Riessler, pp. 247–254, 1281–1282 (chapters 3 and 4); Metzger, pp. 1–22 (Harrelson); JSHRZ I/5 (K. F. Pohlmann), pp. 375–425; J. M. Myers, I & II Esdras

See JSHRZ.
Monographs and articles:


In addition to the Greek and Latin versions\(^3\) 3 Ezra has been passed down to us in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic and Armenian,\(^4\) taking its name from the Vulgate\(^5\) in which the canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah are designated as 1 and 2 Ezra respectively. The designation 1 Esdras (or Esdras A) commonly used in Anglo-Saxon literature is based on the fact that the document precedes Ezra and Nehemiah in manuscripts of the Septuagint, which refer to the combined books of Ezra and Nehemiah as 2 Esdras. In order to distinguish the work from the other books of Ezra the designation “the Greek Ezra” is also employed.

No single apocryphal book of the Old Testament exhibits such a high degree of kinship with the canonical literature of the Hebrew Bible as 3 Ezra. The document consists for the most part of a translation of 2 Chronicles 35–36 (although differing from time to time

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\(^5\) The book is included in an appendix to the Vulgate and is not considered canonical in Roman Catholic circles. Luther’s translation of the apocrypha does not include it.
in terms of content from the Masoretic Text and not in harmony with LXX), the entire book of Ezra (with the exception of Ezra 4:6) and Neh. 7:72–8:14a (Hebr. 7:72–8:13a). The striking absence of the so-called memoirs of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1–7) in 3 Ezra has helped confirm the hypothesis that Nehemiah 8 originally followed the book of Ezra and served as the conclusion of a history of the Jewish community after the Babylonian exile first conceived by the Chronist.

In contrast to the absence of Nehemiah 1–7, however, the work contains two interpolations additional to the biblical text that forms its basis: 3 Ezra 1:21–22 and 3:1–5:6. The latter text segment contains the narrative of the three pages (bodyguards) at the court of King Darius (probably Darius I the Great) and a Weisheitsdichtung drafted within the framework of court history. When asked what they considered to be the strongest thing in the world, the first answered ‘wine’, the second ‘the king’ and the third ‘women’, but above all things ‘the truth’ is strongest. The third courtier, identified in the present text as Zerubbabel (4:13), emerges as winner and is allowed to determine his own prize. He asks permission to allow the Jewish exiles to return, to reconstruct Jerusalem and the temple and to send back the temple treasures and the king grants his request. Some scholars maintain that this interpolated narrative, which has been adapted along Jewish lines, may hark back to a Persian original while others argue that it is based on a Greek story.

Commentators disagree as to whether one should understand 3 Ezra as a supplemented fragment of a larger whole, which once con-


8 The allusion to the truth with its cosmic and ethical characteristics as the strongest would appear to have been added to the narrative at a later date.
sisted of an original version of the Chronistic history, or as a compilation of narratives from the said historical opus. The first hypothesis is supported by the book’s abrupt beginning and the fact that it ends in the middle of a sentence. Others object, however, that the final words of the document, which allude to the continuation of the narrative in Nehemiah, can be taken as a gloss. The fact that the author of 3 Ezra evidently intended to write a history of the temple in Jerusalem in which Josiah, Zerubbabel and Ezra were given a prominent role (cf. the postscript of the Latin translation in the codex Colbertianus: de templi restitutione) serves as an important argument against the fragment hypothesis. The narrative begins with a reference to King Josiah’s celebration of the Passover, relates the period of religious decline after his death, alludes to the return of the exiles and the new beginning under Zerubbabel and culminates in a description of the ultimate restoration of the temple and Ezra’s proclamation of the Law. The author’s particular reverence for King Josiah is apparent from the interpolation of 3 Ezra 1:21–22 and for Zerubbabel from the adoption and adaptation of the tale of the three pages. Significant alterations to the canonical Vorlage serve to place special emphasis on the temple and its liturgy (cf. the tendentious reworking of Ezra 4:7–24 in 3 Ezra 2:16–30). It is highly unlikely, therefore, that 3 Ezra (with its interpolations) represents a fragment of a tradition older than the canonical version of the Chronistic history.

Josephus’ use of 3 Ezra in his Jewish Antiquities as the basis for his representation of the history of Ezra is rooted in his preference for the quality of the Greek it contains when compared with the translation of the Septuagint.

The nature of the Greek employed in the document and its apparent allusions to the book of Daniel serve in all probability to locate it in the second half of the second century BCE. It reached its height of popularity, however, during the first centuries of the Common Era. The people’s exclamation in response to Zerubbabel’s proclamation that the truth is the strongest ultimately acquired an elevated

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status: Magna est veritas et praevalt (Great is truth, and strongest of all: 4:41). Augustine was even inspired to ascribe the latter text a Christological interpretation (De civitate Dei 18,36).

b. **Tobit**

He lived in prosperity, giving alms and continually blessing God and acknowledging God’s majesty (14:2b)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

In light of the discoveries at Qumran, the book of Tobit, referred to in the Vulgate and in Luther’s translation as Tobias, would appear to have circulated in a Hebrew and Aramaic version shortly after it came into existence. The multiplicity of Greek recensions together with the Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian translations (all dependent on a Greek text) clearly bear witness to the book’s popularity. Indeed, Jerome was even able to make use of an Aramaic manuscript in preparing his Vulgate translation.

The book consists of a framing narrative (1–4; 13–14) and a journey narrative (5–12), relating how a pious individual form the tribe of Naphtali named Tobit (Hebr. Tobî) was deported to Nineveh together with his wife Anna and their son Tobias during the reign of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V. While in exile Tobit strictly

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13 Three Greek recensions exist of the book of Tobit: Vaticanus (B); Sinaiticus (S), which offers a longer text and is apparently the best; the minuscules 44, 106, 107, 610 and pap. Oxyrhynchus, cf. N. Poulssen, op. cit. (commentary 1968), pp. 7–8 and J. D. Thomas, The Greek Text of Tobit, op. cit., 1972.

14 For this translation see, for example, Charles I, pp. 176–180, in which attention is also given to later Hebrew and Aramaic reworkings.
upheld the Law of God and displayed kindness towards his neighbours, especially by burying kinsfolk who had been executed by King Sennacherib and thereby putting his own life in danger. Although the confiscation of his possessions reduced him to poverty and in spite of being ill-fatedly struck blind, his faith in God continued unscathed. The life of the pious Jewess Sarah, the daughter of Raguel who lived in Ecbatana in Media, is equally unfortunate. Married seven times, she lost each of her husbands on their wedding night to the demon Asmodeus. In spite of the fact that she was accused of murder, she continued to praise God and beg him to save her. With a view to saving both Tobit and Sarah from their suffering, God sends the angel Raphael to earth. When Tobit commissions his son to undertake a journey to Media in order to recover a sum of money deposited with a certain Gabael, Tobias first addresses a farewell speech to his father, asking him thereafter if he might seek someone to accompany him on his journey. Presenting himself as Azariah, a clansman of Tobit, the angel Raphael agrees to travel to Media with Tobias. The journey narrative relates how Tobias, together with his dog, arrives at the river Tigris and catches hold of a large fish. Following Raphael’s instructions he preserves the fish’s gall, heart and liver. After they arrive in Ecbatana, Raguel offers Tobias his daughter Sarah in matrimony. In the bridal chambers Tobias burns the liver and heart of the fish, the smoke of which so repels the demon that he flees to distant parts. During the fourteen days of the marriage feast Raphael collects the money deposited with Gabael and returns with Tobias and Sarah to Tobit and Anna. Tobit then uses the gall of the fish to cure his father’s blindness, celebrating thereafter with a great feast. When father and son express their desire to reward Azariah for his services, the latter makes himself known as the angel Raphael, sent by God to reward Tobit’s steadfast piety in the midst of suffering as an answer to his prayer. Once the angel had departed, Tobit is moved to sing a song of praise, after which he prophesies to his son that Jerusalem and the

temple are to be destroyed, but God in his mercy will rebuild them. He appeals to Tobias to leave Nineveh because Jonah had predicted the fall of the city. After the death of his parents, Tobias sets off with his wife and children to his parents-in-law in Ecbatana where he himself dies at a great age.

Any claim to historical reliability is already undermined by the book’s geographical and historical inaccuracies: the author would appear to have been ignorant of the fact that Nineveh is located on the banks of the Tigris (Tob. 6:1); members of the tribe of Naphtali were deported into exile by Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kgs 15:29) and not during the reign of Shalmaneser V (Tob. 1:2); Sargon II was the successor of Shalmaneser V and not Sennacherib (Tob. 1:15).

The book of Tobit can be understood as an edifying and paradigmatic novella, breathing a spirit of extraordinary godliness and tender domesticity yet revealing how Jewish piety and Ancient Near Eastern superstition had come to be intermingled. According to Ruppert (1972), the book represents a “Modellfall nachgestaltender Erzählung”. In terms of form and, in part, in terms of content, the framing narrative is dependent on the story of Ahikar (see our treatment of the Elephantine papyri above and cf. 1:21–22, in which Ahikar, Tobit’s kinsman [], is referred to as chancellor to King Esarhaddon; see also 2:10; 11:19; 14:10 and the wisdom sayings contained in Tobit’s farewell address [chapter 4] that are likewise reminiscent of the story of Ahikar).19 The journey report exhibits folkloristic elements and parallels with the popular tale of the “grateful dead”.20 The Armenian version of the latter relates how a prosperous merchant takes pity on the body of a man who had been mistreated and killed by his debtors, giving it a proper burial. The merchant thereafter encounters personal misfortune and is reduced to poverty. On the advice of an anonymous servant he marries the

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only daughter of a rich man from the city who had already lost five husbands on their wedding night. On their own wedding night a snake emerges from the woman’s mouth and tries to kill the merchant, at which point the servant reappears, catches the snake and reveals himself to be the dead man he had buried.

The Tobit narrative not only divides the hero into two individuals (father and son) and transforms the dead man into an angel, it also represents a monotheistic reworking of the story upon which it is based. The narrative’s typically Jewish character is fortified by the tradition-historical framework, with its echoes of Old Testament motifs, which provides us with a picture of life in the diaspora in the century prior to the beginning of the Common Era.

While the book may have come into existence in the eastern diaspora, the emphasis on the temple prevents us from excluding the possibility of Palestinian origin. A number of scholars argue in favour of Egyptian derivation, while Milik (1966) proposes that its source should be sought in Samaritan circles. Whatever the truth may be, the work was probably first written in Aramaic and must have emerged before the middle of the second century BCE since it was familiar to the author of the book of Jubilees (see below under Pseudepigrapha; compare Tob. 5:17–21 with Jub. 27:13–18) and is represented among the Dead Sea Scrolls (in the remains of one Hebrew and four Aramaic manuscripts from the first century BCE). A date for the genesis of the document in the final decades of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE would thus appear to be acceptable.

The book exercised a profound influence on Christian marriage customs and ceremonies deep into the middle ages. Countless artists, including Rembrandt, have been able to claim it as a source of inspiration.

c. Judith

No one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion (8:8)

Text editions:


Translations with introductions and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

While the 16 chapters of the Book of Judith may have been originally composed in Aramaic,\(^{22}\) it remains more likely that they were first written in Hebrew.\(^{23}\) The history of textual transmission of the versions is extremely complicated and far from clear.\(^{24}\) Given its style and use of language, the Greek translation, which has survived to the present day in a number of recensions, is evidently based on a Hebrew \textit{Vorlage} although it serves as the foundation of the Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian and Old Latin versions. The Vulgate version of Judith represents more of a paraphrase than a translation and is shorter than the text found in the \textit{lxx}. It nevertheless contains a number of additional verses not found in the \textit{lxx} and the Old Latin version.\(^{25}\) In spite of arguments to the contrary (Dubarle 1966, 1969, 1975), the Hebrew manuscripts written in the middle-ages were probably not based on an ancient tradition. The fact that virtually nothing is known with respect to the Aramaic tradition makes it difficult to determine whether the latter manuscripts approximate to any degree to the Aramaic version of the book, which Jerome was able to use in his translation of the Vulgate.

The book relates how Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Assyria,\(^{26}\) sent his chief general Holophernes on an expedition to exact revenge against the people of the west because they had refused to enter into a coalition with him against the Medes. Once Holophernes had arrived at his destination, however, the Jews refused to submit to

\(^{22}\) See E. J. Bruns, “Judith or Jael?”, \textit{CBQ} 16 (1954), 12–14.


him and his advance was arrested by the population of Bethulia, a strategically located city on the way to Jerusalem. Surprised by such unexpected resistance, Holophernes turns to the leaders of the Moabites and the Ammonites for information concerning this people of whom he has no knowledge. The Ammonite leader Achior recounts to him the history of Israel, emphasising that the people remain invincible as long as they trust in God. Holophernes, for whom there is no other god than Nebuchadnezzar (6:2), completely ignores Achior’s warning and plots to hand him over to the Israelites in Bethulia with the intention of including him in the destruction of the city. The people of the city are nevertheless able to hold back Holophernes’ attack with slings and stones and to force his slaves to leave Achior behind. After their retreat, the Israelites free Achior and bring him into Bethulia. Holophernes then proceeds to set a siege around the city. Exhausted by the blockade and facing drought, the people of the city begin to lose confidence and are prepared to capitulate. Under the leadership of Uzziah, however, the city council are able to obtain a five day postponement. Judith, a charming, rich and pious widow, reproaches the people of the city for their lack of faith in God’s ultimate power to save. After uttering an impassioned prayer, Judith sets off with her maid towards the Assyrian camp where she remains for a number of days while strictly upholding the Jewish dietary laws. Having gained favour with Holophernes she seizes her opportunity while the general is drunk and beheads him (cf. the deeds of Jael alluded to in Judg. 4:21). She takes Holophernes’ head back to Bethulia where it is hung out for display on the city wall. Achior converts to Judaism and the enthusiastic citizens of Bethulia set out to battle against their besiegers. The Assyrians suffer defeat and are hounded out of the land while Judith, who sings a song of thanksgiving to God in gratitude for the people’s military success, is highly honoured by the High Priest and the council of Israel’s elders. In spite of a number of marriage proposals

she remains alone. Her death at the ripe age of 105 is deeply mourned by all of Israel.

Although the book is written in a realistic and exhilarating narrative style, it is better understood as a quasi-historical novel than an allegorical tale.30 From the latter perspective, however, it remains possible to interpret Judith as Israel, Bethulia (as Bet-ëlôach, house of God) as the temple, Nineveh as pride and haughtiness, Nebuchadnezzar as the devil and Holofernes as his accomplice. The present author is more inclined, nevertheless, to envisage Nebuchadnezzar as representing Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Holophernes as the general Nicanor (cf. 1 Macc. 7:43–50) and Nineveh as the city of Antioch. The document contains too many chronological, geographical and historical inaccuracies to be considered a reliable historical source. While Grintz is inclined to date the book to the Persian period,31 it is more likely that it was written in Jerusalem by a Pharisee impressed by the Maccabean victory over their Syrian oppressors in the second half of the second century BCE. The exhortatory and reassuring character of the book seems quite appropriate at a time in which the Jewish people were facing great distress and were much in need of support in order to maintain their faith in God’s final victory and uphold the commandments to the last detail, especially the dietary and purity laws. Allusion to Greek customs (3:7; 15:12–13), the council of elders (gerousia: 4:8; 11:14), the “Assyrians” (= Syrians), the cult of the king (3:8; 6:2) and the striking agreements between Judith and 1 Macc. 7:43–50 serve to further corroborate the proposed dating of the text.

The book’s edifying content engendered enormous respect among Christians and Jews in the early Christian period and in the middle ages.32 It has likewise served as a source of inspiration for a host of poets, painters and playwrights.

30 E. Haag, Studien 1963 (“eine freie parabolische Geschichtsdarstellung”).
31 J. M. Grintz points out in his Sefer Tehudith, Jerusalem 1957 (Hebrew with English summary) that the Holophernes and Bagoas, his servant alluded to in the book represent Orophernes and Bagoas, who participated in the punitive expedition mounted by Artaxerxes III Ochus (359–338 BCE) against Egypt. While this may be true, the remainder of the book does not square to any significant extent with the Persian period. While the command to eliminate all “indigenous gods” (3:8) is difficult to ascribe (even in tradition-historical terms) to Persian kings, it fits in well with the tradition concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
d. *The Wisdom of Solomon*

Righteousness is immortal (1:15)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


Originally written in Greek, the Wisdom of Solomon is strongly reminiscent of the Greek-Hellenistic conceptual world. The Latin translation, which bears the title *Sapientia Salomonis* or *Liber sapientia*, as well as the Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, and Ethiopic translations are all dependent on the Greek primary text.\(^\text{33}\)

\(^{33}\) For a detailed discussion of this text edition see the text edition of J. Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, pp. 7–35. See also W. Baars, “Ein neugefundenes Bruchstück aus
The work can be divided into three parts. Following an exhortation to love righteousness addressed to “the rulers of the earth” (1:1–15), the first segment (1:1–6:21) makes much of the contrast between the righteous and the godless (2:21–4:19) and is framed by allusions to the unsound reasoning of the godless in 1:16–2:20 and 4:20–5:23. Only the righteous have access to wisdom. In spite of the taunts and derision of the godless, they can expect a glorious future because God will grant them immortality. In the second segment (6:22–10:2) the author, who identifies himself with Solomon without making direct reference to his name, promises to reveal the true nature and origin of wisdom and relates how the latter was granted him as his companion for life in response to his petition.

The segment concludes with a sketch of the saving power of wisdom in history beginning with Adam and ending with Moses (10:1–21). The third segment (chapters 11–19) portrays wisdom’s undertakings in the contrast between Israel and Egypt and contains an excursus on divine clemency (11:15–12:22) and an excursus on idolatry (chapters 13–15).

Scholars are at odds as to whether one should ascribe the Wisdom of Solomon to a single author or to a collective (see Georgi, JSHRZ 1980). The present author is inclined to follow the single author hypothesis since the repetitions, contradictions and linguistic variations evident in the book do not necessarily prove the contrary. While unusual Greek words and expressions are scattered throughout the book, personal names are completely lacking. The range of ideas represented in the work is fundamentally uniform and the spontaneous style, which would tend to indicate the musings of an ardent preacher rather than those of a systematic thinker, is evident throughout.

The anonymous author of the work, who was familiar with Greek rhetoric and Hellenistic philosophical systems, probably lived among the Jewish diaspora in Egypt, most likely in Alexandria. Georgi (JSHRZ 1980, pp. 395–397) is inclined to reject the latter, however, preferring to locate the author in Syria (cf. also Zimmermann 1966).
As a teacher closely linked with the religious traditions of his people, the author would appear to have written his work in the first instance for his fellow Jews in a period of increasing acculturation, exhorting them to remain faithful to Israel’s religious inheritance. According to his mind, a wise and virtuous life is only possible in such a cosmopolitan environment when it is based on the wisdom revealed in God’s Law. Rooted in this conviction, the author endeavours to establish a synthesis between biblical wisdom and Hellenistic philosophical systems with the help of Greek philosophical terminology and pagan stylistic forms. The key Greek virtues (self-control, prudence, righteousness and courage: 8:7) and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul play a significant role therein. The author’s portrayal of Lady Wisdom (Sophia; cf. Prov. 8:22–31) harks back to the cosmic powers and characteristics of the goddess Isis (Reese 1970, pp. 36–50; Mack 1973, pp. 63–107).

The literary form of the tractate, which exhibits the features of the *logos protreptikos* or exhortatory discourse, intended to urge the listener/reader to speak and act in a particular way, is entirely different from classical biblical wisdom literature. Short wisdom sayings, such as those found in abundance in the book of Proverbs, are rare in the Wisdom of Solomon.

While the book may have come into existence in the final decades prior to the beginning of the Common Era (Larcher), a date during the reign of emperor Caligula (37–41 CE) is nevertheless more likely. Scholars continue to dispute the possibility that Paul was familiar with the work.

e. *Jesus Sirach*

The Law overflows, like the Pishon, with Wisdom, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits (Sir. 24:25).

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Text editions:


Indexes and concordances:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Charles I, pp. 268–517 (Box and Oesterley); Kautzsch I, pp. 230–457 (Rysse); JSHRZ III/5 (G. Sauer), pp. 481–644 (lit.); R. Smend (sr.), Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt, Berlin 1906; N. Peters, Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus übersetzt und erklärt (EH 25), Munster 1913; A. Eberharter, Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus überetzt und erklärt (HSAT VI/5), Bonn 1925; B. Alfrink, Het boek Ecclesiasticus, Bruges 1935; V. Hamp (EB) 19622; A. van den Born, Wijsheid van Jesus Sirach (BOT), Roermond 1968; J. G. Snaith, Ecclesiastic or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (CNEB), Cambridge 1974; P. W. Skehan and A. A. di Lella, The Wisdom of Ben Sira (AB 39), New York 1987 (lit.!).

Monographs and articles:


Bibliography:


Originally written in Hebrew, the book of the *Wisdom of Jesus Sirach*, also referred to as (liber) *Ecclesiasticus*, constitutes one of the most splendid and, indeed, one of the oldest documents of the apocryphal literature. It is, in fact, the only apocryphal book in which the author is identified: he is referred to in 50:27 as Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach. He lived in Jerusalem (50:27), where he was active in his house of instruction as a scribe and teacher of wisdom (51:23; cf. 24:30–34). According to 31(34):9–12 and 39:4 he was a well-travelled individual, familiar with “what is good and evil in the human lot” (39:4).

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37 Anglo-Saxon circles tend to speak of “The Wisdom of Ben-Sira” or simply “Ben-Sira” or “Sirach”.
38 Sirach is probably a family name.
The author’s grandson translated the book into Greek after travelling to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of Ptolemy VII Euergetes II (132 BCE; see prologue to the Greek translation 27ff.), and he probably published his work shortly after the death of Ptolemy in 117 BCE. One can conclude from this information, therefore, that the work of Jesus Sirach first saw the light of day around 180 BCE. The hymn (chapter 50) in praise of the High Priest Simon II (219–196 BCE), the father of the High Priest Onias III deposed during the reign of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, serves to confirm this dating.

More than 60% of the Hebrew text of the book has now become available to us after the discoveries in the geniza (refuse-room) of the Ezra synagogue in Cairo (since 1896), the fragments discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls (since 1947) and the excavations at Masada (1963/64). The Hebrew manuscripts found in the Cairo Geniza represent two distinct text recensions (HT I and HT II). The older of the two exhibits close kinship with the Greek translation of Sirach’s grandson (Gr I) and the younger, longer version would appear to have served in part as the foundation of the so-called second Greek translation (Gr II) that came into existence around the beginning of the common era and is based in essence on Gr I. The Old Latin text, which Jerome incorporated in the Vulgate, is based in principle on Gr II. The Syriac translation was made on the basis of a Hebrew Vorlage that had combined the aforementioned recensions HT I and HT II although it also exhibits influence from Gr II together with its own variants. The document is also known to us from the Syro-Hexapla and from Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Old-Slavonic and Arabic versions.

40 Jesus Sirach leaves the impression that Simon the High Priest was already dead when he put together his book.
42 The translator of G II did not fashion a new translation but made use rather of manuscripts with the text of G I. Where he considered it necessary he translated on the basis of HT II. G II has 300 verse lines more than G I, provided in smaller print in the text edition of Ziegler.
Chapters 1–42 of the book contain a colourful collection of wisdom sayings, related to all sorts of individuals and a variety of experiential contexts, interspersed with a number of wisdom teachings (1:1–20; 4:11–19; 14:20–15:8) songs of praise (chapter 24), hymns, prayers and songs of thanksgiving. The segment running from 42:15 to 49:16 contains a hymn to God’s wisdom revealed in creation (42:15–43:33) and a song of praise of the fathers (44–49: laus patrum). The latter is of some significance for our understanding of the history of the canon of the Old Testament. Chapter 50 contains the aforementioned hymn in praise of the High Priest Simon II (50:1–24) as an appendix to the praise of the fathers and a short concluding text. The final chapter represents an appendix to the work as a whole and contains a thanksgiving psalm (51:1–12), a hymn (51:12 i–xvi), an autobiographical acrostic concerning Jesus Sirach’s pursuit of wisdom and appeal to live according to its precepts (51:13–30).

Although the work of Jesus Sirach exhibits kinship with the book of the Wisdom of Solomon, the former contains longer segments, consistently 10 to 22/23 lines in length, as opposed to the latter’s primarily one-line aphorisms.

In spite of the fact that the author lived in an environment characterised by Hellenistic influence, the book of Jesus Sirach remains typically and classically Jewish, although the author occasionally employs Hellenistic and particularly Stoic terminology. In contrast to the author of the Wisdom of Solomon’s reference to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the author of Jesus Sirach makes no allusion to such a doctrine. Jesus Sirach’s intention was not only to urge his readers to devoutness and piety, the foundation of wisdom, and to illustrate the blessings that would result therefrom, he also had ambitious designs: eternal wisdom was sent to earth at a particular moment in history and embodied itself in the Law (chapter 24).\(^{51}\) His work thus represents “the story of grace told from the perspective of eternity” (Nickelsburg) and expresses God’s covenant with Israel and the election of his people in a unique fashion. As a scribe he endeavoured to bring experience and worldly wisdom into line with the concept of God’s universal wisdom in creation and history.\(^{52}\)

While the book did not find its way into the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic sources reveal nevertheless that it enjoyed enormous respect in Jewish circles for a considerable period of time. The familiar hymn “Now thank we all our God” is based on Jesus Sirach (50:22–24).\(^{53}\)

f. I Baruch

We followed the intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God (1:22)

Text editions:


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\(^{53}\) Cf. A. S. van der Woude, “‘Nun danket alle Gott’: de voorgeschiedenis van een beroemd kerklied”, in: Gratias agimus. Opstellen over Danken en Loven, aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. W. F. Dankbaar (Studies van het Instituut voor Liturgiewetenschap nr. 2), Groningen 1975, pp. 141–148.

Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

Several documents have been ascribed to Baruch, the friend and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah (see also below under Pseudepigrapha). The work being treated in the present paragraph represents an example thereof, an apocryphal book that would appear to be much indebted to the Old Testament. The work is referred to as *Propheta Baruch* or as *1 Baruch* and is located in the Septuagint between Jeremiah and Lamentations; the Vulgate, however, locates it after the latter. The oldest text edition that we have at our disposal is the Greek version of the Septuagint. A number of other ancient translations have survived to the present, all of them dependent on *lxx*: Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian and Arabic. It is more or less certain that the book was originally written in its entirety in Hebrew. Some scholars argue, nevertheless, that 1:1–14 and 3:9–5:9 (c.q. 4:5–5:9) were originally written in Greek.

Setting the introduction (1:1–14) to one side, the content of the document can be divided into three parts: 1:15–3:8; 3:9–4:4 and 4:5–5:9. In spite of the fact that the said segments differ considerably from one another in terms of form and content, they nevertheless share some common themes: conversion, obedience to the Law and return from exile to the promised land. The first segment is written in prose, the remaining two in poetry.

The introduction to the book (1:1–14) tells us that Baruch composed his work in Babylon five years after the destruction of Jerusalem and read it aloud to King Jeconiah and to the exiles who lived in Babylon “on the banks of the river Sud”. Deeply shocked by the content of what they hear, the assembly send the book to Jerusalem, together with money and silver vessels, for it to be read by the High Priest “when you make your confession in the house of the Lord on the days of the festivals and at the appointed seasons”. The scroll also exhorts its readers/listeners not only to pray for the exiles but also for King Nebuchadnezzar and his son (!) Belshazzar. 1:15–3:8 follows with a prayer of atonement in the style of a collective
lament; 1:15–2:19 exhibits remarkable agreements with Dan. 9:4–19. A distinct caesura follows after 3:8 with the transition from prose to poetry and a change in the name employed for God. Written in the style of the wisdom literature, 3:9–4:4 consists of an exhortation addressed to Israel counselling the people to change their ways and to live in obedience to the Law given them by God. It contains elements reminiscent of Proverbs, Job 28, Deutero-Isaiah and Jesus Sirach 24. The third segment (4:5–5:9), in which Jerusalem is portrayed as a widow robbed of her children, offers a positive perspective on the return of the exiles. The final portion of the third segment (4:36–5:9) exhibits striking points of association with the Psalms of Solomon 11:2–7 (see below under Pseudepigrapha).

While many scholars have argued that the distinct segments of the book should be ascribed to different authors from different periods of time, Steck (op. cit., 1993, pp. 253–265) has demonstrated with conviction that the document represents a literary unity.

The dating of 1 Baruch is the subject of much debate. Although some commentators favour the period after 70 CE, the fact that only a fleeting allusion is made to the destruction of the (Solomonic) temple (2:26) and the absence of any witness to a belief in resurrection, serve to make a much earlier date a reasonable possibility. Other scholars have thus opted for the period of Pompeii (middle first century BCE). Clear associations between the conclusion of 1 Baruch and the Psalms of Solomon 11 (written after 67 BCE), whereby the latter would appear to be dependent on 1 Baruch rather than the other way round, together with strong similarities between 1 Bar. 1:15–2:19 and Dan. 9:4–19 support a date for the book in the period of the Maccabees around 163–162 (Goldstein, op. cit., 1979–1980; Steck, op. cit., 1993, pp. 285–303).

While evidence exists that the work once had a role to play in the liturgy on the occasion of the remembrance of the destruction of the temple on the ninth day of the month of Ab, the work later came to enjoy greater respect among Christians than among Jews. During the Arian controversy,

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58 B. N. Wambacq, “Les prières de Baruch (1,15–2,19) et de Daniel (9,5–19)”, *Biblica* 40 (1959), 463–475. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that 1 Bar. 1:15–2:19 and Dan. 9:5–19 hark back to the same source.

3:37–38 was considered by a number of Church Fathers to be of considerable importance because they saw in it a prediction of the incarnation of uncreated Wisdom (Logos):

He (God) found the whole way to knowledge,
and gave her to his servant Jacob,
and to Israel, whom he loved.
Afterward she appeared on earth
and lived with humankind.60

**g. The Letter of Jeremiah**

It is you, O Lord, whom we must worship (5b)

**Text editions:**


**Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:**


**Monographs and articles:**


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The Letter of Jeremiah, in Latin Epistula Jeremiae, is located in the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus after the book of Lamentations. Other Greek manuscripts, the Vulgate and Luther’s translation append the letter to 1 Baruch as a sixth chapter. The 72 verse work (excluding the superscription), however, represents an independent textual unit. While it was most likely first written in Hebrew, it has also survived to the present day in Greek, Latin, Syriac and a number of other languages. A small Greek fragment from the letter dating from around 100 BCE was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in Cave 7 of Qumran (7Q2).

The document, which would appear to be more of an exhortatory sermon than a letter, is intended to urge the people of Israel to maintain the faithful observance of their religion. It purports to have been written by Jeremiah and is addressed to the exiles deported by King Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon (cf. Jeremiah 29). Rooted in the thematic content of Jer. 10:1–16 (cf. also Isa. 44:9–20), it contains a warning against the worship of pagan gods (especially those of Babylon) written in a bitingly satirical, verbose and rather unoriginal style. The author employs a selection of arguments to portray the powerlessness and uselessness of such gods and to illustrate the licentious behaviour associated with their cult (42–43).

Based on the allusion to a warning against idolatry issued by Jeremiah in 2 Macc. 2:1–2, scholars generally accept that the document was at least in circulation around 100 BCE. The suggestion that 2 Maccabees makes reference to the letter as such, however, is far from established. The aforementioned Qumran fragment provides evidence nevertheless that the work already existed at the beginning of the first century BCE. The exact date and place of writing can no longer be determined with any certainty. The remark contained in v. 2 of the Letter, stating that the exile was to endure for seven generations, may suggest (if “seven” is not intended as a round

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61 C. C. Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature, New Haven 1945, pp. 64–65 has argued in favour of an Aramaic Vorlage.
figure) the last decennia of the fourth century BCE as the period in which the text came into existence. The anonymous author of the document probably lived in Palestine.

**h. Additions to the Book of Esther**

The wicked one has us by the throat, Haman and his soldiers (W. Barnard)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

The Greek version of the book of Esther contains nine additions, numbering 107 verses in total and exhibiting a variety of different features that do not have a counterpart in the Hebrew text. The said additions are incorporated into the Greek text and are likewise to be found in the Old Latin, Ethiopic and Armenian translations, which are based on a Greek Vorlage. Jerome’s Vulgate, which was first based on the Hebrew text, places them one after the other at the end of the book of Esther (10:4–16:24).64 Most printed editions of the Septuagint distinguish the respective segments from the parallel chapters of the Masoretic Text with a capital letter (A, B, C etc.) as well as their own verse divisions.

1. The dream of Mordecai (A 1–11; Vulgate 11:2–12; at the beginning of the book);
2. Mordecai’s discovery of the plot against Artaxerxes (A 12–17; Vulgate 12:1–6a; after A 1–11 and before Esther 1);
3. Artaxerxes’ edict dictating the destruction of the Jews (B 1–7; Vulgate 12:6b–13:7; after Esther 3:13);
4. Mordecai’s prayer to the Lord to save the Jews from destruction (C 1–11; Vulgate 13:8–18; after Esther 4:17);
5. The prayer of Esther (C 12–30; Vulgate 14:1–19; after C 1–11);
6. Esther presents herself before the king (D 1–16; Vulgate 15:4–19; after C 12–30);
7. Artaxerxes’ edict dictating the protection of the Jews (E 1–24; Vulgate 16:1–24; after Esther 8:12);
8. Mordecai’s explanation of the dream (F 1–10; Vulgate 10:4–13; after Esther 10:3);
9. Colophon to the Greek translation (F 11; Vulgate 11:1; after F 1–10).

As we know, the Hebrew version of the book of Esther lacks any mention to the divine name and contains no explicitly formulated religious references. The Additions clearly endeavour either to fill up these “lacunae” or to restate that which was considered to have been stated implicitly in more explicit terms. Viewed as a whole, therefore, one can see that the Additions consist of prayers intended to

64 For the text editions mentioned see R. Hanhart, op. cit., 1966, pp. 7–36.
deepen the religious intensity of the book, edicts intended to reinforce the plausibility of the narrative, and anecdotes rooted in pious fantasy intended to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the reader. Traces are also evident of an increasing glorification of Mordecai and a growing hostility towards the heathen. The fact that the material does not belong to the original text of Esther is amply substantiated by the number of discrepancies in detail between the Hebrew text and the Additions (variety of dating, the designation of Haman as the Agagite [= Amalekite] in Esther 3:1 and as the Macedonian in E 10, etc.).

The Additions were probably inserted into the Book of Esther in two stages. A, C, D and F would appear to have been originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic before being translated into Greek, while B and E were clearly written in Greek and added after the conclusion of the Greek translation (cf. Martin [1975], who maintains nevertheless that F was either written in Greek or represents a free Greek translation of a Semitic Vorlage).

In light of the fact that the colophon (F)\(^6\) alludes to the transferral of a Greek translation of the entire book to Egypt “in the fourth year of Ptolemy and Cleopatra”, it seems reasonable to accept a date prior to 77 BCE with respect to the origin of the Additions, certainly if the Ptolemy intended was Ptolemy XII (80–51 BCE). It is likewise reasonable to locate the Additions’ point of origin in Palestine (with the possible exception of B and E, which may stem from Alexandria).

The song of Esther (C 12–30) can be found in rhyming form in the hymn “O Lord God our King”.

i. Additions to the Book of Daniel

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever (3:57)

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Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


Song of the Three Men:


Susanna:


Bel and the Dragon:


As with the book of Esther, the Septuagint version of the book of Daniel (together with Theodotion) contains segments that are not to
be found in the Masoretic tradition. The Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian translations are dependent on Theodotion. The Additions are four in number:

1) the Prayer of Azariah (lxx Dan. 3:25–45) following a link text (lxx Dan. 3:24)
2) the Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace (lxx Dan. 3:52–90) following a link text (lxx 3:46–51)
3) the Story of Susanna and the Two Elders;
4) the Story of Bel and the Dragon.

In the text of Theodotion the Story of Susanna is located before Daniel 1 and that of Bel and the Dragon is added to Daniel 12. In the Vulgate, however, Susanna is taken up as Daniel 13 and Bel and the Dragon as Daniel 14. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace are incorporated into Daniel 3 (between Dan. 3:23 and 24).

The Prayer of Azariah (i.e. Abednego, one of the three men who refused to worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar [cf. Daniel 3 and 1:7] and was thus cast into the fiery furnace) represents—with the exception of lxx 3:41–45—a collective lament that does not fit within the context. The poem was originally composed in Hebrew or Aramaic (see Koch 1987, pp. 67–68) and would appear to stem from the period of persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, i.e. the final decade of the first half of the second century BCE (cf. 3:32,38). After a short transitional prose text relating how an angel of the Lord made the inside of the furnace “as though a moist wind were whistling through it”, the poem continues with the Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace (lxx 3:52–90). The latter contains an ode addressed to God (lxx 3:52–56: the “Benedictus es”) together with a hymn reminiscent in terms of content of Psalm 148 and in terms of form of Psalm 136 (lxx 3:57–90: the “Benedicite”). The latter employs a refrain (“sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever”) to exhort all creation to praise the Lord. Verse 88, in which the names of the three men are mentioned explicitly for the first time, would appear to be secondary. As a matter of fact, the Song of the Three Men would appear to have been an already existing

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66 Only the Syro-Hexapla and the oldest edition of the Vetus Latina are dependent on lxx.

song that was added to Daniel 3. Scholars are virtually certain that the ode and the hymn were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, although a date of origin is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy (second century BCE?).

The *Story of Susanna and the Two Elders* (chapter 13 in the Vulgate), a shorter version of which is to be found in the Septuagint and a longer version in Theodotion, relates how an extraordinarily beautiful and pious Jewess Susanna, the wife of the prosperous Joakim who lived in Babylon, was spied upon by two men while she was taking her bath. After Susanna refused to capitulate to their indecent suggestions the two men accused her of adultery. Maintaining her innocence throughout, the two men drag her before the courts and she is found guilty. The young and wise Daniel is able to save Susanna at the last minute from the death penalty after cross examining the two men individually and determining that their statements were not the same. The fictitious narrative serves to combine the motif of the innocent and chaste woman accused of adultery and that of the wise judge in a folkloristic fashion. Some commentators maintain that the narrative is in line with the Pharisaic interpretation of Deut. 17:6, which insists that witnesses should be heard individually. They thus date the story in the period of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE). The tenor of the narrative, however, is closer to the idea that God does not abandon innocent individuals who remain faithful to his commandments. An exact date of origin is thus impossible to determine (the Hasmonean period?, see Engel, *op. cit.*, 1985, p. 179). Scholars are likewise very much in the dark with respect to the documents place of origin (probably Palestine). In spite of evident word-play in the Greek text (vv. 54 and 58)\(^68\) it remains reasonable to presume that the text of *lxx* and Theodotion are based on a Semitic *Vorlage*. The folk tale as such has nothing to do with the story of Daniel.

The *Story of Bel and the Dragon* in Babylon (chapter 14 in the Vulgate), which is likewise to be found in a shorter version in the Septuagint and a longer version in Theodotion, is evidently based on a Semitic *Vorlage*. It relates how Daniel was able to convince the Persian king Cyrus that the priests of Bel were the ones who con-

\(^{68}\) They probably stem from the Greek translator.
sumed the food set before the deity, removing it via a secret entrance to the temple, and not Bel himself. Having confirmed Daniel’s story, the king proceeds to have the priests executed and the image of Bel and the temple of the deity destroyed. The king, however, is not yet completely convinced, insisting that Daniel worship the great dragon (better: snake) revered by the inhabitants of Babylon “you cannot deny that this is a living god”! After receiving the king’s permission to kill the dragon, Daniel proceeds to feed the beast with pitch, fat and hair boiled together to make cakes whereupon the dragon bursts open. The enraged Babylonians demand that the king hand over Daniel to them and they cast him into the lions’ den. Without being harmed by any of the lions, Daniel remains in the den for six full days and is provided with food by the prophet Habakkuk, transported to Babylon by an angel who bore him up by the crown of his head69 (cf. Ezek. 8:3). When the king discovers his confidant still alive on the seventh day, he recognises that there is no God other than the God of Daniel, has his servants remove him from the den and casts those who had sought his demise to the lions who ate them alive (cf. Daniel 6). This double narrative, replete with the motifs of sagas and folk tales, is intended to show that the religion of the pagans is worthless and to proclaim that the God of Israel is the only true God. A possible date of origin might be the second century BCE.70 Scholars are at odds, however, as to the narratives’ place of origin (possibly Palestine).

The Church Fathers were rightly unimpressed with the literary and religious significance of Bel and the Dragon.

j. The Prayer of Manasseh

I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions (12)

69 The same tradition is found in a more extensive form in the Lives of the Prophets 8 (see further below).

70 The motif of Daniel in the lions’ den does not provide further assistance in dating the text, since the narrative of Daniel 6 may have already been known in the third century BCE and it is far from certain that the chapter in question is younger than Daniel 14 (Cf. Koch op. cit., 1987, Band II, pp. 194–200).
Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


The individual lament psalm known as the Prayer of Manasseh (Latin: Oratio Manassis) is lacking in the Septuagint and does not enjoy an established place in the tradition. The Greek version includes the psalm among the Odes (Odae), an appendix of songs borrowed for the most part from Old and New Testament sources and employed in the liturgy of the Greek church, attached in the Septuagint (and the Peshitta) to the end of the Book of Psalms. Codex Alexandrinus lists the Prayer of Manasseh as number eight of the Odes, Rahlfs’ edition as number twelve. Some late medieval Vulgate manuscripts present the psalm as an addition to 2 Chronicles 33. Since the

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71 It is for this reason that J. H. Charlesworth favours the inclusion of the Prayer of Manasseh among the Pseudepigrapha (cf. OTP II, p. 629). The fact that it is generally treated as part of the Apocrypha is probably due to Luther’s inclusion of the text in his Weimarer Ausgabe.
Council of Trent, however, editions of the Vulgate tend to include the prayer in an appendix following the New Testament.

The earliest version of the Prayer of Manasseh can be found in the Didascalia, a Syriac translation of an originally Greek text employed in the early church and dating from around the third century CE. In its Greek form it is to be found in the Constitutiones Apostolicae (II, 22, 12–14), which stem from the fourth or fifth centuries CE. All other Greek texts, as well as the Coptic and Latin translations, are based on the Constitutiones Apostolicae or a Vorlage thereof.

An example of late psalm composition, the lament begins with a hymnic appeal to God (vv. 1–7) followed by a description of the poet’s situation of need (vv. 8–10) and a confession of guilt (vv. 11–12). The song ends with a prayer for forgiveness (v. 13), a confession of trust (v. 14), a vow and a doxology (v. 15).

The psalm is clearly inspired by 2 Chron. 33:12–13, 18–19, in which reference is made to a prayer of King Mannasseh uttered during his imprisonment, and is highly reminiscent of Psalm 51. While the psalm is of Jewish origin, it should not however be identified with the song that was apparently familiar to the author of Chronicles (cf. 2 Chron. 33:19) from the Records of the Seers. Scholars remain at odds as to whether the psalm was originally written in Greek or whether it harks back to a Hebrew (or Aramaic) original. The song may stem from the second or first centuries BCE and probably comes from Judea.

The Prayer of Mannasseh, “the little classic of penitential devotion” (Metzger), stands in line with the observable tendency to supplement the canonical tradition with prayers and songs of praise exemplified by the Additions to the books of Esther and Daniel. It is clearly intended as an appeal to its listeners/readers to do penance and to trust in God as one who desires to be gracious and close to those who confess their guilt.

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k. *I Maccabees*

...the family of those men through whom deliverance was given to Israel (5:62)

**Text editions:**


**Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:**


**Monographs and articles:**


Originally written in Hebrew, the 16 chapters of the First Book of Maccabees have survived to the present day in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Armenian versions. Flavius Josephus, Origen

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74 For these text editions see W. Kappler, *op. cit.*, 1967, pp. 7ff.
75 D. de Bruyne, “Le texte grec des deux premiers livres des Machabées”, *RB* 31 (1922), 31–54. The oldest and most valuable codex for 1 and 4 Maccabees is the Codex Sinaicus.
and Jerome were all familiar with the Hebrew version. The document owes its present title to “Maccabeus” (hammerer?), the name once given to Judas, the son of Mattathias (1 Macc. 2:4), the plural form of which later being used to designate his entire family. The greater part of the work represents a description of the struggle between the Maccabeans and the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE) and his successors.

After an introduction, which alludes to Alexander the Great’s campaign against the Persians, his death, the emergence of the Diadochen kingdoms (1:1–10) and the measures taken by Antiochus IV Epiphanes against the religion of the Jews (1:11–64), the author continues in chapter 2 with a description of the revolt set in motion by the priest Mattathias from Modein against the violation of traditional Jewish religion. The following chapters portray the successes and failures of the conflict with the Seleucid oppressors under the leadership of Mattathias’ sons Judas (3:1–9:22), Jonathan (9:23–12:53) and Simon (13:1–16:17), each in succession leading to the rededication (in 164) of the temple in Jerusalem desecrated in 167 BCE (4:36–61), complete religious freedom (6:55–63) and ultimately political independence. A brief reference is made at the end of the book to Simon’s son John Hyrcanus I (16:18–24). Chapter 8 plays a prominent role in the work as a whole, describing an alliance between Judas and the Romans (highly praised by the author).

Offering a detailed description of the political fate of the Jews between 167 BCE and the murder of Simon in 134 BCE, and employed by Flavius Josephus as a source for his historical writings, the book is clearly intended to glorify “the men through whom deliverance was given to Israel” (5:62). The document has unequivocally polemic designs aimed at the defence of the Hasmonean dynasty against internal opposition. It places enormous emphasis on individual heroism. In contrast to the Second Book of Maccabees, which in part covers the same period, I Maccabees stands out as a sober and practical historical document, reminiscent of the history David and parts of the books of Kings. Interpolated documents (probably without exception authentic), prayers, songs of lament, songs of victory and speeches serve to enliven the narratives. While the latter

79 According to Origen they bore a different title. For details see J. T. Nelis, commentary 1972, pp. 13–14.
make no mention of supernatural intervention, it should be noted
nevertheless that the author was completely convinced that God (to
whom the book refers indirectly as “the heavens” or by way of the
personal pronoun) was in control of history (“as his will in heaven
may be, so shall he do”: 3:60).

The value of the book as an historical source for the history of
the Jewish people in the second century BCE is enormous, although
the reliability of some of the information it contains requires a crit-
ical eye in light of II Maccabees. The author, who was well acquainted
with the geography of Palestine and the history of the Seleucid
empire, more than likely enjoyed a close relationship with the
Hasmonean court and must have been a highly cultured and edu-
cated Jew who wrote his work around 100 BCE.

While the book later came to attract the attention of Christians
more than Jews, the popular feast of the rededication of the temple
(Chanukah) continues to keep the memory of the heroic deeds of
Judas Maccabeus and his brothers alive in Jewish circles (cf. 1 Macc.
4:36–61 and Joh. 10:22: “the festival of Dedication”). Handel’s oras-
torio Judas Maccabeus serves as an example of the influence the
book and the stories contained therein exercised in the first centuries
of Protestantism.

1. II Maccabees

Text editions:

Greek: Swete III. pp. 662–708; Rahlf’s I, pp. 1099–1139; W. Kappler-
R. Hanhart, Maccabaeorum liber II (Göttinger Septuaginta IX/2), Göttingen
1480–1512.

Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Charles I, pp. 125–154 (Moffatt); Kautzsch I, pp. 81–119 (Kamphausen);
Metzger, pp. 263–293 (Johnson); JSHRZ I/3, pp. 165–285 (Habicht);
H. Bévenot (HSAT) 1931; D. P. Schötz (EB) 1948; F.-M. Abel, Les Livres
des Maccabées (Etudes Bibliques 30), Paris 1949; S. Tedesche and S. Zeitlin,
The Second Book of Maccabees (JAL), Philadelphia 1954; J. R. Bartlett, The
First and Second Books of the Maccabees (CNEB), Cambridge 1973, pp. 215–344;
J. T. Nelis, II Makkabeeën (BOT), Roermond 1975; J. A. Goldstein, II Maccabe-
bees (AB), Garden City NY 1983; D. Barsotti, Le Second Livre des Maccabées
(trad. E. de Solms), Paris 1984. See also the bibliographical details related to I Maccabees.

Monographs and articles:


Passed down to us in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Coptic, the Second Book of Maccabees does not constitute a continuation

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83 For these text editions see W. Kappler – R. Hanhart, *op. cit.*, 1959, pp. 7–11.
of I Maccabees but deals rather with a specific segment of the period treated in the latter. It begins with a quotation from two letters alleged to have been addressed by the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea to their fellow Jews in Egypt inviting them to join in the celebration of Succoth and the feast of the purification of the temple (1:1–10a and 1:10b-2:18 resp.). The introduction to the book as such follows in which the author states that he wishes to offer a condensed version (epitomè, 2:28) of the (no longer extant) five volume history of Jason of Cyrene (2:19–32). In the context of the period characterised by priestly intrigue prior to the Maccabean revolt of 167–164 BCE, the author describes the divine punishment of Heliodorus, who was sent to Jerusalem by King Seleucus IV (187–175 BCE) to confiscate the temple treasures (chapter 3), the Hellenising policies of the High Priest Jason, the latter’s elimination by Menelaus and the murder of the former High Priest Onias III (chapter 4). From chapter 5 onwards the narrative runs chronologically parallel with I Maccabees 1–7, thus relating the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the Maccabean revolt under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus. The book ends with an allusion to the victory won by the latter against the Seleucid general Nicanor and a concluding segment (chapters 5–15). The climax of Antiochus IV’s persecution is illustrated in particular with narratives concerning the death under torture of the elderly scribe Eleazar (6:18–31) and that of the seven brothers with their mother (chapter 7).

The book was originally written in Greek around 100 BCE by a Jewish author probably living in Alexandria, who composed his edifying opus in colourful literary prose under the influence of the Greek “tragic school”. The work contains two “tragedies”, corresponding

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with one another in terms of structure and content (3:1–10:9 and 10:10–15:37), whereby the temple in Jerusalem takes centre stage: a failed attempt on the part of the enemy to gain control of the sanctuary (the action of Heliodorus; the expeditions of the Seleucid general Lysias); the conquest of the city (Antiochus; Nicanor), which is liberated by Judas the Maccabean (dedication of the temple; defeat of Nicanor). Reference is made at the end of each segment to the institution of a feast day (the feast of the dedication of the temple: 10:1–9; the day of Nicanor: 15:36).

While the book is full of exaggerations, incredible miracle stories and edifying-moralising remarks, its value as an historical source should not be written off completely. Indeed, in some instances the author would appear to have been better informed than that of I Maccabees.

The document places great emphasis on the maintenance of the Law, God’s providential actions and miraculous interventions in history, human suffering as retribution (cf., for example, 5:10; 9:6,28; 13:8), as expiatory punishment (cf. 7:18,23), as disciplinary measures (cf. 6:12; 7:33) and as a sign of God’s kindness (6:12–16), underlining hope in the resurrection of the dead, at least for the righteous (7:9,14,23,29). It is worthy of note, moreover, that the book contains the first reference to the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo (7:28), prayer and sacrifice for the dead (12:43–45) and the intercession of the departed saints on behalf of the living (15:12–16). The reason for the people’s distress is more firmly and more explicitly attributed to their own guilt than is the case in I Maccabees.

The martyrdoms described in chapters 6–7 left a significant impression in later centuries. The death by torture of Eleazar and that of the seven brothers and their mother do not only play an important role in IV Maccabees, they were also held up by many a Christian author in the early Christian period as an example for their fellow Christians. Indeed, from the third century onwards, an annual liturgy of remembrance was dedicated to these “first Christian martyrs”.

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Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

Included in the Dutch Authorised Version among the apocrypha, but not in Luther’s translation, and completely lacking in the Vulgate, the seven chapters of the Third Book of Maccabees is something of a misnomer. While it does not in fact have anything to do with the history of the Maccabees, its style and historical and theological motifs are nevertheless reminiscent of II Maccabees. The book has been passed down to us in Greek, Syriac and Armenian versions and offers a romanticised and legendary narrative concerning Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE). After his victory over Antiochus III the Great at the battle of Raphia (217 BCE), he made an attempt to enter the holy of holies of the temple in Jerusalem but fell paralysed to the floor, struck by God’s punishment in response to a prayer by the High Priest (1:1–2:24). When he arrived back in Egypt he endeavoured to take his revenge by forcing the Jews there to worship the pagan god Dionysus. The majority of the Jews refused to obey him and in his fury he ordered them to be taken in chains together with their women and children to Alexandria where he planned to put them to death (2:25–3:30). He then had them locked up in a hippodrome where he set five hundred drugged and enraged elephants after them to trample them to death. The Jews, however, were saved from their fate in a miraculous way on three occasions (4:1–6:21). With renewed insight the king then became a friend and benefactor of the Jews and served them a sumptuous feast at his own expense lasting seven days. He also gave permission for the Jews to put their apostate kin to death (6:22–7:23). A festival was established thereafter in remembrance of the seven-day feast.

Written in Greek, the work was probably composed in the first century BCE by a Jew living in Alexandria since it exhibits similarities with the language and vocabulary of II Maccabees and the Letter of Aristeas (see below under Pseudepigrapha) and apparent familiarity with the Additions to the book of Daniel (6:6). A highly apologetic work, in which the punishment of Ptolemy IV is located in the temple, it is particularly reminiscent of the story concerning Heliodorus found in II Maccabees and serves to reinforce our knowledge of the threatened existence of the Jews living in the Greek-Egyptian diaspora. Orthodox and faithful to the Law, the author’s
evidently twofold aim was to encourage his fellow Jews in their faith, on the one hand, and to justify their religion and way of life to outsiders as that of a unique nation loyal, nevertheless, to pharaoh on the other.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

Text editions:

A. M. Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca* (Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 3), Leiden 1970, pp. 45–244. See further below under Concordances and in the bibliography associated with the individual documents.

Introductions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Concordances:

Monographs and articles:


Bibliography:

In the literal sense, a pseudepigraphal work (Greek: \textit{pseudepigraphon}) is a document published under a false name. A variety of reasons must have existed to motivate the assignation of a particular book to a well-known figure from the (mostly far distant) past. It should be borne in mind with respect to the literature to be treated in the present chapter that the Judaism of the final century prior to the beginning of the Common Era took its norms from the past, i.e. from the teaching and preaching codified in the Sacred Scriptures. New “revelation”, therefore, stood little chance of finding its way to a wider audience, unless it was ascribed to figures from the past.\footnote{Cf. M. Hengel, “Anonymität, Pseudepigraphie und “literarische Fälschung” in der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur”, \textit{Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique} XVIII (Pseudepigrapha I, viii) 1972, pp. 231–308 (lit.); B. M. Metzger, “Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha”, \textit{JBL} 91 (1972), 3–14; N. Brox (ed.), \textit{Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike} (Wege der Forschung 484), Darmstadt 1977; D. O. Meade, \textit{Pseudonymity and Canon} (WUNT 39), Tübingen 1986.} It is for this reason that we find pseudepigraphal books ascribed to Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezra etc. On a few occasions, however,—and especially when they were written with apologetic-missionary ends in mind—certain books were ascribed to persons who enjoyed particular authority in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. the Sibylline books).

In the context of the literature of early Judaism, the term pseudepigraphal enjoys both a narrow and a broad significance. On the one hand, we are already familiar with a number of books in the Hebrew Bible (Proverbs of Solomon, Song of Solomon, Daniel) as well as a few apocryphal books (1 Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Wisdom of Solomon) that have been written under a false name. Tradition, nevertheless, does not include such works among the pseudepigrapha. On the other hand, a number of books are included under the latter designation that do not belong there in the literal sense (e.g. the Martyrium of Isaiah, the Life of Adam and Eve, the Lives of the Prophets). In practice, however, the documents of early Judaism that are not included in the Hebrew Bible, the apocryphal books, the Dead Sea Scrolls or the early rabbinic literature, are thus referred to as pseudepigraphal. While the establishment of such boundaries may be necessary for a variety of reasons, it remains completely arbi-
trary from the literary-historical perspective. It is based in part on Christian canonical classification and in part on coincidence (the Scrolls of the Dead Sea, many of which warrant a place among pseudepigrapha, were only discovered in 1947). Differences of opinion with respect to the established boundary between apocryphal and pseudepigraphal are not uncommon (e.g. in the case of 3 Maccabees, the Prayer of Manasseh and 4 Ezra) and some scholars have been inclined to argue that a number of the documents of Qumran should be included under the pseudepigrapha. While options in this regard tend to be made from case to case,² exhibiting a degree of subjectivity,³ the same is true with respect to the aforementioned boundary, which some scholars would like to tear down altogether.⁴

A number of pseudepigraphal writings are only known to us in their Christian form, leaving it difficult on occasion to determine whether the document in question was originally Christian and made use of Jewish traditions or whether it was originally Jewish and later reworked by (a) Christian author(s). Examples include the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Greek Apocalypse of Ezra and the Lives of the Prophets. Linguistic criteria do not always offer much in the way of support when we are engaged in the process of choosing between the two possibilities since Christian authors are not unknown for their use of the semitising Greek of the Septuagint.

The division of the pseudepigrapha into a Hebrew-Aramaic-Palestinian sub-group and a Greek-Hellenistic sub-group has likewise encountered scholarly resistance. In the first instance, contacts between Palestine and the diaspora were considerably more frequent and more intensive than initially thought. In the second instance, it should be borne in mind that many Palestinian Jews were able to speak the common language of the day (koinè Greek) and to use it in their written works.

The pseudepigrapha bear witness to a considerable variety of literary genres. In addition to popular-devotional or haggadic material

² Part II of Charles’ edition thus includes the Pirke ‘Aboth, which is to be classified among the rabbinic literature, and the text of the Fragments of a Zadokite Work (= Damascus Document) discovered in 1896 in the geniza of the Ezra synagogue in Cairo, which would be better classified among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
and the rewriting and expansion of biblical narratives, prayers, wisdom and poetic literature as well as Jewish-Hellenistic historiography, particular attention should be paid to testaments and apocalypses.

According to common oriental custom, those who were on the point of dying frequently had access to supernatural gifts that allowed them to predict the future. In the testaments that have survived to the present day under the name of one or other Old Testament figure, such predictions consistently tend to be interwoven with biographical and exhortatory material. Biographical information thus takes on an exemplary function and the predictions serve to under- line the exhortatory material by way of warning (cf., for example, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs). While emphasis on these elements varies from testament to testament, the exhortatory segments tend as a rule to occupy a central position in terms of content: if the children of the patriarch and their descendants are obedient to God they can expect a future of contentment and happiness.


We will only be able to offer a brief introduction to apocalyptic at the present juncture. The term is derived from the Revelation (Greek: apokalypsis) of John in the New Testament and is employed in scholarly circles to designate a specific type of literature together with the intellectual movement that gave rise thereto. As a literary genre, apocalyptic is revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which other-worldly or eschatological secrets are disclosed in the context of visions and dreams and in particular through journeys to heaven and hell accompanied by an interpreting angel (angelus interpres). The apocalyptic visionary takes no personal responsibility for the present state of the world, which he considers to be doomed to destruction, but determinedly waits (in the knowledge that the end of time is at hand) for the transformation of the present that God will bring about, with salvation for the righteous and destruction for the wicked. While apocalyptic literature is closer to Old Testament prophetic eschatology than to wisdom literature, it need not neces-
sarily be identified as the continuation of the former: the prophets looked forward to a new era in history, the apocalyptic visionaries to the hereafter (albeit conceptualised at times in worldly terms); the prophets called for conversion, the apocalyptic visionaries for perseverance to the end. Striking characteristics of apocalyptic include determinism, whereby the course of history is established in advance; theodicy, which God justifies in the hereafter; *Naherwartung*, the expectation that fervently hoped for salvation will be swiftly realised; dualism between the righteous and the wicked and between God’s armies and the angels of Satan; an emphasis on sin and retribution, both collective and individual, in the final judgement; the notion of *vaticinia ex eventu*, predictions based on that which has already taken place in history (which ought not to be dismissed as mere deceit but properly appreciated as part of a “revelation” of history as a whole); pseudepigraphy, which reveals that determined historical events were already predicted in ancient times by a particular person.

The following bibliographical list contains a selection of the most important works on apocalyptic published in the last fifty years:

After 70 CE, rabbinic Judaism clearly distanced itself from apocalyptic piety (maintained primarily in sectarian circles), rejecting at the same time the apocryphal and pseudopigraphal literature of early Judaism in its entirety. The fact that this material has survived to a significant degree in spite of such blanket rejection is due to its preservation in specific circles of the early Christian church in which it continued to enjoy temporary and, on occasion, permanent popularity. Although the mainstream church was later to reject the pseudopigrapha, they were preserved nevertheless, especially in the outlying regions of the Christian world.

The value of the pseudopigraphal literature is to be found in the information it provides (together with the apocrypha) with respect to the religiosity of Judaism around the beginning of the Common Era.
It has become apparent that Judaism prior to 70 CE (the year in which Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans) was an extremely pluriform phenomenon in contrast to later rabbinic Judaism, which was based to a large extent on Pharisaism and enjoyed a considerable degree of uniformity.

The sequence with which we will examine the pseudepigrapha is based on that employed by other introductions and includes an additional paragraph on less-known material.

b. The Letter of Aristeas

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

The Letter of Aristeas written to his brother Philocrates has only survived to the present day in Greek. The document enjoyed such popularity in Christian circles, however, that the text thereof has been preserved in whole or in part in more than twenty manuscripts. In terms of both form and content the work is more of an account...
than a letter. The author assumed the name Aristeas, who would appear to have been an important courtier to the Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–246 BCE). Often long-winded and, for the contemporary reader at least, rather boring, the book offers a decidedly fictitious account of the circumstances surrounding the translation of the Mosaic Law into Greek. We are told how Ptolemy II, upon the instigation of his librarian Demetrius of Phaleron, who wanted to have a translation of the Torah in the library at Alexandria, sent representatives to the High Priest Eleazar in Jerusalem. Torah scroll in hand, the company, which included Aristeas, returned to Alexandria with seventy-two translators recruited from the twelve tribes of Israel who completed their Greek translation of the text of the Law in seventy-two days. The Jewish community at Alexandria welcomed and endorsed the work, resolutely rejecting any future emendations thereof. The translation was then read to the king who declared himself profoundly impressed with Moses’ wisdom and sent the translators home laden with gifts.

The actual theme of the narrative (the preparation and completion of the translation of the Torah into Greek) occupies a relatively minor portion of the 322 verse document, which contains a number of (frequently long) excursuses: a narrative concerning the release of Jewish slaves upon the intervention of Aristeas (12–27); an exchange of letters between Ptolemy and Eleazar (33–51a); a detailed description of the gifts offered by the king to the High Priest in Jerusalem (51b–82); a comprehensive portrayal of the city of Jerusalem, the temple and the land of Palestine (83–120); Eleazar’s assertions concerning the foolishness of idolatry and his allegorical/apologetic defence of the food laws (121–171); table discussions between the king and the Judean translators written in Greek deipnosophistic style (187–300).

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The Letter of Aristeas has attracted continuous attention throughout the centuries on account of the fact that it appears to provide historical information concerning the origins of the Septuagint. Flavius Josephus\(^\text{10}\) and Eusebius employed the story of the seventy-two translators in their works and the account of the latter’s labours on the island of Pharos took on legendary proportions in the early church in an effort to underline the idea that the Septuagint represented a divinely inspired translation.\(^\text{11}\)

The information provided by the Letter of Aristeas fails in many respects to withstand the test of historical criticism. The writer, who represents himself as a gentile, is clearly a Jew. The language in which the document is written exhibits features that would make its composition in the third century BCE impossible. Demetrius of Phaleron, who was an advisor to Ptolemy I, was sent into exile by Ptolemy II and was already dead by the time the Letter maintains that the Torah was translated (around 270 BCE; v. 41 presupposes the marriage of Ptolemy II with Arsinoë [274 BCE]). None of the above, however, serves to contradict the hypothesis that a translation of the Torah into Greek was made during the reign of Ptolemy II.

The Letter is not intended, as Paul Kahle\(^\text{12}\) suspected, as a recommendation favouring a revision of the Greek Torah, but rather as a defence of an existing translation, which it explicitly represents as closed to any form of change or emendation (v. 310). The author thus clearly opposes himself to the growing tendency to bring the Greek translation of the Torah more into line with the gradually crystallising (proto-Masoretic) text of the Hebrew Bible\(^\text{13}\) by insisting that the former had enjoyed the full support of the clergy in Jerusalem, had been based on the best bible manuscript (cf. v. 30), had been sanctioned by the community at Alexandria and, given the abundant material support provided by the pharaoh, was not to be written off as the product of hasty workmanship.

The function of the extended excursuses contained in the Letter remains difficult to determine with any degree of certainty. The significant role ascribed to the High Priest, the temple and Jerusalem

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\(^{10}\) A. Pelletier, _Flavius Josèphe, adapteur de la Lettre d’Aristée_, Paris 1962.

\(^{11}\) Cf. A. Pelletier, _op. cit._, 1962, pp. 78–98.


might be interpreted as a form of opposition to the aspirations of the priesthood associated with the temple at Leontopolis founded by Onias IV.\textsuperscript{14} In such an instance, the author would have had a primarily Jewish readership in mind. On the other hand, his endeavou\textsuperscript{1}r to reduce the differences between Jews and gentiles to a minimum, Eleazar’s allegorical/apologetic explanation of the food laws, the table discussions between the king and the translators together with the admiration exhibited by the king and his courtiers with respect to Jewish customs and traditions would appear to favour a non-Jewish public as addressees, making the Letter a document of Jewish propaganda intended as a defence of Judaism and the Law aimed at those who knew little thereof.

While it is difficult to attach a precise date to the Letter of Aristeas, language, goal and content would tend to favour the end of the second century BCE. The Letter was almost certainly written in Alexandria.

\textit{c. Jubilees}

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

The book of Jubilees derives its name from the division of history as narrated in the document into periods of 49 years (periods of a jubilee year, cf. Leviticus 25), which in their turn are divided into 7 weeks of years of 7 years of 364 days. The events related in the document are also dated according to this division. The designation Leptogenesis (Little Genesis) was common in the early church since the document runs parallel to a significant degree with the canonical biblical book of Genesis. A third, less common designation, the Apocalypse of Moses, is based on the author’s claim that the content of the book was revealed to Moses by an angel on Mount Sinai upon God’s command (cf. chapter 1). The original title of the work must have been “Book of the Divisions of the Ages According to their Jubilees and Weeks (of years)”, a designation found in the Damascus Document (XVI 3–4; see further under the Dead Sea Scrolls, chapter XIV), which dates from the second half of the second century BCE.

The work, which some scholars maintain has undergone a number of redactions (Davenport 1971; VanderKam 1977; alternatively Berger, JSHRZ), has only survived in its complete form in an Ethiopic translation that was based on a Greek version, fragments of which have been encountered in early Christian literature (Denis, Fragmenta).

Discovered remains of a Latin version, likewise based on the Greek (cf., for example, Rönsch 1874), contain roughly one fourth of the text. Substantial segments of the Hebrew basic text have come to light in twelve fragmentary manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls found in five of the caves at Qumran (cf. VanderKam-Milik, text edition 1994). The latter not only serve as evidence that the work was originally written in Hebrew, they also reveal that the Ethiopic translation can be considered to offer a more or less faithful rendition of the basic text. A few fragments are all that remain of a Syriac translation of the work (cf. Denis, *Introedd.*, pp. 158–159).

The events described after the introduction stretch from the creation to the institution of the Passover (cf. Exodus 12). The sequence of the narrated events is more or less equivalent to that of the biblical text, although the author occasionally introduces changes (e.g. the segment corresponding with Genesis 38 is located between those corresponding with Genesis 41 and 42). At the same time, and in several instances, the material found in Jubilees follows that of the biblical Vorlage, although we also encounter many remarkable interpo- lations (e.g. the struggle between Esau and Jacob: *Jub.* 37:1–38:14) and deviations (the author did not incorporate the biblical text in its entirety). In addition to geographical, onomastic and other information, the document also frequently employs popular-devotional (haggadic) traditions aimed at highlighting the piety and wisdom of Israel’s forefathers. The interpolation of normative (halachic) material serves to prescribe the strict maintenance of the laws and festival times revealed to the latter in the course of the ages. The patriarchs function as luminous examples of fidelity to the Law, thus explaining why those narratives found in the canonical Scriptures that might be considered compromising in their regard are either left out altogether or altered to their advantage.

The first chapter serves as a general introduction to the entire work, in which Moses is offered a glimpse of the course of history extending far beyond his death: the people’s apostasy, its punishment, its remorse and its ultimate restoration thanks to God’s grace. Chapters 2–4 deal with the creation and the history of Adam, whereby

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the author devotes considerable attention to the various classes of angels, underlines the significance of the Sabbath, and makes allusion to the purity laws applicable to a woman who has borne a child. Chapters 5–10 turn around the figure of Noah, whereby the punishment of the Watchers (angels), the institution of the Feast of Weeks celebrated by Noah and his sons, the obligatory solar calendar of 364 days, the testament of Noah, the laws concerning the first-born and Canaan’s occupation of territory ascribed to Shem serve as the subjects of the author’s attention. 11:1–23:9 offers an elaborate description of the journeys of Abraham, including copious additional material on his youth, discussions and benedictions, detailed legal provisions concerning circumcision and the portrayal of Abraham’s celebration of the Feast of the First-Born and the Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth). Reference to the death of the patriarch provided the author with the opportunity to offer a minor apocalypse in chapter 23 in which the history of the people of Israel from Abraham to the Maccabean period is treated, a period that, according to the author, is to be followed by the eschatological kingdom of peace in which evil shall no longer be found. Chapters 24–46 deal with the history of Jacob (who constitutes one of the book’s most central figures) together with that of his family, whereby particular attention is devoted to Joseph and Ruben, the latter’s affair with Bilhah providing the opportunity to make reference to the laws forbidding incest. The greater part of the said chapters, however, is devoted to Judah and Levi—who are blessed in an extraordinary way—offering a representation of the future functions of their descendants. The narratives concerning Jacob and his sons serve to foreshadow and justify the future conflicts with the Philistines, Canaanites, Amorites and Edomites. The history of Moses is limited to his birth and childhood years, the ten plagues and the exodus from Egypt (chapters 47–48). The book ends with a description of the Passover and the stipulations associated therewith together with the laws prescribed for the maintenance of the jubilee years and the sabbath (chapters 49–50).

The author broaches a number of matters in his work that motivate him highly, his interest in chronology being perhaps the most evident: the determination of dates upon which the most important events that are related in the context of the jubilees took place together with his fervent defence of the 364 day solar calendar (whereby festival days always fall on the same day of the week and
never on the sabbath). Of equal importance, however, is the emphasis he places on the precise maintenance of the festival times, which he represents as already having been known to the patriarchs (with the exception of Passover). An additional matter close to his heart is related to the correct observation of the prescriptions of the Law, which he endeavours to provide with theological foundation while employing a variety of means to underline their continuing authoritative and obligatory character. In terms of content, the prescriptions of the Law differ in several ways from the traditions adhered to by the Pharisees and tend to exhibit a more stringent character than the latter. A further characteristic of the work is the author’s concern for the hierarchical world of angels who are represented as being involved in human affairs and characterised by a dualistic understanding of good spirits and evil demons. This dualism is reflected in the world of human beings in which the children of Israel, set aside by circumcision, are represented as the elect from among the nations, are protected by the good angels and can look forward to heavenly glory. The other nations are far from God, are led by demons and can only look forward to downfall and destruction. In the author’s mind, the contrast between good angels and demons together with that between Israel and the other nations is unbridgeable.

The aforementioned information offers us a number of clues as to the spiritual environment in which the author must have lived. Dualism, the importance attached to the world of angels, particular legal prescriptions and the emphasis placed on the 364 day solar calendar all feature in the sectarian documents found at Qumran. For this reason it seems reasonable to suggest that the work came into existence in Essene circles, which were later to give rise to the Qumran community, especially if one accounts for the fact that several manuscripts thereof were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Indeed, the explicit mention of the work in the Damascus Document

further supports the conclusion that Jubilees was held in high esteem in the community of Qumran. While it is possible that the work was written shortly before the Maccabean revolt of 167–164 BCE, it is nevertheless to be dated no later than 140 BCE.

The priestly author of the book of Jubilees, who clearly did not cherish messianic expectations and made no reference to the resurrection of the dead, but spoke rather of the preservation of the souls of the faithful (1:24; 23:31), certainly did not write a history for its own sake and was equally disinclined to enrich the biblical narratives with other traditions for historical reasons. He relates history, rather, for pedagogical and exhortatory reasons. He encourages his readers to be just as stringent in their maintenance of the Law of God as their blessed forefathers, for the descendants of the people that dwelt by Mount Sinai shall one day “forget my (= God’s) entire Law, all my commandments and all my judgements, and shall stray with respect to the new moon, the sabbaths, the feasts, the jubilees and the ordinances” (1:14; cf. also 6:34–38).

d. The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


As with Jubilees and 1 Enoch, the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, referred to in Latin as *Martyrium et ascensio Isaiæ*, has only survived in its entirety in an Ethiopic translation. This translation is based on the Greek version, a segment of which (2:4–4:4 with lacunae in a papyrus from the Amherst collection dating from the fifth/sixth centuries CE) is known to us. In addition, Latin and Slavonic translations of chapters 6–11 have been preserved together with a number of Coptic fragments.

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20 The Latin tradition exhibits two divergent recensions; see further OTP II, pp. 144–146 (Knibb).
The *martyrium*, the legend of Isaiah’s martyrdom, constitutes the core of the work (1:1–3:12; 5:1–16) and represents a narrative that must have circulated independently and have been based on a Hebrew original. We are told how the prophet, in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of King Hezekiah, foretold the apostasy and godlessness of the latter’s son Manasseh (cf. 2 Kgs 21:1–17) and predicted his own martyrdom. After Hezekiah’s death, Manasseh did indeed give himself over to the worship of Satan and his angels. Together with other prophets and those faithful to God, Isaiah withdrew to Bethlehem and thereafter to the wilderness, only to be discovered by the Samaritan Belchira, branded as a false prophet, and accused of insurrection. After having him arrested, Manasseh gave the order that he should be cut in two with a saw. Belchira’s attempt to convince Isaiah to withdraw his prophecies of doom immediately prior to his execution failed with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Given the fact that the author of the letter to the Hebrews would appear to have been familiar with the legend (cf. Hebr. 11:37) and that it exhibits points of agreement with the martyrdoms of Eleazar and the seven brothers with their mother (as narrated in 2 Maccabees 6–7), it is possible that the legend came into existence at the time of the religious persecutions that led to the Maccabean revolt of 167–164 BCE and was written down shortly thereafter.

While it is tempting to associate the narrative with the Qumran community’s withdrawal into the wilderness under the leadership of the Teacher of Righteousness (cf. Flusser 1953, Philonenko 1967), the latter clearly makes allusion to neither Samaritans nor death by torture. Any suggested Essene origin for the document thus remains to be demonstrated.

3:13–4:22 (the so-called “Testament of Hezekiah”) was added in Greek to the legend at a later date and by a Christian author, whereby Belchira’s accusations are represented as inspired by the devil and rooted in Satan’s fury at Isaiah’s prophecies concerning the life and death of Jesus, the foundation and later apostasy of the church, the advent of Belial (the devil) and the return of Christ. Allusion is made in 4:2b–4a to the expectation that emperor Nero would return as the anti-Christ. The reference to the apostasy of the Christian church serves, in addition, to support a dating of this segment of the work at the end of the first century or the first decades of the second century CE. The place in which the “Testament of Hezekiah” came into existence remains unknown.
The second part of the book (chapters 6–11), the *ascensio* or *visio Isaiae* (ascension or vision of Isaiah), is likewise of Christian origin and was first written in Greek.\(^{21}\) It relates how the prophet ascended in the spirit to the seventh heaven, under the guidance of an interpreting angel, where he is witness to God’s command to Christ to return to earth incognito. Isaiah then sees God’s Son descending through the heavens to the earth, rising from the dead and ascending to the heavens once again to take his place at God’s right hand. While the segment exhibits striking parallels with 3:13–4:22, it clearly stems from a different author who presumably composed his work in the first half of the second century CE. The place in which the vision of Isaiah was written likewise remains unknown.

Although some scholars have argued that the vision of Isaiah exhibits Gnostic influence (Helmbold 1972), a relationship between the vision and Gnosticism remains difficult to establish in a variety of respects. Worthy of particular note are the emphasis placed on the miraculous birth of Jesus and the interest exhibited by the author in the divine trinity. 11:14 of the vision is quoted in *Acta Petri* 24 (around 190 CE). Parallels with the proto-Evangelium of James (around 150 CE) serve to confirm the above mentioned dating of the vision of Isaiah.

The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah provide as in turn with information concerning an ancient Jewish legend and a heterodox form of Christianity from the first centuries of the Common Era. They were brought together (possibly in the course of the third or fourth centuries CE) by a Christian who submitted the material to further reworking, adding, among other things, vv. 2b–6a,7,13 to chapter 1.

e. *The Psalms of Solomon*

Text editions:


\(^{21}\) Cf. R. G. Hall, *op. cit.*, 1990. Certain manuscripts only contain this segment.
Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Charles II, pp. 625–652 (Gray); Kautzsch II, pp. 127–148 (Kittel); Riessler, pp. 881–902, 1322–1323; Sparks, pp. 649–682 (Brock); JSHTZ IV/2, pp. 49–112 (Holm-Nielsen); OTP II, pp. 639–670 (Wright); cf. likewise H. Ryle and M. R. James, op. cit., 1891; J. Viteau, op. cit., 1911; R. Harris and A. Mingana, op. cit., 1920; M. de Goeij, Psalmen van Salomo. IV Ezra. Martyrium van Jesaja (De Pseudepigraphen), Kampen s.d. [1980].

Monographs and articles:

Preserved in Greek and (with the exception of the missing conclusion to the final song) in Syriac, the 18 Psalms of Solomon were originally written in Hebrew.\(^{22}\) The title of the collection is remarkable when one considers the fact that the content of the songs makes it clear in every respect that they do not stem from King Solomon.

While the most important literary genres known to us from the book of Psalms are also to be found here in the Psalms of Solomon, the latter tend to represent a mixture of forms in line with the characteristics of early Jewish psalmody and less typical of Old Testament psalms. In addition, the Psalms of Solomon tend as a rule to be less personal in nature, exhibiting greater evidence of the influence of later wisdom literature, and are more reflective in character than the psalms of the Old Testament. Parallels between the songs and the apocryphal psalms found among the Dead Sea Scrolls are worthy of interest and investigation. Several scholars have argued that the poems stem from Pharisaic circles (cf. Schüpphaus 1977; Lane 1982), although evidence in support of such a hypothesis remains thin (O’Dell 1961; Wright 1972).

The majority of the Psalms of Solomon, in which the themes of God’s righteousness and the relationship between the righteous and the godless are most prominent, exhibit a type of piety that is too universal and timeless to be used as an element in ascribing an accurate date to the songs. The work nevertheless provides a number of clear allusions of a different nature that relate to the period in which

\(^{22}\) The Syriac translation is almost certainly based on a Hebrew original.
they came into existence. Psalm 8:14ff., for example, contains reminiscences of the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompeii (63 BCE), an event which the author clearly considers to be an act of God’s righteous judgement. In its endorsement of God’s righteous deeds, Psalm 2 likewise expresses criticism of the Roman occupiers and makes allusion to the death of Pompeii (48 BCE; cf. 2:26–27). The expression “the foreigner, not of our descent” in 17:7 would also appear to refer to Pompeii (and not to Herod the Great as is sometimes suggested). Satisfaction at the fall of the Hasmoneans, who are represented as the godless par excellence, echoes throughout the Psalms. If one accepts the possibility that the songs were written by a single author then it would be reasonable to suggest that they were composed in the second half of the first century CE.

Psalms 17 and 18 are of particular interest on account of the fact that they give expression to messianic expectations and appeal to God to liberate Jerusalem from its pagan occupiers (= the Romans; Ps. 17:22ff.). Psalm 2 already insists that the latter were not driven by their zeal for the things of God but by greed and self-indulgence and that their punishment would thus be unavoidable. The author places his hope, therefore, in “the king, the son of David”, to be awakened by God at “the time He has chosen” (17:12). As the anointed of the Lord “in the fear of God, and in wisdom, justice and strength inspired by the Spirit” (18:7) this ruler will lead the people to salvation.²³

f. IV Maccabees

Text editions


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


Consisting of 18 chapters in total, the Fourth Book of Maccabees was written in Greek and has been preserved in several manuscripts
of the Septuagint. The fact that the book was ascribed in ancient times, and for reasons that remain a mystery, to Flavius Josephus explains why the work has also been preserved in a number of Josephus’ manuscripts. In the present author’s opinion, the title frequently employed in the latter “On the supremacy of reason” does most justice to the nature and content of the document. While one might characterise the text as a philosophical-theological tractate (diatribè), 3:19–18:24 also exhibit formal and content based similarities with Greek eulogies (epitaphios logos; Lebram 1974). In the Peshitta the work is to be found under the title “The Fourth Book of the Maccabees and their Mother”. It is lacking in the Vulgate. The designation IV Maccabees has its roots in the book’s evident kinship with II Maccabees.

The prologue of the document (1:1–12) introduces the theme of the supremacy of reason over human passions and then proceeds to elaborate on the activities of Jacob, Moses and David with the help, among other things, of Old Testament examples (1:13–3:18). After an historical introduction on the intrigues of Simon, who thwarted the High Priest Onias III, Apollonius’ attack on the temple in Jerusalem (3:19–4:14; a parallel in fact of Heliodorus’ attempt to plunder the temple, cf. 2 Macc. 3:7–34) and the cruel treatment of the Jews by the tyrannical Antiochus IV Epiphanes (4:15–26), the author returns to the theme of the supremacy of reason, which he illustrates on the basis of the martyrdom of Eleazar (5:1–7:24) and that of the seven brothers and their mother (8:1–17:6; cf. 2 Macc. 6:18–7:42). The work ends with a reflection on the consequences of martyrdom (17:7–18:5) and a song of praise leading into the mother’s final address to her children (18:6–23).

In spite of his knowledge of Greek rhetoric and (Platonic and Stoic) philosophy, the author of the document was clearly a Jew whose theological concerns evidently took pride of place. He endeavours to defend obedience to God and the Law as the highest wisdom and the greatest virtue, employing examples from history in an attempt to show that the Law of God granted to Israel made it possible for the human spirit to exercise the Greek virtues of level-headedness, righteousness, bravery and goodness. In an apologetic-missionary fashion, the author integrates the Jewish Torah as Law with Hellenistic, ethically determined Bildungswissen. In addition, the author’s opinions on the surrogate suffering of the martyrs on behalf of their land and people (1:11; 6:28–29; 17:21–22) and the immortality of the soul (9:22; 14:5–6; 16:13; 17:12; 18:23) are worthy of note.
The work was written in the diaspora (possibly in Asia Minor, cf. Van Henten 1997, pp. 78–81). Given its dependence on II Maccabees, it cannot have been composed prior to the second half of the first century BCE. It should probably be dated to around 100 CE (Van Henten 1997, pp. 73–78).

IV Maccabees was held in high esteem by a significant number of Church Fathers (including John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine), as if it were a Christian document in which those who had persevered in the Maccabean period were considered the “first Christian martyrs”.

g. The Sibylline Oracles

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Charles II, pp. 386–406 (Lanchester); Kautzsch II, pp. 177–217 (Blass); Riessler, pp. 1014–1045, 1326–1328; JSHRZ V/8 (Merkel; = book III–V together with three fragments from the apologetic work Ad Autolychum written by Bishop Theophilus of Antioch shortly after 180 CE); OTP I, pp. 317–472 (Collins); Hennecke-Schneemelcher, pp. 498–528 (Kurfess); Ch. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, I (1841; 1853), II: *Excursus ad Sibyllina*, Paris 1856; H. N. Bate, *The Sibylline Oracles, Books III–V* (TED), London 1918.

Monographs and articles:

In classical antiquity, the sibyls included charismatically gifted elderly women among their ranks who, after working themselves into a state of ecstatic rapture, provided oracles, the majority of which tended to predict doom and disaster. While allusion was originally made to a single sibyl, later gentile, Jewish and Christian Sibylline books bear witness to the fact that they were evidently numerous. Indeed, many cities and regions boasted about the fact that they had their own sibyl. Written in hexametric style, the oracles tended to be highly revered throughout the Graeco-Roman world, thus explaining in part why the Jews employed the genre as a vehicle for their own insights. In the text under consideration, the sibyl is elevated to the status of Noah’s daughter (-in-law; cf. 3:827). She sings Israel’s praises, warns against idolatry, threatens Israel’s enemies with judgement and predicts the course of history that is to end with the coming of the messiah. Christian circles also created sibylline oracles and reworked already existing material. The texts that we now have at our disposal were probably not collected together prior to the fifth century CE. The 12 remaining books consist of two collections (1–8 and
11–14), given the fact that books 9 and 10 repeat material from the first collection. The books that have been preserved stem from a variety of places (3, 5 and 11–14 from Egypt, 4, 6 and 7 possibly from Syria, 1 and 2 from Phrygia and 8 from an otherwise unknown territory in the Near East) and times (from the middle of the twelfth century BCE to the seventh century CE). Books 3–5 of this “disorderly chaos of transmitted works” (Beek) can be identified as particularly Jewish.

Book 3, which almost certainly stems from Egypt (cf. vv. 155–161, 191–193), clearly came into existence in stages, the core consisting of vv. 97–349 and 489–829, which would appear to stem from the second century BCE or shortly thereafter. Other segments are to be dated later. Vv. 350–488 can be divided into four oracles: one directed against Rome (350–380) and written immediately before the battle of Actium (31 BCE); two directed against the Macedonians (381–387; 388–400); prophecies relating to a variety of disasters (401–488). The composite character of vv. 1–96 presupposes the period after the battle of Actium up to the time of Emperor Nero. Book 4 alludes to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (79 CE) and can be dated in its final redaction to the first century of the Common Era. In its final form book 5 stems from the end of the first or the beginning of the second century CE.24

The Sibylline oracles continued to attract attention in the Christian tradition into the late Middle Ages. The first strophe of the Dies irae, ascribed to Thomas of Celano (died around 1255), represents a good example thereof:

Dies irae, dies illa
solvet saeclum in favilla
teste David et Sibylla.

h. I Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch)

The Jewish prototype of the Christian Dante

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


The figure of Enoch “the seventh after Adam” enjoys a prominent place among those whose name is associated with revelations concerning the future and extraterrestrial realities. Gen. 5:24 relates how he walked with ha-ʾèlohîm, a Hebrew term later used by way of preference for “the angels”, whereby he had direct access to their knowledge and to the heavenly registers of destiny. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a cycle of apocalyptic writings developed around him, including the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (1 Enoch), which represents a library in itself, and the Second or Slavonic Book of Enoch (2 Enoch), which we will discuss in the following paragraph. Reference should be made in addition to the Third or Hebrew Book of Enoch (3 Enoch), a rabbinic compendium of traditions associated with the patriarch stemming from the third or fourth century CE and as such far beyond the remit of the present study. The customary designations “Ethiopic”, “Slavonic” and “Hebrew” serve to indicate that the documents have only survived in complete form in the respective languages.

The Ethiopic version of 1 Enoch consists of five different works stemming from different periods that originally circulated independently. The translation was probably based on a Greek original, of which three substantial fragments are known to us (Black 1970). The Greek version is based in turn on an originally Aramaic text, the remains of numerous copies of which have been found in Cave 4 of Qumran (Milik 1976). The latter shed new light on the genesis and evolution of four of the five constituent parts of 1 Enoch. The Hebrew fragments found in Cave 1 of Qumran, which would appear to belong to 1 Enoch (1Q19, see DJD I, pp. 84–86 and 1Q19bis, see DJD I, p. 154), stem in essence from the Book of Noah.

After a general introduction (1–5), the Book of Watchers or the Book of Angelology (1–36) consists of a narrative describing the fall of the angels (following on Gen. 6:1–4), who had violated the daughters of humankind, and the fate that they and the giants that were born as the offspring of their union ultimately encountered (6–11). The once independent segment encompassing chapters 12–16 relates how Enoch’s intercession on behalf of the fallen angels was rejected and

26 Although E. Ullendorff, op. cit., 1960, considers it possible that the Ethiopic text represents a direct translation from the Aramaic, M. A. Knibb, op. cit., II 1978, p. 22,38–39, maintains that the Ethiopic translators employed an Aramaic text in addition to a Greek version.
how he was obliged instead to serve notice of judgement to them and to the giants. Together with chapters 12–16, chapters 17–36 represent an “‘I’ narrative” with Enoch himself as subject, in which he provides a report of two journeys during which all sorts of secrets were disclosed to him together with every place from the underworld to paradise.

The Book of Similitudes (37–71), also referred to as the Bilderreden, exhibits dependence on the Astronomical Book (see below) and the Book of Watchers. With the exception of a short introduction (37), the book can be subdivided into three parts. The first part (38–44) describes how Enoch was taken up into heaven where he beheld the dwelling place of the righteous, the angels and the messiah and where all the mysteries of the heavens were revealed to him. The second part (45–57) is dedicated to a description of the messiah, the messianic era and the judgement that the messiah will bring to bear on the entire world. The third part (58–71) contains a number of revelations associated with astronomical phenomena, the blessedness of the righteous and the judgement that the “Son of humankind” will deliver, together with other material, including a description of the ascension of Enoch and his appointment as “Son of humankind” (71), that would appear to have been added at a later date. The status ascribed in the Similitudes to the pre-existent, heavenly “Son of humankind” (46:3ff.; 48:2; 62:7,9 etc.), who is designated as the “chosen one” (45:3ff.; 52:6; 62:1) and as the “anointed” (messiah) (48:10; 52:4), is worthy of particular note. He represents the elected and was chosen by God before the creation of the world (46:3; 48:6). When this righteous figure “who reveals all hidden treasures” (46:3; cf. Col. 2:3) appears on earth he shall be “a staff for the righteous and the saints” and a “light for the nations” (48:4), and he shall adjudge the fallen angels and sinful humanity (55:4; 69:29). He thus

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embodies the characteristics associated with the Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah, the Son of Man in Daniel 7 and the royal messiah. Based in part on this observation, some scholars have argued that the Similitudes should be considered as the work of a Christian author or at least as having been reworked by a Christian hand. The fact that the manuscripts of 1 Enoch discovered at Qumran do not contain a single fragment of the Similitudes has served to support recent and renewed defence of the hypothesis.\(^{30}\) The work, however, contains nothing that one might regard as typically Christian (there are no allusions to incarnation or resurrection). It is perhaps best understood as representing a tradition-historical stage between Daniel 7, in which the “one like a son of man” appears after the judgement of the world, and the New Testament gospels, according to which the “Son of Man” shall appear as judge.\(^{31}\) A Christian author would not have identified this figure with Enoch (chapter 71). It is probable, therefore, that the Similitudes were written towards the end of the first century BCE\(^{32}\) or in the first quarter of the first century CE.\(^{33}\) It is not surprising that the Similitudes are not represented among the manuscripts of the library of the community at Qumran since the latter did not incorporate a single document into its library that had come to light elsewhere after it had established itself in its desert retreat (around 130 BCE).

The *Astronomical Book* (72–82)\(^{34}\) consists of a number of instructions given by Enoch concerning the course of the stars, the path of the winds and the solar calendar of 364 days, the latter taken from a revelation granted him by the archangel Uriel. Already familiar to the author of Jubilees (Jub. 4:17f.), it is evident from the Qumran manuscripts that the book exhibits a summarising and confused char-

\(^{30}\) According to J. T. Milik, the Book of Giants (see below) in 1 Enoch was replaced by the Similitudes around 400 CE, thus constituting the latter as a relatively late Christian work.


\(^{32}\) Based on this date some scholars have endeavoured to argue that 1 Enoch 56:6 represents an allusion to the invasion of Palestine by the Persians in 40 BCE.

\(^{33}\) In support of this date scholars appeal to agreements between the Similitudes and the Jewish apocalypses of the last decennia of the first century CE together with the Apocalypse of John (cf. Knibb 1978).

acter in the Ethiopic tradition in relation to the original Aramaic text.

The *Book of Dream Visions* (83–90) consists of two revelations granted to Enoch. In the first (83–84) he describes the (impending) devastation of humanity by the flood to his son Methuselah together with his prayer for the deliverance of the righteous. With the help of animal symbolism, the second (85–90) describes the history of the world, and in particular the history of Israel, from the time of the white calf (Adam) to the appearance of the white calf with great horns (the messiah). The dating of this segment depends on one’s identification of the ram with the great horn alluded in advance of the portrayal of the final judgement and the advent of the messiah (90:9). Given the probability that the allusion refers to Judas the Maccabean, the work must therefore have emerged prior to the latter’s death in 161 BCE.

The *Epistle of Enoch* (91–105), otherwise known as the *Book of Exhortations*, c.q. the *Book of Paranesis*, contains the so-called “Ten Week Apocalypse” (93 and 91:12–17), which offers a description of world history from the creation to the final judgement presented in the form of a ten “week” schema of which seven “weeks” have already passed. While the seventh week was characterised by apostasy, the theme of the eighth week shall be justice, that of the ninth judgement and that of the tenth the great judgement to be followed by eternal salvation. The book also contains a number of warnings addressed by Enoch to his sons, lamenting the fate of the godless and praising the perseverance of the righteous.

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The five constituent parts of 1 Enoch are concluded by two appendices: one taken from the Book of Noah (106–107), in which mention is made of the latter’s miraculous birth (cf. the Genesis Apocryphon from Cave 1 of Qumran, column II, and 4QMess ar = 4Q534), and a second (108), borrowed from “another book written by Enoch” that serves to round off the entire collection.

Thanks to the (albeit fragmentary) copies of 1 Enoch (with the exception of the Similitudes) it has become possible to trace the genesis and evolution of the collection with some degree of accuracy. Two manuscripts of the Book of Watchers have survived in the library of Qumran (4QEn\(^a\) and 4QEn\(^b\)) that would appear to have contained nothing else, thus serving as evidence that the work in question was once in circulation as an independent document. One of these documents stems from the beginning of the second century BCE, thereby suggesting that the original work must have come into existence in the third century BCE. This fact not only sets the Book of Watchers aside as the oldest known apocalypse, to be dated long before the final redaction of the Book of Daniel (165 BCE), it also serves to separate the origins of apocalyptic from the crisis that led to the Maccabean revolt (167–164 BCE). The manuscripts reveal, in addition, that the redactional process whereby the introduction, the two versions of the fall of the angels and later theological refinements were woven together, must have achieved written form prior to the second century BCE. In light of 4QEn\(^d\) and 4QEn\(^e\), the Book of Watchers and the Book of Dream Visions were already associated with one another before the beginning of the first century BCE. 4QEn\(^e\), which stems from the end of the first century BCE, is familiar with the connection between the Book of Watchers and the Book of Dream Visions, the Epistle of Enoch and an additional work related to Enoch (the Book of Giants, see below).

While the Astronomical Book is likewise to be found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, albeit in a more extended and more complete form than that of the Ethiopic text, the Qumran version does not constitute part of a collection of Enoch documents. Although a manuscript (4QEn\(^f\)) dating from the middle of the second century BCE may offer evidence in support of the hypothesis that the Book of Dream Visions was in circulation at that time in an independent form, definitive conclusions have not yet been established. Three other manuscripts from a later period contain segments of the Dream Visions, when the latter was already associated with other Enoch documents.

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38 See F. García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, pp. 1–44.
The beginning of the Epistle of Enoch has become somewhat confused in the Ethiopic tradition. Fortunately, however, one of the better preserved Enoch manuscripts from Qumran (4QEn) provides us with the opportunity to re-establish the original sequence of the sub-division of the “Ten Week Apocalypse” (93 and 91:12–17). The characteristics of the manuscript serve as evidence that it contained nothing more than the Epistle of Enoch, thus suggesting that the latter was likewise once in circulation as an independent work. The manuscript confirms, moreover, that the “Ten Week Apocalypse” constituted an integral part of the Epistle and was not added at a later date. A further copy dating from the first century BCE, in which the Epistle is already associated with other books (4QEn²), contains a segment of chapters 106–107, which are borrowed from the Book of Noah. This supports the hypothesis that the conclusion of the collection had already been added to the whole at that time. Given the fact that chapters 106–107 of the said manuscript are separated from chapter 105 by two unwritten lines, one can conclude that the material in question serves to round off the material collected in 1 Enoch as a whole and not simply the Epistle of Enoch. Since the latter document would appear to be presupposed in the Book of Jubilees (4:17–19), it must have already existed in the first half of the second century BCE (for the dating of Jubilees see above under c).

The traditions associated with the figure of Enoch, “this Jewish prototype of the Christian Dante”, which have found their way into 1 Enoch, exhibit striking parallels with the data found in Daniel, Jubilees and a variety of documents discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. While it remains difficult to determine the religious-historical context in which the autonomous books first saw the light of day, the discovery of the Aramaic manuscripts at Qumran undermines the possibility that the Book of Watchers, the Astronomical Book, the Dream Visions and the Epistle of Enoch emerged from Pharisaic circles or from the community of Qumran on account of the period in which they came into existence.

The Enoch manuscripts discovered at Qumran also include fragments of the Book of Giants⁴⁰ (cf. Gen. 6:4), which was later to serve as a source of inspiration for Mani (216–276), the founder of the Manichean sect. Scholars were already aware of the fact that a Book of Giants had once existed in classical antiquity because the title thereof is mentioned by Georgius Syncellus (died 806 CE) and it is

alluded to among the apocryphal books in the Decretum Gelasianum from the sixth century CE. The contents of the document, however, had remained unknown until the discovery of fragments of translations and summaries of Mani’s work at Turfan (Iran)\textsuperscript{41} and the discovery of the remnants of about ten Aramaic manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls.\textsuperscript{42} Based on the information provided by these manuscripts, the Book of Giants consisted of a summary of the Book of Watchers, made detailed reference to the names and deeds of the giants, distinguished between the punishment meted out to the fallen angel Azazel and the imprisonment of Shemihaza, elaborated on the discussions between the latter and the incarcerated giants, related the dreams of Ohya and Hahya, which led to a double mission on the part of Mahaway to Enoch to ask for his explanation thereof, and Enoch’s response in which the giants are rebuked and God is praised. Other material preserved in the Manichean work yet lacking in the Aramaic text alludes, among other things, to the battle between the giant Ohya and Leviathan (see, for example, Isa. 27:1) and Mahaway, together with the ultimate extermination of the giants at the hands of the angels. In short, the original Book of Giants evidently consisted of four segments: a summary of the Book of Watchers, a segment relating the deeds of the giants prior to their incarceration, a segment relating the dreams of the incarcerated giants and the missions to Enoch, and the prayer of Enoch with which the book apparently ended.

In like fashion to the already mention sub-divisions of 1 Enoch, the Book of Giants, which must have come into existence in the course of the second century BCE, was originally in circulation as an independent work. From the middle of the first century BCE, however, it is found in association with other documents from the Enoch cycle.

i. II Enoch (Slavonic Enoch)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

2 Enoch has only survived in its complete form to the present day in a Slavonic translation, hence the designation *Slavonic Enoch*. An alternative designation, namely the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* is sometimes employed together with a large variety of other titles. Two Slavonic recensions exist of the work, one short and one long (more detailed: short and very short, long and very long). The frequently proposed thesis that the former better represents the original text than the latter (see Vaillant 1952) is difficult to prove on account of the complex textual history of the work (Andersen, OTP I). Indeed, according to some scholars the reverse is more probable (Böttrich, JSHRZ V, pp. 788–790).

The introduction (1–2) relates the appearance of two angels to Enoch who announce his heavenly journey and command him to give his children instructions for the time of his absence. The book goes on to describe the patriarch’s heavenly journey (3–21) during which the two angels introduce him in some detail to the secrets of the ten heavens (probably originally seven). He is then granted a revelation by God concerning the creation and history of the world up to the flood (22–35). After his return to earth (36–38), the revelations he received and committed to writing in the form a countless books serve as the basis for a variety of exhortations and disclosures concerning heavenly and eschatological matters which he addresses to his children and (the elders of) the people (39–66). Chapter 67 relates Enoch’s ultimate ascension into heaven. The conclusion of the book (chapters 68–73), which is often, and probably without justification, taken to be an appendix, describes how Enoch’s charge as teacher and reconciler is taken over by his son Methuselah, thereafter by Nir, the youngest brother of Noah, and finally by Melchizedek, whose birth is described as miraculous.

The original language in which the document first saw the light of day together with the period and religious environment in which it emerged are the subjects of scholarly dispute. The Hebraisms found in the text do not necessarily point to a Hebrew original but suggest rather that the author was probably influenced by the Septuagint and by his Jewish origins. Sufficient reasons exist to accept a date

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of origin at the beginning of the first century CE, among them the fact that the temple (51:3) and the sacrificial cult (59:1–3; cf. 61:4; 62:1) are presupposed. The work may originally have been written in Greek by Jewish circles in diaspora in Alexandria (cf. Böttrich, JSHRZ V, pp. 808–812). The longer form of the text, however, contains Jewish mysticism, early Christian and Byzantine chronographic interpolations (Böttrich, JSHRZ V, pp. 802–805).

With the exception of the Similitudes, the author of 2 Enoch harks back continually to the content of 1 Enoch (and also to Jesus Sirach). This does not serve to undermine the fact that 2 Enoch represents a different mindset to that of 1 Enoch, namely that of the universalistically oriented Hellenistic Judaism of the diaspora in contrast to the early Jewish apocalyptic influence so characteristic of the Ethiopic book of Enoch.

j. The Assumption of Moses

Tunc felix eris, tu Istrahel (10:8a)\textsuperscript{45}

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


\textsuperscript{45} Then you shall be happy, O Israel.
Monographs and articles:


The content of the Assumption of Moses (in Latin: *Assumptio Mosis* or *Ascensio Mosis*), also referred to as the *Testament of Moses*, is only known to us on the basis of an incomplete and in places virtually illegible palimpsest from the sixth century CE, together with a number of Greek quotations from ancient Christian literature (Denis, *Fragmenta*, 63–67). The manuscript was discovered by Ceriani in the nineteenth century in the Bibliotheca Ambrosiana in Milan and published in 1861. The Latin text is based on a Greek *Vorlage*, which in its turn may have been based on a Hebrew original.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{46}}\] For the Latin version of the Ascension of Moses see in particular J. Tromp, *op. cit.*, 1993, pp. 27–77.

The only manuscript available to us not only lacks the opening lines but also significant portions of the conclusion of the work. The surviving segment of the book relates how Moses, in a farewell speech and with a view to his approaching death, instructed Joshua to take his place (1), foretelling thereafter the history of the people of Israel to the end time (2–10). In a state of trepidation at Moses’ predictions, Joshua declares himself unfit to take his place (11). Moses, however, provides welcome encouragement (12). The text abruptly stops at this juncture, offering no explicit reference to the assumption of Moses yet making a number of allusions to his natural death (1:15; 3:13; 10:14). A description of the dispute between Michael and Satan concerning the body of Moses referred to in the New Testament Letter of Jude (v. 9) is likewise lacking. For the segment of the document that has been preserved, therefore, the designation Assumption of Moses is rather unfortunate. If the book ever made any allusion to the assumption of Moses it must have been contained in the lost conclusion.

Since the text we have at our disposal makes no allusion to an assumption on the part of Moses, the fact that it does exhibit the characteristics of a testament has frequently led scholars to associate the work with the Testament of Moses mentioned in early Christian literature. Gelasius Cyzicenus (fifth century CE), however, who alludes to the text of 1:6,14 in his Historia Ecclesiastica II 17,17 and 21,7, only speaks of “the Assumption of Moses”. Given the fact that the Testament of Abraham (see below) is nevertheless clearly not a testament, one should be on one’s guard against any rash identification of the document under consideration with the testament genre. Furthermore, there is good reason to support the identification of the Testament of Moses with Jubilees. Any proposed relationship between the Assumption of Moses and the Testament of Moses referred to in early Christian literature would thus be best ignored.

In the present instance, a significant number of Moses’ predictions, which are addressed to Joshua in the form of an apocalypse, bear the features of a “prophecy after the event” (vaticinium ex eventu). 6:2, for example, speaks of a malicious king who is to reign for 34 years (6:6), a figure who can only be identified with Herod the Great (37–4 BCE). It is stated of his children, in addition, that they were to exercise royal authority for shorter periods of time than their father (6:7), a prediction confirmed by the reign of Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE) but not by that of Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE) or Philip (4 BCE–34 CE). There is virtually no doubt, therefore, that the period in which the
document came into existence must be confined to the first quarter of the first century CE (Charles, edition 1897; alternatively Zeitlin 1947–1948 and Haacker 1969: second century CE). Introduced by the words “from this point on the ages shall come to an end”, the predictions of chapter 7 and thereafter thus tend to be less concrete than those of the preceding segment: godless hypocrites shall arise (7) and the faithful shall be subject to terrible persecutions (8). Thereafter, a man shall arise named Taxo of the tribe of Levi who will prefer to die rather than violate the commandments of God and he shall exhort his seven sons to take the same position (9). With the dawning of God’s kingdom, the power of the devil shall be put to an end. God will punish the nations and destroy their idols, but Israel shall be raised to the heavens where it shall dwell among the stars and give praise to God (10).48

In spite of the many hypotheses that have been proposed with respect to the man Taxo referred to in 9:1, the identity of the figure and the significance of his name remains unclear.49

Based on the fact that chapter 6 clearly refers to the governance of Herod the Great (37–4 BCE) while chapter 8 thereafter would appear to allude to the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE), Charles (1897) has argued that chapters 6–7 must have been introduced by accident between chapters 5 and 8. Licht (1961) and Nickelsburg (1973), on the other hand, are of the opinion that chapters 6 and 7 are an interpolation from the Herodian era and that the book originally stems from the early Maccabean period. The hypothesis defended by Eissfeldt (p. 846) and Tromp (1993), namely that the description found in chapter 8 was modelled along the lines of the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, is more convincing.

The book was almost certainly written in Palestine and perhaps even in Jerusalem (cf. also 1:4, in which Amman is located “on the other side of the Jordan”). The author was clearly a Jew who considered the Hasmonean priesthood to be illegitimate (6:1) and rejected the temple cult as it was observed by the priests that functioned in his day. While this has led some scholars to argue that the document


has its roots in Essene circles, the segments of the text that have survived to the present day provide insufficient support for such a hypothesis.

It is evident that the author did not belong to the upper classes whose lifestyle he deplored. His aim was to exhort his readers during the “end of days” to remain faithful to God and his commandments and to encourage them in the midst of religious and political uncertainty with the promise that God will (swiftly) intervene on behalf of those who persevere to the end.


**k. IV Ezra**

vacua vacuis et plena plenis (7:25)\(^{50}\)

Text editions:


\(^{50}\) “Empty things are for the empty and full things are for the full” (NRSV).
Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


The fourth book of Ezra, also known as 2 Esdras or the *Apocalypse of Ezra*,51 is among the most important and most profound writings that have been bequeathed to us by Jewish apocalyptic. The value ascribed to the work in Christian circles is evident from the countless translations thereof, its citation in the writings of both Greek and Latin Church Fathers,52 who likewise quoted from the prologue (chapters 1–2, also referred to as *V Ezra*)53 and the epilogue (chapters 15–16, also known as *VI Ezra*),54 which were added to the book by a Christian hand.55 The text of 4 Ezra (3–14) has thus survived in Syriac,56 Ethiopic, Arabic,57 Slavonic, Armenian58 and Georgian59

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51 The enumeration 4 Ezra is based on the Vulgate in which 1 Esdras = Ezra, 2 Esdras = Nehemiah, 3 Esdras = the apocryphal book of Ezra and 4 Esdras the work being treated in the present paragraph. The primarily Anglo-Saxon usage 2 Esdras is borrowed from the Geneva Bible (1560).


55 They were originally written in Greek, cf. the Greek Oxyrhyncus fragment, which contains 15:57–59 (see A. S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri VII*, London 1910, n. 1010, pp. 11–15 [papyrus from the fourth century CE]).

56 The Syriac text is only known to us from the codex Ambrosianus, ms. B 21, Milan. For a recent edition see Bidawid, *op. cit.*, 1973.


versions together with a Coptic fragment known to us from a Latin translation. The latter, which ultimately acquired a place in the appendix to the Vulgate, deserves to be considered the most reliable. It is based on a Greek text that in turn was based on a Hebrew original. With the exception of a number of quotations of the Greek version (cf. Denis, *Fragmenta*, pp. 130–132), however, both texts have been lost to posterity. The translators of the Dutch Authorised Version included the work among the Old Testament apocrypha.

Setting aside the two Christian additions (chapters 1–2 and 15–16), which need not be treated at the present juncture, the document consists of seven "visions", said to have been granted to “Salathiel, also named Ezra” (3:1) thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE). In reality Ezra lived a century later while Salathiel is referred to in the bible as the father of Zerubbabel (cf. Ezra 3:2; Hagg. 1:1 etc.). Only the fourth, fifth and sixth visions can be considered visions in the strict sense of the term. The first three are in fact dialogues, in which the angel Uriel is sent by God to provide answer to Ezra’s questions, while the seventh is best understood as a legend.

After a summary of sacred history from the time of Adam to the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE), the first vision (3:1–5:20) relates how Ezra presented God with a question, asking him why he had rejected Zion. While the latter was not without sin, it was nevertheless no worse than all the other peoples (the Babylonians excluded). The angel answers that while the ways of the Most High are not open to human scrutiny, when the number of the righteous has reached its completion, deliverance from the misery in which humanity finds itself on account of the wicked seed sown from the beginning in the heart of Adam, shall finally dawn. Prior to this moment, however, creation shall undergo a terrifying upheaval.

In the second vision (5:21–6:34) Ezra asks God why he handed over his one chosen people to the "many". Once again the angel answers that the problem cannot be solved by human persons. Generation after generation comes and goes according to God’s plan, mother

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earth has grown old, but the end and final judgement are at hand in which evil shall be blotted out.

The third vision (6:35–9:25), which contains the well-known oratio Esrae (prayer of Ezra; 8:20–36), asks why Israel does not possess the world that was nevertheless created for it. The angel responds that the righteous advance towards the broad space of the deliverance to come via the narrow path of pain and exertion while the godless shall receive the due reward for their disobedience to God’s commandments. At the endtime, God’s son, the messiah, shall appear and he shall reign for four hundred years after which he and all humanity shall die. The world shall return for seven days to its primordial state, whereafter the resurrection of the dead and the final judgement shall take place. In response to Ezra’s observation that only a few shall be saved, the angel declares that this is in line with the rule that the most precious things are also the most exceptional: God shall rejoice over the righteous few that have been saved and shall not grieve the lost many whose eternal punishment is their own doing. While Ezra laments the fate of humankind and the fact that human beings, in contrast to the animals, are aware of the impending judgement, the angel answers that created beings poisoned by intelligence are responsible for their own transgressions. After a rather detailed excursus on the fate of the souls of the godless and the righteous in the interval between death and final judgement, Ezra ask whether any intercession by the righteous on behalf of the godless will be possible at the time of the final judgement. The angel’s negative response inspires the visionary to lament the fate of humanity on account of the fall of Adam (“O Adam, what is this that you have done!”), 7:118a). Ultimate guilt for humanity’s situation, however, should not be shifted exclusively onto Adam’s shoulders: life is a struggle in which one has to make the right choices. Ezra continues to express his doubts: is the destruction of so many souls really in harmony with the goodness of God? The angel responds that this world is for the many, the world to come for the few. Why does...

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64 The figure of 400 years is based on a combination of Ps. 90:15 with Gen. 15:13 (see G. Box, op. cit., p. 116).
God destroy human beings, the miracle of his creation? It is like seed that is sown: it produces little fruit! Ezra is given the reassurance that he himself belongs among the righteous. He should rejoice over the deliverance to come and not worry about the godless who shall receive their just rewards!

The *fourth vision* ([9:26–10:59]), which is also referred to as the *Zion vision*, represents the first of three symbolic revelations granted to Ezra. After contrasting the persisting magnificence of the Law with Israel’s infidelity, the visionary sees a woman in mourning who, after thirty years of infertility, was granted the gift of a son at a late age but had to give him up to death. Ezra comforts the woman by comparing her maternal suffering with the suffering of Zion who has been robbed of all her children. At this juncture the woman makes way in Ezra’s vision for a magnificent city. The angel Uriel explains to the visionary that the woman represents the heavenly city of Jerusalem who lost her son during the fall of the earthly city. Ezra is then comforted in his lament over the fall of the city with a glimpse of the new Jerusalem.

In the *fifth vision* (chapters 11–12), which is also known as the *vision of the eagle*,65 Ezra recounts a dream in which he sees an eagle with twelve wings and three heads emerging from the sea, growing eight little opposing wings and reigning over the entire earth. After the wings and (the majority of) the opposing wings had reigned for a time and disappeared, the eagle’s middle head awakes and allies itself with the other two. The middle head then disappears and one of the remaining heads devours the other. A roaring lion appears at this juncture and announces to the eagle that it is the last of the four beasts created to reign over the world and that its end is near. Thereafter the remaining head and two opposing wings disappear and the body of the eagle is burnt up. In the explanation that follows the vision the angel interprets the eagle as the fourth kingdom that “appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel”, and the lion as the (pre-existent) messiah of the line of David who is to destroy the world power and deliver the remainder of God’s people. The vision is a clear example of the development and reinterpretation (cf.

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12:11–12) of traditional apocalyptic images, in this instance those of Dan. 7:7–8.

In the sixth vision (chapter 13), also called the vision of the man from the sea,66 Ezra sees “something like the figure of a man” (13:3, cf. Dan. 7:13) coming up out of the sea, who devours a mighty army, gathered to wage war against him, with fire from his mouth (cf. Isa. 11:4), but thereafter calls a peaceable multitude to himself. In the explanation that follows the man is referred to as God’s Son. He is the messiah that will assemble the ten tribes and the “remainder” of Israel to himself.

In the seventh vision (chapter 14), also familiar to us as the Ezra legend, we are told how Ezra is commanded to “preserve in his heart” the revelations he has received and to prepare himself to be taken up into heaven where he shall dwell with God’s son until the dawn of the endtime. Given the loss of the sacred books during the destruction of Jerusalem and the danger that forthcoming generations might remain ignorant of salvation history and of God’s law, Ezra is granted a request, prior to his departure, whereby the Holy Spirit inspires his dictation of the content of the Sacred Scriptures to five men over a period of forty days. He is allowed to publish 24 books (the canonical books) while the remaining 70 are to remain secret and only made available to the “wise”. The book ends with the narrative of the assumption into heaven of the “the scribe of the knowledge of the Most High” (14:49–50).

Some scholars have been inclined to doubt the literary unity of the book on account of its irregularities, repetitions and shifting of accents. This has led, for example, to the defence of a Salathiel and an Ezra apocalypse as well as arguments in favour of the independence of the fifth, sixth and seventh visions as literary sources (Box 1912). The majority of contemporary scholars, however, are inclined to support the literary unity of the work and the present author considers such a position acceptable. The irregularities are best explained by the combination of personal visionary experiences with material provided by the tradition (Brandenburger 1981; Stone, commentary 1990).

The claim that the visions were revealed to Ezra thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem and the temple (thus in 557 BCE; cf. 3:1) is

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clearly fictional. In addition to the fact that Ezra lived a century later, it is evident that the book does not represent the written documentation of the problems that emerged after the aforementioned catastrophe but rather those that brought about by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 CE. The vision of the eagle offers a useful starting point in determining the period in which the work came into existence. It is generally accepted that the three heads of the eagle represent the Roman emperors Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. Given the fact that the death of the latter is not yet presupposed (12:28), the book must have come into existence prior to the year of his death (96 CE). Bearing in mind the language in which the work was originally written and the impression left on the author by the fall of Jerusalem, it is evident that the book stems from Palestine.

Sensitive, profound, visionary and poetically gifted, the author of IV Ezra did not only struggle with the misfortunes of his own people—the history of which inspired him with pessimistic emotions—he also grappled with the misfortunes of the world as a whole. His attempts to arrive at a theodicy are reminiscent of the book of Job and several passages of the work remind one of the latter. The questions posed by Ezra in the first three visions are answered in the following three visions in the form of revelations concerning the judgement to come and the immanent time of salvation: “God’s answer is not an explanation, but it is a promise” (Nickelsburg).

The book exhibits affinities with Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (see below) and may in turn have influenced 2 Baruch.

1. II Baruch (Syriac Baruch)

Now we have nothing more, only the Almighty and his Law (85:3)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

In an endeavour to distinguish the work to be discussed in the following pages from the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (see below), scholars employ the designation Syriac (Apocalypse of) Baruch in addition to 2 Baruch, the former being until recent times the only complete text of the book available to us. At the present time, however, we also have an Arabic version (Sinai No. 589), which is based on a late Syriac text (Leemhuis e.a. 1986). The Syriac text is based on a Greek translation, a fragment of which was found among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri (see above under text editions). The document was originally written in Palestine and probably in Hebrew.

In similar fashion to 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch can be sub-divided into seven parts.

In the first part (chapters 1–9) we are told how Baruch received an announcement from God concerning the fall of Jerusalem when King Jehoiakin was twenty-five years of age (591 BCE). The Chaldeans (Babylonians) enter the city only after the temple vessels have been removed from the Holy of Holies and hidden in the earth and other angels have levelled the walls of the city to the ground. The

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67 By way of distinguishing the work from the apocryphal book 1 Baruch, the Greek apocalypse 4 Baruch and the Paralipomena Jeremiae, also known as the Remaining Words of Baruch (3 Baruch); for the latter two works see below. Confusion arises from the fact that the Greek apocalypse is also referred to as 3 Baruch and the Paralipomena Jeremiae as 4 Baruch.

68 The Syriac text has only survived in a single manuscript from the sixth or seventh century CE (Codex Ambrosianus, Milan, B. 21 Inf., fols. 257a–265b). A few excerpts from a later period can be found, however, in Jacobite lectionaries, cf. S. Dederer, op. cit., 1973, p. iii. The letter attached to 2 Baruch (chapters 78–87), on the other hand, is available in no less than 38 different Syriac texts, cf. P. M. Bogaert, op. cit., 1969, pp. 43–46.

69 The Greek text of the papyrus does not deviate from the Syriac text to any significant degree.


enemy is thus unable to boast that they themselves destroyed Zion and set fire to the dwelling place of God. Baruch together with Jeremiah then fast for seven days.

In the second part (chapters 10–12) the text relates how Jeremiah is ordered to accompany the exiles to Babylon while the lamenting Baruch is directed by God to stay behind in order to receive a revelation concerning the end of days. Baruch breaks into a song of lament and fasts once again for seven days.

The third part (chapters 13:1–21:1) contains a dialogue between God and Baruch on the value of righteousness and a long life. Baruch is exhorted not to worry about the mortality of humankind. After the discussion he fasts for a further seven days on God’s command.

In the fourth part (chapters 21:2–34:1) Baruch prays for a swift revelation of God’s glory, saddened by the vanity and transience of human existence. He is told that God will bring what He has started to completion. Twelve periods of oppression shall come but the time of salvation shall dawn with the advent of the messiah. Once the messiah has returned to heaven, the dead shall rise and the final judgement shall take place. Baruch then addresses himself to the elders of the people and announces that “the building of Zion” (the temple) is to be destroyed once again only to be reconstructed thereafter forever in glory.

In the fifth part (chapters 35–47) we are told how Baruch received a vision and, upon his request, an explanation thereof. He sees a great forest located in a plane surrounded by high mountains (the forest symbolises the four world kingdoms) and a vine, under which a spring appears (the messiah). The water of the spring swells up into a mighty flood that destroys the forest. A single cedar (the final ruler of the fourth kingdom) remains standing only to be destroyed thereafter by fire. Flowers appear around the vine that do not wither (the immortal righteous). After having received further answer to his question concerning the fate of the righteous and the godless in the time of judgement, Baruch returns once again to his people, addressing in particular his oldest son, a few friends and seven elders. He exhorts them to hold firm to God’s Law in this time of affliction and to set their sights on the everlasting world to come, which the righteous shall inherit. They are to call upon the people to do everything in their power to avoid deviating from the commandments of the Almighty. Baruch then fasts once again for a further seven days.
The *sixth part* (chapters 48–77) begins with Baruch’s prayer for the deliverance of his people. God responds with a new revelation concerning the affliction of the endtime and on the change of appearance the righteous and the godless shall undergo after their bodily resurrection from the dead. Baruch once again receives a vision. He sees a cloud rising up from the sea and spreading over the earth. Alternating black and clear water rains twelve times from the cloud and finally only the blackest of water remains mixed with fire. A bolt of lightning on the upper edge of the cloud tosses it to the earth, takes control over it and restores the destruction it had brought about. At this juncture twelve streams emerge from the sea, surround the lightning and submit themselves to it. Upon Baruch’s request, the vision is explained to him by the angel Ramael. The black rain symbolises the darker periods of history (the fall of Adam and of the angels, the flood, the sin of the nations and of godless Egypt, the works of the Amorites, the godlessness of King Jeroboam I and that of his successors, the exile of the tribes of Israel, the godlessness of Manasseh and the destruction of Jerusalem). The clear rain stands for better times (the righteousness of Abraham and his descendants, the appearance of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua and Caleb together with all those who resembled them, the salvific era of David and Solomon, the righteousness of Hezekiah, the appearance of Josiah and the reconstruction and glory of Zion). The blackest of water stands for the afflictions of the endtime. The explanation goes on to speak of the clear water of the endtime (in contrast to the vision itself) that symbolises future salvation.

Baruch is then commanded by the angel to await the time to come on a high mountain. He must first, however, address his people to inform them that they shall not go into exile if they maintain God’s commandments. In response to the people’s request, Baruch promises to send a letter containing exhortations and words of comfort to the brothers living in Babylon. Upon his own initiative he adds that he will also write a letter to the ‘nine and a half tribe’. The latter is delivered to its destination by an eagle while the letter intended for the diaspora in Babylon is delivered by three human messengers.

The *seventh part* (78–87) contains the letter written to the ‘nine and a half tribe’ and speaks about the fall of Jerusalem and the judgement to come. The addressees are encouraged to repent and to maintain the Law of God with fidelity. The Letter of Baruch (epis-
tula Baruch) has been transmitted independently in Syriac bible manuscripts and once enjoyed a place in the church’s liturgy.

In terms of literary form, the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch exhibits striking and detailed points of agreement with 4 Ezra. After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, questions surrounding sin, suffering, mortality, retribution and divine governance come to the fore once again with the same intensity and are handled within the same universal framework. Significant differences in content remain, however, between 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, the tone of the latter being less sombre than that of the former: the suffering of the present is nothing compared to the glory to be revealed in the future! The agreements between the two documents have led scholars to suggest potential literary dependence.\textsuperscript{72} Indeed, one cannot exclude the possibility that the author of 2 Baruch wanted to temper the pessimism evident in 4 Ezra.\textsuperscript{73} In light of the fact that 2 Baruch offers more mature theological reflection than 4 Ezra one can at least presume that the former came into existence after the latter.

For the author of 2 Baruch, Adam cannot be blamed for the presence of evil in the world beyond that which applies to himself: “each of us has become his own Adam” (54:19; cf., however, 4 Ezra 7:118).

The fact that the Letter of Barnabas, written between 117 and 132 CE, already presupposes 2 Baruch\textsuperscript{74} implies that the apocalypse cannot have been written any later than the first decennia of the second century CE.

As we noted above with respect to 4 Ezra, the literary unity of 2 Baruch is occasionally called into question and, it would seem, unjustifiably so (cf. Bogaert 1969; Sayler 1984; Murphy 1985). The irregularities and contradictions apparent in the text can be explained as a result of the sources employed by the author and tend to be inherent to apocalyptic literature as a whole.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72} Others consider the dependence of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch on a common source to be more plausible, cf. A. F. J. Klijn, OTP I, pp. 617 and 620.
\textsuperscript{74} Compare 2 Baruch 61:7 with the Letter of Barnabas 11:9.
\textsuperscript{75} The Paralipomena Jeremiae (see below under p.) are dependent on 2 Baruch (cf. P. Bogaert, \textit{op. cit.}, 1969, pp. 175–222). In addition to 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch exhibits parallels with Pseudo-Philo (see below under p.).
m. III Baruch (Greek Baruch)

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


As a rule, 3 Baruch tends to be designated the Greek (*Apocalypse of*) Baruch in order to distinguish it from the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch.
(2 Baruch). Some confusion arises from the fact that it is also referred to as 4 Baruch, a designation employed elsewhere for the Paralipomena Ieremiae (see below under p). The document has survived to the present day in two Greek manuscripts, which exhibit few variant readings (cf. Picard, text edition 1967, pp. 68–69), and in two Slavonic versions that deviate significantly from the Greek texts (cf. Picard 1967, pp. 69–75). Questions surrounding the possibility that the author was inspired to write his book by 2 Baruch 76:3, in which Baruch is told to anticipate a number of revelations, cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. Any positive response to such questions is nevertheless undermined by the fact that the intended revelations would appear to be related to more earthly matters than to the secrets of heaven. While the document under discussion clearly contains reminiscences of 2 Baruch, it nevertheless exhibits a completely different character, representing an example of the genre of heavenly journey descriptions as found in the Slavonic Enoch and in the Visio Isaiae.

3 Baruch begins with a question addressed by a lamenting Baruch to God asking why He had handed over Jerusalem into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar II. An angel of God commands Baruch not to be concerned about the city: heavenly secrets will be revealed to him. Without further reference being made to Jerusalem, chapters 2–16 describe Baruch’s journey through five heavens (instead of seven!) under the guidance of an interpreting angel. He beholds the punishment meted out to those who had challenged God by building the Tower of Babel (2; cf. Gen. 11:1–9), to those who had forced others to make bricks for the tower (3), and to the serpent that had tempted Adam and Eve (4f.). He sees the chariot of the sun and the Phoenix, which guides the sun in its path and absorbs its scorching rays with its wings (6–8), the moon as a woman on a chariot (9) and the place from which the salutary rains and the dew of heaven originate (10). The following chapters (11–16) focus their attention on the inhabitants of the earth, the righteous and the godless. The concluding chapter (17) relates Baruch’s return and his gratitude for the revelations he has received.

The content of the book exhibits frequent points of contact with the traditions found in particular in the Syriac Baruch and the Slavonic Enoch. While the description of Baruch’s heavenly journey has clearly been influenced by Jewish apocalyptic, the text also contains motifs from Greek and Ancient Near Eastern mythology (the
sun chariot; the Phoenix; the moon as a woman on a chariot).

The place and time in which 3 Baruch came into existence cannot be established with certainty. While the author of the original document probably belonged to the Jewish-Hellenistic diaspora, his work as such is only known to us in its Christian reworking (cf. 4:15; 13:4; 15:4). The hypothesis that the book is based on a Semitic original cannot be confirmed. It is possible that Origen referred to 3 Baruch around 225 CE in his De principiis II,3,6, although the Church Father speaks of seven heavens rather than five. If the text of Origen does indeed refer to 3 Baruch—the author of which was familiar with the Syriac Baruch—then the work must have first come to light between 120 and 225 CE. The content of the document likewise suggests that the work originated in the second century CE.

n. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (TestXXIPatr) represent a collection of the last words of the twelve sons of Jacob, which they are said to have addressed to their descendants prior to their death. In line with the typical characteristics of such addresses, virtually all of the testaments contain biographical-haggadic, exhortatory and eschatological-apocalyptic material. Each testament, in which the exhortations tend as a rule to occupy the most important place, deals with one or more virtue or misdeed, illustrated on the basis of the patriarch’s own experience or by reference to the Joseph. Ruben, who had sexual intercourse with one of his father’s concubines (Gen. 35:22; 49:4), warns against illicit sex; Simeon against...
envy and jealousy (cf. Gen. 42:24); Levi, to whom the priesthood was granted, against arrogance among priests; Judah, who gave in to alcohol and lust (Genesis 38), against wine, impurity and avarice; Issachar who, according to lxx Gen.49:15, became a farmer, argues in favour of simplicity; Zebulun, who had pity on Joseph, appeals for compassion and mercy; Dan, who rejoiced at the sale of his brother Joseph, warns against anger and deceit; Naphtali, light footed as a doe (cf. Gen. 49:21), appeals for goodness; Gad, who hated Joseph, counsels fraternal and neighbourly love; Asher (literally: “just one, pure”) calls for radical devotion to God and his commandments. Partly on account of his experiences with the wife of Potiphar (Genesis 39), Joseph adjures perseverance, chastity and neighbourly love. As the Lord’s labourer who “divides the spoil” (Gen. 49:27) and no longer a ravenous wolf, Benjamin urges a pure disposition.

Worthy of particular interest in the Testaments are the apparent precedence it gives to Levi (priesthood) over Judah (kingship), its associated reference to the expectation of two messianic figures (cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls) and the particular emphasis it places on the love of God and neighbour and on purity of life. A prominent role is likewise set aside for Joseph as ethical model (Hollander 1981).

The Testaments have survived to the present day in the form of fourteen Greek manuscripts, several Armenian manuscripts that differ considerably on occasion from the Greek text and (in addition to a Latin and Modern Greek tradition) a number of Slavonic versions. We also have a number of Hebrew and Aramaic fragments at our disposal that exhibit kinship with the text of the book as we now have it. Perhaps the most important of the latter is the Aramaic fragment of Test. Levi, discovered in the geniza (refuse room) of the Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo, which agrees in places with the remnants of the Test. Levi found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scant remains of an Aramaic text from Cave 4 of

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Qumran potentially pertain to a Testament of Joseph, which served as the basis of the Greek text of the TestXIIIPatr. In part fairly large fragments of a Hebrew Testament of Naphtali, likewise discovered in Cave 4 of Qumran, contain a text that is related to the Greek Testament of Naphtali (which forms part of the TestXIIIPatr), but the precise nature of the relationship between them remains to be determined. A medieval Testament of Naphtali, know to us in the form of two recensions, exhibits striking kinship with the Greek version but offers no points of agreement with the Qumran fragments.

It is difficult to imagine a subject more disputed than the origins of the TestXIIIPatr. After a long period of time in which the document was considered to be of Jewish origins with later Christian editing/interpolation, scholars have more recently defended the hypothesis that the book was originally Christian, that it was written in the second (or third) century CE and that it made use of existing (already documented) Jewish traditions. The discoveries at Qumran, moreover, have led some scholars to favour an Essene origin whereby Christian interpolations are barely considered acceptable. Others support the idea of an Essene sub-stratum that was later reworked by Christian writers.

One can argue with a considerable degree of assurance that the Aramaic Test. Levi served as the Vorlage of the present Greek Testament. In light of the manuscripts thereof discovered at Qumran, this Aramaic document must have had its origins in the second century BCE. A number of scholars likewise favour the suggestion that similar Vorlagen, possibly written in Hebrew, can be presupposed with respect to the other Testaments. It is argued that a collection of Testaments came into existence on the basis of such Vorlagen that also attracted the attention of Christians who subjected them to further redaction. The TestXIIIPatr would thus appear to have come into existence around the beginning of the Common Era after a cen-
turies long process of reworking and adaptation of older traditions and the addition of new material. While the location in which this process took place is difficult to determine, the importance ascribed to Joseph in several of the Testaments has led to the postulation of Jewish-Hellenistic circles in Egypt, at least with respect to the Greek redaction. In spite of certain points of agreement with the content of some Qumran documents, the suggestion of an Essene origin remains difficult to support. Too many characteristic features of the Qumran community, such as strict observation of the sabbath, the new covenant, celibacy etc., are lacking in the Testaments to make such an identification feasible.

0. The Life of Adam and Eve

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


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Chapter Thirteen

Monographs and articles:


An extensive cycle of Adam literature emerged in early Judaism and in Christian circles surrounding the figures of Adam and Eve. The vast majority of the said material is of Christian origin, while the two works to be treated in the present paragraph exhibit, albeit slight, Christian reworking: a Greek text preserved in three different forms and designated the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and a Latin text significantly parallel to the latter entitled *The Lives of Adam and Eve* (Vita Adae et Evae). In addition to the (on occasion) verbatim agreements between the two texts, however, each contains pericopes that are lacking in the other.

The Armenian *Book of Adam* (to be distinguished from the *Penitence of Adam*) is dependent on the Greek version. In addition, we possess a Georgian *Book of Adam* (closely related to the Armenian *Penitence of Adam*), a Slavonic version and fragments of a Coptic translation (for details cf. M. de Jonge and J. Tromp, *op. cit.*, 1997).

The books relate the various penitential acts performed Adam and Eve after their expulsion from paradise whereby Eve falls victim once again to Satan’s deceit (*Vita* 1–17), the birth of Cain and Abel, Eve’s dream and Abel’s death, the birth of Seth and the remaining children (*Vita* 18–24; *Apoc.* 1–5), Adam’s declaration to Seth concerning a reception into the “paradise of justice” in which the first human person received the announcement of his death, and the secrets of the future revealed by Adam to Seth (*Vita* 25–29). The narrative of Adam’s sickness follows and we are told of Eve and Seth’s mission to paradise and their futile attempt to acquire oil to heal him (*Vita* 30–44; *Apoc.* 5–14). After Eve has related the fall (*Apoc.* 15–30), Adam makes known his last will and testimony and dies (*Vita* 45–46; *Apoc.* 31–32). All the angels pray for Adam’s forgiveness (*Apoc.* 33–36) and God in response has mercy on him (*Vita* 46–47; *Apoc.* 37). The angels ask permission to bury him (*Apoc.* 38–39) whereupon he is interred together with Abel in paradise (*Vita* 48; *Apoc.* 40–42). Both books end with the narrative of Eve’s death and burial (*Vita* 49–51; *Apoc.* 42–43).

Both documents exhibit such a degree of agreement that they appear to have been based on a common source. Parallels in terms of content with early rabbinic traditions and Pauline theology together with agreements with material preserved in 2 Enoch and Josephus make it likely that the original work (probably written in Greek) first came to light in the second century CE. Based on the *Vita*’s apparent presupposition of the existence of the temple in Jerusalem, several scholars have defended the hypothesis that the author must have

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penned his work prior to 70 CE. The lack of evidence to this end in the best Latin manuscripts, however, makes such a hypothesis unsustainable.

The author of the original work's lively imagination and artistic skills are abundantly evident in the document's copious use of edifying narrative (haggadic) material. The emphasis on fervent penitence as a means to defeat Satan is a striking feature. Shades of Pharisaic theology have led scholars to suspect that the author should be counted among the early rabbis.

The abundance of Adam literature that was to develop in later years may have been motivated and/or inspired by the Vita Adae et Evae. For further details see M. E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (SBL Early Judaism and its Literature 3), Atlanta GA 1992 and M. de Jonge – J. Tromp, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 79–94.

p. Other pseudepigraphal documents

**Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Bibli carum**

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Monographs and articles/commentaries:

Paralipomena Jeremiae

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


*The Lives of the Prophets*

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


*Testament of Abraham*

Text editions:

Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:


Testament of Job

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:

Monographs and articles:


*Apocalypse of Abraham*

Joseph and Asenath

Text editions:


Translations with introduction and notes/commentary:


Monographs and articles:

The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides


In the following pages we will briefly discuss a number of pseudepigraphal documents that tend on the whole to be left untreated in introductions to the Old Testament and early Jewish literature.

Incorrectly ascribed to Philo of Alexandria, the Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB: “the Book of Biblical Antiquities”) constitutes a retelling of biblical history from the time of Adam to the death of Saul supplemented with haggadic material. When compared with the
canonical tradition, the LAB exhibits a significant number of omissions (e.g. Genesis 1–3 and Leviticus; the period from Abraham to the exodus from Egypt is related in abbreviated form; the author shows little interest in the tabernacle and the priesthood etc.). On the other hand, however, the text also contains emendations and interpolations (prayers, speeches etc.; cf., for example, the elaborate narratives relating to Kenaz [see Judg. 1:13] in chapters 25–28). Some take the book to be a counterpart to Chronicles, which begins its narrative with the death of Saul, while others maintain that the document as we now have it is incomplete. The work, which only survives to the present day in Latin translation,91 is based on a Greek Vorlage, which in turn harks back to a Hebrew original. It was probably written in Palestine prior to 70 CE (cf. 22:8; 32:3)92 and was apparently known to the authors of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. The book contains motifs and legends that are characteristic of synagogue circles from the first century of the Common Era. The author urgently recommends the maintenance of the Law as the way to salvation.

While LAB contains a number of popular motifs that re-emerge in later Jewish legend (Abraham’s escape from Ur [6], Job as husband of Jacob’s daughter Dinah [8:8], the birth of Moses as an already circumcised boy [9:13]), it also contains material restricted only to the document itself (the relationship between the tower of Babel and Abraham being cast into the fire [6:3–18], the narrative concerning Kenaz [25–28]). Particular attention is devoted to prophecy, the Holy Spirit, good and evil leaders and angels. Idolatry and mixed marriages between Jews and pagan women are rejected as contrary to God’s covenant with Israel.

The Paralipomena Ieremiae, also referred to as 4 Baruch or (in Ethiopic manuscripts) the Rest of the Words of Baruch, contains a legend stemming from Palestine that brings the reader to the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and the Babylonian exile (cf. also 2 and 3 Baruch [l. and m. above]). The book has been preserved in Greek,

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91 The Hebrew fragments of LAB in the medieval Chronicles of Jerachmeel would appear to have been translated from Latin, cf. Harrington, op. cit., 1974.
92 While a date of 70 CE is often proposed on the basis of 19:7, it is possible that the text refers to the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II, cf. further D. J. Harrington, OTP II, p. 299.
Ethiopic, Armenian and Slavonic translations, although it was originally written in Hebrew. The work tells us how the prophet Jeremiah was ordered by God to leave Jerusalem prior to the city’s destruction (1), how angels razed the city walls to the ground and how the temple vessels were swallowed up by the earth (3). Upon the prophet’s request, his servant Abimelech is spared the sight of the city’s destruction. After gathering figs on land owned by Agrippa, Abimelech falls asleep only to wake up again 66 years later and find the figs he had plucked were still fresh (5)! He then establishes contact with Baruch who had remained in Jerusalem. Baruch understands the significance of the miracle (the restoration of the people) whereupon he is commanded by an angel to send a letter by way of an eagle to Babylon ordering Jeremiah and the exiles to return to Jerusalem (6–7). Those who had entered into marriage with pagan women are refused entry to the holy city and construct for themselves the city of Samaria (8). After having offered sacrifice, Jeremiah dies only to rise again after three days and predict the coming of Christ and his salvation. He is then stoned to death by the people (9).

With the exception of the concluding segment with its evident Christian reworking, the document as a whole is clearly Jewish in origin. The edifying and exhortatory work presupposes the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch and, like the latter, was written under the influence of the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE). The lack of any reference to the second Jewish revolt under Simon bar Kochba (132–135 CE) suggests that document probably stems from the beginning of the second century CE.

The Vitae prophetarum, the Lives of the Prophets, represents a document that has survived in a variety of often highly divergent Greek recensions and in a number of other languages. It contains a collection of non-biblical haggadic material concerning the lives of the prophets (the Major and Minor prophets together with those mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament), providing as a minimum

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93 Additional details in Denis, Introd., pp. 70–78 and Denis-Haeleweyck, Introduction, pp. 690–703.
reference to their name, place of birth and the location of their grave.

The oldest form of the document's superscription reads: “Names of the prophets and the place from which they come and where they died and how and where they lie buried”. The epilogue reads: “There are [yet] other prophets, [who are] hidden, whose names are recorded in their genealogies in Israel's books of names, for the entire generation of Israel is written down by name”. It would thus appear that the author limited himself to those prophets concerning whom legendary material was available to him.

Strongly influenced by the vocabulary of the Septuagint, the Vitae exhibit kinship with other ancient Vitae collections and represent an attempt to introduce the same sort of information contained in the latter to a broader public. The author has clearly borrowed his material from a variety of self-selected written sources of Jewish origin. His interest in the prophets is not based on their ethical preaching but rather on their miraculous deeds, their intermediary intercessions and their predictions of the future. The language in which the document was first compiled (Hebrew c.q. Aramaic or Greek) remains the subject of scholarly dispute. Heavily influenced by legends and popular religion (cf., for example, 2:4) the work may have been written in Jerusalem as early as the first half of the first century CE. The recensions of the Vitae available to us all contain Christian interpolations.

The Testament of Abraham is known to us in the form of two Greek recension, one long (A) and one short (B), both of which have been subject in later centuries to, albeit minor, Christian reworking. In addition to the latter we also possess Slavonic, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic versions. The suggestion that the document was originally written in Hebrew remains unsubstantiated and indeed unlikely (cf. Delcor 1973). We are told that as death approached the righteous and hospitable Abraham, the archangel Michael was sent to him in the hope that patriarch would relinquish his soul to the messenger of the Most High. Abraham refuses, however, insisting that he desires

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to see the whole of the civilised world before he dies. Michael first consults with God and Abraham’s wish is granted. The archangel transports him through the air in a heavenly chariot from which Abraham is able to observe humanity below. When he sees men and women committing outrages he calls for punishment by death. At this point, however, Michael is ordered to bring the journey to an end, for God is merciful and postpones judgement to allow sinners the chance to repent. Abraham is then allowed to witness the fate of the souls of humanity, the majority of which enter the wide gate to face judgement while only a few enter through the narrow gate into paradise (cf. Mt. 7:13–14). Three judgements take place in succession: by Abel, by the twelve tribes of Israel and finally by God himself, since only on the basis of two or three witnesses shall the condemned be put to death (cf. Deut. 17:6)! Once they have returned home Abraham again refuses to relinquish his soul to the archangel. At this juncture God sends Death to Abraham who, upon God’s request, reveals to the latter his violent cruelty and steals his soul by cunning. Abraham is then transported to paradise by the angels. Recension B differs from recension A in locating Abraham’s vision of the place of judgement prior to his journey in the heavenly chariot and in providing a considerably less elaborate judgement scene.

The presence of Egyptian motifs (including the weighing of souls in judgement: A 11–13) suggests that the Testament of Abraham, which is not a testament in the strict sense of the term, was probably written in Egypt and not in Palestine (thus Schmidt 1986) and perhaps in the first century CE. Abraham’s refusal to die has parallels in Jewish traditions surrounding the figure of Moses. With the exception of A 13:6, which alludes to the judgement carried out by the twelve tribes of Israel, the book’s universalistic portrayal makes no distinction between Jews and gentiles. As descendants of Adam, all humanity will be saved or punished according to their deeds.

Surviving in Greek, Old Slavonic and (incomplete) Coptic versions,97 the Testament of Job presupposes the canonical book of Job in the Septuagint version while exhibiting its own particular characteristics. In line with the main features of a testament, the book tells us how the former pagan King Jobab (cf. Gen. 36:33), who later came to

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be known as Job, informed his (later) children on his deathbed of his quest for the true God, how he was informed by angels of the satanic character of the idols worshipped in his kingdom and how he then destroyed their idolatrous temple. Filled with rage, Satan then set about robbing him of his property and children and making him suffer intensely. Job persevered in spite of the devil’s revenge, rejecting the advice of his wife and friends as inspired by Satan. His wife Sitis was dead and Elihu had addressed him in anger. Although the latter is cursed, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are granted forgiveness. Job’s wealth had been returned to him twofold, he had married Dinah, the daughter of Jacob (1:6), and he had been granted seven sons and three daughters as before (1:2–3). The text goes on to relate how Job admonished his children and divided his property among his seven sons. In response to his daughters’ request for a share in the inheritance, Job bequeaths them the three girdles that God had granted him to heal him of his sickness. Once clothed in the girdles, the daughters begin to speak ecstatically in the language of the angels, sing hymns of praise and glorify the Most High in their own language. As they do so the soul of Job is transported away in a heavenly chariot and his body is then buried.

While the designation Testament of Job is clearly justified, the testament’s characteristic elements of exhortation (cf. 45) and its apocalyptic features are evidently forced into the background in favour of the haggadic tale in which Job’s mercy and the virtue of perseverance are given a prominent place. While there is little doubt among scholars that the work was originally written in Greek and came to light in Hellenistic-Jewish circles, the place (probably Egypt) and period (probably during the first century of the Common Era) in which it was written remain the subject of dispute. The author accentuates God’s creative power, final judgement and heaven as the place of salvation. In addition, however, the work exhibits a highly moralistic and individualistic piety focused on the hereafter, hand in hand with a spiritualisation of the idea of salvation and a devaluation of earthly existence, which nevertheless does not lead to asceticism or pessimism. It is striking that Job’s suffering does not occasion questions concerning God’s righteousness but is seen rather within the framework of Satan’s conflict with the pious. While the work clearly borrows from Jewish Wisdom Literature, apocalyptic and mysticism, the influence of magical notions is likewise present.
The *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which election and covenant play a significant role, is a midrash based on Genesis 15 and presented in the form of a revelation. The work is only known to us from Old Slavonic texts, which have survived in a number of Russian redactions and represent translations of a Greek version that may have been based on a Hebrew original. Given the fact that it presupposes the destruction of the temple (27) the book must have been written after 70 CE but before the middle of the second century. It was probably written in Palestine. The work consists of a narrative segment (1–8) together with the apocalypse as such (9–32). Chapters 1–8 relate how the youthful Abraham came to the conclusion that the idols of his father Terach did not symbolise gods. He thus beseeches God to reveal Himself to him. God answers his prayer and commands him to leave the house of his father (chapter 7 is a redactional addition). In chapters 9–16 Abraham is commanded by God to offer sacrifice (cf. Gen. 15:9) so that he might be allowed to see great things that he has not yet seen. The patriarch is then taken up to heaven, under the guidance of the angel Jaoel, where he sees the light and the fiery angels (15), fire (17), the throne of God (18), the firmaments (19), the world (21) and its seven sins (24–25) as well as the destruction of the temple (27) (it is possible that chapter 23 is secondary). God announces, thereafter, the final punishment of the godless by ten plagues (29–30) and the victory of the righteous (31–32).

The document exhibits evidence of a number of Christian interpolations and contains glosses stemming from the Bogomiles, an eleventh century CE sect typified by “Marcionite” dualism (see, for example, 20:5; 22:5).

The book of *Joseph and Asenath* was originally written in a form of Greek that exhibits evident Septuagint influence. The work is in fact a novel of Egyptian Jewish origin, probably stemming from the period around the beginning of the Common Era. Taking Gen. 41:45,50–52 and 46:20 as its point of departure, it relates how Joseph took

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98 While some scholars ascribe the apocalypse to a different author than that of the narrative of chapters 1–8, Rubinkiewisz (OTP I, p. 682) argues in favour of the literary unity of the work (allowing for later interpolations).
Asenath, the beautiful daughter of Potiphera (lxx: Pentefres), the priest of Heliopolis (On), as his wife only after she had converted to the true God (1–21). In the second part of the work (22–29) we are told of an attempt on the part of pharaoh’s son—with the help of Dan, Gad, Naphtali and Asher—to kill Joseph and to abduct Asenath. The attempt failed, however, and pharaoh’s son died as a result of wounds inflicted by Benjamin. Joseph then becomes king of Egypt.

In addition to the Greek version, the text of *Joseph and Asenath* has been passed on to us in Syriac, Armenian, Latin, Slavonic and Ethiopic translations. The suggestion that it was written as a proselytising document has gained little support. The addressees would appear rather to be Jews and the work itself designed to show that gentiles who convert to Judaism deserve an equal place within the faith community to those who were born into it.

Associations of the work with the Essenes, the followers of Gaius Therapeutes, Jewish Merkabah mysticism and Gnosticism have proven insubstantial.

*The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* endeavour to imitate—in terms of language, style and meter—the poetry of the famed Greek poet Phocylides who lived in the second half of the sixth century BCE in Miletus in Asia Minor. Terminology influenced by the Septuagint, affinity with the conceptual world of the later Stoa and elements of content (including belief in the resurrection of the body, vv. 103–104), however, serve to identify the author of the text rather as a Hellenistic Jew who lived, presumably in Alexandria, in the first decades of the Common Era. Basing himself on both biblical and gentile sources, the author has put together a “vademecum of ethical instructions” (Van der Horst), in which typically Jewish customs and laws (sabbath, circumcision, food laws, cultic prescriptions) are left unmentioned. While his moral tone would have been lofty enough to attract gentile approval, it is sufficiently inspired by Old Testament ethics to lead one to presume that he wanted to create the impression that Phocylides served his apprenticeship, as it were, under Moses.

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Other pseudepigrapha cited by the Church Fathers or discovered elsewhere tend to have survived in only fragmentary form. These include the Prayer of Joseph, the Book of Eldad and Medad (cf. Num. 11:26–29), the Book of Jannes and Jambres (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8), the Apocalypse of Zephaniah and the Greek Apocryphon of Ezekiel. Others still have undergone such a thorough Christian reworking that any Jewish substratum is barely recognisable. Such is the case, for example, with respect to the Apocalypse of Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Sedrach (cf. Dan. 1:7), the Apocalypse of Eliezer.  

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the Testament of Isaac, the Testament of Jacob, the Testament of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Zephaniah. The occasional inclusion of the Odes of Solomon among the Old Testament pseudepigrapha cannot be adequately justified.

q. Fragments of Jewish-Hellenistic works

Text editions:


Translations with notes/commentary:


109 Cf. OTP I, pp. 903–911 (Stinespring).

110 Cf. OTP I, pp. 913–918 (Stinespring).


Monographs and articles:


Of the works of the *Jewish-Hellenistic poets* Epic Philo, Epic Theodotus and Ezekiel the Tragedian only fragments have survived in book IX of Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Praeparatio evangelica* (roughly 260–340 CE).
The latter borrowed his material from the document *Concerning the Jews* by Alexander Polyhistor, a Greek author from the first century BCE.\footnote{J. Freudenthal, “Alexander Polyhistor und die von ihm erhaltenen Reste jüdischer und samaritanischer Geschichtswerke”, *Jahresbericht des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars “Fraenkel’scher Stiftung”*, Breslau 1874–1875, pp. 105–130; 212–215. Given the process of textual transmission, textual abbreviation and reformulation, the literal text of the authors alluded to by Alexander Polyhistor is no longer open to reconstruction. The same is true with respect to Eusebius on account of textual corruption. This does not prevent us, however, from forming a more or less reliable image of the intentions and use of Scripture of the authors cited by Eusebius and the content of the works ascribed to them.}

After providing brief commentary on the reign of Ptolemy XII (80–51 BCE) and the High Priests Simon and John Hyrcanus I, the medieval Latin chronicle entitled *Excerpta Latina Barbari* (seventh or eighth century CE), a translation of a no longer extant Greek world chronicle from the fifth century CE, contains the following line: “In the same period, Sosates, the Jewish Homer, was highly respected in Alexandria”. While one can conclude from the use of the epithet (“the Jewish Homer”) that Sosates must have composed his biblical history in hexametric poetry, not a single line thereof has survived to the present day.

Epic Philo composed his epic hexametric poem *Concerning Jerusalem* in a ‘baroque’ and for modern readers frequently obscure Greek.\footnote{Probably due in part to the style of Philo and in part to defective transmission.} Eusebius quotes 23 lines thereof in his *Praeparatio evangelica* (IX,20,1; IX,24,1: IX,37,1–3), referring to Abraham and in particular to the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22), to Joseph’s reign over Egypt and the provision of water for Jerusalem respectively. The identification of Philo with the historian Philo the Elder, who is referred to by Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1,218) and Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 1,141,3) is more than likely incorrect (cf. N. Walter, *JSHRZ* I/2, p. 113). Epic Philo may have lived in the second century BCE, probably writing his work in Alexandria.

Fragments of Theodotus’ work composed in the style of Greek epic poetry\footnote{The title of the original is uncertain. Alexander Polyhistor refers to it as *Concerning the Jews*, but there are reasons to suspect that the original title was *Concerning Shechem*, cf. N. Walter, *JSHRZ* IV/3, p. 155.} are likewise cited in Eusebius (*Praeparatio evangelica* IX,22,1–11). After a description of the surroundings and geographical location of Shechem and a summary of Jacob’s vicissitudes, the
fragments paraphrase the narrative of the rape of Jacob’s daughter Dinah found in Genesis 34. As is the case in Jdt. 9:2, Jub. 30:6–7 and Test. Levi 5:1–5; 6:8,11, the attack on the unrighteous Shechemites is not portrayed as a revenge offensive on the part of Simeon and Levi but rather as a punishment desired by God.

Scholars are at odds as to whether Theodotus was a Jew or a Samaritan. The author probably lived in the second century BCE. The hypothesis that the surviving fragments represent a justification of the destruction of the temple on Mount Gerizim (129 BCE) and of Shechem (109 BCE) by John Hyrcanus I (135–104 BCE), based on an anti-Samaritan interpretation of Genesis 34, cannot be established with any degree of accuracy and is certainly to be rejected if Theodotus was a Samaritan.

Written in the style of Greek tragic drama, substantial portions of *Exagoge* (“Exodus”) by Ezekiel, the “composer of tragedies”, have been preserved in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio evangelica* (IX,28–29).\(^\text{117}\) The surviving material relates the departure of the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 1–15) in which Moses enjoys a prominent role. In addition to the biblical tradition, Ezekiel also makes use of haggadic material. While the *Exagoge*’s use of iambic meter serves to confirm the suggestion that the work was written in Greek, the period in which the author composed his work is far from certain: his dependence on (a recension of) the Septuagint together with the content of the Letter of Aristeas 312–316, in which the inclusion of the scriptural material in a dramatic work is explicitly condemned, point to the second half of the second century BCE. The place in which he composed his poem is also disputed (Alexandria? Cyrene?). It is possible that Ezekiel’s dramatic work was actually intended for the stage (cf. how the plagues with which Egypt was to be confronted were announced in advance to Moses by God [132ff.] and how a survivor relates the massacre of the Egyptian army in the Sea of Reeds (193 ff.).

The *Exagoge* also contains a striking description of the phoenix, the extraordinary and impressive bird that was sighted in Elim (cf. Exod. 15:27, vv. 254–269) and that always represents the beginning of a new era in (salvation) history (cf. Van der Horst 1982, pp. 111–112 and Jacobson 1983, pp. 157–164).

\[^{117}\] A number of fragments have also survived in the works of Clement of Alexandria and Eustathius of Antioch.
With the exception of 2 and 3 Maccabees, only fragments have sur-
vived of the work of Jewish-Hellenistic historical writers. During the
Hellenistic period, when more and more nations of the Ancient Near
East found themselves absorbed within the horizon of the Greek
world, representatives of the former employed a combination of Greek
literary forms and their own traditions in an endeavour to demon-
strate that their national history and wisdom had its roots in most
ancient times (cf. the Aegyptiaca of the Egyptian priest Manetho and
the Babyloniaca of the Babylonian priest Berossus from the third cen-
tury BCE). The purpose was to bring to light the credibility of their
national traditions and, as was often the case, to demonstrate, albeit
implicitly, that Greek culture was dependent on their culture.

Demetrius “the chronographer” is almost certainly the oldest Jewish
historian who wrote in Greek. Fragments of his work, which may
have been entitled On the Kings of Judah and apparently presented
the history of the Jewish people from the time of the patriarchs to
the post-exilic period, are known to us from Eusebius (Praeparatio
evangelica IX,19,4, IX,21,1–19, IX,29,1–3,15,16c—excerpts borrowed
from Alexander Polyhistor) and from a quotation found in Clement
of Alexandria’s Stromata (I,141,1–2). Among the remains of Alexander
Polyhistor’s work, brief mention is made of the sacrifice of Isaac
together with detailed allusion to the chronology of the patriarchs,
the ancestry of Moses and the genealogy of Moses and Sippora. The
material also contains a summary narrative of the incidents at Marah
and Elim (cf. Exod. 15:22–27) and a treatment of the question con-
cerning the way in which the Israelites came to acquire their weapons
at the time. It would appear from the quotation preserved in Clement’s
Stromata, which determines the length of the exile of the Northern
and Southern Kingdoms up to the reign of Ptolemy IV (221–205
BCE), that Demetrius wrote his work in the last decades of the third
century BCE, most probably in Alexandria. He exhibits familiarity
with the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch. His rather dry
writing style is akin to Hellenistic “scientific historiography” and the
question-answer schema (erotpokriseis), whereby problems raised in
the text are provided with a solution. His work is free of legendary
trimmings, of the glorification of the patriarchs and Moses and of
syncretism. Analogous to the historiography of his day, primary
emphasis is placed on the historical plausibility of the Scriptures,
substantiated on the basis of chronological considerations.

Three fragments found in Eusebius’ Praeparatio evangelica (IX,18,1;
IX,23,1–4; IX,27,1–37—likewise borrowed from Alexander Polyhistor’s work have been ascribed to Artapanus, suggesting that the latter composed a Moses novel under the title Concerning the Jews, a work with which Josephus would appear to have been familiar (cf. Jewish Antiquities II 201–349). After a brief introduction on Abraham’s sojourn in Egypt, where he educated the pharaoh in matters of astrology (fragment 1), and Joseph’s ordinances in support of the Egyptians as well as his discovery of measures (fragment 2), Artapanus’ work would appear to have been entirely dedicated to Moses, portraying the latter as the initiator of all sorts of cultural patrimony and not in the first instance as a legislator (see fragment 3). We are told how Moses’s jealous stepfather Chenephres employed a variety of means to get rid of his son-in-law but without success. After killing the man sent to murder him, Moses flees to Arabia. Upon his return to Egypt Moses is thrown into prison in response to his demand that the reigning pharaoh set the Jews free, only to enjoy a miraculous escape when the doors to his cell open by themselves. In a discussion thereafter with the pharaoh, whom Moses had aroused from his sleep, the former asks the name of the God who had sent Moses. Upon hearing the name the pharaoh falls unconscious to the ground only to be brought back to consciousness by Moses. Confronted by devastating plagues, the pharaoh ultimately decides to grant the Jews their liberty. Reference is made to the various explanations provided by the Memphites and the Heliopolites concerning the passage of the Israelites through the Sea of Reeds. Fragment 3 concludes with a brief allusion to the journey in the wilderness and the provision of manna as well as to the physical vitality of Moses, who would have been roughly 89 years old at the time.

Artapanus represents Moses in particular as Kulturheros, identifying him with the god Hermes and with Musaeus, the instructor of Orpheus. The author’s goal was ultimately to demonstrate the superiority of Moses and Judaism over Egyptian culture and religion. Indeed, he even goes so far in his endeavours as to ascribe the Egyptian animal cult to Moses. It is possible that his work was a reaction against the defamation of the Jews and their religion in Egypt where he would appear to have published his Greek language opus in the first half of the second century BCE.

118 A partial parallel of the latter fragment can be found in Clement of Alexandria’s Stromata I, 23, 154, 2–3.
Five fragments remain of Eupolemus’ book, which was probably published under the title On the Kings in Judah, four of which are to be found in Eusebius’ Praeparatio evangelica (IX,26,1; IX,30,1–34,18; IX,34,20; IX,39,2–5—borrowed from Alexander Polyhistor) and one in Clement of Alexandria’s Stromata (1,141,4–5 cf. also a parallel with Eusebius IX,26,1 and a brief allusion to IX, 31,4–34,3). The first fragment relates how Moses, the first wise man, taught the Jews the alphabet, which they in turn passed on to the Phoenicians, and how the Greeks received it from the latter. Moses is also represented as a lawgiver. The lengthy second fragment begins with a summary of history from Moses to Saul after which it turns its attention to David and, in particular, to Solomon. A considerable amount of space is devoted to the construction of the temple of Solomon (differing in many respects from the biblical text) and the latter’s correspondence with Pharaoh Vaphres and the Phoenician king Suron (= Hiram). The short third fragment provides further information concerning Solomon. Fragment 4 relates how Jeremiah prevented the ark and the two stone tables from being transported to Babylon. The fifth fragment, preserved in Clement’s Stromata, calculates the number of years from Adam and from the exodus from Egypt up to the fifth year of the reign of Demetrius I Soter (158/157 BCE), the year in which Eupolemus wrote his work. Such a date supports the probable identification of Eupolemus with the priest of the same name who, according to 1 Macc. 8:17–18, was sent by Judas the Maccabean to Rome in 161 BCE together with a certain Jason in order to establish a friendship treaty with the Romans.

Eupolemus appears to have given preference to Chronicles over Kings, occasionally harmonising details from both. He was nevertheless familiar with the Hebrew text as well as the Septuagint. It would seem that his history, which begins with Moses, was intended for non-Jewish readers, although his work is much less defensive and missionary-apologetic than then later Jewish Antiquities of Flavius Josephus.

Within the framework of its treatment of Abraham, Eusebius’ Praeparatio evangelica alludes to two texts, the first of which being ascribed by Alexander Polyhistor to Eupolemus, the second remaining anonymous. Both texts, referred to in the scholarly world as Pseudo-Eupolemus (Praeparatio evangelica IX,17,2–9 and IX,18,2 respectively), portray Abraham as an astrologer who, according to fragment 1, had acquired his knowledge from Enoch.
Fragment 1 relates how the tower of Babel was constructed by the giants who had survived the flood. After the tower was destroyed by God’s power the giants dispersed themselves over the earth. We are told how Abraham, born in Babylon, travelled to Phoenicia on God’s command where his nephew was taken prisoner in battle by the Armenians (!). Having liberated his nephew, however, Abraham is received as a guest in the temple on Mount Gerizim (!) where he is granted gifts by Melchizedek (cf. Genesis 14). Famine forces Abraham to travel to Egypt where the pharaoh marries his wife but is unable to have intercourse with her (cf. Genesis 12). While in Egypt Abraham spends his time educating the priests in matters of astrology and other sciences. A genealogy follows in which Bel features as the father of Canaan.

The fragment’s allusion to Melchizedek as priest of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim (cf. Gen. 14:18–20), together with its syncretistic association of biblical figures with characters from Babylonian and Greek mythology (Bel as father of Canaan, Enoch identified with Atlas), serves as sufficient proof for many scholars that the author must have been a Samaritan and cannot, therefore, be identified with Eupolemus. Doran (OTP II, pp. 874–876), nevertheless, has defended the attribution of fragment 1 to Eupolemus.

The anonymous second fragment relates how Abraham traced his ancestry to the giants who were destroyed by the gods on account of their wickedness. Bel, however, escaped death and built a tower in which he lived. Abraham instructed the Phoenicians in matters of astrology and then travelled to Egypt. The fragment would appear to combine traditions from a variety of different sources.

In light of the fact that the sanctuary on Mount Gerizzim (destroyed in 132 BCE by John Hyrcanus) is presupposed in fragment 1, one can argue that the material it contains stems from the first half of the second century BCE.

Only a small fragment remains of the work of Theophilus (cf. Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica IX,34,19), which relates how Solomon gave the gold left over after the construction of the temple to Hiram who used it to make a statue for his daughter. While it is apparent that Theophilus must have written about the construction of the temple (as did Eupolemus), we know nothing more about his historical work beyond the probability that it was written around 100 BCE. It may be possible to identify him with a person of the same
name (incorrectly taken to be Greek) referred to by Flavius Josephus (Contra Apionem I, 216).

Cleodemus, “the prophet, also known as Malchus”, is referred to by Josephus in his Jewish Antiquities (I, 240–241) in a quotation taken from one of the works of Alexander Polyhistor (On Libya?). Eusebius borrowed the said excerpt from Josephus and incorporated it into his Praeparatio Evangelica (IX,20,2–4). It speaks of the children fathered by Abraham with his wife Keturah (cf. Gen. 25:1–6) and draws genealogical associations between his descendants and the Greek hero Heracles. Cleodemus apparently lived in the diaspora in Carthage where he endeavoured to co-ordinate the traditions current at the time with the biblical tradition. While he clearly must have lived prior to Alexander Polyhistor, further details of his work and career remain unknown. Scholars generally date him between 200 and 50 BCE.

A number of fragments ascribed to the Hellenistic author Hecataeus of Abdera (around 300 BCE) can be found in Josephus (Contra Apionem I,183–204; see also II,43) and Clement of Alexandria (Stromata V,113,1–2; cf. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities I,159a). The material in question has engendered a great deal of discussion (cf. likewise the Letter of Aristeas 31). Some scholars are of the opinion that the fragments are taken from one and the same document, while others argue that the work On Abraham and the Egyptians, referred to by Clement and employed by Josephus in his portrayal of Abraham, has nothing to do with the document quoted in Josephus’ Contra Apionem (I, 183–204), which transports us to the time of Ptolemy I. Some scholars likewise argue that we should account for two pseudepigrapha in this regard (pseudo-Hecataeus I and pseudo-Hecataeus II; see Walter, JSHRZ 1/2, pp. 144–151) while others maintain that at least the larger fragment (Contra Apionem I, 183–204), which praises the Jewish people, the beauty of their land and of the city of Jerusalem, should be considered an authentic example of the work of Hecataeus of Abdera (see Gauger 1982).

Among the Jewish-Hellenistic exegetes one can include both Aristobulus and Aristeas, fragments of their work having been preserved by Eusebius (and in the case of Aristobulus also by Clement of Alexandria).

Aristobulus composed a tractate, addressed to Ptolemy VI Philometer (181–145 BCE), in which he endeavoured to show that religious doctrine proposed by (the Greek translation of) the Pentateuch contained
the “true philosophy”. Every passage in the Law of Moses that gives
offence on account of its anthropomorphic expressions concerning
God should be interpreted allegorically in order to achieve an accu-
rate representation of the Most High. For those who are able to
reason correctly, the Law stands as proof Moses’ wisdom and godly
spirit, the latter’s writings being known to Pythagoras, Socrates and
Plato! Fragments of the work of Aristobulus, who should be located
in Alexandria, have also been preserved by Clement of Alexandria
in his *Historia ecclesiastica* (VII, 32,16–18) and in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio
evangelica* (VIII,10,1–17, XIII, 12,1–2,3–8,9–16).

Only a single fragment has been preserved of Aristeas’ work *On
the Jews*, once again in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio evangelica* (IX,25,1–4, bor-
rowed from Alexander Polyhistor). The fragment offers a brief his-
tory of Job, the son of Esau (!), who was initially called Jobab (cf.
Gen. 36:33 and Test. of Job) and was the king of Edom. Tested by
God with misfortune and sickness, Job nevertheless remained faith-
ful. His indomitability moved God who healed his sickness and
granted him much property.

Nothing further is known of Aristeas beyond the fact that he must
have written his work around 100 BCE, if not earlier. He should
not be confused, however, with the author of the Letter of Aristeas.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Between 1947 and 1962, a large number of mostly fragmentary manuscripts were found, both by accident and as a result of systematic field study, in the Judean desert to the west of the Dead Sea. The discoveries centred around eleven caves located in the neighbourhood of Chirbet Qumran, which is situated on an extended rocky plateau roughly 12 km south of Jericho. The manuscripts found at Qumran would appear to have belonged to a Jewish sect that had assembled as a community in the area from the end of the second century BCE to 68 CE (with a temporary interruption). The site in question has since been thoroughly excavated and now functions as a popular tourist attraction. The documents stem from three centuries before to a half century after the beginning of the Common Era and can be dated at the latest to 68 CE when the members of the sect living in Qumran were forced to flee in face of advancing Roman forces moving in on Jerusalem from the east at the time of the first Jewish revolt. The same forces were to destroy Jerusalem and its temple two years later in 70 CE.

A clear distinction must be made between the manuscripts found at Qumran and the documents discovered at Chirbet Mird, roughly 10 km south-west of Qumran, which stem from a much later period. Likewise, documents discovered 20 km to the south at Wadi Murabba‘at and in a number of valleys further south should not be counted as part of the library of the community of Qumran. The documents in question belonged to Jewish resistance groups that were active during the second revolt against the Romans under the leadership of Simon bar Kochba (132–135 CE). A final group of manuscripts discovered at the mountain fortress of Masada, which served as the last bastion of Jewish resistance against the Romans in the final days of the first Jewish revolt in the year 73 (or 74) CE, should also be considered independently.

While it is strictly speaking inappropriate to refer to all the above-mentioned manuscripts as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the designation has nevertheless become common usage for the most extensive of the
various discoveries, namely those found at Qumran. The latter have been the subject of much press attention and, up to the end of the 1980’s, occasioned a number of sensation seeking popular publications that have tended to mislead their wider audience with respect to the actual significance of the manuscript discoveries.¹

The Qumran scrolls are of immeasurable value for our understanding of the textual transmission of the Old Testament, the history of early Judaism and the world of the New Testament. Their study has led scholars to an increasing realisation that the New Testament, in spite of its roots in early Judaism, radiates an entirely different spiritual climate to that of the Qumran documents and that Judaism at the time of Jesus was a heterogeneous phenomenon, whereby a variety of factions denounced one another with respect to the explanation of the Law and the practices of daily life.

a. The manuscripts of Qumran

1. Introduction

According to the majority of scholars the manuscripts of Qumran stem from the library of a religious sect known as the Essenes and described in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus and other authors.² Others are of the opinion, however, that the material belonged to the library of a splinter group that had separated itself from the mainline Essene sect in the second half of the second century BCE under the leadership of the so-called “Teacher of Righteousness” (understood as “the true teacher”), an opinion often referred to as the “Groningen hypothesis”.³

¹ An example thereof is the best selling, but (with the exception of a few interesting interviews) far from scientifically accurate work of M. Baigent and R. Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, London 1991.

² The texts in question with introduction, translation and notes can be found in G. Vermes and M. D. Goodman, The Essenes According to the Classical Sources (Oxford Centre Books 1), Sheffield 1989.

In order to distinguish the discovered remains of roughly 800 manuscripts from one another in a simple and comprehensible fashion scholars employ a system of abbreviations whereby the sigla used designate the place in which a manuscript was found (according to the chronological order of discovery: thus 1Q designates the first Qumran Cave, 2Q the second etc.), the nature of the document in question and, in the event that a single cave contained more than one scroll of the same work, the sequence of the documents. The second Isaiah scroll from the first cave in which manuscripts were discovered, for example, is designated with 1QIsb and the first Exodus scroll from Cave four of Qumran with 4QExa. In addition, the sigla p designates a *pesher* (“commentary”; see below), ‘ap’ an apocryphal book and ‘tg’ a targum (cf., for example, 1QpHab[akkuk], 4QGen[esis]ap, 11QtgJob). As a rule, a numerical sequence is employed that conforms to that of the publication of the Qumran manuscripts in the series *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (DJD)*, e.g. 4Q178. Manuscripts that have survived in extremely fragmentary form, which in some instances cannot be identified, are generally designated with the latter abbreviation only.

For the history of the discovery of the Qumran manuscripts, which has already been recounted several times and can no longer be retrieved in all its details, we refer the reader to the general introductory works listed in the bibliography below. In any event, it is clear that Caves 1, 4 and 11 contained the greatest number and the most important manuscripts. Literature dealing with the discoveries has become so extensive in recent years that the present volume is obliged to limit itself to a list of introductions and bibliographies. At the same time, the published texts are so numerous that it would be impossible to review them all. In this regard, therefore, the reader is once again referred to the official editions of the documents in question and to translations thereof. The remainder of the present chapter will thus limit itself to a discussion of the most important documents discovered at Qumran.


In addition to the earlier editions of the best known scrolls from Cave 1, the documents from Qumran, the manuscripts discovered in the Judean desert to the south of Qumran together with those from Wadi ed-Daliyeh, have been officially published in the series Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (DJD), Clarendon Press, Oxford (1955–).


For a useful yet somewhat dated edition of the most important scrolls from Cave 1, the Damascus Document and a few documents discovered in Cave 4 (with translation) cf. E. Lohse, Die Texte aus Qumran, Hebräisch und Deutsch, Darmstadt 1986. A modern, extremely useful and complete edition of the discovered texts with translation and bibliography can be found in F. Garcia Martinez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, The Dead Sea Scrolls. Study Edition I (1Q1–4Q273), II (4Q274–11Q31), Leiden-Grand Rapids 2000 (lit!; frequent reference will be made to these volumes in the treatment of individual texts).


The journals Revue de Qumrán and Dead Sea Discoveries are specifically dedicated to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2. Biblical manuscripts

The discoveries at Qumran include a large number of mostly fragmentary manuscripts of material from the Hebrew Bible. The manuscripts in question account for roughly one quarter of the discovered documents and are of extraordinary importance for the text-critical and the textual and canonical history of the Old Testament.4

With the exception of Nehemiah and Esther, all the books of the Hebrew Bible are represented in one form or another among the Qumran documents. Given the fact that the books Ezra-Nehemiah tend to be preserved in a single scroll, the discovery of Ezra fragments (4Q117) has inclined scholars to argue that the absence of Nehemiah is purely accidental. The book of Esther likewise did not belong among the sacred scriptures of the community of Qumran, the feast of Purim described therein being unattested in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first and second Isaiah scrolls from Cave 1 (1QIsa and 1QIsb) enjoy a place of prominence among the biblical manuscripts, the first scroll offering a virtually complete text of Isaiah, the second accounting for roughly one third of the book. 1QIsb is closely related to the Masoretic traditions while 1QIsa would appear to be the result of an intentionally actualising recension.5

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The biblical manuscripts discovered at Qumran serve to prove that in the first century prior to the beginning of the Common Era, the canonisation process of the Old Testament had not reached definitive closure within Judaism in its totality. In addition, it is evident that a (more or less) uniform text of the Old Testament had not yet established itself at the time, although there are indications that the textual tradition as we know it from the editions of the Hebrew Bible we now have at our disposal had achieved a substantial degree of permanence in circles surrounding the temple in Jerusalem. In Qumran, however, we also encounter a variety of text recensions. While it is true that the majority of the discovered biblical manuscripts are akin to the later Masoretic tradition (roughly 60%), they also include manuscripts that would appear to be based on a Hebrew text that served as the basis of the Septuagint translation (see, for example, 4QJer\textsuperscript{b}),\textsuperscript{7} and recensions that constituted the Vorlage of the Samaritan Pentateuch (see, for example, 4QpaleoExm).\textsuperscript{8} A number of other biblical texts cannot be classified among the proto-Masoretic, proto-Septuagint or proto-Samaritan text traditions (see, for example, 11QpaleoLev\textsuperscript{[itics]}).\textsuperscript{9} In addition to the Hebrew manuscripts, a number of (Greek) fragments of the Septuagint\textsuperscript{10} have been found that correspond for the most part with the text as we know it (see also chapter V). Old Testament biblical texts are quoted with great frequency in the Qumran documents, in florilegia from books of the bible and in particular in the “bible commentaries” (see below). An example of the former can be found in 4Q Testimonia
(4Q175) [see below under the heading Texts related to the endtime] and 4Q Tanchumim (4Q176), a collection of words of comfort borrowed to a significant degree from Deutero-Isaiah (this collection also includes commentary on a number of the quoted passages).  

3. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Fragments of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal documents have also been found among the discoveries at Qumran, material that frequently allows us an initial glimpse of the original language in which the books in question were first written. Discoveries include fragments of Tobit (both in Aramaic and in Hebrew), of Jesus Sirach and the Letter of Jeremiah (see chapter XII), of Jubilees and of four of the five books of I Enoch (see chapter XIII). Given the fact that the community of Qumran would appear not to have accepted any books that had been written elsewhere after it had established itself in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea around 130 BCE, the books alluded to above must thus have already existed prior to the said date. This also explains why several other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books known to us today were not included in the library of Qumran.

4. Bible commentaries

Among the literature conceived by the Qumran community itself a number of documents have been found that bring us into contact with a hitherto unknown form a biblical interpretation.

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Formally speaking, these “commentaries” are made up of the text of a prophetic book or of the Psalms interrupted at intervals with an interpretation of the relevance of the passages. The interpretation is introduced by a formula that generally includes the word pesher (“explanation”) although this varies from time to time. It is for this reason that the scientific literature tends to designate such biblical commentaries as pesher (plural pesharîm). The “commentaries” in question are clearly unrelated to modern biblical interpretation, which endeavours to explain the words of a prophet or psalmist within the framework of his own time and circumstances. Rooted in the conviction that the prophets (including the prophet [!] David, to whom the book of Psalms is ascribed) had spoken their words with respect to “the last of days”, their message was applied in actualising fashion to contemporary circumstances. In line with this procedure, certain commentaries relate the prophetic text primarily to the history of the Qumran sect (e.g. 1QpHab[akkuk]; 1QpMicah = 1Q14; 4QpPs[alm]37 = 4Q171), while others place the emphasis on the powers unleashed by the endtime which, in their opinion, was already at hand (in part 1QpHab, but see also 4QpNahum = 4Q169) or on the messianic future (4QpIsa = 4Q161).\(^\text{14}\) Given the fact that the words of the prophets are explained on the basis of persons and events from the time of the sect, it is possible, at least in principle, to determine the date of the documents in question with some degree of accuracy and draw conclusions thereby with respect to the history of the community. On the other hand, the authors of the “commentaries” tend as a rule to employ characterisations and pseudonyms (such as “the Teacher of Righteousness”, “the False Prophet”, “the Godless Priest”, “the Raging Lion”, “Ephraim”, “Manasseh”, “Judah” etc.) which, while undoubtedly familiar to their contemporaries, often

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present something of a riddle to the present day reader in his or her endeavour to trace the fortunes of the sect.\(^{15}\)

The term *pesher* (Aramaic *peshar*) is employed in Daniel 2 and 5 for the explanation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the mysterious writing that appeared on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast. The Habakkuk commentary from Cave 1 of Qumran\(^{16}\) similarly states that God has made known “all the secrets of his servants the prophets” (1QpHab 7:4–5) to the Teacher of Righteousness. What would appear to be intended by this statement is that the Teacher was granted insight into the content of the prophecies (understood as predictions) of the Old Testament for his own faith community and the eschatological community. From the hermeneutical perspective, use is made of exegetical methods similar to those known to us from later Jewish literature, although the actualising explanations oriented towards the endtime no doubt fulfilled a self-confirming and comforting role for the members of the community of Qumran.

A distinction should be made between continuous commentaries, whereby the content of a biblical book or a segment thereof is closely followed and explained (cf. 1QpHab), and thematic commentaries that exhibit a similar form of scriptural exegesis while focusing on a single subject, elucidated on the basis of a variety of passages borrowed from different biblical books. A representative example of the latter type of thematic commentary can be found in *11Q Melchizedek* (11Q13), which alludes to a selection of texts in its presentation of Melchizedek (cf. Gen. 14:18–20) as a heavenly figure who will be victorious against Belial (the devil) at the endtime.\(^{17}\) The text of this document sheds new light on Hebr. 7:1–3. The *Eschatological Midrashîm*...

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from Cave 4 (4Q174 together with 4Q177 and 4Q182), originally published as 4QFlorilegium and 4QCatena, exhibit a similar character.\(^{18}\)

5. **Targums**

During synagogue services, the biblical texts associated with the liturgy of a particular Sabbath were read aloud in Hebrew and translated simultaneously into the vernacular (Aramaic) for the benefit of the assembled community. The person assigned to read the Sacred Scriptures did so on the basis of a scroll while the person assigned to provide the translation did so from memory and without any form of written support. In the rabbinic period, such Aramaic translations, which simultaneously provided an occasion for the explanation and actualisation of the recited texts, were consigned to book form (see chapter V). The codification of the Targums (“translations”) thus served in addition as a tool for the study of the scriptures outside the synagogue liturgy.

It has long been believed that any written registration of the translation of the Sacred Scriptures into Aramaic must have taken place at a relatively late date. Three Targums have been preserved in fragmentary form among the Qumran documents (4QtgLev, 4QtgJob and 11QtgJob),\(^{19}\) however, which prove the existence of Aramaic renditions of the Sacred Scriptures prior to the beginning of the Common Era. Given the fact that the members of the community of Qumran were evidently familiar with the Hebrew language, such Targums must have been employed in the first instance as a support in understanding the biblical text and will thus have been used for study purposes.

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6. Para-Biblical literature

The Qumran scrolls have brought us into contact with a number of documents that scholars have designated as para-biblical. While the authors of such material are familiar with the biblical text and take it as their point of departure, they rewrite the latter by adding information from different traditions and by introducing their own contribution. The extent to which the authors in question base themselves on the biblical text varies from case to case. Some such documents are closely akin to the original text while others would appear to limit the latter to little more than a point of departure for the composition of an entirely unique work. The manuscripts that offer a *Reworked Pentateuch*,20 a clear example of a “rewritten Bible” are closely related to the biblical text. While the Aramaic *Genesis Apocryphon* from Cave 1 of Qumran (1QGenAp),21 of which only columns 2, 12 and 19–22 have been preserved in reasonable conditions, tends to follow the course of history as it is related in the Old Testament, it nevertheless paraphrases the latter to a significant degree. Col. 2 narrates the birth of Noah in a fashion reminiscent of 1 Enoch 106. The narratives devoted to Abraham in col. 19–22 associate biblical material with other information from the tradition, including a description of Sarah’s beauty (col. 20:1ff.) and Abraham’s journey along the boundaries of the promised land (col. 21:15–19).

The Book of Jubilees and segments of 1 Enoch can likewise be reckoned among the para-biblical literature of Qumran. Several other works discovered among the scrolls would also appear to belong to this category, the majority being hitherto unknown: remains of the *Book of Noah*,22 testaments of Joseph, Levi, Naphtali, Kehat and Aram, pseudo-Mosaic documents, Psalms of Joshua and works classified as Pseudo-Samuel, Pseudo-Jeremiah, Pseudo-Ezekiel and Pseudo-Daniel.23

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22 See the recent detailed study by F. García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic* (STDJ 9), Leiden 1992, pp. 1–44.
23 Cf. F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tischler, op. cit., pasim.
Written in Aramaic, the *Prayer of Nabonidus*\(^{24}\) (4Qpr[ayer]Nab = 4Q242), the last king of the neo-Babylonian empire, should be included among the pseudo-Daniel literature. Only a few segments of the first column and a couple of fragmentary lines from the second have been preserved. The text is extremely interesting because it provides a tradition-historical precursor to the tradition found in the text of Dan. 3:31–4:34, where it is related to Nebuchadnezzar II. The relationship with the canonical-biblical text should be evident from the following translation:

The words of the prayer spoken by Nabonidus, the king of Babel, the great king, when he was stricken by the Most High God with malignant abscesses in the city of Teman. I was stricken with malignant abscesses for seven years and I became like the beasts. But I gave honour to the Most High God and he forgave my sins. He had a seer, a Jewish man from the exile, who said to me: Proclaim in writing that honour, glory and majesty be given to the name of the Most High God. I thus wrote: When I was stricken with malignant abscesses . . . in Teman for seven years, I called out to and praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, stone and clay, because [I thought] that they were gods . . .

The remains of manuscripts known to us as *Proto-Esther* (4Q550\(^{a-f}\)), on the other hand, are far removed from the biblical tradition. The hypothesis that the said remains represent an earlier or contemporary tradition-historical stage of the Old Testament Esther narrative\(^{25}\) remains unlikely.\(^{26}\)

7. **Legislative literature and rules of order**

Much of the literature we have outlined thus far did not originate within the community of Qumran itself. This is clearly the case with

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respect to biblical books, the Targums and the majority of the para-
biblical material. The legislative literature and rules of order dis-
covered at Qumran, however, first saw the light of day within the
sect as such or can be traced back to the circles that gave rise to
the Qumran community. The documents in question can be divided
into three categories:

a. documents containing the norms that the Qumran community
   believed to be binding for all Israel;
b. scrolls containing prescribed rules binding in the first instance for
   the community itself;
c. texts of a utopic nature containing legal provisions for the end-
time.

Representative examples of the first category include 4Q Certain Works
of the Law (4QMMT = 4QMiqsat Ma’ase ha-Torah = 4Q394–399),27
4Q Ordinances (4Q159 and 4Q513–514)28 and the Rules for Purifi-
cation (4QTohoroth = 4Q274–279).29

The content of 4Q Certain Works of the Law30 is of particular inter-
est. It appears to take the form of a letter written by the religious
movement that would later constitute the Qumran community and
addressed to the Sadducees (or their predecessors) and their leader.
After making reference to a festival calendar based on a 364-day
year (A), the document goes on to detail its opposition to certain
elements of the explanation of the Law proposed by a third group,
namely the Pharisees or their direct predecessors (B). The work pro-
cceeds to spell out that the petitioners had separated themselves from
“the mass of the people” on account of the opposed explanation of
the Law and that while the blessings and curses foretold in the Sacred
Scriptures had in part already been realised, they were to be brought
to further completion in the endtime that had now dawned. The
leader of the addressees is urged to accept the perspectives of the
authors of the letter (C). Given the fact that the explanation of the
provisions of the Law supported in the document is in line with
ordinances that recur in other Qumran documents and run counter
to Pharisaic and later rabbinic (under Pharisaic influence) insights

and practices, it seems reasonable to conclude that the petitioners as “sons of Zadok” upheld an interpretation of the Law that was closely akin to that of the Sadducees. This “act of separation” must thus stem from the first decennia of the second half of the second century BCE, the period prior to the community’s withdrawal into desert of Qumran.

Among the documents to be classified under the second category outlined above, documents intended in the first instance for the sect itself, the *Rule of the Community* (1QS) and the so-called *Damascus Document* (CD = Covenant of Damascus) deserve particular attention. The documents in question do not limit themselves to designating codes of behaviour, the hierarchical structure of the community and various penal ordinances, they also contain several other elements, including theological tractates, interpretations of sacred history, hermeneutical discourses and even hymns.

The *Rule of the Community* (Sèrèk ha-Yachad), initially referred to as the Manual of Discipline, has survived more or less intact in Cave 1 (1QS) and in part (in older recensions) in Cave 4 (two indecipherable fragments were discovered in Cave 5, cf. DJD III, 181). Based on the content of the surviving manuscripts we can determine that the document emerged in a complex process around the time that the community of the “Teacher of Righteousness” withdrew into the desert around Qumran. After a general introduction (I 1–15), 1QS contains a description of the annual ceremony of admission to the covenant (I 16–III 12). Therafter we are introduced to a tractate on the two spirits, the spirit of truth and the spirit of iniquity, c.q. the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness. The continuous struggle between the two spirits dominates the heart of humankind and its history, placing a strong emphasis on predestination and

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dualism (III 13–IV 26). The rule of the community in the strict sense of the term (including a penal code) is to be found in columns V–VII, followed by a plan for the establishment of a future community that would be constituted as a spiritual temple in the wilderness (VIII–IX). Given its style, vocabulary and content, the latter segment, which also contains instructions for the Wise One, a functionary within the community charged, among other things, with the task of education, and is interrupted with a fragment from the penal code, must have been written earlier than the actual rule of the community found in columns that already presuppose residence in the desert. The work, which probably came to light in its present form in the second century BCE, ends with a lengthy hymn of thanksgiving (X–XI). The Rule of the Community is of exceptional value because the document provides us with information concerning the religious conceptual world of the community of Qumran, its understanding of the covenant and divine predestination, its confessed dualism, the centrality of the Scriptures and fidelity to the Law of Moses, together with its eschatological and messianic ideas, its opposition to the temple cult in Jerusalem and its substitution of cultic sacrifice with the “praise of the lips”.

Two further documents, generally referred to as the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa = 1Q28a = Règle de la Congrégation) and the Rule of Benedictions (1QSb = 1Q28b = Recueil des Bénédictions), are attached to 1QS. The first document (1QSa) can be classified under the third category outlined above. It contains a number of ordinances related to the coming endtime and concludes with the description of an eschatological banquet at which the high priestly messiah of Aaron and the royal messiah of David expected by the sect will participate. The fragmentary second document (1QSb) will be treated under the liturgical texts (see 9 below).


Among the manuscripts discovered at the end of the nineteenth century in the geniza (refuse room) of the Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo, two copies were found of a hitherto unknown work later published by Solomon Schechter under the title *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge 1910). The first copy consists of 8 pages of double-sided written text that, with the exception of the two last pages, has been preserved in perfect condition (columns I–XVI = CD A). The second copy consists of only a single page, with similarly double-sided notation, designated by Schechter as columns XIX and XX (CD B; the content of column XIX coincides to a significant extent with that of columns VII–VIII van CD A). The work is commonly referred to as the *Damascus Document*, because it speaks repeatedly of “the land of Damascus” (an allusion to the territory of Qumran?), or in abbreviation as CD. The discovery of fragments of the Damascus Document in Caves 4, 5 and 6 at Qumran confirms the fact that CD represents a further example of the sectarian works that include the Rule of the Community (1QS). The remains of manuscripts found in Cave 4 (4QDa–h) serve in the meantime to support the hypothesis that CD represents only a portion of the original document.

The original content included the following: the beginning of the work, not represented in CD, but partly preserved in 4QDa and 4QDb; columns I–VIII of CD A; column XX of CD B;

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numerous legal prescriptions preserved in various manuscripts from Cave 4; column XV–XVI of CD A; column IX–XIV of CD A; a continuation of the legal prescriptions preserved in 4QDb; a penitential codex found in 4QD\textsuperscript{b,d,e}; a ritual of exclusion from the covenant and the conclusion of the work represented in 4QD\textsuperscript{b} and 4QD\textsuperscript{e}.

In terms of content the work can be divided into three main segments:

a. “admonitions” addressed to the members of the community by way of introduction to the legal prescriptions that follow;\textsuperscript{40}

b. a collection of legal ordinances borrowed from the bible or based on the community’s interpretation of the Law, a special set of regulations intended to determine the life of the community;

c. a collection of ordinances for the meetings of the military platoon, for the Supervisor, for the plenary assembly of the sect members, followed by a penal codex and a description of the ceremony for exclusion from the community.

Agreements and differences between 1QS and CD can be explained on the basis of the fact that the communities referred to in the Damascus Document coincide with Essene groups spread throughout Palestine as a whole while the Rule of the Community (1QS) embodies the standpoint adhered to by those who had withdrawn into the wilderness of Qumran under the command of the “Teacher of Righteousness” around 130 BCE. Given the allusions to the book of Jubilees in CD A XVI 3, scholars are inclined to date the Damascus Document in the second half of the second century BCE and prior to the final redaction of 1QS.

The Temple Scroll from Cave 11 of Qumran (11QTemple\textsuperscript{a} = 11Q19),\textsuperscript{41} which was copied by two different scribes, represents the

\textsuperscript{40} The hypothesis maintained by H. Stegemann, “Das Gesetzeskorpus der Damaskusschrift (CD IX–XVI)”, Revue de Qumrân 14 (1989–1990), 409–434, that the Exhortations originally constituted an independent document is countered by the fragments from Cave 4.

longest of the scrolls discovered among the documents of the Dead Sea (at the moment more than 8 meters long) and should be classified under the third category outlined above. Certain hiatuses in the document, which has been preserved for the most part in good condition, can be filled in on the basis of a copy of the same work likewise stemming from Cave 11 (11QTempleb = 11Q20). Located within the framework of the Sinai covenant, the author presents his work as a direct revelation from God to Moses and as a new Law for all Israel. The document integrates various laws concerning the sanctuary and the cult as found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers with those of Deuteronomy, either literally or in an adapted form or with additions not found in the biblical texts. The laws dealt with in the work address a number of different themes: the construction of the temple and the altar (columns II–XIII) as well as the temple square and the buildings located therein (XXX–XLV); the annual festival cycle with its associated sacrifices (XIII–XXIX); prescriptions intended to guarantee the ritual purity of the temple and the city (XLV–XLVII), more general purity laws (XLVII–LI); a rewriting of the laws of Deuteronomy 12–23 (LI–LXVI) with a detailed tractate dedicated to Deut. 17:14–20, referred to as the King’s Law (LVI–LIX), ordinances concerning the Levites (LX 1–11) and crucifixion as punishment for a capital offence (LXIV 6–13).

There can be little doubt that the author of the Temple Scroll made use of a variety of written sources. It is apparent from his work that he did not consider the existing sanctuary in Jerusalem to be in agreement with God’s will as revealed on Sinai. Agreements in use of terminology and concrete legal ordinances between the Temple Scroll and 4QMMIT (see above) compel us to locate the document among the priestly circles surrounding the temple in Jerusalem and to accept that the work must have first seen the light of day in the second half of the second century BCE. It clearly stems from the

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community of Essenes that had withdrawn into the wilderness of Qumran. Given the authority claimed for the document and the candour with which the author rewrites biblical texts, one can argue, albeit without conclusive proof, that the leader of the group, the “Teacher of Righteousness”, was responsible for compiling the Temple Scroll.

8. Poetic texts

Among the poetic texts stemming from the community of Qumran, the Hymn Scroll, sometimes referred to as the Thanksgiving Scroll or Hodayot, enjoys the most important place. The work has survived in a manuscript from Cave 1 (1QH), which appears to have been copied by two different scribes. It was published by Sukenik in 1954 and later by Puech in 1988, the latter attempting a reconstruction of twenty-six columns in the original sequence, of which provide a more or less complete text. Both the beginning and the end of the manuscript have been lost. One of two fragments of an alternative copy (1QHb) discovered in the same Cave, however, provide us with the opportunity to supplement a portion of column XV of 1QH. While the remains of six manuscripts of the work found in Cave 4 (4Q427–432) tend on the whole to coincide in terms of content with certain passages from 1QH, they occasionally provide segments of thanksgiving hymns not found in the latter. It is interesting to note that one of the six manuscripts offers evidence of the possibility that the sequence of songs in the scrolls could vary.


The work consists of a collection of hymns of praise that begin as a rule with the words: “I praise you, Lord, for . . .”. The hymns are strongly influenced by the language of the Old Testament, from which they borrow a large number of expressions. In terms of literary genre, poetic structure and style, the hymns exhibit a high degree of homogeneity, suggesting that they were written over a relatively short period of time. It is no longer possible to establish with certainty whether the songs were written by one and the same author. Some scholars have been inclined to ascribe them all to the “Teacher of Righteousness”, the founder of the Qumran community, others only a portion thereof.46

While the exact date of origin if the hymns can no longer be established, it must be prior to that of the oldest manuscript found in Cave 4 (4Q428 = 4QHb), which stems from the first half of the first century BCE. There is little doubt that the songs emerged from the community of Qumran but the function they fulfilled within the sect (liturgical?) remains unknown.

The primary theme of the scroll is God, whose power, omniscience, glory and righteousness are continually accentuated together with his mercy, kindness and love. By contrast, human persons tend to be portrayed in rather negative terms: formed out of clay, a corporeal spirit, corrupt from birth onwards and destined to die. It is only on account of God’s preordination and grace that humankind is blessed with a share of His Holy Spirit, is justified by Him and is allowed to cherish the hope of a future heavenly glory together with the angels. The fact that the songs frequently exhibit a cogently personal character suggests that we should not exclude the possibility that at least some of them stem from the “Teacher of Righteousness”. The question of authorship to one side, the songs provide us with a picture of religious perspectives that had already come to predominate within the community of Qumran in its earliest days.

A further category of poetic texts is formed by the *Apocryphal and Non-Canonical Psalms*. Closely akin to biblical poetry, and in particular to the book of Psalms, they represent the evolution of the latter in the period of early Judaism. Three manuscripts from Qumran

contain a number of songs not found in the Hebrew Bible intermingled with other canonical songs. Some are already known to us from Greek (Psalm 151) or Syriac (Psalm 151–155) collections of psalms. The manuscript that contains the largest number of apocryphal songs is the First Psalm Scroll from Cave 11 (11QPs\textsuperscript{a}), which stems from the first half of the first century BCE. In between a large collection of canonical psalms we find a reference written in prose alluding to the 4050 songs allegedly composed by David (column XXVII 2–11). Two further poems, the second of which having survived in a highly fragmentary state, offer us the Vorlage of Psalm 151 included after the book of Psalms in the Septuagint and in an appendix to the Vulgate. The psalm in question reveals that the Goliath scene in lxx Ps. 151:6–7 would appear to have been borrowed from a different song to the description of the election of the youthful David found in the preceding verses (column XXVIII 3–14). In addition to Psalm 151, the first Psalm Scroll from Cave 11 contains the original Hebrew text of two other psalms (Psalm 154 and 155), known to us since 1759 from the five so-called “Syriac Psalms”, which have survived in a bible manuscript and in manuscripts of a work by Bishop Elias of al-Anbar. 11QPs\textsuperscript{a} also contains a prayer for deliverance (column XIX 1–18), a hymn to Wisdom (column XXI 11–17), which is par-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Cf. J. Starcky, “Psaumes apocryphes de la grotte 4 de Qumrân (4QPs\textsuperscript{a} VII–X)”, \textit{RB} 73 (1966), 350–371. Cf. DJD XVI, 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{48} J. A. Sanders, \textit{The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs\textsuperscript{a})}, Oxford 1965 (= DJD VI); Y. Yadin, “Another Fragment (E) of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11”, \textit{Textus} 5 (1966), 1–10. Cf. DJD XXIII, Oxford 1998, pp. 29–36 (fragments E and F).
\item \textsuperscript{49} J. P. M. van der Ploeg, “Fragments d’un manuscrit de psaumes de Qumrân (11QPs\textsuperscript{a}²)”, \textit{RB} 74 (1967), 408–412. Cf. DJD XXIII, Oxford 1998, pp. 37–47.
\item \textsuperscript{50} English translation in F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, \textit{The Dead Sea Scrolls}, pasim.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Cf. A. S. van der Woude, “Die fünf syrischen Psalmen”, in: JSHRZ IV/1, pp. 29–47.
\item \textsuperscript{52} J. A. Sanders, \textit{The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs\textsuperscript{a})}, Oxford 1965.
\end{itemize}
allel to Jesus Sirach 51:13–19, a hymn to Zion (column XXII 1–15) and a hymn to the Creator (column XXVI 9–15).55

The fragments of 4Q380–381 also contain apocryphal psalms, which most probably represent the remains of one and the same work possibly stemming from the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.56 Those to whom the songs are ascribed include King Manasseh, a king of Judah whose name has been lost, a certain Obadiah and “the man of God” (Moses?; David?). A further genre of poetic works contains hymns against the evil spirits. The Songs of the Wise (4Q510–511),57 for example, aim to “frighten off those who inspire fear” and “to scare and confuse all the spirits of the angels of destruction”. Rather than being intended for ritual exorcisms to drive out wicked spirits, the poems were probably recited during the assemblies of the community of Qumran with a view to protecting its members against the influence of evil powers. Non-sectarian psalms of exorcism ascribed to David and followed by a unique version of Psalm 91 have survived in fragmentary form in 11Q Apocryphal Psalmsa (11QPsApa = 11Q11) and are akin to the hymns against the evil spirits.58

A further category of poetical texts is constituted by the Wisdom Songs, an example of which was found in Cave 4 and is referred to as The Wiles of the Wicked Woman (= 4Q184).59 The text clearly alludes

55 Cf. J. A. Sanders, op. cit. An English translation of the songs in question can be found in F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, The Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 1172ff.
to the “strange (loose) woman” of Proverbs 1–9, whereby the mistress portrayed in the song, who seduces many and ruins them all, is identified with the personification of Foolishness as counterpart to Wisdom, likewise portrayed as a woman. 4Q Concerning the Resurrection (4Q Messianic Apocalypse = 4Q521), which describes the deeds God will perform in the days of the messiah, is also worthy of note. The work, which probably stems from the community of Qumran and can be dated to the first half of the first century BCE, provides us with a text that would appear to have been strongly influenced by Psalm 146 and Isa. 61:1, although striking emendations have been made in both instances. Similar mention of the resurrection of the dead in the same breath as the announcement of the good news in Jesus’ response to the disciples of John the Baptist (Mt. 11:4–5; Lk. 7:22–23) is worthy of note:

Magnificent deeds, as yet undone,
the Lord shall perform, as He has spo(ken).
For he shall heal the wounded,
bring the dead back to life,
anounce the good news to the humble,
sati(sfy) (the needy),
lead the rejected
and make the hungry rich (lines 11–13).

4Q Wisdom Text with Beatitudes (4QBéatitudes = 4Q525), a manuscript that offers us a series of beatitudes with a pronounced Wisdom character (in fragment 2) stems from the end of the first century BCE. From the perspective of form, the series constitutes the best and most complete precursor to the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), although it differs significantly in terms of content from the latter:

(Blessed are those who speak the truth) with a pure heart,
and on whose tongue no slander can be found.
Blessed are those who uphold her ordinances,

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and do not adhere to improper ways.
Blessed are those who rejoice in her,
and who do not abandon themselves to the ways of foolishness.
Blessed are those who seek her with clean hands,
and do not try to find her with a deceitful heart.
Blessed is the one who achieves Wisdom,
who walks in the Law of the Most High
and directs his heart in her ways;
who applies himself to her discipline
and always takes pleasure in her reprimands;
who does not reject her in the destitution of the oppressed
and does not abandon her in the time of distress;
who does not forget her (in the days of) fear
and does not despise her during the oppression of his soul (column II 1–6).

Wisdom songs belonging to the same category include 4Q Work of Wisdom (4Q185), 62 4Q Words of the Wise to the Children of the Dawn (4Q298) 63 and 4Q Wisdom Song (4Q413), 64 together with 4Q Wisdom Documents (4QSap[iential] Work A a,b,c,d 65 and B = 4Q415–419; 65 4QSap. Work A e and C = 4Q423–424, now known as 4QInstruction), 66 which represent a single (originally very comprehensive) work. The latter was written for the most part in prose and devoted to instruction on the acceptable behaviour to be adopted in different circumstances and with respect to different individuals: in poverty and

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riches; towards fathers, wife and children, the powerful, debtors etc. In addition to the latter instructive material, however, a number of theological topics are also developed. All the aforementioned wisdom documents do not appear to have stemmed from the community of Qumran itself but to have been adopted from elsewhere.\(^67\)

Only remnants remain of many additional poems. Perhaps the best preserved document is the *Book of Mysteries*,\(^68\) three or four fragmentary copies of which have survived, one from Cave 1 (1Q27, cf. DJD I, pp. 102–107) and two or three from Cave 4 (4Q299–300, cf. DJD XX, pp. 31–123; while 4Q301 has been designated as a manuscript of the work it does not exhibit agreements with the other three documents). The work is markedly related to 4Q Wisdom document A.

The stylistically impressive *Apocryphal Laments A and B* (4Q179\(^69\) and 4Q501)\(^70\) are also worthy of note. Both texts are clearly inspired by the biblical book of Lamentations. The first poem laments over the destruction of Jerusalem but there is no clear evidence to determine the disaster to which it refers. The second laments over the fate of the people of the covenant and appears to allude to a distressing situation in which the community of Qumran found itself, brought about by the “villains of the people”.

9. Lithurgical texts

Little is known to us concerning the liturgy of the community of Qumran celebrated in independence of the sacrificial liturgy of the temple in Jerusalem, which it shunned. The texts referred to in the present paragraph, which contain concrete instructions for liturgical use, can only provide a partial picture of the sect’s liturgical practices.\(^71\)

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The extremely fragmentary *Daily Prayers* (4Q503, see DJD VII, pp. 105–136), the equally poorly preserved copies of the *Festival Prayers* (1Q34, see DJD I, pp. 136, 152–155; 4Q507–509, see DJD VII, pp. 175–215) and the *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504–506, see DJD VII, pp. 137–175), a work containing hymns and prayers for the various days of the week, would appear to have been written outside the community of Qumran. The same can be said of a number of texts that were employed in purification rituals.

A place of honour can be ascribed among the liturgical texts to the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, of which the remains of eight manuscripts from Cave 4 (4Q400–407), of one manuscript from Cave 11 (11Q17) and a further manuscript from the Masada documents have been discovered. The copies stem from the middle of the first century BCE to the middle of the first century CE. The work consists of 13 songs intended to be recited during the 13 consecutive sabbaths of every quarter of the 364-day solar year. They refer to the heavenly priesthood, allude to the beatitudes intended for God and recited by the seven archangels and their subordinate angelic princes in the heavenly temples, mention the songs of praise of the angelic hosts, the animated parts of the heavenly sanctuary, the heavenly chariot and the sacrifices offered in the heavenly temple. The work exhibits a thoughtfully contrived literary structure surrounding the song of the seventh sabbath, the midpoint of the cycle, and a progression that culminates in the liturgy of the most holy of the heavenly temple. The fact that the songs originate from the community of Qumran is virtually undisputed. Their liturgical recitation on the successive sabbaths of the four quarters of the year provided its members with the opportunity to participate in the sabbath sacrifices of the angels in the heavenly temple as a substitute for their participation in the sabbath sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem, which was precluded for them as a matter of principle: songs of praise came to replace actual sacrifices.

Attached to 1Qsa and the Rule of the Community (1QS), The *Collection of Benedictions* from Cave 1 (1Q Recueil des Bénédictions =

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1QSB = 1Q28b)\textsuperscript{74} can likewise be classified among the liturgical texts of Qumran. The collection contains a number of benedictions intended for the messianic era addressed to those of the community who had remained faithful to the Law, the priestly messiah of Aaron, the priesthood and the Prince of the assembly to be identified with the Davidic messiah.

Worthy of note are the Benedictions from Cave 4 (4Q280 and 4Q286–290),\textsuperscript{75} likewise intended for the celebration of the renewal of the covenant, which have survived in six fragmentary (in some instances extremely fragmentary) manuscripts. They contain, among other things, a threefold blessing of the Prince of light and of those who had remained faithful together with a similarly threefold curse of the Prince of darkness and his cohorts. There can be little doubt that the document in question stems from the community of Qumran.

Surviving in six copies (4Q434–439), Bless, Oh my soul,\textsuperscript{76} the title of which is taken from the first words of the poem, is closely related to the Hymn Scroll (1QH). The preserved segments of the work contain a glorification of the deeds of God who grants deliverance to the poor, the righteous and the pious by liberating them from the dominion of evil, transforming their hearts and granting them the grace to understand His mysteries.

10. Texts associated with the endtime

The present paragraph will focus on manuscripts that do not exhibit a common literary genre but are related in terms of content on account of their characteristic allusions to the endtime. A number of texts have already been referred to in the preceding paragraphs that contain eschatological thematic elements: the Bible Commentaries, the Rule of the Community (1QSa), 4Q Testimonia (4Q175), the


Collection of Beatitudes (1QSB), 11Q Melchizedek (11Q13) and 4Q Concerning the Resurrection (4Q521).

The War Scroll from Cave 1 of Qumran (1QM = 1QMilchama), which is also referred to with the extended title: “Scroll of the war of the children of light against the children of darkness” enjoys a place of prominence among those documents that have the eschatological struggle as their primary theme. 19 columns of the document have survived, the lower part having been lost together with the end of the scroll, which dates from the end of the first century BCE. The document contains a summary of the course of the eschatological struggle, which results in the victory of the powers of good and the restoration of the temple cult (columns I–II 14). Considerable attention is then devoted to organisational directives and battle strategies: rules concerning the trumpets with their legends, the ensigns with their legends, the formation of the military battalions, the armour of each of the units and their tactical manoeuvres, the supervision of the battle by the priests and the Levites and the redeployment of the military battalions (II 15–IX 17). This is followed by a number of prayers to be recited during the course of the battle (X–XIV). From column XV onwards we encounter a new segment preceded by a new introduction, offering a detailed description of the battle against the Kittites, the enemy of the endtime. This portion of the document contains a considerable amount of material that is more or less identical to that of the preceding columns while at the same time exhibiting clear points of difference. The text of the scroll is thus the result of a compilation of two (or perhaps even three) documents that deal with the same theme: an apocalyptic work that portrays a forty year war against all the nations of the earth and a work that describes the struggle against the Kittites as the adversary of the endtime.

Four of the manuscripts of the War Scroll discovered in Cave 4 (4Q492; 4Q494–496) represent copies of the recension known to us

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from 1QM. Two other manuscripts (4Q491; 4Q493), however, bear witness to different documents dealing with the same theme and to different recensions of the same work. They allow us to reconstruct the main features of the genesis and evolution of 1QM and offer proof that the latter manuscript represents the final redaction of the work.

The document as represented by 1QM offers us a dramatic portrayal of the final struggle between the powers of good and the powers of darkness in which trumpets are just as effective as lances and swords, priestly prayers are just as necessary as troop manoeuvres and the participation of angels in the battle, the final result and divine victory are just as important as the prescriptions concerning the ritual purity of the participants and the military tactics that have to be implemented in order to defeat the enemy.

The Description of the New Jerusalem (NJ) differs considerably in character from 1QM. Fragmentary remains of seven copies of the work from five different caves (1, 2, 4, 5 and 11) have survived, dating from the period between the second half of the first century BCE and the first half of the first century CE. The document is devoted to a description of the future Jerusalem and the future temple together with the cult to be practised therein. It is conceived as a sort of tour, whereby the author is shown around the immense city (a rectangle of 32 km × 23 km) and its temple by an angelic guide. Detailed description of the construction and dimensions of the walls, gates, streets, houses and their interiors is provided. A fragment of a manuscript from Cave 4 (4Q554) locates the description within the final struggle against the nations, thereby underlining the work’s eschatological character. Agreements in terms of content with the Temple Scroll (11QTemple) more or less certify that the document owes its origins to the circles from which the community of Qumran emerged.

A third category of texts is devoted to the various figures that are to contribute to the deliverance of the endtime. On a single sheet

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of leather, 4Q *Testimonia* (4Q175, cf. DJD V, pp. 57–60) contains a small collection of four quotations from texts relating to the coming of the messiah and the anti-messiah: Exod. 20:21b according to the Samaritan Pentateuch (in which the Masoretic tradition of Deut. 5:28–29 and Deut. 18:18–19 are combined in a single verse); Num. 24:15–17; Deut. 33:8–11; a passage from the Psalms of Joshua discovered in Cave 4. The first three texts allude to the prophet as Moses, the royal messiah and the priestly messiah respectively (cf. 1QS IX 11). The fourth quotation would appear to refer to three eschatological adversaries: “a cursed one, one of Belial” and two other individuals that are to serve as “instruments of oppression”.

Written in Aramaic, 4Q *Aramaic Apocalypse*, also referred to as 4Q *Son of God Text* or 4Q *Pseudo-Daniel* (= 4Q246) is of particular interest. Only a single fragment containing the remains of two columns of the document, copied in the first century BCE, has survived. Allusion is made to a figure who falls prostrate before a royal throne and explains the vision seen by the king seated thereon in which a future world war is announced. At that time a mysterious figure shall intervene and he shall be called “Son of God” and “Son of the Most High”. Troubled times shall follow his appearance “until he has established the people of God” (others read: “until the people of God rise up”). His kingship shall be an eternal kingship. With God’s help he shall defeat the nations, establish peace and exercise dominion over the primal depths.

While the apocalyptic and eschatological character of the fragment is not open to question, it has nevertheless been subject to a variety of interpretations. The most plausible interpretation maintains that the “Son of God” and the “Son of the Most High” allude to a messiah of heavenly origin. The functions he is to fulfil are messianic in character and are portrayed with the characteristics of the “Son of man” from Daniel 7. A messianic figure of the same character can be found in the Similitudes of 1 Enoch (48:2–3,10; 80 C. A. Newsom, “The Psalms of Joshua from Qumran Cave 4”, *JSJ* 39 (1988), 56–73. Cf. ‘Apocryphon of Joshua’ (4Q378–379) DJD XXII, pp. 237–288.


52:4) and 4 Ezra (7:28–29; 12:32). The apparent parallel with the messianic designation in Lk. 1:32,35 is worthy of note.83

Likewise written in Aramaic, but in an extremely fragmentary condition, the text of two copies of 4Q Four Kingdoms (4Q552–553)84 describes how an angel engages in a dialogue with an individual who has seen a vision of four trees, the name of only one of which has survived (Babel). We are clearly dealing in this instance with an eschatological text containing a description of history in line with the four kingdoms schema familiar to us from Daniel 2 and 7.

A treatment of 11Q Melchizedek, of which 14 fragments of a Hebrew manuscript copied in the second half of the first century BCE have survived, is provided above under the (thematic) bible commentaries.

11. Astronomical texts, calendars and horoscopes

A relatively large number of manuscripts discovered at Qumran represent astronomical or astrological material, whereby astronomical knowledge serves, for example, in the establishment of sacred seasons and astrological insights are employed to determine the fate of human persons.

The remains of four copies of 4Q Astronomical Enoch (4Q208–211)85 provide a synchronised account of the movements of the sun and moon together with other information relevant to the heavenly bodies. The oldest manuscript (4Q208) brings us back to the beginning of the second century BCE and serves as evidence that the work could not have originated in the community of Qumran itself. 1 Enoch 72–82 offer us an abbreviated and somewhat confused version of the document. Likewise written in Hebrew but copied in a cryptic script, 4Q Phases of the Moon (4Q317)86 is related to Astronomical Enoch and describes the phases of the moon based on the strength of the full moon’s luminosity (divided into 14 parts) over a 364-day year.

83 Cf. further F. García Martinez, Qumran and Apocalyptic (STDJ IX), Leiden 19942, pp. 162ff.
The remains of several *cultic calendars* have been discovered, some of which synchronise data relating to the lunar calendar current in early Judaism with the solar calendar of the community of Qumran, while others relate the calendar to the (six year) cycle of duties ascribed to various priestly ranks in the temple (cf. Lk. 1:5,8–9). Others still serve to establish the data related to religious feasts within the aforementioned cycle or to register that of specific historical events within the system provided by alternative calendars.

Distinction ought to be made with respect to the three *astrological texts* that have been discovered between a *brontologion* (4Q318), in which the astrological signs are employed to determine future events, and two *horoscopes* (4Q186 and 4Q561), which relate the characteristic qualities of a person with the star sign under which he or she was born.

12. *The Copper Scroll*

Brief mention deserves to be made of the *Copper Scroll* discovered in Cave 3 (3Q15), which belongs among the most mysterious of the documents found at Qumran. Written in a script that differs significantly from that of all the other Qumran documents and in a language reminiscent of Mishnaic Hebrew, the Copper Scroll contains a list of places in which treasures are said to have been located. Some scholars consider the scroll to be a folkloristic legend while others take it to be a genuine description of a number of locations in which treasures are to be found.

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87 See further F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 679ff.


b. The manuscripts of Chirbet Mird

On the site of the Hasmonean fortress Hyrcanium, roughly 14 km south east of Jerusalem, Saint Sabas founded the monastery of Castellion (Syriac: Marda) in 492. In 1952, Bedouins discovered the remains of a number of documents close to the ruins of the monastery, later identified by a Belgian expedition under the leadership of the Leuven professor De Langhe as Greek, Christian-Palestinian and Arabic manuscripts dating from the late Byzantine and early Arabic periods together with a fragment of Euripides’ Andromache.91 While the present author offers no further discussion of the discoveries in question he nevertheless considers it necessary to mention them in order to avoid any confusion with the Qumran manuscripts that stem from a much earlier period.

c. The discoveries at Wadi Murabba‘at and the valleys to the south of the Judean Desert

Texts representing disparate content, written in several different languages (Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic) and dating from a variety of periods (first century CE to the early middle ages) were discovered by Bedouins and a scientific expedition led by Roland de Vaux and Lancaster Harding (1952) in a number of caves in the Wadi Murabba‘at, roughly 20 km south of Qumran. The majority of the discoveries date from the period prior to the two Jewish revolts against the Romans (132–135 CE) and contain, among other things, letters with the signature of the pseudo-messianic leader Simon ben Koseba (Simon bar Kochba).92 The substantial remains of a scroll of the Twelve Minor Prophets found among the discovered documents are of particular importance because they provide a Hebrew consonantal text that more or less agrees with that of medieval biblical manuscripts.93

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93 Cf. op. cit., pp. 50, 181–205.
In 1952, Bedouins presented 24 fragments of a Greek scroll of the Twelve Minor Prophets to the Palestinian Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem. It later appeared that the discoveries were actually found on Israeli territory in Nachal Chever, between Engedi and Masada. During the Israeli expeditions of 1960 and 1961, carried out in Nahal Hever, Nahal Tse‘elim and Nahal Mishmar, segments of the same manuscript were discovered together with a number of other documents. The most abundant discoveries stem from the “Cave of Letters” in Nahal Hever, which, in addition to Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic documents from the time of bar Kochba, also yielded a number of biblical fragments from the personal archives of a certain Babata, daughter of Simon, and her kin, dating from between 93 and 132 CE. Written in Aramaic, Greek and Nabatean, the archive also includes Babata’s marriage contract. The aforementioned Greek scroll of the Twelve Minor Prophets (8HevXIIgr) brings us into contact with a recension of the Septuagint that represents a stage in the process of adapting the text to the Hebrew Bible.

**d. The discoveries at Masada**

In the course of the excavations carried out between 1963 and 1965 at Masada several fragments of the Book of Jesus Sirach, a scrap

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98 Y. Yadin, The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada, Jerusalem 1965 (Hebrew text, introduction, translation and commentary). See, in addition, J. Strugnell, “Notes and
of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice\textsuperscript{99} (see above under a. 9 Liturgical texts) and other Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts were discovered\textsuperscript{100} (together with portions of Genesis, Leviticus and the Psalms, more than 200 inscribed potsherds and a number of Latin papyri left by the Romans). Given the fact that Masada served as the last pocket of resistance during the first Jewish revolt and fell to the Romans in 73 (or 74) CE,\textsuperscript{101} the manuscripts discovered there date from more or less the same period as the youngest of the Qumran scrolls.

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INTRODUCTIONS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT AND OTHER REFERENCE WORKS

The most prominent introductions to the Old Testament published in the twentieth century include the following:
G. Ch. Aalders, *Oud-Testamentische Kanoniek*, Kampen 1952;
B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, London 1979;
O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament unter Einschluß der Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen sowie der apokryphen- und pseudepigraphenartigen Qumrân-Schriften*, Tübingen 1934, 1964 (1976);
C. Kuhl, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*, Munich 1953, 1960 (uitgegeven door G. Fohrer);
R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, New York 1941 (1957);
Older Dutch language introductions:
G. Wildeboer, *De letterkunde des Ouden Verbonds naar de tijdsorde van haar ontstaan*, Groningen 1893.

General surveys of the problems surrounding the study of the Old Testament:
A. S. van der Woude (red.), *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*, Kampen 1986;

History of research into the Old Testament:

Encyclopedias and reference works:
A. van den Born e.a., *Bijbels Woordenboek*, Roermond-Maaseik 1954–1957;
D. N. Freedman e.a., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* I–VI, New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-Auckland 1992 (one of the best reference works available);
H. Mulder, *Klein Lexicon van bijbelse namen*, Kampen 1982;

Theological dictionaries (knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic required):
G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, H. J. Fabry (eds.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, Stuttgart etc. 1973– (multi-volume work);

Concordances:
*Concordantie op de bijbel in de Nieuwe vertaling van het Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap*, Kampen 1983;
H. N. Ridderbos and W. van der Meer (final redaction), *Handwijzer op de grondtekst van de bijbel*, Kampen 1993.

Concordances of the basic text of the Old Testament:
S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae*, Graz 1955 (unedited reprint of the 1937 edition);
Concordances of the Septuagint:
E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, A Concordance of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books), Graz 1954 (overanderde herdruk van de uitgave van 1897).

Concordances of the Pseudepigrapha transmitted in Greek:

Concordances of the Vulgate:

Commentary series:
(virtually all are incomplete)
AB Anchor Bible, Garden City NY
ATD Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Göttingen
BK Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, Neukirchen-Vluyn
BOT De Boeken van het Oude Testament, Roermond and Maaseik
CAT Commentaire de l’Ancien Testament, Neuchâtel
CB Century Bible, London-Edinburgh
CNEB The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, Cambridge UK
COT Commentaar op het Oude Testament, Kampen
EB Echter Bibel, Würzburg
EHAT Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Münster Westf.
FOTL The Forms of Old Testament Literature, Grand Rapid
HAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen
HCOT Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HKAT Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, Göttingen
Herm Hermeneia, Philadelphia
HSAT Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments, Bonn
IB The Interpreter’s Bible, New York and Nashville/Tenn.
ICC The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh
KAT Kommentar zum Alten Testament, originally Leipzig, later Gütersloh
KHC Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament, Tübingen
KV Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift, Kampen
NCB New Century Bible, Grand Rapids MI and London
NEB Neue Echter Bibel, Würzburg
NICOT The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids MI
OTL The Old Testament Library, London
POT De Prediking van het Oude Testament, Nijkerk, thereafter Baarn, thereafter Kampen
TT Tekst en Toelichting, Kampen
TU Tekst en Uitleg, Groningen-Den Haag-Batavia
WBC Word Biblical Commentary, Waco, thereafter Dallas, Texas
ZBK Zürcher Bibelkommentare, Zurich
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

a) Kings of Judah and Israel

Given the abundance of difficulties surrounding the establishment of accurate dates, those provided in the following tables must remain approximations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>1011–972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>972–931</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>931–914</td>
<td>Jeroboam I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam</td>
<td>914–912</td>
<td>Nadab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>912–870</td>
<td>Baasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elah</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zimri</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Omri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehosaphat</td>
<td>870–848</td>
<td>Ahab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joram</td>
<td>848–841</td>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>Joram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athaliah</td>
<td>841–835</td>
<td>Jehu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joash</td>
<td>835–795</td>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaziah</td>
<td>795–789</td>
<td>Joash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azariah</td>
<td>789–749</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham</td>
<td>749–734</td>
<td>Zechariah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Menahem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Pekahiah</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Pekah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achaz</td>
<td>734–718</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>718–698</td>
<td>Hoshea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>698–642</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amon</td>
<td>642–640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>640–609</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joahaz</td>
<td>609</td>
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<td>Jehoiakim</td>
<td>609–598</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jehoiakin</td>
<td>598–597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
<td>597–587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Kings of Assyria from 781 BCE

|                  |                |
|                  | Shalmaneser IV | 781–772       |
|                  | Ashur-Dan III  | 771–754       |
|                  | Ashur-nirari V | 753–746       |
|                  | Tiglath-Pileser III | 745–727 |
|                  | Shalmaneser V  | 727–722       |
|                  | Sargon II      | 722–705       |
|                  | Sennacherib    | 705–681       |
|                  | Esarhaddon     | 681–669       |
### Ashurbanipal
669–625

### Ashur-etil-ilani
625–621

### Sin-shar-ishkun
621–612

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**c) Kings of the neo-Babylonian Empire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nabopolassar</td>
<td>625–605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar II</td>
<td>605–562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awil-Marduk</td>
<td>562–560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nergal-shar-usur</td>
<td>560–556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabonidus</td>
<td>556–539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**d) Kings of the Persian Empire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus</td>
<td>550–529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambysses</td>
<td>529–522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius I</td>
<td>522–486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerxes I</td>
<td>486–465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes I</td>
<td>465–424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerxes II</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius II</td>
<td>423–404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes II</td>
<td>404–358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes III</td>
<td>358–338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arses</td>
<td>338–336</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darius III</td>
<td>336–331</td>
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</tbody>
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**e) Rulers of the Kingdom of the Ptolemies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruler</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy I</td>
<td>323–283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy II</td>
<td>283–246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy III</td>
<td>246–221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy IV</td>
<td>221–205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy V</td>
<td>204–180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy VI</td>
<td>180–145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy VII</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptolemy VIII</td>
<td>145–116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy IX</td>
<td>116–107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptolemy X</td>
<td>107–88</td>
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<td>Ptolemy IX</td>
<td>88–81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptolemy XI</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Ptolemy XII</td>
<td>80–59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleopatra VI</td>
<td>58–57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berenice</td>
<td>59–55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptolemy XII</td>
<td>55–51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy XIII</td>
<td>51–47 (Cleopatra VII co-regent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy XIV</td>
<td>47–44 (Cleopatra VII co-regent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy XV</td>
<td>44–30 (Cleopatra VII co-regent)</td>
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**f) Rulers of the Kingdom of the Seleucids**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ruler</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seleucus I</td>
<td>312–281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiochus I</td>
<td>281–261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In the years that followed a struggle for the throne ensued between the five sons of Antiochus VIII and the son of Antiochus IX. In 83 the Armenian king Tigranes took possession of the empire which he ruled for 69 years.

| High Priests in Jerusalem from the end of the Babylonian exile to the arrival of the Romans |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Jeshua                                  | ?–? 510                         |
| Joiakim                                 | ? 510–? 480                     |
| Eliashib                                | ? 480–? 440                     |
| Joiada                                  | ? 440–? 425                     |
| Johanan                                 | ? 425–? 390                     |
| Jaddua (?)                              | ? 390–? 370                     |
| Jochanan (?)                            | ? 370–? 340                     |
| Jaddua                                  | ? 340–? 320                     |
| Onias I                                 | ? 320–? 300                     |
| Simon I                                 | ? 300–? 285                     |
| Eleazar                                 | ? 285–? 270                     |
| Manasseh                                | ? 270–? 260                     |
| Onias II                                | ? 260–? 220                     |
| Simon II                                | ? 220–? 190                     |
| Onias III                               | ? 190–174                       |
| Jason                                   | 174–172                         |
| Menelaus                                | 172–163                         |
| Alcimus                                 | 162–160/159                     |
| Inter-sacerdodium                       | 159–155/152                     |
| Jonathan                                | 153/2–143/2                     |
| Simon                                   | 143/2–135                       |
| John Hyrcanus                           | 135–104                         |
| Aristobulus I                           | 104–103                         |
| Alexander Janneuss                      | 103–76                          |
| Hyrcanus II                             | 76–67                           |
| Aristobulus II                          | 67–63                           |
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ACEBT Amsterdamse cahiers voor exegese en bijbelse theologie
AIO Archiv für Orientforschung
AG[A]JU Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJSL American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ALGHJ Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
AnBibl Analecta Biblica
AnOr Analecta orientalia
AO Der Alte Orient
AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARW Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
ASOR American Schools of Oriental Research
ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
AT Altes Testament
ATANT Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATSAT Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
Aug Augustinianum
BBB Bonner biblische Beiträge
BiAr The Biblical Archaeologist
BAR Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BETHL Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BFchTh Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BHT(h) Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BiOr Biblica et Orientalia
BIOSCS Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
BJRL Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BN Biblische Notizen
BSt Biblische Studien
BThS Biblisch Theologische Studien
BWANT Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ Biblische Zeitschrift
BZW Beihilft ZAW
BZNW Beihilft ZNW
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Charles The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, edited in conjunction with many scholars by R. H. Charles I–II, Oxford 1913
CRINT Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CThM Calwer Theologische Monographien
DBAT Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament
Denis, Introd. A. M. Denis, Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancient Terament, Leiden 1970
Denis, Fragm. A. M. Denis, Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graece una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmenta, Leiden 1970
diss. dissertation
DJD Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (of Jordan)
DSD Dead Sea Discoveries
DTT Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift
e.a. and others
ed. editor
EdF Erträge der Forschung
eds. editors
EThL Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
FAT Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB Forschung zur Bibel
FOTL Forms of Old Testament Literature
FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS Festschrift
FThSt Freiburger Theologische Studien
FzB Forschung zur Bibel
GCS Die griechisch christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte
GTA Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten
GTT Gereformeerde Theologisch Tijdschrift
HAR Hebrew Annual Review
Hebr. Hebrew text
HSM Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS Harvard Semitic Studies
HTS(t) Hervormde Teologiese Studies
HThR Harvard Theological Review
HThS Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
ibid. ibidem (in the same place)
id. the same author
IEJ Israel Exploration Journal
JAL Jewish Apocryphal Literature
JANES Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JBTh Journal of Biblical Theology
JCS Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEOL Jaarbericht Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap Ex Oriente Lux
JJS Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNS(W)L Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JQR The Jewish Quarterly Review
JSHRZ Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSNT Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSJ Journal for the Study of Judaism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>Stuttgater biblische Monographien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBT(h)</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Sources chrétiennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS</td>
<td>Septuagint and Cognate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.d.</td>
<td>sine dato (year unknown)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEÄ</td>
<td>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJLA</td>
<td>Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJOT</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNVAO</td>
<td>Skrifter utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps Akademi i Oslo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOTS</td>
<td>Society for Old Testament Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>Studia Semitica Neerländica</td>
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### I. Papyri

Chester Beatty papyri 80, 474 | Oxyrhynchus papyri 521 n13, 611 n55, 618 |

Greek Papyrus 458 (John Rylands Library) 80 | |

Papyrus Bodmer XXIV 80 | |

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