

Story and History

Edited by
JOHANNES UNSOK RO

Forschungen
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105

Mohr Siebeck

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Edited by

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (Princeton)
Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen) · Andrew Teeter (Harvard)

105



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The Kings of Israel and Judah in Context

edited by

Johannes Unsok Ro

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

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May 2019

Johannes Unsok Ro

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ACSH	Atala, cultures et sciences humaines
AHRT	<i>Ancient History: Resources for Teachers</i>
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
Alt	<i>Altertum</i>
Ant	<i>Antiquity</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BE	Biblische Enzyklopädie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BICSSup	Supplements to Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CHANES	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East Series
<i>ClAnt</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CSHB	Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible
CThMBW	Calwer Theologische Monographien Reihe A, Bibelwissenschaft
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DBAT	<i>Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament und seiner Rezeption in der Alten Kirche</i>
EABS	European Association of Biblical Studies
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios Biblicos</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<i>HeBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
<i>Hist</i>	<i>Historia</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament

HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
<i>Hum</i>	<i>Humanities</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IOSOT</i>	<i>International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
ISJ	Institución San Jerónimo
<i>ITS</i>	<i>Indian Theological Studies</i>
<i>JANEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i>
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JClasS</i>	<i>Journal of Classical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JhebS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Les</i>	<i>Lêšonénu: A Journal for the Study of the Hebrew Language and Cognate Subjects</i>
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Levant</i>
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LMB	Le Monde de la Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>Ori</i>	<i>Orient</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>OTWSA/OTSSA</i>	<i>Oud Testamentisch Werkgezelshap Suid Afrika/Old Testament Society of South Africa</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
<i>PNAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RC</i>	<i>Radiocarbon</i>
<i>RGP</i>	<i>Review of General Psychology</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Revista Biblica</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme</i>
SAIS	Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBOT	Sacred Books of the Old Testament
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
<i>SemCl</i>	<i>Semitica et Classica</i>
<i>Semio</i>	<i>Semiotica</i>
<i>SF</i>	<i>Social Forces</i>
<i>SPQ</i>	<i>Social Psychology Quarterly</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica: Nordic Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
<i>Tran</i>	<i>Transeuphratene</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VF</i>	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
<i>VL</i>	<i>Vetus Latina</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> .
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WdO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

Introduction: The Gap and Overlap between Story and History

JOHANNES UNSOK RO

1. Introduction

In recent centuries, and especially the last decades, critical scholarship on the Hebrew Bible has brought to light a large gap between biblical portrayals of the historical reality of ancient Israel,¹ on the one hand, and historical-critical reconstructions of the actual past, on the other.² The scientific presentation of ancient Israel's history can no longer be considered as a more or less critical narration of the accounts in the Hebrew Bible.³ However, the heyday of academic discussions related to the historicity⁴ of the Hebrew Bible seems to have passed. One no longer hears so frequently the passionate, sometimes even overheated debates between the so-called "minimalists" and "maximalists."⁵ But the problems they struggled to solve still remain unsettled. For some scholars, the Hebrew Bible is still an important source that contains significant evidence and trustworthy information about the historical reality and actual past of ancient

¹ Davies makes a threefold discernment between "historical Israel," "biblical Israel" and "ancient Israel" (Davies 1992, 11). Even though his argument is highly insightful, this chapter will not employ his terminology.

² In this chapter, for the sake of convenience and simplicity, I designate "the biblical portrayals of the historical reality of ancient Israel" as "story" and "the historical-critical reconstructions of the actual past" as "history."

³ Krüger 2008, 4.

⁴ Following the Oxford English Dictionary, I understand "historicity" as "the fact, quality, or character of being situated in history; esp. historical accuracy or authenticity" ("historicity, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, July 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87305. Accessed 4 October 2018).

⁵ In the 1990s, the term "minimalist" began to emerge as a designation for scholars who rejected the Hebrew Bible's historical value, in particular for the premonarchic and monarchic period of ancient Israel. Scholars such as Niels Peter Lemche, Thomas L. Thompson, Philip R. Davies and Keith W. Whitelam are included in this appellation (for the summarized ideas of "minimalists" cf. Moore and Kelle 2011, 33–37). There have been a number of critics of the minimalists. They have attempted to demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible is historically trustworthy in many details concerning the premonarchic and monarchic periods. The most conservative and combative opponents of the minimalists have been called "maximalists." Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III and William Dever are the best-known maximalists, although one should note that Dever would not regard himself as a maximalist (cf. Provan et al. 2003; Dever 2001).

Israel. For others, most, if not all, of the historicity of the Hebrew Bible has simply collapsed.⁶ Students and scholars of the Hebrew Bible cannot ignore or even remain indifferent to the gap and overlap between story and history. After the Enlightenment, historicity became one of the main concerns for Hebrew Bible studies. Of course, Hebrew Bible scholarship concerns much more than the history or the historiography⁷ of ancient Israel, containing many other aspects and areas of study such as literature, law, wisdom, ethics, theology, mythology and linguistics. However, considerable amounts of at times influential research, study and interpretation related to the Hebrew Bible have been and still are based on the history or the historiography of ancient Israel.

2. The Historical Development of Research on the Story and History of Ancient Israel

During the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, historians gradually came to believe that the research they performed using the critical method of searching for historical truth was equated with what really occurred in time and space.⁸ Thus, one can understand the rise of historical criticism reflected in the Wellhausen hypothesis and its successors as a creation of modernity.⁹ The principles of historical-critical biblical scholarship have been formed and shaped since the middle of the eighteenth century. In particular, after Johann Philipp Gabler's inaugural address in 1787, the historical aspect gradually emerged as one of the essential elements of biblical scholarship. Biblical scholars started to develop diachronic source divisions within the Bible. In the view of biblical scholars of the nineteenth century, the different methods of historical-critical investigation equipped researchers to clarify not only the formation history of the biblical text, but also the history of ancient Israel and its religion. Whereas the positivism and developmentalism of the nineteenth century diverges considerably from the rationalism and empiricism of the eighteenth century, a striking continuity exists between them regarding the epistemological view that considers

⁶ For example, cf. Lemche 2008, 299–326; 2015, passim: “Until at a fairly late point in Israel’s history, nothing happened as told by the Old Testament, and, in fact, only a very few events mentioned by the historical books in the Old Testament related to the actual events in the history of ancient Palestine. The minimalist quest has accordingly been to explain why we have this discrepancy between story and history, between the biblical version and the ‘real’ history of the ancient Levant, including Palestine and historical Israel” (Lemche 2015, 4).

⁷ In this chapter, I use “historiography” to mean “the writing of a historical text.” However, other contributors may use this term with a different meaning and connotation. Readers should pay due attention to the fact that the contributors of this volume do not necessarily share unified meanings or connotations for terms such as “history,” “historicity,” “historiography” and so on.

⁸ Aylmer 1997, 249–80; Lemche 2008, 35; Lorenz 2009, 393–403.

⁹ Brueggemann 1997, 12.

a human observer to be an uninterested and uninvolved expositor.¹⁰ Therefore, until the middle of the twentieth century the mainstream of historical-critical Hebrew Bible scholarship concluded that it had answered almost all historical inquiries other than a few minor details.¹¹

A look into the history of biblical research after that time should recall the debates related to Gerhard von Rad's *Old Testament Theology*. Von Rad poses the problem in its most radical form when he juxtaposes two versions of Israel's history.¹² On the one hand, the portrayal of ancient Israel must be accepted as it is (in my terminology, it is "story"). It represents the biblical expression portraying divine redemptive actions. On the other hand, one should reconstruct Israel's historical reality by employing modern historical-critical methodology (in my terminology, it is "history"). Hans Conzelmann posed a number of engaging questions to von Rad about story and history, such as: What are the original and fundamental facts in the biblical story and how do they relate to the interpretations given by ancient Israel?¹³ Von Rad answered emphatically, "there are no *bruta facta* at all. We always have history only in the form of interpretations, only in the reflection."¹⁴ He affirms, "Historical investigation searches for a critically assured minimum – the kerygmatic picture tends toward a theological maximum."¹⁵ However, his strict distinction between the kerygmatic version of Israel's historical reality on the one hand and the historical-critical version on the other has been criticized. For instance, Franz Hesse argued that von Rad only considered the kerygmatic version of Israel's historical reality theologically relevant.¹⁶

Von Rad's sharp distinction between story and history had an enormous impact on the subsequent generation of Hebrew Bible scholarship and furthermore on systematic theology. Numerous developments derived from this dichotomy. It is well known that Wolfhart Pannenberg was deeply influenced by von Rad's concept of history. Even though Pannenberg valued Barth's as well as Bultmann's emphasis on eschatology, he was not willing to accept fully their de-historicized versions of eschatology, since the versions contradicted the accounts of the Hebrew Bible upheld by von Rad.¹⁷ Pannenberg and his colleagues, including Rolf Rendtorff and Ulrich Wilckens, have undertaken a reconciliation

¹⁰ Brueggemann 1997, 13.

¹¹ Lemche 2008, 43.

¹² Von Rad 1957, 111–20.

¹³ Conzelmann 1964, 116.

¹⁴ Author's translation from the German text: "Bruta facta gibt es überhaupt nicht; wir haben die Geschichte immer nur in Gestalt von Deutungen, nur in der Spiegelung" (von Rad 1964, 393).

¹⁵ Von Rad 1962, 108: "Die historische Forschung sucht ein kritisch gesichertes Minimum; das kerygmatische Bild tendiert nach einem theologischen Maximum" (von Rad 1957, 114).

¹⁶ Hesse 1958, 7–8.

¹⁷ Zehnder 2010, 130.

of von Rad's two portrayals of ancient Israel's historical reality.¹⁸ While von Rad attempts to maintain the tension between story and history, Pannenberg strives to merge the two versions of historiography proposed by von Rad.

Von Rad's two portrayals of Israel's past, namely a critically assured minimum (close to a minimalist position) and a theological maximum (close to a maximalist position), anticipated the debates between minimalists and maximalists in the 1990s.¹⁹ In particular, Niels Peter Lemche does not hide the influence of von Rad's concept of a kerygmatic version of Israel's past on his scholarship. He states, "the story remains even if nothing like it happened in real life. With this in mind, we may now proceed to place the content of the story of Israel in the Old Testament in focus. It is of little or no importance whether it reflects any historical event or is totally fictive. From this perspective, von Rad's theology remains important."²⁰ Lemche radicalizes von Rad's idea of a kerygmatic version of ancient Israel's past to a certain degree by arguing that the theological study of the Hebrew Bible is the study of literature without a concern for historicity.²¹ Thus, in retrospect, the discussions related to von Rad's *Old Testament Theology* served as a forerunner to the debates between minimalists and maximalists and, beyond that, to some current inquiries concerning the story and history of ancient Israel.

During the twentieth century, there were many different directions in the field of the history of ancient Israel. Among them, in particular, the schools of William F. Albright and Albrecht Alt deeply influenced the tendency and orientation of the field.²² The two schools existed side by side and played preeminent roles until the 1970s.²³ However, since the 1970s, their academic authority has weakened considerably, mainly due to the minimalist movement.²⁴ One can view the modern minimalist movement concerning the historiography of ancient Israel as starting around 1974.²⁵ In that year, Thomas Thompson published his *Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*. Shortly thereafter in 1975, John Van Seters' *Abraham in History and Tradition* appeared. These books attack the

¹⁸ Pannenberg 1961, 129–40; Rendtorff 1970, 21–41; Wilckens 1970, 42–90.

¹⁹ Of course, it should be noted that the maximalist position cannot be fully equated with von Rad's kerygmatic version of history. While the maximalist approach denotes a spectrum within the critical reconstruction of historical reality, von Rad's kerygmatic version of historical reality is distinct from such critical methodology.

²⁰ Lemche 2008, 295.

²¹ Lemche 2008, 350.

²² Moore 2006, 47–69; Lemche 2008, 71–72.

²³ Of course, neither Hebrew Bible scholarship nor the field of the historiography of ancient Israel in the twentieth century were monolithic or bipolar. For a detailed summary cf. Brueggemann 1997, 15–114; Zevit 2000, 1–80; Lemche 2008, 284–392 among others.

²⁴ On the other hand, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that the Albright school is still popular in North America and that the Alt school also retains many followers in continental Europe.

²⁵ Grabbe 2017, 2. I wish to express my thanks to Lester L. Grabbe, Ehud Ben Zvi, Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò and Emanuel Pfoh who made available to me the unpublished papers they read at the 2017 SBL International Meeting.

scholarly consensus related to the patriarchal narratives of Genesis in a compelling manner and contain trenchant criticisms of the Albrightian as well as the Altian approach to biblical historiography, in particular the former. However, they only constitute the beginning of a long journey. In the early 1990s, the minimalism of the “Copenhagen school” emerged. In this school, Thompson and Lemche started to publish books reflecting radical scepticism about the Hebrew Bible as a historical source. The influential monograph *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’* (1992) by Philip Davies followed their lead. Since then intensive debates between minimalists and maximalists have occurred.

3. The Methodological and Ideological Gap between the Minimalists and the Maximalists

There have always been debates between those who greatly esteemed the value of the Hebrew Bible as a historical source on the one hand and those who were rather skeptical regarding the historicity of the Hebrew Bible on the other. However, the debates between minimalists and maximalists distinguish themselves due to the radical and fundamental contrast between the two sides of the debate. In the 1990s, biblical scholars began to investigate the biblical texts more sensitively and consciously to establish what one could regard as a solid foundation for historical knowledge of ancient Israel and Judah. Over the last three decades, considerable change and a paradigm shift took place in biblical scholarship through the investigation of the historical reality of ancient Israel and Judah.²⁶ For example, the majority of biblical scholars currently consider the narratives of “conquest” or “settlement” in the book of Joshua as a literary creation devoid of any historicity.²⁷

Lester L. Grabbe and Ehud Ben Zvi indicate that the difference between minimalists and maximalists concerns methodology rather than substance or, more accurately, that it is ideological.²⁸ In other words, the core of the debates consists of the methodology and ideology regarding the historiography of ancient Israel. For instance, Lemche writes:

The basic difference between maximalists and minimalists is that the maximalists accept the version of the past found in the Bible as ‘true’ until proven otherwise, whereas the minimalists claim that there is no reason to put faith into the biblical story unless it can be proven to have happened by applying normal historical procedures as found in general history.²⁹

²⁶ Niesiołowski-Spanò 2017, 3.

²⁷ On this issue, see also the section “7. Early Traditions in the Bible: How Far Back Can They Go?” in Finkelstein’s article below.

²⁸ Grabbe 2017, 1–8; Ben Zvi 2017b, 1–16.

²⁹ Lemche 2015, 4.

However, this seemingly clear methodological statement hides plenty of riddles. Ben Zvi raises questions concerning the aforementioned methodological principles as follows:

what does the term ‘proven’ mean in the mentioned text? What does it mean that something ‘has happened’? Does ‘what happened’ refer to a punctual event that has significance in itself, or to a narrative explaining why it ‘happened’? Does the event have one single perspective and meaning? Are (partial and perspectival) descriptions of punctual events ... the goal or perhaps even the outcome of historiography? What are ‘normal historical procedures’ and ‘normal’ according to whom?³⁰

It is obviously far beyond the scope of this introduction to attempt to articulate appealing answers to the above inquiries. Suffice it to recognize that the proper address of the above inquiries requires a certain worldview or frame of reference. As Ben Zvi correctly surmises,³¹ Lemche seems to try to convey that religious prejudice or ideological idiosyncrasy has impacted the methodology of maximalist scholars. However, is the methodology of minimalists exempt from ideology? Is there really no hidden preconception or assumption or even faith without evidence among minimalists? Minimalists consistently raise objections concerning the Hebrew Bible as a historical source unless extra-biblical sources confirm the biblical text. However, we could ask a question with Grabbe as follows: “[I]s consistency always a virtue?”³² Of course, consistency is not always a virtue; from the historical viewpoint, the Hebrew Bible is inconsistent regarding reliability and accuracy. If a methodology does not acknowledge and accordingly cannot adapt to this reality, then it is too rigid and stiff as a tool for penetrating historical reality. Therefore, one should pay heed to Grabbe’s warning:

There is a danger in a particular methodology’s becoming a dogmatic ideology. As Hans Barstad (1998) pointed out two decades ago, the proper critical position and healthy skepticism exhibited by Minimalists is in danger of slipping over into little more than an exhibition of bibliophobia.³³

It has long been recognized that the debates between minimalists and maximalists do not always concern only historical facts. Sometimes hidden worldviews and presuppositions underlying the historical facts impact them heavily. The overly aggressive and combatant tone of the debates can only be understood fully with the awareness that the debates result not only from a search for historical fact, but also from a more comprehensive foundation, namely the struggle for superiority regarding academically valid worldviews or epistemologies. At this point, it is worthwhile to realize that despite all the differences between the

³⁰ Ben Zvi 2017b, 8–9.

³¹ Ben Zvi 2017b, 9–10.

³² Grabbe 2017, 4.

³³ Grabbe 2017, 8.

minimalists and maximalists, they share a common and overarching belief that historical value can be measured, judged and proven.

4. Beyond the Debate between the Minimalists and the Maximalists

In my view, Hebrew Bible scholarship should now move beyond the debate between minimalists and maximalists.³⁴ In order to achieve this goal, awareness of one's own hidden assumptions and presuppositions proves more important than a pretended absolutely neutral position. Only by doing so are we able to dare to bring our hidden assumptions and presuppositions into the light of examination.

Perhaps we should humbly recognize that fully describing the "actual past" or "historical reality" represents an unobtainable goal.³⁵ Although one of the aims of historical research in Hebrew Bible scholarship concerns the identification of how the biblical story connects to the actual past (or even whether it does so at all) and the portrayal of the historical reality of ancient Israel as accurately as possible, the selectivity of observation means that no modern historiography can capture all aspects of this reality.³⁶ All research based on observation, including research on the historical reality of ancient Israel, needs a chosen object, an interest, a point of view and a problem.³⁷ Accordingly, story as well as history as defined in this chapter are by no means identical with the actual past or historical reality. Thus, I would like to emphasize at this point that the terms "story" and "history" in this chapter do not intend to convey any value judgment. Their relationship should not be understood as "inferior story" versus "superior history" or vice versa. Instead, I regard them as different literary genres or, more accurately speaking, as divergent modes or heterogeneous approaches to capturing and describing the infinite historical reality in their own ways.

³⁴ In this context, it is worth remarking that Pfoh criticizes the fact that the current historiography related to ancient Israel is primarily performed in theology departments and seminaries in Europe and North America (Pfoh 2017, 5–6). In his view, this portrays the research frameworks for such historiography as a historical investigation based on specific concerns and interests. He suggests instead that research on the historiography of ancient Israel should be conducted in departments of history, social anthropology, or historical geography. Pfoh concludes that the results would differ depending on the research framework. However, it is a difficult and complicated question whether departments of history, social anthropology and historical geography are interest-free or concern-free zones. In my view, this is an issue relating to awareness or consciousness rather than location.

³⁵ On this issue, see also the section "5. Reflecting on the Task of Historical Reconstruction" in Han's article as well as the section "1. Introduction: The Interplay between History and Interpretation" in Schmid's article, below.

³⁶ Popper 1965, 46.

³⁷ Popper 1965, 46.

Acknowledging this simple fact, we can perhaps move forward and even beyond the milieu of debate between minimalists and maximalists. This has to do with the inquiry about objectivity in historiography.³⁸ Objectivity in historiography has been explained in diverse ways, and different researchers presuppose varying conceptions of historical objectivity.³⁹ However, historiographic objectivity has been generally related to the issue of neutrality.⁴⁰ Paul Newall articulates the view that the identification of historical objectivity with neutrality should be reconsidered since theory based on observation and interpretation is an unavoidable element of any historical inquiry.⁴¹ At the same time, this does not mean that all historiographies represent nothing more than competing partisan theories written to maintain or challenge a prevailing orthodoxy with no claim to veracity. Newall seems to claim that plural, inevitably subjective elements are sometimes essential to ascertaining objective truth in history.⁴²

Even though historians cannot be neutral, since as human beings they cannot wholly remove their value judgments or particular points of view and are therefore unable to start without preconceptions, historians should and can seek to gain conceptual as well as methodological instruments that minimize distortion and get as close to historical reality as possible.⁴³ Investigating along these lines, Richard J. Evans states:

... it is important not to confuse objectivity with neutrality, indifference, or lack of passion, as Novick himself appears to do ... All this needs “detachment,” the ability not to put oneself at the center of a view of the world, as the most narcissistic of the postmodernists do, but to develop what Haskell calls “a view of the world in which one’s own self ... appears merely as one object among many.” Otherwise, for example, how would

³⁸ For historiographic objectivity see Moore 2006, 137–82; Newall 2009, 172–80. Beginning in the 1960s, postmodernism rejected objectivity in historiography as an impossible mission. However, according to Stanford, “almost every social scientist today lives and works somewhere between the two poles of positivistic objectivity and insightful subjectivity” (Stanford 1998, 22). A certain amount of subjectivity is necessary for understanding the human element, for example emotions, which have a profound impact on the trajectory of history. The current majority of historiographers seem to have built a consensus that a historiography should be written “with an appreciation of the difficulties involved in doing history objectively as well as with self-awareness of the subjective factors they bring to their work” (Moore 2006, 11). This epistemological position can be confirmed by the contributors of this volume. For an overview of the postmodern position regarding historiography cf. Zammito 2009, 68–71; Southgate 2009, 540–49. The antirepresentationalist viewpoint, one of several related postmodern viewpoints, for example, expresses strong doubt about usual assumptions such as the existence of a correspondence between language and reality, and the ability to use language competently for literal expression of past reality (Moore 2006, 12).

³⁹ Newall 2009, 173.

⁴⁰ Newall 2009, 173.

⁴¹ Newall 2009, 175.

⁴² Newall 2009, 173.

⁴³ Newall 2009, 175.

we be able to understand phenomena like Nazism or individuals like Stalin and Pol Pot? None of this means that historical judgment has to be neutral. But it does mean that the historian has to develop a detached mode of cognition, a faculty of self-criticism, and an ability to understand another person's point of view.⁴⁴

Every historiography is influenced to some degree by the historian's particular preconceptions, presuppositions and viewpoints, for we all have to supply some information from "now" in order to take information from "back then."⁴⁵ This human epistemological characteristic is sometimes abused to defend the legitimacy and validity of a historiography based on completely arbitrary subjectivity. But, of course, this is problematic epistemologically and scientifically. The discipline of history cannot and should not simply legitimate or validate the possibility of historiography deriving from uncontrolled arbitrariness and hidden bias, but historiography instead requires a scientific discourse to clearly display its presuppositions and assumptions as transparently and honestly as possible.⁴⁶

By keeping historical objectivity in the form of the aforementioned "detachment," historians obtain clearer criteria in order to judge and examine with self-scrutiny and humility how and in which way the gap and overlap between story and history could and should be interpreted and, accordingly,

⁴⁴ Evans 2000, 218–19.

⁴⁵ Kosso 2009, 18.

⁴⁶ Following Keith Oatley (1999, 101–17), Raymond F. Person discerns three kinds of truth: "truth as empirical correspondence," "truth as coherence within complex structure" and "truth as personal relevance" (Person 2016, 78). In his view, biblical historiography is a form of traditional history containing "truth as coherence within complex structure" and "truth as personal relevance." In traditional history, "historical events are arranged in ways that will bring honor to the historian when he performs his history orally in ways that moves his audience emotionally and strengthens their group identity" (Person 2016, 78). Therefore, the descriptions of biblical historiography have their own virtue and should not be judged naively or charged as inaccurate, incomplete or even distorted (Person 2016, 78). This understanding results from his recent hypothesis that the reciprocal relationship between written and oral tradition, along with scribes writing with a perspective based upon texts recited in public should be recognized in research on the relation between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles (Person 2010, 163–74). Person concludes that biblical historiography must be understood and accepted as traditional history, taking seriously its characteristics and features as such. Therefore, understanding biblical historiography on its own terms should be the starting point for putting it to other uses such as historical data for our own modern historiographies (Person 2016, 82). His arguments are helpful and enlightening in many aspects concerning the interpretation of the gap and overlap between story and history. They enable us to realize that "inaccuracy," "incompleteness" and "distortion" in story on the one hand and in history on the other are qualitatively different categories. As a result, modern historiography based on uncontrolled arbitrariness and hidden bias should not be legitimated. On this and related issues, see also the section "11. Summary: Landmarks in the Development of Early Biblical History" in Finkelstein's article as well as the section "1. Introduction: The Interplay between History and Interpretation" in Schmid's article, below. Furthermore, the section "4. What Sort of New History of Israel Is Chronicles?" in Levin's article below deals with the characteristics and features of Chronicles as an ancient historiography.

which interpretation comes closer to the actual past and historical reality. The brief sketch given so far demonstrates that the gap and overlap between story and history is one of the most sensitive and vital points of Hebrew Bible scholarship in the present and the future.

5. The Collected Articles in this Volume

The articles in this volume can be regarded as valuable efforts to take the gap and overlap between story and history seriously and to understand this significant topic better, particularly in the context of the books of Kings as well as its proximate frame of reference. Thus, they form a kind of prolegomena for any historiography of ancient Israel that desires to move beyond the milieu of the debates between minimalists and maximalists. The articles collected in this book deal with some core topics related to the gap and overlap between story and history such as: What do recent archaeological finds suggest about the biblical records? Did any coherent theological or ideological intention lie behind mitigating descriptions in the books of Kings (2 Kgs 3:1–3; 14:1–3; 17:1–2)? Is the so-called Deuteronomistic History more theological or more historiographical? What really happened to Josiah in Megiddo? Did Jeremiah preach at the Temple of Jerusalem in the year 609 BCE? How were the conquests of Jerusalem in 597 BCE and 587 BCE delineated and evaluated in 2 Kings 24–25? How were the kings of Judah in the Deuteronomistic History reinterpreted by the Chronicler? Did Croesus really meet with Solon?

The authors of the contributions gathered in this volume are located in various regions and countries. Moreover, they have different intellectual, institutional, religious and ethnic backgrounds. However, they and their contributions share the following methodological and epistemological points:

1) The contributors are neither minimalists nor maximalists. They all strive to move beyond the debates between maximalists and minimalists.

2) They concur that the historical value of the biblical text should not be presupposed or denied from the outset. Furthermore, they assume that the historical reliability of the Hebrew Bible should not be evaluated generally or consistently, but viewed in a differentiated manner as heterogeneous on a case-by-case basis for every single book, passage or even verse.

3) They seek to develop a detached mode of cognition, a faculty for self-criticism and an ability to understand other points of view.

4) They endeavor to acquire cutting-edge information regarding the differences and convergences between biblical portrayals of the historical evolution of ancient Israel (story), on the one hand, and the historical-critical reconstructions of the historical reality (history), on the other.

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