

Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls

Edited by
PETER DUBOVSKÝ
and FEDERICO GIUNTOLI

Archaeology and Bible



Mohr Siebeck

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Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls

Periods of the Formation of the Bible

edited by

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Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This book contains a collection of papers that were presented during a conference entitled “Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls.” The conference was held at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome on May 11–13, 2017. The conference was born after a long discussion with our colleagues at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, to whom we wish to express our deep gratitude. The friendly atmosphere and discussion we enjoyed was thanks to the support of the rector of the PBI, Fr. Michael Kolarcik, and its treasurer, Andrzej Kowalko. However, the conference would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Gregorian University Foundation and the encouragement of its president, Fr. Alan Fogarty, SJ. We express our appreciation to the staff of Mohr Siebeck and to the editors of „Archaeology and Bible“ for accepting this volume to the series.

Peter Dubovský and Federico Giuntoli

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Abbreviations

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	Albert K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . TCS 5. Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1975
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
ABIG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABSA	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
AD	<i>Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia</i> . Edited by Abraham J. Sachs and Hermann Hunger. Vienna: LIT, 1988–
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
ALASPM	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs/Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series
AnOr	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i>
AO.SS	Anecdota Oxoniensia, Semitic Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	Altorientalische Forschungen
AOS	American Oriental Series
ASJ	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i>
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
b.	Babylonian Talmud
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BaghM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BaghMB	Baghdader Mitteilungen Beiheft
BaghMB 2	Jan van Dijk and Werner R. Mayer, <i>Texte aus dem Rēs-Heiligtum in Uruk-Warka</i> . Baghdader Mitteilungen Beiheft 2. Berlin: Mann, 1980
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BAR.I	BAR International Series
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BCHP	Irving Finkel and Robartus J. van der Spek, “Babylonian Chronicles from the Hellenistic Period.” <i>Livius</i> . http://www.livius.org/sources/about/mesopotamian-chronicles/
BE	Babylon Tafeln in Berlin
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium

<i>BHLT</i>	Albert K. Grayson, <i>Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
<i>BJPES</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BM	British Museum
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblishe Notizen</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BVSAW	Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblishe Zeitschrift</i>
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
<i>ClAnt</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>ClQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
<i>COS</i>	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CSMSJ</i>	<i>Canadian Society of Mesopotamian Studies Journal</i>
CSOLC	Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture
<i>CTU</i>	<i>Corpus dei testi urartei</i> . Edited by Mirjo Salvini. 5 vols. Documenta Asiana 8/1–5. Rome: CNR, 2008–2018
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
<i>CV</i>	<i>Communio Viatorum</i>
<i>DCH</i>	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by David J. A. Clines. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2014
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DH	Deuteronomistic Historian
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
<i>DNP</i>	<i>Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> . Edited by Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996–
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DT	Daily Telegraph (British Museum London)

Dtr	Deuteronomistic
DtrH	Deuteronomistic History
EDSS	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> . Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English translation
ETCSL	<i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FAT II	Forschungen zum Alten Testament, Series 2
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
GMTR	Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record
HANE/S	History of the Ancient Near East/Studies
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
<i>HeBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae. Editio Minor</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1924–
ISACR	Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
JBS	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JHebS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplements

<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JSRC	Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>KAI</i>	H. Donner and W. Röllig, <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 5th ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002–
KEHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
Klio	Klio: Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LAS	Leipziger Altorientalische Studien
LBPL	Late Babylonian Priestly Literature
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
<i>LKU</i>	<i>Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk</i> . Edited by Adam Falkenstein. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1931
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX ^A	Codex Alexandrinus
LXX ^{Ant}	Antiochian/Lucianic recension of the Septuagint
MdB	Le Monde de la Bible
MNB	Monuments de Ninive et de Babylone, Louvre
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</i>
NATCP	The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project
NCB	New Century Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> . Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament
NTOA.SA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus, Series Archaeologica
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OIMP	Oriental Institute Museum Publications
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OIS	Oriental Institute Seminars
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLAG	Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i> (NS)
<i>OrAnt</i>	<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTR	Old Testament Readings
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>PAP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its [<i>sic</i>] Contexts

PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
PW	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>Qad</i>	<i>Qadmoniot</i>
<i>QC</i>	<i>Qumran Chronicle</i>
QH	Qumranic Hebrew
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>Racc</i>	François Thureau-Dangin, <i>Rituels accadiens</i> . Paris: Leroux, 1921
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>RevPhil</i>	<i>Revue de philologie</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RGTC	Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RIMB	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
RINAP 3.1–2	A. Kirk Grayson and Jamie Novotny, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC)</i> . 2 vols. RINAP 3.1–2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012
RINAP 4	Erle Leichty, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)</i> . RINAP 4. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011
RINAP 5.1	Jamie Novotny and Joshua Jeffers, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria</i> . RINAP 5.1. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista biblica italiana</i>
Rm	Tablets in the Collections of the British Museum (Rassam)
<i>RStB</i>	<i>Ricerche storico bibliche</i>
<i>RTLu</i>	<i>Rivista Teologica di Lugano</i>
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
<i>SAAB</i>	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
<i>SBH</i>	George Reisner, <i>Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit</i> . Mitteilungen aus den Orientalischen Sammlungen 10. Berlin: Spemann, 1896
SBLABSt	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLBibEnc	Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Encyclopedia
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SD	Studies and Documents
<i>SDAW</i>	<i>Sitzungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East

SMNIA	Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SpTU</i>	Hermann Hunger (vol. 1) and E. von Weiher (vols. 2–3), <i>Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk</i> . Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte, 9, 10, 12. Berlin: Mann, 1976–1988
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>StBiSl</i>	<i>Studia Biblica Slovaca</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
<i>TCHB</i>	Emanuel Tov, <i>Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible</i> . 3rd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012
TCL	Textes cunéiformes. Musée du Louvre
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TSJTSA	Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America
<i>TU</i>	François Thureau-Dangin, <i>Tablettes d'Uruk a l'usage des prêtres du Temple d'Anu au temps des Séleucides</i> . TCL 6. Paris: Geuthner, 1922
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VAT	Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin), Tontafelsignatur
<i>VeEc</i>	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAAFLNW	Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
y.	Jerusalem Talmud
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK.AT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare, Altes Testament
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

Peter Dubovský

The discussions presented in our collection of articles are not new, since the mutual interaction among the archaeological evidence (stones), extrabiblical texts (tablets), and biblical accounts (scrolls) is far from being a new topic. Nevertheless, the last century has witnessed new discoveries as well as new approaches in analyzing the data that call for a reevaluation of previous scholarship. A continual reassessment of the new archaeological and textual material unearthed and edited in recent decades is a recurrent duty of ancient and modern scholars. In other words, to reevaluate the complex process of the formation of the Bible is a scholarly task that must be constantly pursued. Thus, this book is one ring in the long chain of the continual scholarly effort to understand better how the Bible was born, written and rewritten, redacted, edited, and translated.

When Julius Wellhausen, William F. Albright, or other scholars were undertaking a similar reassessment of extant data, the task was to a certain degree feasible for one scholar, albeit a scholar with extraordinary gifts. In the last decades the situation has changed radically. No single scholar can be competent in all fields required for a reevaluation of the sources, be they material or textual. Since the amount of archaeological, extrabiblical, and biblical data has grown exponentially in the last decades, a proper evaluation of the data must be conducted in dialogue with the experts in a given field. A conference organized by the Pontifical Biblical Institute in May 2017 and generously sponsored by the Gregorian University Foundation aimed at bringing together and creating an atmosphere of friendly discussions among three groups of scholars: archaeologists; experts in cuneiform studies, Greek-Roman literature, and Qumran; and biblical scholars. The present volume, thus, allows readers to engage in discussion with specialists in different fields.

Moreover, recent discussions on the formation of the Bible, its editions, and its rewriting often tend to emphasize one period over another. Thus, the history of the biblical scholarship can be seen as a series of waves: there were periods when most biblical texts were dated to the preexilic period; then the pendulum shifted and several scholars preferred to date the biblical texts to the Persian or Hellenistic period; then again the Assyrian period became important, and so on. Each wave of scholarship brought to light new evidence, cast new light on the formation of the Bible, and set up some milestones that later generations must take

into account. Recognizing the changing trends in scholarship, this book aims to give space to the most important currents that in the last centuries marked the scholarly writings concerning the formation of the Bible. Thus, the goal of this book is to present four major periods that left significant traces on the Bible: the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Greco-Roman periods. Even though we can distinguish more than four historical periods, we opted for these four because they had a great impact not only on the literature of the ancient Near East, but also on its culture, politics, and religion.

The book is divided into six parts. The first part starts with the paper of Diana Edelman. This paper is a theoretical enterprise that tries to imagine what could have happened in different periods of the formation of the Hebrew Bible. Similarly, Jean Louis Ska evaluates the traces of the oral tradition preceding the written sources.

The second and third parts are dedicated to the Assyrian period (ninth–seventh centuries BCE). Part 2 contains three papers that evaluate the first wave of Assyrian expansion, i. e., before the advent of Tiglath-pileser III. Peter Dubovský discusses the birth of Israelite historiography, dated here to the early eighth century BCE; Israel Finkelstein evaluates textual and archaeological evidence for an eighth-century Northern Kingdom; and Thomas Römer proposes to link the Jeroboam II stories with foundational stories of the Pentateuch. Part 3 is dedicated to the second phase of Neo-Assyrian expansion (from the late eighth century BCE until the end of the Assyrian Empire). Archaeologist Alice Hunt presents the archaeological background, and Assyriologist Eckhart Frahm evaluates various proposals to link a given stratum of the Bible with the Neo-Assyrian period. Assyriologist and biblical scholar Peter Machinist presents a rereading of the reign of King Manasseh and the biblical traditions linked with this king.

Part 4 studies the stones, tablets, and scrolls of the Babylonian period (seventh–sixth centuries BCE). Archaeologist Jeffrey Zorn discusses the importance of Tell en-Maşbeh as a window on the material culture of sixth-century Judah. Michael Jursa and Céline Debourse, specialists in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform material, examine the priestly aspects of Babylonian culture, which can provide a point of comparison for the priestly sources of the Bible. The last two papers of part 4, presented by Erhard Blum and Hermann-Josef Stipp, discuss evidence for dating texts from the Pentateuch and the book of Jeremiah to the Babylonian period.

The Persian period is the focus of part 5. Pierfrancesco Callieri, who has excavated several Persian sites, summarizes important archaeological evidence that can inform our understanding of cultural and religious continuity between the Babylonian and Persian periods. Agustinus Gianto presents a linguistic evaluation of the use of Aramaic and other languages in Judah. Federico Giuntoli and Eric Meyers explored the questions of which strata of the Bible may be linked

with the Persian period, and what redactional processes occurred during this period.

The last part of this collection is dedicated to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The first paper, written by Katell Berthelot, describes the historical background of these periods. Barbara Schmitz discusses links between the book of Judith and Hellenistic literature. Finally, three papers written by Emanuel Tov, Marcello Fidanzio, and Henryk Drawnel engage the Dead Sea scrolls and the textual and archaeological evidence for the editing and rewriting of the Bible at the end of the first millennium BCE.

Without pretending that this collection is the last word in the discussion of the formation of the Bible, we believe that the discussions generated during the conferences and the papers presented in this volume mark further advances in the never-ending scholarly endeavor to understand how the Bible came to be.

Part 1

Write My Commands on the Tablet of Your Heart
(Oral and Written Tradition in Israel)

The Text-Dating Conundrum: Viewing Genesis and Kings from an Achaemenid Framework

Diana Edelman

Scholars of the Hebrew Bible continue to debate the reasons and historical contexts for the creation of individual books now found in the Tanak and the Old Testament. Their subsequent expansion, collection, arrangement into larger sub-groupings, and elevation to authoritative status remain open issues without firm answers as well. Hypotheses abound because manuscript evidence for the stages of creation and adaptation is lacking before the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls (ca. 250 BCE–68 CE), due to the perishable nature of papyrus and parchment, the two main writing surfaces used in the southern Levant for letters and various compositions. Joining the ongoing debate, I will consider the types of written documents and literature we can logically associate with the three periods that are commonly viewed as possible periods of composition for the books of the Hebrew Bible: the late monarchic era (ca. 720–586 BCE), the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods (ca. 586–450 BCE), and the later Persian period after the rebuilding of Jerusalem (ca. 450 BCE–332 BCE). I will then undertake two case studies using the books of Genesis and Kings, looking at how the main themes, plotlines, and ideologies in each are best explained as features of compositions initially created in the later Persian period.

Biblical scholars largely agree on a few points about the manner in which individual books were created. The first is that those responsible worked in a cultural setting where oral tradition and composition were prevalent and written texts were limited primarily to specialized genres. Second, the majority of the population was illiterate. Third, the producers of individual books likely drew on preexisting oral and written sources, stock patterns, motifs, images, and idioms. There is less agreement over the extent to which the producers used their imagination when composing. Fourth, each book has been adapted over time, both inadvertently, through the errors of scribes, but also deliberately, in order to bind together more closely the books within the collection and to make their contents relevant to later audiences. As a result, the Masoretic Text of each book does not reflect how it was initially conceived and executed as a coherent composition but represents a later, final form of the text that gives us partial access to some stages in the limited expansion of the original creation. This much is

widely agreed, although the degree of authorial creativity involved in the creation of each book as a coherent composition is disputed.

Before we can begin to think about what kind of written texts would have been produced, and by whom, in the three time periods usually associated with literary production, two important issues need to be addressed. The first is what the assumption of a written-oral continuum means in ancient Judahite and Judean culture in terms of the creation and adaptation of individual biblical books. The second is the question whether the individual books are the products of authors, as opposed to editors or tradents. These preliminary issues are interrelated and can be treated together. After these issues have been discussed, I will survey the three historical periods and the kinds of texts we might expect to be produced in each and then consider the compositional dates of the books of Genesis and Kings.

A. The Oral-Written Continuum and the Role of Authors versus Editors and Tradents

It is widely recognized that literacy was quite limited in ancient Israel and Judah; they were primarily oral cultures in which written records backed up oral statements and agreements for archival purposes but did not serve as the primary medium of expression or of transmitted memory. Ruth Finnegan describes such a cultural situation as operating on an oral-written continuum.¹ Noting that the various compositions in the Hebrew Bible display traits typically associated with orally composed works, Susan Niditch argues that it is best to view them as belonging to an “oral register.” She does not use the term to refer to a specific mode of composition but rather to “the style of compositions whether the works were created orally or in writing.” The term also includes “the patterns of content that are the plots of biblical narratives and ... various recurring literary forms, employed by a range of biblical authors.”² Because the same story patterns and literary devices and techniques could appear in oral or written compositions, there is no foolproof method for deciding which units of material might have originated as oral compositions that were subsequently appropriated by the creators of biblical books, and which were composed from scratch by the individual who conceived of a given book as a whole.

The impact of this concept of an oral-written continuum on scholarly thinking about scribal activity, especially on composition, has varied. So, for example, Eugene Ulrich, a Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, has paid lip service to authorial

¹ Ruth H. Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 139–74.

² Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*, LAI (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 10.

activity in the creation of the present biblical books but more or less rules it out in his description of the formation of books. In his view, the texts originated and developed for the most part as traditional literature in a largely oral culture and so were created by a community: “Each book is not the product of a single author, such as Plato or Shakespeare, but of multiple, anonymous bards, sages, religious leaders, compilers, or tradents.”³ Each was constituted by the repetition, augmentation, and reshaping of earlier traditions by later authors, editors, or tradents over the course of many centuries. “Thus,” Ulrich concludes, “the text of each of the books is organic and developmental, a composition-by-multiple-stages, sometimes described as a rolling corpus.”⁴ He acknowledges the oral-written continuum and the role of orality, but his view of the creation of the texts is heavily influenced by his understanding of the work of scribes in the transmission of texts and the pluriformity of the texts of various biblical books in the Qumran collection.

I reject this model of scribal activity, which denies to scribes any sort of creative literary impulse. The presence of earlier source material, whether written or oral, within a given biblical book does not rule out the fact that a single individual conceived of the book project as a coherent composition with a beginning, middle, and ending, and a storyline with plot developments, twists, and a final denouement that followed set conventions used in composing both oral and written material. The first manuscript of any narrative-based biblical book formed a coherent literary unit, conveying its messages through the contents. In the model used by Ulrich, it is impossible to identify at what stage in a book’s growth it could have been regarded as a coherent literary unit.

Certainly, changes were subsequently introduced, both inadvertently in copying and deliberately, to update a book and eventually to integrate it into the current collection. Nevertheless, its overall shape and the elements that comprise its storyline reflect the creative conception of the book’s first composer. Similarly, every oral performance is the creation of its bard or storyteller, who shapes the specific form and content of a tale in accord with the type of audience, the particular setting, and the allotted time frame, even when using standard elements. The biblical writers were not authors or narrators who composed in the same way as Plato or Shakespeare, who did not incorporate source material to the same extent.⁵ Nonetheless, they were anonymous authors or narrators who

³ Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, VTSup 169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 2.

⁴ Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 10.

⁵ For the distinction between a real author and the narrator whose voice is heard in a work of literature, see, e.g., Jean-Louis Ska, “Narrator or Narrators?,” in *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch: Exegetical Studies and Basic Questions*, FAT 66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 221–24. For the concept of the implied author, who is constructed in the imaginations of readers on assumptions deriving from texts written by a real author, see Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 431. This “virtual” author often does

created coherent narratives, and not simply editors who cut and pasted together earlier sources to create longer and longer narrative sequences that grew organically over time, or tradents who preserved and passed on oral traditions, committing some to writing and adapting some along the way.⁶

To be sure, the concept of a “rolling corpus” mentioned by Ulrich is more appropriate in the context of the prophetic books, but even in this setting it remains problematic. The term designates a process in which short pieces of existing text attract exegesis or commentary that becomes part of the text, which leads to gradual growth over time and eventually to a book.⁷ It certainly is possible to discern such exegesis within individual prophetic books, but does this necessarily reflect a long-term, gradual process of growth, as is commonly assumed, or rather, was the exegetical commentary incorporated during the creation of the book, with some expansions added subsequently?

B. Types of Literature in the Monarchic Era

What sort of texts would have existed during the monarchy? Logically, they would have included a range of genres, such as treaties, letters, petitions, contracts, lists, royal annals, inventories, land registries, tax registers and payment lists, collections of legal cases and prescriptions, commemorations of royal deeds, records of income from royal estates, and oracles and ecstatic pronouncements relating to the king or the kingdom. In addition, some wisdom texts – for example, proverb collections – and liturgical texts, psalms, myths, and possibly omens and incantation collections probably existed in written form.

Many texts would have been produced in an administrative context. Exemplars of all of these genres logically would have been included as set texts in the training of scribes at different levels of their apprenticeship. The curriculum would have reflected the range of texts that future scribes would be expected to produce during their careers as civil servants, even if some ended up working in the private sector for wealthy or influential clients. What remains unclear is

not correspond to the traits of the real author. Behind the narrator’s voice and the implied author is the actual author who created the work of literature, even if he must remain anonymous and unknowable.

⁶ Here I agree with John Van Seters, who helpfully traces the history of the impact of the Romantic movement and its definitions of author and editor on German biblical scholarship. See *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Origins* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 164–77. However, I also agree with Jean-Louis Ska, who endorses the concept of an anonymous author who shaped inherited tradition to create a new composition, that we need to retain the concept of redactor to cover the subsequent reworkings of the initial edition of any given book, even if the content of such reworkings cannot be identified with certainty. Ska, “A Plea on Behalf of the Biblical Redactors,” in *Exegesis of the Pentateuch*, 232–45.

⁷ See, e. g., William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, 2 vols., ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 1:xlx–l, lxxxiv–lxxxv.

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