Louis C. Jonker

I & II Chronicles

A Commentary

WJK Westminster John Knox Press
Louisville • Kentucky

"A compendium of past scholarship on 1 and 2 Chronicles, Louis Jonker's masterful study moves beyond traditional commentary to reclaim the Chronicler's vision as urgently relevant. Jonker shows how the Chronicler's adept reframing of history later in the Persian period created a cohesive 'all Israel' identity centered on the Jerusalem temple. By integrating postcolonial theory, social psychology, and reception history, Jonker illuminates how ancient traditions were reinterpreted in order to negotiate imperial power. This work is a vital witness to the Chronicler's theological imagination."

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"An excellent commentary on Chronicles written by one of the top experts on the topic."

—Ehud Ben Zvi, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, Classics, and Religion, University of Alberta

"This volume is not only a traditional commentary on the text of Chronicles but also encompasses historical, rhetorical, and theological aspects, as well as reception history in and of Chronicles, introducing the reader to diverse facets of a late and very complex biblical book. With this milestone of his work, Louis Jonker brings many loose ends of his long scholarship into coherence and pioneers new directions in the analysis of Chronicles."

—Angelika Berlejung, Professor of Old Testament, Leipzig University

"An exemplary work of scholarship, this commentary masterfully situates Chronicles within its historiographical and identity-political contexts, offering a reinterpretation of the book at the highest level of exegesis in a clear and accessible manner. Its theological insight is profound, unveiling Chronicles as a true literary masterpiece. At last, we have a worthy successor to Sara Japhet's enduringly outstanding commentary."

—Christian Frevel, Professor of Old Testament Studies, Ruhr University Bochum

"An authority on research on 1–2 Chronicles, Professor Louis Jonker has written a rich and solid commentary, marked by his well-known signature approach, which combines interdisciplinarity with a multilayered interpretation that highlights rhetorical strategies, identity negotiations, memory construction, colonial discourse, and a utopian vision. It's a great pleasure to read such an engaging volume!"

—Kristin Joachimsen, Professor of Old Testament,
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society

"This marvelous new commentary on Chronicles is most welcome! Written by one of the leading experts on the book, it is thorough in scope and is in dialogue with scholarship internationally. A genuine tour de force, Jonker's work brings new energy to the academic study of 1–2 Chronicles and is an absolute must-have for anyone interested in biblical studies."

—Steven L. McKenzie, Professor of Religious Studies
and Spence L. Wilson Senior Research Fellow, Rhodes College

"Louis Jonker has written a Chronicles commentary for our time: finely aware of contexts for both authors and readers. Thoroughly versed in the scholarship of the past two centuries and attuned to the nuances of sociological and psychological contexts, this commentary takes Chronicles seriously as a book of identity formation and re-formation. This is the first major commentary on Chronicles to summarize and draw from the research on social memory, identity formation, and postcoloniality, reinforcing an understanding of the book as shaped by and shaping its own colonial context in late-Persian-period Judea. Jonker's delight in Chronicles is infectious. Even the most complex issues in Chronicles are explained clearly and lucidly, never abstrusely. A must for any student of Chronicles."

—Christine Mitchell, Professor of Hebrew Bible,
Knox College, Toronto School of Theology

"Louis Jonker's engaging commentary brings together careful attention to the biblical text with a special focus on scholarly interpretation and questions over the last two decades. The substantial introduction is accessible and invitational for the reader and creates a rich picture of the landscape of recent approaches, concerns, and the book's central themes. Through his characteristically broad

interdisciplinary perspective (including sociohistorical, rhetorical, postcolonial, feminist, reception history, and the specific political and theological context of South Africa), Jonker's insights illuminate this book's complexities, allowing new avenues for deeper investigation into the dynamic tapestry of Chronicles and its continued importance as part of larger interpretive traditions within Judaism and Christianity."

—Steven Schweitzer, Academic Dean and Professor,
Bethany Theological Seminary

"Jonker's South African context gives him a distinctive appreciation for Chronicles as 'reforming history,' and how rethinking Israel's past helped reshape Israel's identity. His thoroughly researched commentary is a welcome addition to the new wave of interest in this often-ignored text."

—Steven Tuell, James A. Kelso Professor Emeritus of Hebrew
and Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

"In his erudite and illuminating commentary, Louis Jonker puts the book of Chronicles in the spotlight it deserves. It is often overlooked that Chronicles leads us directly into a historical period and a community in which greater parts of the Hebrew Bible were composed. With sensitive literary skills and profound knowledge, Jonker explains the texts, their literary world, and the formative theological themes, thereby illuminating the discourses in Yehud that they reflect but also drive forward."

—Kristin Weingart, Professor of Old Testament,
Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

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PREFACE

More than twenty-five years ago, I stumbled upon the book of Chronicles (eventually divided into two books because of scroll length). During the 1990s I led a research project on the influence of sociohistorical transformation in the interpretation of the Bible—thus, a hermeneutical endeavor. The context was the so-called "New South Africa," that is, postapartheid South Africa, which emerged after 1990, when Nelson Mandela was released from prison after twenty-seven years, and particularly after 1994, when a new era dawned in this country with the first democratic elections on April 27 of that year. I became aware of the hermeneutical question that many (especially the white, Afrikaans) South Africans grappled with during this period: Why is it that pastors and theologians are now telling us—with the Bible in their hands—that "apartheid" was a sin, while three decades ago pastors and theologians—with the same Bible in their hands—told us that "apartheid" was the will of God for us? Although this question certainly has political overtones and undertones, I sensed that this question exposed the fact that the interpretation of the Bible changes over time due to sociohistorical transformation.

This was also the time when "new" histories of South Africa started appearing in print. The history books that I studied in school in the 1970s declared that the history of South Africa started in 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch explorer and businessman of the Verenigde Oos-Indische Compagnie (VOC—United East-Indian Company), set foot on the shores at the southern tip of Africa. Then my children learned in school in the early 2000s that southern Africa was the "Cradle of Humankind," and that some of the earliest ancestors of our species originated from this continent. Jan van Riebeeck and his Dutch brethren, not to mention their British counterparts from the beginning of the nineteenth century, then became latecomers and colonial settlers on this continent, driving out the indigenous Khoi and San peoples and taking possession of their land. European missionary work that was praised in "my" history books as the bringing of civilization and Christianity to a "dark" continent was portrayed in my children's history books as exploitative imperial power abuse, trying to subjugate local peoples to foreign values and economic aspirations.

So, how did this experience bring me to Chronicles? I started a new research project in 2000 in which I endeavored to investigate the same relationship of sociohistorical transformation and interpretation of authoritative scriptures in the different historical contexts of the Bible's origin. Within the context of transition in South Africa, I became intrigued by the "new" history of ancient Israel embodied in the book of Chronicles. What sociohistorical changes took place that prompted the writing of this ancient work? How was history portrayed in comparison with earlier versions of the same history? In service of which ideologies did the writing of the book take place? For the first time I started taking notice of the carefully crafted literature in Chronicles, with particular attention to how this literature adapted and transformed earlier versions of the same history.

I am thus fully aware of how my South African experience has contributed to, and heavily influenced, my study of Chronicles. On the one hand, such awareness is fruitful and creative. On the other hand, it could be dangerous not to realize—and acknowledge—one's own subjective perspectives. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, I fell in love with Chronicles and (thus far) could not get "beyond" Chronicles. Time and again, I am surprised by the rhetorical richness of this book, and by its—in my view—huge role in processes of literature formation during the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

The task of writing a commentary on this book for the OTL series was a huge privilege that afforded me the opportunity to bring many loose ends in my Chronicles scholarship into coherence. It also gave me the opportunity to explore new diachronic directions in Chronicles studies—something that has yet to reach a scholarly consensus. This fresh research will, I hope, contribute to advancing our studies of Chronicles.

While writing the commentary, there was also a tangible shadow hanging over my shoulder! The previous commentary on Chronicles in the OTL series was written by Sara Japhet, a renowned scholar. Her commentary, and her Chronicles scholarship in general, contributed to the emergence of a new phase in the study of this book. She, together with scholars like Hugh Williamson and Thomas Willi, pioneered new directions in the analysis of Chronicles. During the period of finalizing the manuscript of this commentary, I received the sad message that Professor Japhet had passed away. May her work inspire us all to learn lessons from history.

Through this commentary, I pay tribute to Sara Japhet, as well as to Thomas Willi, who led me into the world of Chronicles in Greifswald; to Gary Knoppers, with whom I still had the privilege of discussing the plans for this commentary before he sadly—and too early—passed away; to Ehud Ben Zvi, whom I met through our common interest in Chronicles and who remains a mentor and friend; to Josef Wiesehöfer and Oded Lipschits, who have enriched me through their vast knowledge of the ancient history and archaeology; and to

Erhard Blum (Tübingen), Manfred Oeming (Heidelberg), Angelika Berlejung (Leipzig), and Christian Frevel (Bochum), who hosted me graciously at their respective universities in Germany during various research periods.

During the past decades, and particularly through the years of writing this commentary, there had been colleagues, friends, and family members who encouraged me on my way. I am especially indebted to my wife, Anita, and our children for their constant love and interest in my work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CREDITS

I hereby acknowledge the funding that I have received on numerous occasions from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn), which enabled me to tap into the vast literary resources of several of the university libraries in Germany (Leipzig, Tübingen, Heidelberg, Bochum). Without these fellowships, it would not have been possible for me to spend several sabbatical periods in Germany.

I also acknowledge the research leave and funding that I have received from my home institution, Stellenbosch University, as well as funding from the National Research Foundation of South Africa. Thank you also to Rev. Delphine Fongeh, my doctoral student, who assisted with the compilation of the ancient sources index.

I have great appreciation for the assistance and diligent work of the editors (especially William Brown) in finalizing the manuscript, as well as for the professional service of the publisher, Westminster John Knox (Julie Mullins and Daniel Braden, in particular). I am grateful for the invitation (by former editor Carol Newsom) to contribute the Chronicles commentary to the renowned Old Testament Library series.

I had the privilege of collaborating in the project of reviewing the NRSV that resulted in the NRSV Updated Edition (NRSVue), published by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (see https://www.biblegateway.com /versions /New -Revised -Standard -Version -Updated -Edition -NRSVue -Bible). I base my translation on the NRSVue text but annotate the text with text-critical comments and alternative translations. The textual notes in the translation sections of this commentary are based on my own research and are not copied from the NRSVue. Furthermore, the versification of the Masoretic Text (MT) is followed, and not that of NRSVue, and the Tetragrammaton is throughout rendered as "YHWH." All quotations in the commentary are from the NRSVue (except when indicated otherwise).

ABBREVIATIONS

&	and
†	died
=	equal
/	or
||	parallel to
§(§)	section(s)
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AcT	*Acta Theologica*
AdO	*Archiv des Orientforschung*
ADPV	Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AJ	*The Asbury Journal*
AJHG	*The American Journal of Human Genetics*
ANEM	Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*, by Josephus
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
AT	author's translation
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
b.	Babylonian Talmud
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeological Review*
BARIS	Biblical Archaeological Review International Series
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBRS	Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement

BCE	before the Common Era (in quote: B.C.E.)
BCT	*The Bible and Critical Theory*
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 5th ed., emended. 1997
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschicte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
c.	century
ca.	circa, approximately
CBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary
CBOTS	Coniectanea Biblica / Old Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CE	Common Era
CEss	Classical Essays
CetO	Classica et Orientalia
cf.	*confer*, compare
CH	*Church History*
ch(s).	chapter(s)
CHBKul	C. H. Beck Kulturwissenschaft
ColT	*Collectanea Theologica*
CSHB	Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible
CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*

DCLS	Deuteronocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*
diss.	dissertation
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
Dtn	Deuteronomic
Dtr	Deuteronomistic
DWB	*Developing World Bioethics*
EBR	*Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*
EDEJ	*The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*
ed(s).	editor(s), edited by, edition
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
EI	*Eretz-Israel*
EncJud	*Encyclopedia Judaica*
ESHS	*Electrum: Studia z Historii Starożytnej / Journal of Ancient History*
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	versification in English translation
etc.	*et cetera*, and so forth, and the rest
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
FAT	Forschungen zum alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
H	Holiness Code (Lev 17–26)
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited and translated by M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
HArkh	*Hadashot Arkheologiyot*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HB	Hebrew Bible
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HeBAI	*Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*
Herm	Hermeneia
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HOS	*Handbook of Oriental Studies*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICS	Interpretation Commentary Series
IECOT	International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament

IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
IS	*Iranian Studies*
JA	*Journal of Anthropology*
JAJ	*Journal of Ancient Judaism*
JAJS	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JQR	*The Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSem	*Journal for Semitics*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
JVC	*Journal of Victorian Culture*
KAT	Kommentar zum alten Testament
Kgdms	Kingdoms, in LXX (ET: 1–2 Samuel; 1–2 Kings)
KJV	King James Version
LAS	Leipziger altorientalische Studien
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lev	*Levant*
Lev. R.	Leviticus Rabbah
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX	Septuagint (Greek version of HB + additions); Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*. Stuttgart: Würtembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935, later editions.
masc.	masculine
MBA	Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie
MBI	Methods in Biblical Interpretation
MT	Masoretic Text
n(n).	number(s)
NaN	*Nations and Nationalism*

NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NETS	*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*. Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/.
NGTT	*Nederduits-gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif*
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
Or	*Orientalia*
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische studien
P	Priestly source (of the Pentateuch)
Pal	*Palynology*
PAW	Peoples of the Ancient World
per.	person
pl.	plural
Proof	*Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*
QS	*Qualitative Sociology*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RC	*Religion Compass*
Rel	*Religions*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review & Expositor*
RGG	*Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*
RRJ	*The Review of Rabbinic Judaism*
RT	*Religion and Theology*
Ruth R.	Ruth Rabbah
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBA	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SCJ	*Stone-Campbell Journal*
Scrip	*Scriptura*
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SCT	Social Categorization Theory (a designation used in social psychology)
SEL	*Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico*
Sem	*Semitica*
sg.	singular
SHBOT	Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament
SIT	Social Identity Theory (in social psychology)

SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SK	*Skrif en Kerk*
SRel	*Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*
SS	Semeia Studies
ST	*Studia Theologica*
StudSam	Studia Samaritana
SW	southwest
Syr.	Syriac translation of HB (also called the Peshitta)
TA	*Tel Aviv*
Tar	*Tarbiz*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
T. Mos.	Testament of Moses
trans.	translated by
Transeu	*Transeuphratene*
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UBCS	Understanding the Bible Commentary Series
v(v).	verse(s)
VetE	*Verbum et Ecclesia*
Vrhbos	*Vrhbosnensia*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplementum
Vulg.	Vulgate, Jerome's Latin version of HB
WANEM	Worlds of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZABR	*Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschicte*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

GLOSSARY

Fortschreibung	The redactional growth of ancient texts through the addition of smaller, related fragments of new textual material
gentilicum	A word used as the name of a people or a nation (pl. *gentilica*)
Grundschrift	The first basic (or proto-) form of an ancient text before further source or redactional additions extended it
haplograpy	A scribal error where a letter or group of letters is written once, although they occur twice in the master manuscript
homoeoteleuton	A scribal error constituted by a scribe's eye jumping from a word in the master text to the same word further down in the text, resulting in some text being lost in the copy
ketiv	A Masoretic indication of how a word is written in the text (in contrast to the *qere* form)
qere	A Masoretic indication of how a word in the text should be read (in contrast to the *ketiv* form)
setumah	A Masoretic sign indicating a break in the sentence (or verse)
Sondergut	German word used in scholarship to refer to the unique material in Chronicles, whether from the Chronicles writer(s) or from later redactional additions
Vorlage	German word used in scholarship to refer to the sources that the Chronicles writer(s) used in constructing the book (pl. *Vorlagen*)

INTRODUCTION

1. Research History

The history of research on the biblical book of Chronicles is vast and wide. With the advent of critical studies of HB literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Chronicles did not stand in the center of interest, to say the least. It nevertheless made it into the studies of, for example, Julius Wellhausen (1885, 1889) who denigrated it as a "midrash" that merely elaborates on some aspects of the Early Prophets. Even before Wellhausen, Wilhelm M. L. de Wette (1806) argued that scholars should not waste energy to save this book from its own incredibility. At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, however, interest in this book has blossomed. Cinderella has indeed turned into a Sleeping Beauty!

However, it is not necessary to retell the story of Chronicles studies from the beginning of critical scholarship until today. Apart from the very good introductions in several recent Chronicles commentaries—see especially the excellent overview of scholarship in Knoppers (2003b, 45–137)—some article surveys of the history of research on Chronicles also provide relevant and detailed material and literature (Kleinig 1994; Willi 2002; Duke 2009). The focus here is rather on recent trends in Chronicles scholarship, features not treated in previous overviews.

In a previous survey, the present author (Jonker 2013a, 1–4) has highlighted three lines of interest in the history of scholarship on Chronicles:

1. Historical value. In studies from the nineteenth and the majority of the twentieth century, the main interest was the *historical value* of the book, particularly in comparison to the Dtr version of the history of ancient Israel as found mainly in the books Samuel and Kings (Japhet 1985; Graham 1990; Peltonen 1996). Archaeological evidence was often employed in these studies to argue in favor, or against, Chronicles as a more reliable historical source of Israel's past. With the dwindling of historicism and positivism in the first half of the twentieth century, interest in this aspect of the book also started decreasing.

2. *Nature of Chronicles*. A next line of interest gradually emerged; scholars started debating the *nature* of Chronicles. Was the book of Chronicles an early

form of Midrash (Wellhausen 1885; Zeitlin 1953; Seeligmann 1979)? Was the Chronicler a historian (Graham, Hoglund, and McKenzie 1997), a literary creator/author (Graham and McKenzie 1999), a redactor (McKenzie 1999), an exegete (Willi 1972), or a theologian (Graham 2003)? Or is Chronicles independent literature (Sugimoto 1992)? These studies have emphasized that, in a certain sense, the Chronicler was all these descriptions. The richness of the Chronicler's material, and especially the creative way in which the author has handled some sources and added further material, demonstrate that it would be unfairly reductive to restrict the nature of Chronicles, and the Chronicler, to any one of these descriptions.

3. *Ideological rhetoric.* A third line of thinking, to which Japhet has contributed significantly, is to ask what ideology or ideologies can be identified behind the book of Chronicles (Japhet 1989). The question shifted to "What did the Chronicler want to achieve with this rewritten history of ancient Israel?" As part of this third line of focusing on the ideology of Chronicles, the rhetoric and persuasive appeal of the book became a major focus of research (Duke 1990). Since literature does not try to persuade in sociohistorical vacuums, more attention to the context(s) of origin behind the book of Chronicles therefore returned to Chronicles scholarship during the last part of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. What were the sociohistorical conditions within which the Chronicler was formulated? And how did this literature contribute to the ideological debates of those ancient contexts?

Two subthemes to this third line of thinking can be identified in the most recent scholarship on Chronicles. In terms of *rhetorical studies*, a variety of foci have emerged. Some describe the dynamic and intention of rewriting Israel's history in Chronicles in terms of its ideological function. How did Chronicles, as "reforming history" (as literature that reformed the earlier portrayals of history yet also as literature that reformed the understanding of Israel in new and changing circumstances) contribute to processes of identity negotiation (Jonker 2007a, 2007b, 2010b, 2016c), formation of utopian visions (Schweitzer 2007, 2013; Uhlenbruch and Schweitzer 2016), or the construction of social memory sites (Ben Zvi 2011, 2017) during the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods?

A second subtheme focuses on the role of Chronicles in the *history of literature formation* during the mentioned period (Jonker 2019b, 2019c, 2021c, 2021e). To which debates of the time did the Chronicler respond? What other contemporaneous literature influenced the Chronicler's rewriting of Israel's history? And what impetus did Chronicles give to further literature formation processes of the time? This second subtheme brings together Chronicles research and research on other biblical corpora, especially Pentateuch studies (Jonker 2014a, 2014c).

The present commentary is situated primarily in the third line of scholarship. In the interpretations offered in this work, we are alert to the ideologies

that played a role in the formation of Chronicles, in its interaction with other processes of literature formation, and in its reception in later periods. The focus will thus be on the rhetorical strategies of the book, as well as on its role in the processes of literature formation in the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

In what follows, we focus on the textual, historical, and rhetorical aspects of the book of Chronicles before addressing the issue of reception both *in* and *of* Chronicles. Not only is a focus on the reception of other literature *in* Chronicles important for highlighting the book's contribution to the debates of its time, but also a study of the reception *of* Chronicles in later literature will assist us in determining the value and importance of this book for later contexts, including our own.

2. Textual Aspects

2.1 The Name, Text, and Canonicity of Chronicles

The old Jewish custom of naming a book after the first words in the book never caught on for Chronicles. The book starts with "Adam" as the first name in the genealogical list of early humanity. Therefore, some rabbinical traditions (the most well-known b. B. Bat. 14b–15a) called the book *Sēpher dibrê hayyāmîm*, literally, "the scroll of the words of the days." The LXX translation of Chronicles called the book ΠΑΡΑΛΕΙΠΟΜΕΝΩΝ (genitive pl. of Παραλειπόμενα), literally, "of the omitted/remaining things" (Knoppers and Harvey 2002; Knoppers 2003b, 47–52). This name gives expression to how the LXX translators viewed the book: it was meant to be complementing the other version of the history of ancient Israel in Samuel and Kings. The LXX translators, who also divided the book in two parts—coinciding with 1 and 2 Chronicles in modern-day translations—and moved it to a position after Samuel and Kings, thus did not regard it as a book in its own right but rather saw it as literature that derived its value from another, earlier version of history. The Codex Alexandrinus version of LXX Chronicles expands on this title by specifying that it was about "the omitted/remaining things regarding the Kings of Judah." The same tendency, which emphasizes that Chronicles focuses on the southern kingdom, Judah, can be seen in the Syriac Peshitta as well as in Augustine's version.

It was only in the late fourth and early fifth centuries CE when the term "Chronicles" appeared. Jerome, who translated the HB into Latin in 390–405, mentions, in the preface to his translation of Samuel and Kings, that another book in the HB contains a similar history. He indicates that this other book could be called a χρονικόν, a "chronicle," of all divine history. With this term, Jerome was probably equating the genre of the HB book with another historiographical work known to him: Eusebius's χρονικοὶ κανόνες, offering "a synchronistic summary of the ancient Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, and biblical past from the

birth of Abraham to approximately 325 C.E., the twentieth year of Constantine's reign" (Knoppers 2003b, 50–51). But, simultaneously, with the qualification of "all divine history," Jerome indicated the unique contents of this book in contradistinction to that of Eusebius. Jerome's name for the book did not gain general acceptance through the ages; only under the influence of Martin Luther's name for his 1524 German translation of the book, "Die Chronika," did it become increasingly dominant (McKenzie 2004, 19–20; Dirksen 2005, 2; Klein 2006, 2). Today, most translations refer to the book as "1 and 2 Chronicles."

The text of Chronicles, as acknowledged by Japhet and other recent commentators (Knoppers 2003b, 52–56; McKenzie 2004, 35; Dirksen 2005, 7–10; Klein 2006, 26–30), has been preserved relatively well in its transmission process. Most textual studies on Chronicles concentrate on synoptic comparisons with the *Vorlage* texts in the HB. Such comparisons reveal a high level of textual congruency between Chronicles and the materials taken from the book Kings, but the same does not hold true for Samuel. MT Chronicles differs in substantial parts from MT Samuel. Instead of assuming that those differences should be attributed to the Chronicler's creative use of his sources, scholars call attention to the fact that MT Chronicles resembles LXX Samuel in many instances. Consequently, the Chronicler most likely used a Hebrew version of Samuel that was also the basis for the LXX translation of the book, one that was more original than the corrupted version in MT Samuel. In those instances, Chronicles thus preserved a less corrupt version of the Hebrew book of Samuel than MT Samuel. When interpreting the Chronicler's unique materials in light of synoptic comparisons, one should remain cognizant that differences between MT Chronicles and MT Kings might be more significant than differences between MT Chronicles and MT Samuel, which could rather be attributed to textual corruption of the MT Samuel text (Klein 2006, 28–30).

Currently, there is wide agreement that LXX Chronicles originated in Alexandria in Egypt sometime in the second century BCE. The LXX contains two versions of some parts of Chronicles, however. Apart from Παραλειπομένων, which contains the full book (with the exception of some verses of 1 Chr 1 being omitted and some in 2 Chr 35 and 36 added, compared to the Hebrew text), the apocryphal book 1 Esdras (also called *Esdras* α) includes 2 Chronicles 35–36 together with excerpts from Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 1:21–22; 3:1–5:6; Neh 7:73–8:12). First Esdras differs in linguistic style from Παραλειπομένων. Whereas the former contains an idiomatic and elegant Greek text, the latter's Greek mostly attests to a literal translation. Various theories account for the relationship between these two Greek versions. Some scholars see the text of 1 Esdras as the primary Greek translation of the Hebrew, with Παραλειπομένων being a later and less stylistic version; others argue that it is the other way around. The latter position, which has gained traction in recent scholarship, regards 1 Esdras as a secondary compilation of extracts from Παραλειπομένων and Ezra-Nehemiah.

A third position is that 1 Esdras is in itself a revision of some Greek texts from Παραλειπομένων and Ezra-Nehemiah (Knoppers 2003b, 56–57).

It is furthermore worth noticing the more than forty-six extant LXX Chronicles manuscripts. In a two-part study by Allen (1974a, 1974b), which has become the standard reference about LXX Chronicles manuscripts, four groups of manuscript traditions are distinguished. These different traditions also reflect various levels of similarity with MT Chronicles. Especially in the genealogical lists, differences in spelling, order, and other features can be seen.

The Qumran library does not contribute significantly to our knowledge of the text of MT Chronicles. Only two small Hebrew fragments have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, jointly called 4QChr (or 4Q118). Paleographers have dated these fragments to approximately 50–25 BCE. The fragments published by Trebolle Barrera (2000) contain only eleven decipherable words from 2 Chr 28:27–29:3. The only preserved word on the first fragment is a variant when compared to both MT and LXX; three other variants compared to MT can be seen.

Available Jewish sources give no evidence that the canonicity of Chronicles was ever disputed. While containing a version of the history of ancient Israel and coinciding largely in terms of contents with the other historical traditions contained in Samuel-Kings, the book, from early years, was seen as part of the authoritative Scriptures of Judaism. What function this book exerted in the biblical canon was, however, varied. The usual position of Chronicles in MT Chronicles is just after Ezra-Nehemiah, concluding the third part of the HB canon, the Ketuvim. However, this position is not attested in some of the most prominent manuscript traditions, such as Codex Leningradensis and the Aleppo Codex. There, the book of Chronicles opens the Ketuvim, with Ezra-Nehemiah concluding it. In some of the Babylonian talmudic traditions, Chronicles stands in the last position, following Ezra-Nehemiah. Although the latter tradition has even been accepted in some HBs based on Leningradensis, such as *BHS*, and has thus become the generally accepted position, it still should be borne in mind that the other canonical traditions might have had some other intentions with their placement of Chronicles in another position (Jonker 2015b). Consequently, Steins's view that Chronicles was written especially as a canonical conclusion (*kanonisches Abschußphänomen*) cannot be accepted (Steins 1995). Chronicles functioned in different positions in different MT manuscript traditions.

As indicated above, the LXX translators moved their Greek translation of Chronicles to a section after the Pentateuch, containing the so-called historical books. The same happened to Ezra-Nehemiah, but Chronicles is followed by Ezra-Nehemiah in LXX and not preceded by it. In LXX, Chronicles seems to be repeating the historical narratives of Samuel-Kings, and Ezra-Nehemiah seems to follow the return from exile as witnessed at the end of Chronicles. This reordering of books in LXX created a newer framework than that contained in the

Hebrew traditions, which in turn fostered renewed interpretations of the book of Chronicles. The order established by LXX also became dominant in Christian Bibles. Even when the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century returned to the shorter Hebrew canon under the motto *ad fontes* (to the sources), the order of the books was not changed back to the Hebrew tradition. To this day Protestant translations therefore contain a merging of two traditions: the shorter form of the Hebrew canon, but in the order of the LXX canon.

2.2 The Sources of Chronicles

Biblical scholars studying Chronicles—unlike those examining the Pentateuch or other biblical corpora—are in the fortunate position that the majority of the Chronicler's sources are known to them. It is clear that Chronicles was mainly based on the earlier history contained in the so-called Dtr History—the books Samuel and Kings in particular—but that the author(s) also relied on genealogical and other lists contained in the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezra-Nehemiah (Jonker 2011f). Some other biblical materials, such as parts of Pss 96 and 105, are also quoted in Chronicles (Jonker 2011e). There might even be engagements with some prophetic literature (Jonker 2011d). Direct usage of these texts is almost generally accepted by scholars, although some variant ideas about the composition of the book exist (see below).

However, it is increasingly realized that the Chronicler did not only engage with other, earlier biblical materials in a direct way through quotations and otherwise, but that more subtle and nuanced allusions to other biblical materials (Lange and Weigold 2011; Nihan 2013a), reworkings and revisions with rabbinical techniques (Kalimi 2005), inner-biblical exegetical processes (Willi 1972, 2007b), and conversational implicatures (Maskow 2019), to mention a few such, are also featured in the book. These subtle forms of employing source materials clearly contribute to the rhetorical fiber of the book (Knoppers 2003b, 69).

Readers also see signs of nonbiblical sources that must have been available in the Chronicler's environment, but we unfortunately do not have access to those. Japhet (1993, 19–23), McKenzie (2004, 35–43), and Klein (2006, 30–44) offer useful discussions about the variety of other sources referred to in Chronicles. Japhet distinguishes two categories. The first category includes all those references to other (nonbiblical) sources that occur in the conclusion formulae (and in a few cases, in the introductory formulae) of the Chronicler's royal narratives. Except for the conclusion to the David narrative in 1 Chr 29:29, all other references in this category were taken over from the Chronicler's *Vorlage* in Samuel-Kings (although the phrase ספר דברי הימים "the book of the words of the days [normally translated as 'chronicles']" is never used in Chronicles, although it occurs frequently in the conclusion formulae in Kings).

The more interesting category, however, includes all those references to nonbiblical materials that occur outside the concluding (or introductory) formulae. From these, it seems that certain other sources of information were regarded as important, reliable, and even authoritative (Ben Zvi and Edelman 2011). Japhet indicates that some of the Chronicler's references might have been to material that we find back in the canonical Scriptures anyway. Another theory would be that these references were to a nonbiblical history of Israel, unknown to us. Lastly, these references might merely have been historiographical techniques to support the Chronicler's claim to legitimacy and authenticity.

Knoppers (2003b, 123–26) observes that the Chronicler's references to historiographical or prophetic sources do not necessarily point toward a consistent and unified technique. It is clear that the Chronicler's references to other sources served the function of validating certain textual contents or making some theological points (see also McKenzie 2004, 41). There is a paradox, however, that the Chronicler does not feel the same need for referencing when he cites from those biblical sources known to us.

One theory about the Chronicler's use of sources and the composition of the book has never gained enough traction in scholarship to become an accepted position, the view championed by Auld (1999, 2000, 2017) and Ho (1995, 1999) and supported by Person (2007, 2010) that the Chronicler did *not* use the Dtr version of Samuel-Kings as his *Vorlage*. Rather, these two blocks of historiography independently engaged with a historical source unknown and not available to us. Auld, who forged this direction in Chronicles studies, contends that de Wette should be blamed for throwing out the baby with the bathwater of Eichhorn's theory that was formulated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In a time when scholars started dating Chronicles relatively late in Israel's history, questions started emerging in scholarship about the historical worth of Chronicles (as seen above). Eichhorn hypothesized that the Chronicler having historical value could not be ruled out completely because it seems that the writer made use of (a) historical source(s) that could have originated in temporal proximity to the original events. Eichhorn explained the overlaps in content between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles via a common source, a Life of David, or Solomon, or others, from which the authors of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles drew their information.

According to Auld, de Wette's critique of the Chronicler as historian was the reason why he lost the essence of Eichhorn's theory as well. Whereas Eichhorn wanted to argue in favor of the historical value of Chronicles on account of presumed sources that originated much earlier and that were shared with Samuel-Kings, de Wette did not want to concede the historical value of Chronicles. De Wette's view gained acceptance in Chronicles scholarship and became the dominant position (also followed by Wellhausen and other later scholars), and the argument about a common source for Samuel-Kings and Chronicles was

therefore lost in the process. Auld revisits Eichhorn's theory when he identifies a hypothetical source, "the Book of Two Houses" (comprising "the house of YHWH" and "the house of the king").

2.3 Language, Terminology, and Genres in Chronicles

The language of Chronicles has been typically categorized as Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) (Polzin 1976). Early critical studies have noticed a peculiar type of Hebrew utilized in Chronicles. They regarded the book's language as poor or containing untidy forms of Hebrew and supposed that the author was not well-educated in this language (Curtis and Madsen 1910).

Later studies identified a measure of Aramaic influence in the language of Chronicles, with some even hypothesizing that the book was partially translated from Aramaic. Although the Aramaic influence in LBH is not doubted in modern-day scholarship (see below), it is now emphasized that the Aramaic language had such a long history (Gzella 2015) that one should not necessarily assume the imperial form of Aramaic, developing during the Achaemenid period, prompted this influence.

A recent comprehensive study, a lexicon of LBH by Hurvitz (2014), provides interesting perspectives on the development of Hebrew. In a Prolegomenon, Hurvitz mentions that "the fifth century BCE was a critical turning point in the history of the Hebrew language; texts written from this point on reveal unique linguistic features that are entirely absent in the earlier sources" (2014, 1). This turning point was the result of "the displacement of a significant proportion of the Hebrew-speaking population, and its subsequent return to Judah after 70 years . . . of minority status within a distinctive Aramaic-speaking majority, [which] inevitably caused a disruption in the gradual development of the Hebrew language" (2014, 2).

Regarding terminology specific to Chronicles, certain words and phrases have a very high frequency of use in Chronicles. A close study of this terminology reveals that the most extensive reworking of the Chronicler's *Vorlage* in use of these terms took place in the narratives of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah—who all happen to be "good" kings. In the cases of David and Hezekiah, almost all the typical terminology had been used in the Chronicler's modifications to those royal narratives. The terminological reworking of these narratives corresponds to changes made to the notices about high places and burial reports, which also seem to be part of the Chronicler's rhetorical strategy. One gathers the impression that those changes and the introduction of the distinct terminology were not coincidental or haphazard. The overall pattern of changes and modifications rather leaves the impression of carefully planned literary activity.

The main genre type in Chronicles is narrative. Most of the book consists of conventional forms of narrative literature, within which some microgenres are embedded. With reference to the microgenres, a variety of forms are identified in Chronicles by various authors and commentators (Japhet 1993, 34–41; McKenzie 2004, 43–47; Klein 2006, 17–23). Lists and genealogies are prominent at the start of the book, in 1 Chr 1–9, but also elsewhere in narrations of the ordering of the cult and preparation to build the temple. Speeches (by kings, prophets, clergy, or other agents) and prayers also abound in the book. A specific type of speech, that of foreign monarchs, has received special attention in the book. It has been pointed out (Ben Zvi 2006e) that such speeches all fulfill an ideological role. Apart from the speech by Nebuchadnezzar, all the other speeches by foreign monarchs (the queen of Sheba, Pharaoh Neco, and the Achaemenid emperor Cyrus) portray these foreign monarchs as mouthpieces of YHWH, the God of Israel, and as insiders to the will of YHWH. Within the context of Chronicles' origin, these portrayals are quite significant. Some poetic sections are also found in 1 Chr 16, but they are direct quotations from certain psalms (Jonker 2011e). In one narrative, a letter (by Elijah, in the Jehoram narrative, 2 Chr 21:11–15) is quoted from an unknown source (or as the Chronicler's own composition).

This great variety of literary forms should be treated with caution, however. As we have seen above, many parts of Chronicles were taken over from his source materials. The use of specific literary forms may simply be the result of the Chronicler quoting directly from his sources. However, many of the microgenres mentioned above, such as the lists, genealogies, speeches, and the letter, stand in the Chronicler's *Sondergut* sections (own material). The creativity of usage of such variety should therefore be studied in synoptic comparison to the Chronicler's source materials (where these are known).

2.4 The Structure of Chronicles

The book of Chronicles is traditionally divided into four major parts:

1. The genealogical "portal" (1 Chr 1–9)
2. David's reign (1 Chr 10–29)
3. Solomon's reign (2 Chr 1–9)
4. The kings of Judah (2 Chr 10–36)

This division rests mainly on matters of content, with the genealogical material clearly demarcating the first section; with the two "main" kings in Israel's history, David and Solomon, forming the center of focus in the next two main parts; and with a focus on the kings of the southern kingdom Judah forming

the storyline in the fourth major section. The last section ends with the fall of Jerusalem and liberation from exile.

Although these section divisions make much sense, some variations can be seen in commentaries, especially in passages that represent transitions from one set of contents to the next. The first example comes from the boundary between the first two major sections. Three variations exist: (1) Willi (2009a) ends the first major section of the genealogies only at 1 Chr 10:14. He thus treats Saul's death notice together with Saul's genealogy as belonging to the genealogical portal. (2) Other commentators end the first main section at 1 Chr 9:34, at the conclusion of the section on postexilic Jerusalem's inhabitants. The next pericope, 1 Chr 9:35–44, on Saul's descendants, is then seen as already belonging to the second main section, the history of David, stretching from 1 Chr 9:35 to the end of 1 Chr 29. (3) Knoppers (2004) offers a variation on the preceding option, treating the genealogical pericope and the story about Saul together as a separate main section (9:35–10:14) that focuses on Israel's "first king," Saul. The third main section, in his case, starts with 1 Chr 11. These attempts, in effect, uphold the Dtr version, which regards Saul as the first king of the united Israel. The Chronicler clearly does not share that view. Saul's death notice is simply used as incitement for telling the story of the *first* real king, David.

A second example is the transition from David's history to Solomon's. This transition starts in 1 Chr 28:1–29:25, where David's preparations for temple building are described and where he announces that Solomon, his son, will succeed him and will be the builder of the temple. This transitional section does not rely on the *Vorlage* in Samuel-Kings but forms part of the Chronicler's own material. Some commentators (Braun 1986) see these two chapters of 1 Chronicles as part of a section that already begins in 1 Chr 22:2. The material from there belongs to the Chronicler's own hand. This extended piece of *Sondergut* is therefore seen as a transitional unit. Braun (1986) combines the David and Solomon histories under the heading "The United Monarchy" and sees 1 Chr 22–29 as the transitional section between the David (1 Chr 10–21) and Solomon (2 Chr 1–9) stories.

A third and last example occurs toward the end of the book. The last rulers of the kingdom of Judah are described in 2 Chr 36:2–14. Thereafter, a short section on the fall of Jerusalem (36:15–21) follows, and another on the liberation announced by King Cyrus of Persia (36:22–23). The narrative about the last rulers of Judah ends with the remark that the leading priests and the people were exceedingly unfaithful to YHWH, especially in polluting the temple that YHWH had consecrated in Jerusalem (36:14). This prepares the way for the fall of Jerusalem and the calamity of the exile. The exile is, however, interpreted by the Chronicler as the land's Sabbath rest. Only after this Sabbath rest can the hopeful note of liberation sound right at the end of the book.

This commentary therefore treats the last two pericopes (2 Chr 36:15–21 and 22–23) as a *grand finale* to the book and therefore as a separate main section. Structurally, it links back to the first major section, the genealogical portal, in two significant ways, thereby drawing an arc over the whole book: first, it ties the Chronicler's present context, as witnessed in the list of inhabitants of Jerusalem (1 Chr 9:1b–34), to the liberation under the Persians. Second, it ends the book on a universalist note (with a foreign king proclaiming the liberation of the exiles) similar to the universalist note on which the book starts in 1 Chr 1:1–2:2 (with the genealogy of humanity, starting with Adam, preceding the genealogy of Israel). The following macrostructure will thus be used in this commentary:

1. The genealogical portal (1 Chr 1–9)
2. David's reign (1 Chr 10–29)
3. Solomon's reign (2 Chr 1–9)
4. The kings of Judah (2 Chr 10:1–36:14)
5. The end of Judah, and a new beginning (2 Chr 36:15–23).

The microstructure of these main sections will be explained in the commentary below.

3. Historical Aspects

3.1 The Date of Chronicles

The conclusion to the book of Chronicles (2 Chr 36:20, 22–23) mentions the emergence of the Kingdom of Persia and the release by Cyrus II (the Great) of Persia. Since we know that Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BCE and issued his release order in the next year, one can be sure that the book originated after this event. A further indication that the book originated in the Persian period is found in the name list in 1 Chr 9:3–34, where the postexilic inhabitants and clergy of Jerusalem are listed. This subsection starts with the words "In Jerusalem . . ." (HB) and is separated in v. 35 from the next section, which starts with "In Gibeon . . . ," a clear indication that the Chronicler was drawing the geographical but also ideological boundaries of his own time (see later discussions in §5.1). There is thus no uncertainty about the *terminus ad quem* of Chronicles (Cyrus).

However, the *terminus ante quem* is much harder to determine (Kalimi 2004). There are clear indications that Chronicles must have been available to some later writers of the second-century BCE (see discussion in §7 below). The Chronicler's portrayal of King David formed the background of the references in Sir 47:8–10, that is, in a book dating to approximately 190–175 BCE. In addition, the Jewish historian Eupolemus, who wrote in approximately 150 BCE,

most probably made use of a Greek translation of Chronicles. A Hebrew form of the book must therefore have been available to those Greek translators at least in the first half of the second century BCE.

In his historical overview of the research on Chronicles, Duke mentions that "although there is still a diversity of positions on dating Chronicles within the broadest possible range of dates, from Cyrus's decree in 538 BCE to Eupolemus's use of Chronicles about 150 BCE, there is a growing majority who place Chronicles around the fourth century BCE" (2009, 16). Peltonen also agrees that such a consensus is developing around the fourth century BCE, "be it before or shortly after the fall of the Persian Empire to Alexander the Great in 333 BCE" (2001, 227). He further states: "One may recognize behind this mediating position, first, a willingness to avoid certain methodological, especially literary-critical, procedures necessitated by the early Persian date of Chronicles and, secondly, a serious appraisal of the observation that there are no obvious signs of Hellenistic influence in Chronicles" (2001, 228).

Although the major recent commentaries (Knoppers 2003b; McKenzie 2004; Dirksen 2005; Klein 2006) agree on the middle to the end of the fourth century BCE as the most likely date for the origin of Chronicles, the view of a much later date still persists among some scholars, a date well into the Hellenistic period, or even into the Hasmonean era. This option cannot simply be brushed away.

Welten (1973, 111–14) opted for the third century BCE on account of his study of military equipment and terminology. He argued that some terminology mentioned in Chronicles, such as the reference in 2 Chr 26:14 to what he interpreted as a catapult, points in the direction of the first half of the third century BCE, when this military equipment was introduced for the first time. However, his argument rests on only a handful of military terms and on his interpretations of these terms. His view has not found entry in Chronicles studies.

Steins (1995) and Mathys (2000) both rely on certain similarities between Chronicles and 1–2 Maccabees, which were written in the second century BCE. They see the historiographical models of these historians reflected in Chronicles and view Chronicles as a deliberate attempt to close the biblical canon (Steins) or to polemicize against Hellenism (Mathys). Unfortunately, most of Steins's and Mathys's arguments rest on silences in Chronicles. For instance, whereas they see the image of kingship portrayed in Chronicles as an antimodel against the kingship of Alexander and the Diadochi (contending rivals after Alexander's death), they do not explain why no explicit reflection of the late fourth-century-BCE realities and later occur in Chronicles.

Using archaeological evidence and information from extrabiblical texts, Finkelstein (2018) argues to move the date of origin of Chronicles (as well as Ezra-Nehemiah) even further down the historical spectrum. He explains that the geographical information included in the biblical materials may shed light

on the historical background behind the texts and the goals of their authors. By deploying archaeology, Finkelstein verifies the settlement history of the sites mentioned in the texts and compares the information to extrabiblical written sources. From these archaeological and extrabiblical studies, he concludes that the realities of the second half of the second century BCE, that is, the Hasmonean period, are reflected in Chronicles. He advises biblical scholars:

> Try dating as much material as possible to periods in the history of Judah/Judea that demonstrate widespread scribal activity and literacy in all media and all forms of inscriptions, that is, the latest phase of the Iron Age and late Hellenistic period after circa 200 BCE. [And a] second recommendation: in the centuries between circa 600 and 200 BCE, especially the Babylonian and Persian periods, to place the compilation of as much material as possible in Babylonia. (2018, 162)

Yet at the same time he concedes, "There must have been some continuity of literary activity in Yehud; one can imagine, for instance, a secluded, educated priestly group near the temple. But even this is not an elegant solution, since evidence for activity on the Temple Mount in the Persian period is meager" (2018, 162). Here Finkelstein admits to the absence of evidence, which should not point necessarily to evidence of absence. In the end, Finkelstein expresses his willingness to date 1 Chr 10–2 Chr 9 in the late Persian or early Hellenistic periods, but he still places the remaining parts of the book in the second century BCE and later.

Despite concerted attempts to move the date of origin for Chronicles much later, most Chronicles scholars have not been convinced by the arguments. The majority view maintains a fourth-century BCE dating. The *first* argument one can make for the consensus position is that, as we have seen above in §2.3, there is no trace of Greek influence in the language of Chronicles. Hence, the book must have been written before Alexander the Great of Macedonia invaded Persia, and particularly the Levant, in 332 BCE; that is, with a *terminus ante quem* in the middle of the fourth century BCE. Although Knoppers has refuted this argument by indicating that the conquest of Alexander should not be used as the marker to determine a *terminus ante quem* for Chronicles (2003b, 102–4), McKenzie (2004, 31) rightly cautions that the omission of any Greek vocabulary in the texts should prompt scholars to avoid dating Chronicles too late in the third century. Knoppers's protest is particularly against those scholars who do not recognize that Chronicles might have been influenced by the historiographical traditions of classical Greece. And, in its use of features such as genealogies, the role of intermediaries, and so on, Chronicles indeed shows signs of (classical) Greek influence. Therefore, Knoppers's cautionary note does not refer to language use specifically, but rather to genre, style, and motif influences from the classical Greek world. What McKenzie suggests in his response to Knoppers's point is that with the more deliberate hellenization from

the time of Alexander, the Greek language also started making its way into the Levant. Although Greek historiographical forms were most probably known in the Levant in the pre-Alexander era due to trade and exchange of people, and although Greek coins are also provenanced in the Levant already in the early Persian period, the language influence was still not strong enough to make it into literary works of the time. The absence of Greek language in Chronicles is therefore still a meaningful criterion for dating the book to a time before hellenization became stronger.

However, another factor that should be considered is that the spread of the deliberate hellenization program after the conquest by Alexander the Great was not evenly distributed. Archaeological evidence shows that this influence was particularly strong in the coastal regions of the Levant, where trade and maritime contact with classical Greece had already been in place much earlier (Betlyon 1991; Rhodes 2006). The Greek language therefore started making inroads in this area immediately after Alexander's conquest. In contrast, it took much longer for the highland areas to be influenced on a similar scale. The program of hellenization reached the highlands much later, even years after the conquest of Alexander (Lipschits 2011; Lipschits and Shalom 2020). With Chronicles most probably written in Jerusalem in the highlands (see §3.2), the absence of Greek loanwords in the book does not necessarily pinpoint a time before Alexander. As indicated by archaeological evidence (Finkelstein 2008, 2010; Lipschits 2010, 2011), the intellectual conditions of the late Persian period continued for quite a while in Jerusalem, even after Alexander's conquests in other areas. This means that, even if one would place the book in the late Persian period, a *terminus ante quem* of some years after Alexander's conquest is not necessarily excluded.

A *second* argument for the consensus view that Chronicles was written sometime in the fourth century BCE is the seeming lack of indications in the book of the sociopolitical turmoil associated with the conquests of Alexander the Great in the latter quarter of the fourth century BCE. There is no sense of a threat to the existence of *kol-yiśrāʾēl* (all Israel) in the book (such as in some of the apocalyptic literature of later periods); instead, in Chronicles we find a quest for a new identity in a new and changing sociopolitical dispensation (Willi 1995). However, Knoppers also cautions that one should not work from the assumption that there is a direct correlation between a text and a given context. Although this view is certainly valid, it is also true that literature from the later Hellenistic period often carries clear marks of their time, particularly the awareness of a threat of existence (e.g., in literature from the time of the Seleucid, Antiochus IV Epiphanes). It seems not only that the later Hellenistic phase prompted the rise of more apocalyptically oriented literature in ancient Israel (such as the second part of Zechariah and parts of Daniel), but that historiographical traditions also reflect on their circumstances openly (as in 1 and

2 Maccabees). One should therefore not exclude the possibility that Chronicles could have been influenced by the dramatic events of hellenization. However, as indicated above under the first argument, the conquest of Alexander the Great should not necessarily be seen as the watershed. One could plausibly assume that literature originating in Jerusalem in the early Hellenistic phase would rather show continuity with the late Persian intellectual and sociohistorical circumstances, yet still not reflect much of the turn of political events. Those reflections only would come in later literature, as noted above.

Third, McKenzie in particular refers to internal evidence that points to a date of origin of the book in the later Persian period (2004, 31–32). From these internal indicators, he concludes that the evidence points to a range of 400–250 BCE at the narrowest, homing in on 350–300 BCE as perhaps the most likely time period for the composition (2004, 32).

A *fourth* argument that can be advanced is the possible engagement with the Persian peace ideology, often called the *Pax Achaemenidica* or *Pax Persica*, in some parts of Chronicles. Examples are the indications in 1 Chr 22 and 28 that Solomon, whose name is etymologized as related to *šālôm* [peace], is "a man of rest" and that the temple is "a house of rest" (22:9, 18–19; 28:2); and various instances, such as in the Asa narrative in 2 Chr 14–15, where a king relying on YHWH brings rest for Judah (14:6–7; 15:15). It is generally acknowledged in Persian historiography that the notion of peace played a very prominent role in the royal ideology of the Achaemenids (Kuhrt 2001, 2013; Wiesehöfer 2005; Brosius 2006; Henkelman 2012; Waters 2014; Rollinger 2014). This is especially clear in some of the monumental inscriptions (such as Bisitun/Behistun, but also in the so-called Darius Testament on the tomb face of Darius I at Naqš i-Ruštam) (Jonker 2019a, 2023c), as well as in architectural and iconographical features in the Achaemenid cities (such as in the reliefs on the Apadana staircases at Persepolis). The emphasis on peace and rest as the outcome of former Judahite kings relying on YHWH in their battles and wars is a prominent feature of the royal narratives in Chronicles, as J. W. Wright and others have convincingly argued (J. W. Wright 1997). Although the idea of YHWH giving rest is not completely new here and comes from the Dtn tradition (Deut 12:9–11), it is developed in a unique way in Chronicles (in contrast to Kings, where the theme is present in 2 Sam 7:1 and 1 Kgs 5:18 [5:4 ET], but not emphasized so much) (Nihan 2016). It is especially evident in the portrayal of King Solomon in 1 Chr 22:7–10, which was possibly used by the Chronicler to polemicize the Persian peace ideology (Jonker 2008a). The correlated theme of "rest" and "peace" is clearly used to mark the transition from David to Solomon. It is also the only place in the HB where the name of Solomon is explicitly etymologized to relate it to the notion of peace. However, not only Solomon is associated with the theme of "peace" and "rest," but also the temple of Jerusalem, as becomes clear from 1 Chr 28:2–3. It is likely that these indications from the Chronicler's

hand had a polemical overtone challenging the peace ideology of the Achaemenid kings. The true symbols of peace and rest are not the Achaemenid kings, but Israel's ideal king of the past, Solomon, and not the audience halls in their famous royal cities, but the temple in Jerusalem. All this is given by YHWH, the God of all Israel, who is worshiped in the temple in Jerusalem. These polemical hints make best sense within the context of the fourth century BCE, when the Achaemenid peace ideology was especially prominent (Jonker 2008a, 2022).

Fifth, identity issues are very prominent in the rhetorical strategy of Chronicles (Jonker 2008c, 2016b). The early Persian era was strongly characterized by a drive toward restoring the past and maintaining continuity with the past (Willi 1995; Carter 1999; Harrison 2011; Jonker 2018), but a new dispensation seems to have dawned toward the end of the fifth century BCE, that is, in the late Persian period. The late Persian era was historically significant, since Judah (including Jerusalem) became a separate Persian province called Yehud. Scholars are not sure exactly when this happened. From the time of Cyrus II, Judah probably constituted a so-called *medinah* (province) for purposes of tax collection and tribute payments. The province was probably subject to Samaria, the more successful and prosperous province to the north. However, there are no solid witnesses available that confirm this historical situation. We do not have any information on the early organization of Yehud until the time of Artaxerxes I of Persia (465 BCE). From this time onward, material evidence that the province Yehud was granted a more formal status sometime in the second half of the fifth century BCE begins to appear (e.g., the appearance of the name Yehud on coins and changes in the appearance of seals that were used on official documents: Betlyon 1986; Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2007, 2011). The archaeological evidence from Mizpah and Ramat Raḥel is especially revealing in this respect (Lipschits 2005, 2006, 2017; Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2007, 2011; Tal 2011; Lipschits et al. 2011; Lipschits, Gadot and Langgut 2012; Langgut et al. 2013). Before its more formal proclamation, the province was characterized by a drive toward continuity; with the exilic period, and even preexilic past, the new phase reveals more evidence that a greater self-consciousness or even new identity was emerging.

The weight of the arguments discussed above remains convincing; there is no need to move away from the majority view that the book mainly originated in the last part of the Persian period and could even have been finalized in the first decades after Alexander's conquests.

3.2 The Composition of Chronicles

Traditionally, commentaries (Knoppers 2003b, 90–93; McKenzie 2004, 21–29; Klein 2006, 11–13) point to two earlier models guiding scholars of the past as they tried to address the compositional history of Chronicles. The first model, which involves issues on the relationship between Chronicles and

Ezra-Nehemiah, understands the editorial processes in the book(s) as an accumulation of different source materials, at different stages in history. Although several scholars have suggested variations of this so-called "block model" (Knoppers 2003b, 93–94), it goes back chiefly to the work of Cross (1975, 4–18; 1998, 151–72). He distinguished between three subsequent editions of Chronicles (and Ezra-Nehemiah): (1) A first original edition, consisting of 1 Chr 1–9*, 1 Chr 10–2 Chr 34, and the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras, was created by "the Chronicler" (= Chr^1) around 520–515 BCE, to support the restoration program after the exile under the dyarchy of Zerubbabel and Jeshua. (2) A second edition (= Chr^2) of the original work composed around 450 BCE, shortly after the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem, consisted of 1 Chr 1–2 Chr 34 and 1 Esdras (also including certain parts not present in the first edition) and ended with Neh 8:13–18. (3) The third edition (= Chr^3) was composed around 400 BCE and included 1 Chr 1–2 Chr 36, as well as Ezra-Nehemiah. This third editor was also responsible for bringing the books Ezra and Nehemiah together and for rearranging some of the materials in that book.

Although Knoppers (2003b, 95) sees some value in such a block model of explaining the origin of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah (in accounting better for the origin of these books than the models of separate or unified authorship), some profound criticism has also been brought against this model. McKenzie (1999; 2004, 21–27), for example, criticizes Cross's reliance on 1 Esdras as evidence. Yet McKenzie does concede that some editorial changes could have been intended to bridge Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, especially visible in Ezra 1–3. However, he does not see a clear demonstration of this in the scholarship and states that this interpretation cannot be made on the basis of 1 Esdras (McKenzie 2004, 27).

A second model often discussed in Chronicles studies is the so-called "layer model" (Knoppers 2003b, 90–93; McKenzie 2004, 27–29; Klein 2006, 11–13). The block model discussed above posited at least three editions of the book, with blocks of literature added to the earlier form of the book in each edition; the layer model takes as its point of departure the assumption that the book went through various redactions, adding some further layers of text to the original composition.

Theories on how the Pentateuch grew over time were also applied as explanatory models for Chronicles. Under the influence of the so-called Documentary Hypothesis pioneered by Wellhausen in the second half of the nineteenth century, some early scholars saw a basic narrative behind Chronicles that was then redacted in subsequent phases. Rothstein and Hänel (1927), for example, took the Priestly source of the Pentateuch as a model for the development of a basic narrative in proto-Chronicles. Later this Priestly narrative underwent a Dtr redaction, and some layers characterized by the latter tradition were added to the original Priestly narrative. A similar approach, but in an inverse direction, was

taken by Welch (1939), who suggested that the basic narrative of Chronicles was rather of Dtr character and that a Priestly redaction followed only later. A contemporary of Welch, von Rad (1930), supported the idea that the basic character of Chronicles is Dtr, but he allowed for secondary editing of some passages in Chronicles that specifically dealt with the priesthood and the Levites.

A further trend in scholarship suggesting a layer model for the composition of Chronicles followed the example of Martin Noth's hypothesis of a Dtr History (written by one author, as a unity that offered a comprehensive history of ancient Israel to his audience). Analogously, some scholars (Noth 1943, 1981; Rudolph 1955) suggested that Chronicles was another unitary work by a single author who wanted to present an alternative version of ancient Israel's history to a much later audience. This view did not exclude the strong possibility that some later additions were made to Chronicles, although these additions cannot be ascribed to one or more redactions. The more recent version of this trend is to see Chronicles as an independent literary unit written by an author who wanted to integrate both Dtr and Priestly elements into his version of Israel's history (Knoppers 2003b; McKenzie 2004; Jonker 2013a, 2013b). Knoppers (2003b, 92) refutes the earlier work of Williamson (1982), who posited that certain sections of Chronicles, specifically 1 Chr 1–9, 15–16, and 23–27, contain mainly secondary material originating from a Priestly redactor who also linked Chronicles to Ezra-Nehemiah with the addition of Ezra 1–3. Although most Chronicles scholars today agree with Knoppers on this issue, some commentators concede that one could perhaps allow for some "light redaction" here and there. As McKenzie indicates:

> Chronicles appears to be predominantly the work of a single individual. One may occasionally find additions from a later hand. There may even have been a light redaction along the lines proposed by Williamson. But there is no compelling reason to deny all or most of 1 Chr 1–9; 15–16; 23–27 to the Chronicler. The genealogies and lists of cultic personnel in these chapters are best understood as integral to his work. (McKenzie 2004, 28)

Some of these possible "light redactions" were also the topic of investigation in some studies on Chronicles from the 1990s. Dörrfuß (1994), for example, investigated the Moses references in the book and came to the conclusion that there must have been a Moses redaction that was critical of the very positive portrayal of the Davidic kingship and the temple in Chronicles. Steins (1995, 1997), who dates the book in Maccabean times, identified three main layers of redaction, but with sublayers in two of these. The first of his main layers focuses on the cultic personnel featured prominently in the book, the second on the community in Jerusalem, and the third on the cult. However, these studies have not convinced the scholarly community to a view other than that expressed in Knoppers's words above (see also Jonker 2016b).

The most recent attempt to return to a diachronic perspective on the composition of Chronicles is the published dissertation of Hilpert (2022). In his study of 2 Chronicles 10–36, he observes that phenomena generally considered to be characteristic of Chronicles often turn out to be additions. Therefore his quest is to investigate the book with a diachronic, compositional-historical approach, to identify the layers of growth in the book. He distinguishes between three layers in 2 Chronicles 10–36: (a) a basic layer in which the Chronicler provided interpretative assistance to the readers of Kings; (b) a prophetic layer, ChrP (in the early 3rd c. BCE), that established the Davidic cult and the Huldah oracle as the main narrative line and transferred some of the heroics claimed by Alexander to the house of David; and (c) a Levitical layer, ChrL (ca. 200 BCE), that propagated a purely Levitical cult. Although the idea of revisiting some diachronic explanation models should be welcomed, Hilpert's specific suggestions are sometimes questionable (see the discussion in Excursus 7 for further detail).

My own observations (Jonker 2020b, 2020c), discussed in Excursus 7, confirm that the first part of Chronicles still reflects a traditional Priestly view on the position of the Levites, but later sections in 2 Chronicles (especially the Passover accounts of Hezekiah and Josiah) associate priestly functions with the Levites and even call them more upright in sanctifying themselves than the priests (2 Chr 29:34). These later sections might be the work of later (Levitical) redactional processes.

3.3 The Authorship and Intellectual Environment of Chronicles

An old Jewish tradition (in b. B. Bat 15a, compiled in the 3rd–6th centuries CE) states that both Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah were written by Ezra (although Nehemiah completed Ezra-Nehemiah, according to this Talmud entry). The understanding was that Ezra's tenure stretched into the years of restoration initiated by the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great's release of the exiles, and that he compiled the past and contemporary history of Israel for his community, up to his own time.

This traditional understanding was turned around in the nineteenth century, when Zunz (1845) argued that an anonymous Chronicler wrote all these materials and in this way formed a second historiographical tradition, analogous to what later became known as the Dtr History. Modern-day scholarship no longer sees the same author(s) behind Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah; however, the fact that the Chronicler was an anonymous author (or collective) is still maintained in recent scholarship (Knoppers 2003b; McKenzie 2004; Klein 2006; Boda 2010; Jonker 2013a, 2016b). It is likely that the Chronicler was not a single person—something that can be deduced, but not confirmed, from the vast variety of literature included in the book—but that a collective of writers, hailing from the same intellectual circles, wrote the book. It is also highly likely

that the Chronicler was a male—something that can be deduced from the scribal practices of ancient times, where mainly males were educated to master reading and writing. Although the term "Chronicler" is singular, a male collective is meant when it is used in this commentary.

But can anything more be said about "the Chronicler"? We may assume that the Chronicler belonged to the literate elite in Jerusalem, with a close association to the Second Temple personnel and a good knowledge of past historiographical traditions of Israel and Judah. Some further studies in recent years have broadened our knowledge of these literati. These studies provide greater specificity about the Chronicler's affiliation (Ben Zvi 2004, 2007, 2010).

Jerusalem was most probably a very sparsely populated place in the beginning of the Persian period (Jonker 2018). Estimates by archaeologists and historiographers range from a relatively high 1,500–3,000 inhabitants in Jerusalem (Carter 1999), to some moderate estimations (Ussishkin 2006; Lipschits 2006; Lipschits and Tal 2007), and to the very low proposal of 400–500 persons (Finkelstein 2010). The province of Yehud probably had an estimated 12,000 to 30,000 inhabitants in total. Lipschits indicates that the situation in Jerusalem changed dramatically during the middle to the end of the fifth century BCE: when the city was proclaimed as capital of a separate Persian province, it regained political and administrative influence (Lipschits 2005).

It is not easy to establish the extent of the social layer that enjoyed high literacy in Yehud during this time. Ben Zvi assumes that maximally 0.25–0.3 percent of the society in the later Persian-period Yehud would have possessed the kind of literacy needed to write the sophisticated literature that we find in the HB and to read and reread these documents (Ben Zvi 1997, 195). With the increase in population, and especially because of the increasing religious and political role of Jerusalem in the later Persian period, one may assume that such literature more likely emerged during the second half of the fifth century BCE and later.

With reference to sources that the biblical writers might have been able to access, Ben Zvi surmises, "The availability of resources in itself presupposes the existence of a center of power in Jerusalem, able to control the resources of Judah efficiently and channel them according to its priorities" (1997, 196). He therefore claims, "It is reasonable to associate most of the biblical literary activity usually assigned to the Persian Period (and, of course, its outcome, the bulk of biblical literature) with a period that follows rather than precedes (1) the establishment of an efficient urban center controlling Judah's resources, (2) the establishment of the Jerusalemite temple, . . . and (3) the beginning of the major increase in population and settlements in Judah that separates the Persian I and II Periods" (1997, 197). In other words, the intellectual environment of the second half of the Persian period, from the end of the fifth through the fourth centuries BCE, was more conducive to producing literature such as Chronicles.

Scholars agree that these literati must have been based at the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during this period. The Chronicler was therefore most probably closely associated with the temple clergy. The centrality of the temple in Chronicles and the strong cultic awareness in its narratives and name lists confirm this assumption. Furthermore, the very clear engagement with priestly and Levite duties in the book, specifically in the Chronicler's nonsynoptic material, not only creates the impression of a vibrant cultic community but even shines some light on the discourses apparently important in the time after the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Beentjes 2008a). It seems that this engagement on the role of the priests and Levites took place in discourse with other priestly traditions available at the time and later included in the biblical canon. This aspect of Chronicles will be highlighted in further sections below; suffice it to say here that the Chronicler (or later redactors) clearly had some close association with Levite aspirations and self-identification. This becomes visible in the clear development of the Levites profiled in the book, such that the Levites are eventually portrayed on an equal footing with the rest of the priesthood.

Who was the audience of Chronicles? Apart from the general hypotheses that scholars have suggested in the past, Levin (2003) has focused specifically on the genealogies of Chronicles in determining the audience of the book. He sees the main rift in society in the late Persian and early Hellenistic period to be between the urban elite of Jerusalem and the "people of the land" (in contrast to a distinction between returnees and remainees). Levin rightly finds signs of the values and interests of a "tribal, village society" behind the genealogies of Chronicles. But whether these should be put in such a stark contrast to the urban elite in Jerusalem remains doubtful.

In sum, one could say that the Chronicler, who was closely associated with the cultic clergy at the Jerusalem temple in the latter part of the Persian period and/or the early Hellenistic period, wrote to a Yehudite community struggling to negotiate a new identity in the changed and changing sociopolitical environment.

3.4 Various Levels of Sociohistorical Existence in the Chronicler's Time

Now that we have established the historical and intellectual environment within which the Chronicler(s) most probably wrote his (their) work, it is important to consider the power relations functioning in this variegated sociohistorical context. Postcolonial biblical criticism has opened our eyes to the fact that literature originating in imperial environments, as part of sociocultural and sociopolitical processes, participates in the power dynamics at play in those societies. Sociopsychological studies, moreover, have alerted us to the fact that literature often (if not always) contributes to the negotiation of various identities in those circumstances (Jonker 2016b, ch. 2). It is therefore problematic

that many biblical scholars simply "read off" the Persian-period history from the biblical writings. In this way, due acknowledgment is not given to the fact that these biblical writings did not simply intend to provide the factuality of the past, but that they rather participated in the broader discourses in society and on political and religious matters. The dynamic rhetorical nature of the biblical texts is therefore underestimated.

A further problem is that "the Persian period" is often understood uniformly (Jonker 2018) as if the same conditions and social dynamics persisted throughout the period from the time of Cyrus II the Great to Alexander the Great. To provide more depth to our discussions on the Persian period, within which the book of Chronicles originated, I have made a distinction in earlier publications of at least four levels of sociohistorical existence. Only a summary is provided here, but the detailed discussion can be found in Jonker (2016b, 71–113).

The *first* level is the Persian imperial context (Jonker 2016b, 73–95). The imperial context functioned as a political and ideological umbrella over all the other levels and largely determined the power relations and dynamics on the other levels.

A *second* level was the provincial context (Jonker 2016b, 95–101). Yehud was initially put under the administration of the economically more successful province Samaria, to the north (Finkelstein 2013). The relationship between the south and the north was always a political factor since the division of the supposed united kingdom of David and Solomon into two polities. Israel and Judah were not only rivals in terms of their earlier political history and their respective statuses during the Persian imperial regime, but also while they were the two main bases of the Yahwistic religion. The relationship between these two areas during the Achaemenid era has received thorough attention in recent scholarship (Knoppers 2006, 2013, 2019; Kartveit 2009, 2019). It is realized now that the so-called conflict model between these two communities overgeneralizes the very complex relationship that developed over time between Judeans and Samarians (Hensel 2019). Within the shared cultural environment between Samaria and Yehud, however, the rivalries and disparities should also be acknowledged. These played out particularly on economic and religious levels but also in terms of their openness to outside influence (Cornelius 2011). The same configuration of factors, economic and religious differences as well as openness to outside influences, determined Yehud's relationship with other surrounding provinces, such as Phoenicia, Philistia, Arabia, Idumaea, and the Transjordanian regions.

The *third* level is the intertribal relationship between Judah and Benjamin (Jonker 2016b, 101–6). Although the tribal organization of old no longer held in the Persian period (if such an era actually existed in premonarchic times), it seems that some tribal *memories* and *identities* persisted. The early, preexilic history of the Benjaminite area and particularly the connection of King Saul with this area

play a key role in numerous scholarly debates on Benjamin (Davies 2006, 2007). Many scholars have suggested that the biblical data on Benjamin reflect the difficult and varying relationship between the Judahite-dominated cult and political center of Jerusalem and the area of Benjamin. The Saul narratives, for example, might reflect an old (or later) rivalry about political domination, with Saul being a Benjaminite and David a Judahite (Amit 2006; Blenkinsopp 2006; Jonker 2010b, 2013b). The relationship of Benjamin with the North and South was most likely fluid. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 BCE by the Neo-Babylonian force, the Benjaminite area gained importance. The archaeological record indicates, however, that this situation changed dramatically from the end of the sixth and during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. From survey data, it becomes clear that the Benjaminite area went through a decline in this period, with Mizpah and other centers such as Bet-el (Bethel), Gibeon, and Gibeah losing inhabitants and influence (Lipschits 1999, 181–82). This decline was most probably the result of the resettling and rebuilding of Jerusalem after the return from exile of many of the cultic and political elite who had been deported earlier. During the early Persian period the main administrative center moved to Jerusalem again. One may therefore expect that tensions would develop between these areas after the return from exile (Giffone 2016).

A *fourth* level of sociohistorical existence in the Persian period was the inner-Yehudite cultic context (Jonker 2016b, 106–13). It is clear that many "fault lines" (Horsley 2007) ran through the community in Jerusalem, and also through the cultic community. The cult in Jerusalem was not solely a religious institution but also fulfilled an important role in local and imperial economic affairs, although we do not know exactly how (Jonker 2015a, 2016a). This fact necessarily complicates our understanding of the function of the cult, and especially of the different power relations that were constituted in this context (Leuchter and Hutton 2011; Heckl 2022).

Additional to the above-discussed four levels of sociohistorical existence, one could perhaps distinguish a *fifth* level, the Jewish diaspora (DeSilva 2013). Although there is not a very strong Diaspora awareness to be detected in Chronicles (Knoppers 2015; Meyer 2021), it is much stronger in Ezra-Nehemiah, which originated contemporaneously to Chronicles, as discussed in §2 above (Bedford 2002; Knowles 2006). The Babylonian and Egyptian diaspora communities maintained close ties since some exiles did not return to Jerusalem with their families after Cyrus's release or corresponded on economic or religious matters. These factors strongly influenced the processes of identity negotiation during the Persian period, something that does play a prominent role in Chronicles (see §4.2 below). The religious connections with the Diaspora communities were especially influential.

We do have concrete evidence of a Diaspora YHWH temple at Elephantine, an island in the Nile River in Upper Egypt where a Judahite/Jewish garrison

was based since most probably the seventh century BCE (Rosenberg 2004; Becking 2005, 2008, 2011; Kratz 2006; Albertz 2011; Granerød 2016). During the fifth century BCE, it served the purpose of guarding the southern border of the Persian Empire. The famous discovery of an Aramaic papyrus collection in the archives of the island community brought valuable insight into Judean life in the Diaspora. The letters between the Elephantine community and the governors of Yehud and Samaria are especially important. In these letters, dating from the final decade of the fifth century BCE, the Jewish colony on Elephantine appealed to the governors of Yehud and Samaria to rebuild their local temple. A reply from the two governors was also found in this collection. Reinhard Kratz indicates that "the destruction of the Jewish temple of Elephantine and its reconstruction must be seen within the context of the disputes between the leaders and priests of the Jewish colony on the one hand and the priests of the adjacent Chnum Temple on the other" (2006, 252). These documents, together with the archaeological evidence from Elephantine, not only confirm the existence of a diaspora YHWH temple, but they also indicate that the religious community in Elephantine felt themselves associated with their counterparts in the provinces of Samaria and Yehud.

The Babylonian Diaspora is another context that should be considered. Although evidence is not so strong, some scholars assume that there must have been a Jewish community who served YHWH living in Al-Yahudu in Babylonia after the release from exile (Bedford 2002; DeSilva 2013; Knoppers 2015; Pearce 2015; Kratz 2020). During the 1990s, a collection of two hundred clay tablets written in Akkadian cuneiform came to light in the scholarly world. Unfortunately, it is not known where and when these tablets were discovered because they emerged from private collections and from the antiquities market. The veracity of the tablets has been established, however (Abraham 2005, 2010, 2015; Pearce 2006; Pearce and Wunsch 2014). The tablets are called after a toponym that seems to be the central place of activity in the tablets, Al-Yahudu, which means "City of the Judeans." The clay tablets do not contain any religious literature but are mostly economic and contractual texts (such as marriage contracts). Through these texts, scholars have learned many details about Jewish life in the Diaspora, including how relations with the homeland community back in Yehud and Jerusalem had been sustained (DeSilva 2013). Many of the personal names mentioned in these texts reflect Yahwistic theophoric elements. Because of these, scholars conclude that the Jews of Al-Yahudu must have been YHWH worshipers. It is clear from the book Ezra-Nehemiah especially, but also from other biblical literature, that the relationship between Jerusalem and the Babylonian Diaspora remained important and even influenced their respective processes of finding a new identity in the new sociopolitical dispensation after the release by Cyrus. Knoppers describes the symbiotic relationship well: "In the context of a time in which Judeans have become an international phenomenon,

the communities in Yehud and Babylon exist in an interdependent relationship. One does not exist to the exclusion of the other" (2015, 20).

The relationship with the Diaspora communities in Egypt and the East was less prominent in Chronicles than in Ezra-Nehemiah. It is nevertheless important for our interpretation of the book to be alert to discourses that possibly reflect something of its relationship with these communities and of the power dynamics involved in those relationships.

Why do these five levels of sociohistorical existence matter for our interpretations of Chronicles? The emphasis here is that these levels should not be treated in isolation from one another (Jonker 2011a). It is exactly the interplay and interrelatedness of these different levels that form the background of the identity-negotiation processes (see §4.2) that we can detect in Chronicles. Each of these levels, under the "umbrella" of the imperial existence, had its own power dynamics. Different sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and socioreligious forces were in operation on different levels. Yet, their interrelatedness created a very complex society in which all these factors were in constant interaction. It created a society in which hybrid identities were the order of the day, particularly in the core leadership in Jerusalem.

4. Rhetorical Aspects: "Reforming History"

The book of Chronicles stands between ancient Israel's historiographical and theological traditions of the past and the sociohistorical realities of a new present during the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods (Japhet 2009, 403–4). This in-between status of the book can be captured by characterizing it as "Reforming History" (Jonker 2007b). This expression is deliberately ambiguous: it indicates that the Chronicler had the intention of reevaluating, reappropriating, and even rewriting the historical traditions of the past—not only those included in Samuel-Kings, but also in some pentateuchal traditions—for the sake of reforming the Yehudite community of the late Persian and early Hellenistic period in terms of their self-understanding. "Reforming history" therefore gives expression to the "between-past-and-present" position of this book but also points to the dynamic hermeneutical strategy of innovation at work in this literary work. As Japhet indicates so well, "Chronicles is a comprehensive expression of the perpetual need to renew and revitalize the religion of Israel" (Japhet 2009, 404). This description is very similar to the emphasis on "the hermeneutics of innovation" that scholars have often identified in the legal traditions of the Pentateuch (Levinson 2008a, 2008b, 2013).

Some other scholars characterize the in-between position of Chronicles with the category of "rewritten Bible" (Knoppers 2003b, 129–34; 2007). Although this category is often applied to the Qumran corpus of literature (Docherty 2004; Segal 2007; Zahn 2008; Bernstein 2013; Perrin 2017; Anderson 2020),

it has not gained general acceptance in Chronicles studies. However, when the anachronistic use of the word *Bible* in this expression is acknowledged, it is understandable why this category is worthy of consideration. Knoppers notes that the Chronicler seems to have worked from an earlier account of the history of Israel and Judah, mainly encapsulated in the books Samuel and Kings, and wanted to update this earlier account with his own interpretations. Thus, it is rightly acknowledged that the Chronicler has worked from certain written sources. However, not enough reflection is given in this understanding to the very deliberate rhetorical function of Chronicles, as captured in its description as "Reforming History." Knoppers himself is therefore doubtful whether the category of "rewritten Bible" is an adequate description of Chronicles. McKenzie comes closer, calling it "a theological rewriting of Bible history for instructional purposes" (2004, 34).

In various ways this rhetorical function of Chronicles is described in scholarship. Some of the recent proposals are briefly discussed in the next subsections (§§4.1–4.4).

4.1 Chronicles as Identity Negotiation

One approach is to take our point of departure in sociopsychological studies on the dynamic processes of identity negotiation (Jonker 2013a, 15–16; 2016b, 54–61). The use of sociological categories in the biblical sciences is somewhat problematic. Although social categories have been used in biblical studies since the advent of historical-critical approaches, it was particularly the new wave of using modern-day sociological and anthropological theories since the 1970s that triggered some criticism. One point of criticism raised is that sociological studies are normally based on fieldwork and empirical observation of living societies, but biblical texts were written long ago, in ancient societies that no longer exist. Furthermore, it is also criticized that these ancient texts often reflect societies in retrospect, since the world "behind" these texts, the world of their origination, was mostly different from the worlds of the past constructed in the texts. Grabbe, in response to the criticism, reminds scholars in a lighter tone that "social theories are simply analogies based on one or more cultures. They are not 'facts' that can then be taken as givens by biblical scholars. . . . They are templates of interpretation, not tablets from Sinai" (2001, 120). In a more serious tone, Grabbe also warns against the negative side of employing sociological models in biblical interpretation: "A real danger exists that theories and models derived from sociological study might be imposed on the data rather than tested against them and then modified or discarded where necessary. A similar danger is to over-interpret—to find a lot more data in a passage than is warranted. And, finally, the texts themselves may be read uncritically, as if they provided immediate access to the ancient society" (1995, 15).

Taking the potential and pitfalls of using sociological models into consideration, one can proceed to formulate how sociopsychological theories are used in describing the identity negotiation processes witnessed in Chronicles. Social psychology, sometimes considered to be a subdiscipline of sociology and other times of psychology, emerged in order to give expression to the processes involved in social collectivities, such as families, organizations, communities, and social institutions (DeLamater and Ward 2013). Whereas psychology tends to focus on the processes taking place in individuals and in interaction between individuals, social psychology emphasizes that groups also negotiate collective identities in interrelationship with other collectives.

The emergence of social psychology was also prompted by criticism of essentialist understandings of identity in some psychological models and by the move toward more constructivist understandings (Sayer, 1997). Essentialism understands identity as something that consists of certain fixed, given characteristics of a person or a group. It proceeds from the assumption that for any entity to have an identity, it should consist of a determined set of attributes. When the set of attributes changes, the identity changes. It therefore has become customary in social psychology to avoid speaking of "identity" and rather to focus on the processes through which social identities are constructed or negotiated. We can only observe and describe processes of identity negotiation that take place dynamically in interaction with other groups and circumstances and that change and develop over time. Two subfields are influential in social psychology: Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), both emphasizing the dynamic and constructivist side of social processes.

How could this be applied to the ancient communities behind Chronicles? It is important to note that these theories emphasize the discursive nature and textual dimension of identity negotiation. Language has become a central issue in the study of identity negotiation, as aptly stated by De Fina and others: "Identity is a process that is always embedded in social practices . . . within which discourse practices . . . have a central role. Both social and discourse practices frame, and in many ways define, the way individuals and groups present themselves to others, negotiate role, and conceptualize themselves" (De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006, 2; De Fina 2013). Stainton Rogers and others therefore discuss the awareness of how textuality plays a role in identity negotiation processes under the rubric "textual identities." They indicate that "we craft out understandings of who we are . . . from out of the socially available pool of textual resources that are available in a given culture at a given time" (Stainton Rogers, Stenner, and Gleeson 1995, 60). Shotter and Gergen agree: "The primary medium within which identities are created and have their currency is not just linguistic, but also textual: persons are largely ascribed identities according to the matter of their embedding within a discourse—in their own or in the discourse of others" (1989, ix; Shotter 1993).

These views imply that literature can be a valuable resource for studying the identity negotiation processes of communities, even if those communities have long passed. The literature left behind by past communities give a glimpse, not of complete, crafted identities, but rather of those dynamic processes of identity negotiation of the past. With reference to Chronicles, this means that we should not expect to find finally formulated identities described in the book, but rather be sensitive to the fact that this literature played a significant role in the identity-negotiation processes of the late Persian and early Hellenistic period. The Chronicler crafted out understandings of who the Yehudites were in those changed sociohistorical circumstances, drawing from the pool of textual resources available in the society at the time (mainly Samuel-Kings, but also pentateuchal and other traditions). The Chronicler's intent was to negotiate a new identity for the people of Jerusalem and Yehud and to establish *kol-yiśrāʾēl* (all Israel) in continuity with past traditions, as well as in response to the new sociopolitical and socioreligious conditions of the time (see §5.1).

4.2 Chronicles as Social-Memory Construction

Although the French philosopher and sociologist who fathered this direction of thought, Maurice Halbwachs, used the term "collective memory" in his studies (1992), we choose to use the term "social memory" here (Jonker 2016b, 42–54). The Egyptologist Assmann, who applied insights from this field in his studies of ancient Egypt and of other early cultural environments, uses the term "cultural memory," as can be seen in the title of his groundbreaking work *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (1992). In cultural memory as understood by Assmann, there are certain official "Träger," carriers of memory. These persons are normally defined in the sociocultural environment and derive their legitimacy from it. Not all members of a given memory community can therefore influence the memory to the same extent, because the power to interpret and define the past is unevenly distributed within the collective and is crucially situated in the official "carrier" groups. Cultural memory is therefore a group's official memory and is intrinsically related to power and tradition (Erll and Nünning 2008).

Related to the above is Zerubavel's use of the concepts "mnemonic communities" and "social mindscapes" (1996, 1997, 2003), employed particularly in Chronicles studies. He argues against an individualistic understanding of remembering the past while noting that the process of "mnemonic socialization" normally starts in the family, even with children, but goes beyond that social context as persons enter further mnemonic communities during their lives. These mnemonic communities within which the past is remembered collectively, on the one hand, play a constitutive role in the self-understanding of those communities and the individuals who form part of that community. On the

other hand, the self-understanding of such a mnemonic community determines selectively how the past is remembered. Zerubavel furthermore indicates that all the different sites of memory actively functioning in any specific mnemonic community contribute to the formation of a social-memory landscape, or, as he calls it, a "mindscape." Inversely, remembering and forgetting in this community is deeply influenced by this social mindscape, which forms the contexts within which sites of memory function.

A biblical scholar who notably employs this approach to Chronicles (and other biblical literature) is Ben Zvi (2007, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2019c, 2020; Ben Zvi and Edelman 2011). Ben Zvi rightly indicates that "the majority of books within the authoritative repertoire of the literati in Yehud were, among many other things, past-construing works" (2012, 18–19). However, Ben Zvi is hesitant to refer to Chronicles as "historiography" (2011, 95 nn. 1–2). Although he admits that "prophetic literature, Chronicles and the Dtr historical collection all had an impact on the formation of communal identity in later Persian Yehud," he maintains that "they did so not as historiographical or prophetic literature directly, but through their contribution to the shaping of the community's social memory, or at least that of the literati who read and reread these books" (2011, 95). This remark clarifies, however, that Ben Zvi sees the shaping of the community's social memory by this literature as the mechanism through which identity negotiation takes place.

4.3 Chronicles as Colonial Discourse

In the aftermath of decolonization from imperial domination in many parts of the world since the middle of the twentieth century, postcolonial studies have begun to emerge. These literary studies especially, and therefore also biblical studies (Segovia 2000; Moore and Segovia 2005; Yee 2010; Sugirtharajah 2012), have been influenced by this approach. Some theorists, such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, have reflected on the dynamics of imperialism and colonialism and particularly on the effects they have on how subjected peoples view and interpret the world.

These theorists have developed a broad collection of theoretical concepts identifying and exposing ways in which imperial powers have constructed and controlled the identities of subjugated peoples. They have also demonstrated how configurations of domination shape the colonial experience. Concepts such as "stereotyping," "mimicry," and "hybridity" are especially useful in describing colonial strategies and experiences.

Exactly because of the hybrid nature of colonized contexts, some scholars have started problematizing the distinction between "imperial center" and "colonized margins." Rivera, for example, speaks of "the topography of power"

and the "multidimensionality of power" (2008, 120–25). This notion coheres well with the distinction (expressed above, §3.4) of four or even five levels of sociohistorical existence in the late Persian and early Hellenistic period, each characterized by unique power dynamics. The topography of power in these different levels contributes to various formations of hybridity and various strategies of mimicry.

Although postcolonial theory and criticism are a recent development, the phenomenon of imperialism is well known to the ancient world, including the Persian and Hellenistic empires. The distinctions made in postcolonial criticism can therefore be used analytically and heuristically to come to a deeper understanding of the topographies of power behind the texts and of how the texts respond to those topographies of power. Although the whole book of Chronicles cannot be characterized as a discourse with the imperial master, Persia, most texts in the book show signs that they had the Persian imperial context in mind and intended to communicate in this context. Since the imperial context formed the umbrella under which all other levels of sociohistorical existence were positioned (see §3.4), one could expect colonial discourse on all these levels. The imperial center was not a far-off reality; the imperial presence throughout the Persian Empire, and in Yehud, was facilitated by the fact that the imperial administration was conducted through satraps and governors (who were often appointed from the local leadership corps). Ramat-Raḥel, as the Persian administrative center just outside Jerusalem, bears witness to this fact. Also, the regular transit of imperial administrative and military forces through the Levant en route to Egypt probably contributed to regular exchanges between the imperial center and the periphery of satrapies and provinces.

Asymmetrical power relations were characteristic of this existence. The imperial center had the right to dictate relations, to conduct military campaigns to spread its influence, to impose administrative and economic measures onto subjugated colonies, and to create the conditions in subjugated colonies that would help them serve the imperial center best. Subjugated colonies were expected to be loyal to the imperial master, to support the imperium in military campaigns, and to pay taxes and tribute. We have seen that, in general, the Persian rulers (Cyrus the Great, in particular) had a good reputation in Yehud and elsewhere; their royal ideology was somewhat different from that of their predecessors. However, ancient-history scholars warn us not to overromanticize the Persian imperium, because their "carrot-and-stick" (Briant 2002; Wiesehöfer 2005) approach still imposed a clear power hierarchy onto subjugated colonies.

It is within this colonial context that the book of Chronicles was a powerful voice, participating in the political and religious discourses of its day in order to bridge the gap between the Yehudites' past traditions and their present realities and to open a new self-understanding in these circumstances.

4.4 Chronicles as Utopian Vision

Although some earlier studies attempted to read Chronicles within the framework of utopian politics (Boer 1996, 1999, 2009, 2011b), it was especially the publication of Schweitzer's book *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (2007) that sparked renewed scholarly discussion on the potential of this approach for interpreting Chronicles. In his reading of Chronicles, Schweitzer sees the cultic practices and systems described in the book as desired realities, not necessarily reflections of historical realities. According to this perspective, Chronicles offers an alternative reality to its readers.

Schweitzer has been criticized by some scholars for abandoning Chronicles as a witness to certain historical realities (Boda and Lowe 2009). These scholars are concerned about how one should assess the historical information in Chronicles in the wake of utopian literary theory. They ask whether only a stark discontinuity should be seen between past realities and future utopian visions. Could elements of both the past and the present realities not be leveraged by utopian texts to construct an alternative utopian reality?

Is there justification for seeing Chronicles as utopian vision? There is, of course, no evidence in Chronicles to claim that the book was indeed written as a Utopia in the technical sense of the word. Schweitzer also does not claim that: "I would conclude that Chronicles is utopian rather than a Utopia, but that it creates multiple Utopias within its narrative world, all of which manifest themselves and then dissolve only to reappear in other related forms" (2009, 16).

The main value of this approach is not so much to strictly work from the methodological perspective of utopian literary theory, but rather to identify the rhetorical effects of the ideologies that lie behind the literature and can be detected in the literature. With reference to Chronicles, it means that utopian theory can potentially help us to be more specific in our interpretations of the book, indicating how the Chronicler made use of traditions about the past to urge an audience (or various audiences) toward a specific vision of the future that functions in the specific present (of the Chronicler).

5. Theological Themes in Chronicles

5.1 "All Israel"

Many commentators indicate that the expression *kol-yiśrāʾēl* (all Israel) is a favorite of the Chronicler (McKenzie 2004, 50–51; Dirksen 2005, 15–16; Klein 2006, 46; Boda 2010, 18). The term is normally interpreted as the Chronicler's specific view on the extent of the restored community in the postexilic period. Although the expression is used in numerous other texts in the HB (mainly in Dtn-Dtr texts, but also once in the presumably late Priestly text of Num 16:34 and in other late texts, such as Dan 9:11; Mal 3:22; Ezra 2:70; 6:17; 8:25, 35;

10:5; Neh 7:73; 12:47; 13:26), the Chronicler's use of the expression is mostly unique. Of the thirty-four occurrences of the expression in Chronicles, only seven were taken over from the *Vorlage*. All others (27) are either part of the Chronicler's unique material or are adaptations of other expressions used in the source texts.

In the other HB texts where the expression occurs, it is used in one of two connotations: (1) as an indication of the "whole people of Israel" that came out of Egypt, wandered through the desert, and conquered the promised land; or (2) as an indication of the "whole people of Israel" of the era of the united monarchy under David and Solomon. By employing this concept so prominently and uniquely in Chronicles, the author clearly wanted to tie the identity of the postexilic restoration community in Jerusalem to these earlier definitions of "all Israel" (Jonker 2016b). The first place the expression appears in Chronicles is in 1 Chr 9:1, "So, all Israel was recorded by genealogies." Such is the introduction to the list of returnees to Jerusalem who formed the restoration community in Yehud, claiming continuity with the whole of Israel that came up from Egypt and conquered the promised land and with the people of Israel of the united monarchy.

This perception creates some problems in terms of the Chronicler's view of the former Northern Kingdom's territories. On the one hand, the genealogies make clear that the author includes these northern tribes, as well as the Transjordanian tribes, in his definition of all Israel. On the other hand, however, the Northern Kingdom is almost ignored in the Chronicler's description of the post-Solomonic era. Whereas the Dtr source texts in Kings narrate the histories of the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel in parallel to one another, the Chronicler chooses the line of Judah as the backbone of his narrative. The northern tribes, or Israel as a kingdom, are only featured here and there where their relationship impinges on the Chronicler's narrative of the Southern Kingdom. This ambiguous relationship plays itself out mainly on the provincial level (see §3.4). Although a united "all Israel" is the identity forged in this book, the narratives do not exclude elements of intragroup categorizations. The Chronicler employs the expression "all Israel" from a southern perspective, and the northerners are invited to return to this united existence.

5.2 Jerusalem and the Temple

Jerusalem features as a central locus in Chronicles. As we have seen above, the genealogical portal to the book climaxes with a list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after the return from exile. After a short mention of Hebron as the place where David was anointed (1 Chr 11:1–3 || 2 Sam 5:1–3), the first major narrative cycle of Chronicles moves immediately to Jerusalem becoming the

seat of the king and, eventually, the cult. Both the David and Solomon narratives (1 Chr 11–29 and 2 Chr 1–9) focus on the establishment of Jerusalem as the focal point of all Israel. In the royal Judahite narratives in the fourth major narrative cycle of the book (2 Chr 10–36), Jerusalem is the place where most of the narrated action takes place. It is no wonder that some scholars, like Beentjes, have described Jerusalem in Chronicles as "the very centre of all the kingdoms of the earth" (2008b).

The Chronicler took over the Dtr account of David capturing Jebus from the Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6–10) but made a significant change, revealing something of the author's agenda. The Chronicler changed the book of Samuel's indication that "David and his men" went up to the Jebusite city to capture it, into "David and all Israel" went up. From the very start of Jerusalem's connection to the Davidic kingship, it is indicated in Chronicles that the city represents "all Israel." The genealogical preamble to the book indicates that the Chronicler had a very comprehensive understanding of the identity of all Israel, even with the inclusion of Israel's northern and Transjordanian tribes. The Chronicler therefore makes clear that Jerusalem is no longer just the *local* capital of the southern kingdom of Judah during the period of the divided kingdoms. David's kingship, which represents an era of a united kingdom, is continued into the new dispensation under Persian rule by Jerusalem as the center of "all Israel."

The Chronicler's portrayal is clearly theological and ideological. Some Syro-Palestinian archaeologists, such as Finkelstein with a more skeptical view and A. Mazar with a more moderate view on the early kingship (see discussions in Schmidt 2007), have pointed out that the Davidic kingship and establishment of the city of David on the Jebusite site is scarcely attested in the archaeological record of the site and the environment. Finkelstein even doubts the existence of a united kingdom under David and Solomon and sees it as a back-projection from the Northern Kingdom during a much later period (although he acknowledges the possibility of minor fiefdoms in the southern area); A. Mazar accepts the existence of such a united kingdom and the kingship of David and Solomon, but still indicates that the grandeur portrayed in the biblical narratives is not supported by archaeological evidence. Accordingly, archaeological evidence has a bearing on our understanding of the accounts in both the Dtr History and Chronicles, but this applies even more critically to Chronicles, since the latter portrays Jerusalem after David captured it as the center of all Israel.

Scholars have equally observed how prominently the temple features as a theme in the book of Chronicles (Jarick 2007; Tiňo 2010; Schweitzer 2011; Lynch 2014). According to the Chronicler, King Solomon built the temple after his father, David, had prepared everything for the construction of this sanctuary. The prominence of the temple in the history of the united monarchy and in the kingdom of Judah (in the narrative line covered in Chronicles) is, of

course, also a feature of the book of Kings, used by the Chronicler as a literary source (see again §2.2). However, the Chronicler, through the temple-building account, as well as in the temple-restoration accounts of later Judahite kings, adapted, shortened, or expanded these narratives in a way making it apparent that the temple in Jerusalem forms a central theological orientation point for the Chronicler. McKenzie even says, "It is fair to say that the temple, its personnel, and the activities that take place there represent the Chronicler's dominant concern" (2004, 49). The prominence of the Jerusalem temple in the Chronicler's version probably says more about the author's postexilic time than about the preexilic existence. The Chronicler indicates that temple worship belongs to the heart of all Israel's existence in the restoration period after the exile (see also §5.2 below). Furthermore, with the Chronicler writing his work after the temple had been restored in the early Persian period, his portrayal of the temple's central significance serves to legitimate this Second Temple in the eyes and understanding of his audience. McKenzie indicates that the Chronicler "may also be advocating a restoration of temple worship to the place it held during the period of Israel's grandeur" (2004, 49).

The establishment of the temple site is also given special significance by the Chronicler. In 1 Chr 21 we find the Chronicler's version of the narrative about David's census. We see many interesting differences between the *Vorlage* text of 2 Sam 24, which in some cases need to be attributed to the Chronicler probably having used another *Vorlage* than the one attested in the Masoretic Text (Knoppers 2004, 743–50). Our focus here is particularly on the fact that the Chronicler highlights David's acquisition of the future temple site in an interesting way (1 Chr 21:18–22:1). The encounter between David and Araunah (in Samuel) / Ornan (in Chronicles) is taken over from 2 Sam 24, but some significant changes were made. First, the Chronicler mentions, like Samuel, that "Gad, David's seer" (1 Chr 21:9, 18), brought an oracle to David, commanding him to purchase the threshing floor of Ornan as the future temple site. However, the Chronicler added to the Samuel *Vorlage* that an angel of YHWH commanded Gad to bring this oracle; thus, the oracle receives divine sanction (Evans 2004). Furthermore, the Chronicler mentions (21:25) that David bought the threshing floor from Ornan for 600 shekels, which is 12 times higher than the price mentioned in 2 Sam 24:24. The Chronicler therefore emphasizes the great significance of the site. Last, according to the Chronicler (21:26), the first sacrifice on the altar that David built on the site was answered "with fire from heaven," a clear indication of an epiphanic moment. This is not mentioned in the *Vorlage* text. In this section the Chronicler clearly wanted to highlight that the temple was built on neutral ground between the tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin and also to legitimize it anew as the divinely sanctioned place where the Yahwism of the postexilic "all Israel" should be centralized.

In §6.2 below we process the Chronicler's engagement with the pentateuchal traditions; at this stage it is worth noticing that Chronicles represents an interesting engagement with those traditions in his understanding of the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem. Nihan (2016), among others (Römer 2004, 2018; Edelman 2008; Chavel 2009; Rhyder 2018), has done an interesting study in this regard. He refers to the Chronicler's indication (2 Chr 5:2–14) that "the tent of meeting" was eventually installed in the temple that Solomon built on the site purchased by David. The tent of meeting is closely associated with the Priestly traditions in the Pentateuch, and the association of portability with this sacred space has been used as an argument by some scholars that the Priestly traditions reflect an understanding of a decentralized religion. In the narrative of the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7:12–16), however, the Chronicler emphasizes that the temple itself is the place that YHWH has chosen for his name to live there forever. This clearly links back to the Dtn idea (and formulations) of the centralization of the temple in one place. Nihan therefore remarks: "In the end, to be sure, the Priestly conception of a centralized space (identified with the portable tent of meeting) and the Dtn conception of a centralized place (identified with the temple) are eventually harmonized in Chronicles' narrative" (Nihan 2016, 275).

However, the idea of centralization in Chronicles comes not only from the Dtn tradition. As Nihan, supported by Rhyder (2019), convincingly argues, Chronicles reveals that the Priestly traditions also had their understanding of centralization, but with different underlying motivations than in the Dtn tradition. Nihan discusses Abijah's speech in 2 Chr 13:4–12 (the Chronicler's own material), where the author polemicizes against the Northern Kingdom's cult. In this section the cultic rituals associated with the Southern Kingdom's cult of Jerusalem are all taken from the Priestly description of rituals that were performed in the tent of meeting. The officiating priests, who are indicated by the Chronicler to have kept the service in the southern cult, are also clear references to the Aaronide priesthood of the Priestly tradition. Nihan remarks that "the opposition between southern and northern priesthoods in vv. 9 and 10 implies that the only priests who can legitimately officiate are those who can claim an Aaronite lineage, a notion which already plays a central role in the Priestly traditions" (2016, 280). He therefore concludes that the centralization of the cult is argued in the Abijah narrative not with reference to the Dtn conception but rather with reference to the Priestly motivation for a centralized cult, "the presence of Aaronite priests, who perpetuate the daily rituals . . . already performed in the wilderness" (2016, 281). Chronicles therefore reflects both the Dtn and Priestly understandings of the centralization of the cult (see Excursus 7).

This discussion not only emphasizes how important it is to bring Chronicles studies into discourse with pentateuchal studies (Jonker 2014a, 2014c), but it also leads us to a discussion of Chronicles' portrayal of religion in Yehud.

5.3 Religion in Yehud

McKenzie states without hesitation: "It is fair to say that the temple, its personnel, and the activities that take place there represent the Chronicler's dominant concern. The Chronicler wishes to demonstrate the centrality of Israel's religious life" (2004, 49). Although McKenzie's statement is undoubtedly true, the Chronicler's portrayal of religious worship goes further than temple service. As we have seen above, the temple as well as the priestly personnel play a central role in the self-understanding of the community, and the holiness of the temple and temple service are emphasized in various places (as discussed in the commentary). But the Chronicler also emphasizes total reliance on and dedication to YHWH by all, especially illustrated through the lives of the former kings. McKenzie therefore admits, "Despite the Chronicler's emphasis on proper ritual and obedience to prescription, it would be a grave error to conceive of him as a rigid legalist. . . . The Chronicler consistently emphasizes the attitude of those involved in cultic celebration" (2004, 55).

Within the context of cultic celebration, the theme of "joy" (mostly with the Hebrew term *śimḥâ*) plays a significant role, particularly in the Chronicler's own material. There is great joy at the coronation of David (1 Chr 12), when the ark of the covenant is brought to Jerusalem (chs. 15–16), when the preparations for building the temple are made (ch. 29), and when the temple is dedicated by Solomon (2 Chr 7). The climax of this theme comes in 2 Chr 30:26, where the Chronicler (again in his own material) indicates that the Passover was not celebrated with such joy since the time of Solomon.

In the royal narratives, however, other themes are also featured that indicate the attitude required toward YHWH, not only in cultic matters but also in royal decisions and strategies. Kings who "seek" (*drš* or *bqš*) YHWH surely prosper and are successful in their military campaigns. Those who "rely" (*šʿn*) on YHWH enjoy peace, rest, and quietness. Those who do not seek or rely on YHWH clearly are "rebellious" (*mʿl*) and receive punishment through illness, death, or defeat (Tuell 2001; McKenzie 2004, 56–58; Jonker 2006).

Another factor that forms a prominent backdrop for many of the cultic discourses in Chronicles is the rivalry with the Northern Kingdom's cult. The Dtr portrayal of painting the northern cult as falsehood and idolatry is surely also present in Chronicles. However, some differences in Chronicles should not go unnoticed, differences likely to be explained alongside the fact that from the middle of the fourth century BCE (Stern and Magen 2002; Magen 2007), another YHWH sanctuary existed on Mount Gerizim, near Shechem, in the province of Samaria, to the north of Yehud (see §3.4). We have shown above (§5.2) that Nihan associates the Chronicler's understanding of the central position of the temple in Jerusalem with both the Dtn and Priestly pentateuchal traditions. The Chronicler emphasizes, over against the competing temple on

Mount Gerizim, that the Jerusalem temple is the true guardian of the Mosaic law. The Chronicler links the Jerusalem temple back to the tent of meeting in the Exodus tradition, as well as to the great kings of the past, especially David and Solomon; thus he claims that the more recently built temple on Mount Gerizim does not have the historical roots of the Jerusalem temple. And, while the Aaronide priesthood is performing all cultic functions in the space of the Jerusalem temple, the northern cult and sanctuary are deemed illegitimate.

5.4 Cultic Staff

As noted above (§§5.2 and 5.3), the Aaronide priesthood is portrayed in Chronicles, in continuity with Priestly understanding, as constitutive for the Southern Kingdom's cult, in contrast to the Northern Kingdom's cult. There is no doubt that the Chronicler honors this Priestly understanding.

It is evident already in the genealogies, where the family line of Aaron features centrally in the Levite genealogy (1 Chr 5:27–6:66 [6:1–81 ET]). The list featuring the dwelling places of the priestly families (6:39–66 [6:54–81 ET]) derives from the narrative text in Josh 21:5–40, which scholars argue belongs to the Priestly tradition. This section reports the allotment of dwelling places to the Levites during the conquest of the land. However, the Chronicler made interesting changes in the order of the material of Josh 21. After a general introduction to the list of Levitical cities in 1 Chr 6:39 [6:54 ET], the Chronicler first (in vv. 40–45 [55–60 ET]) offers a detailed list of the places given to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clan (the Priestly line). Although this material is also present in Josh 21 (in vv. 10–19), the Chronicler shifted it earlier in his presentation. By first presenting the Aaronide dwelling places, the Chronicler has given prominence to this part of the Levitical lineage, emphasizing the status of the Aaronides within the priesthood and highlighting their connection to the tribe of Judah.

A further section casts clear light on the Chronicler's understanding of the divisions in the priesthood, 1 Chr 23–27, which originates from the Chronicler's hand. For long, the main scholarly debates on these chapters were on whether older sources underlie them and on their redactional history (Knoppers 2004, 788–98; Klein 2006, 445–47). Some have argued that everything listed in these chapters is secondary. Others maintain that some are original, while certain secondary changes were made to them at a later stage (Williamson 1979, 1982). Further scholarship, mainly following Japhet (1993, 406–10), has however concluded that the majority of these lists, if not all, are original and belong to the Chronicler's *Sondergut*. They form an integral part of the Chronicler's rhetorical construction, as J. W. Wright (1991) argues. Knoppers agrees when he states that 1 Chr 23–27 play a key role, alongside the narratives of David and Solomon, in upholding an image of the united monarchy as a golden age

of Israel (2004, 798). The Aaronide priesthood and the kingship of the united monarchy therefore define one another.

One should notice, however, that an interesting relationship is created in this section between the Levites and the Aaronides. To understand the division of the Levitical clergy in 1 Chr 23–27, one should notice that the term "Levite" is used here in two different meanings (Jonker 2010a). In the generic sense of the word, the "Levites" refers to all those who trace their descent to the tribe of Levi. But the term "Levites" is also used in a technical sense, referring to Levites who perform special functions in the cult. The detail of this distinction will be discussed in the commentary on these chapters.

This order is well-respected throughout the book of Chronicles. Although the Levites (technical) serve alongside the Aaronide priests in the cult of Solomon's Temple, continued by his successor sons, they are never denigrated as a second-class priesthood, as in some other HB texts (such as Ezek 44; see §6.3). In fact, it seems that the profile of the Levites (technical) grows as the narrative of the kings of Judah is told by the Chronicler. The Levites (technical) are never called "holy" in the Priestly traditions of the Pentateuch (see §6.2), but 2 Chr 23:6 declares that priests *and* Levites who have consecrated themselves (with *qdš*) can enter the temple. The suggestion seems to be that the Levites (technical), when consecrated, are considered on a par with the (Aaronide) priests. The contrast that the Chronicler constructs between Aaronide priests and Levites (technical), in terms of holiness, represents the unique element of this literature.

Many scholars have therefore engaged in debates on whether Chronicles should be seen as pro-Priestly or pro-Levite (Knoppers 2003b; Leuchter and Hutton 2011). Yet a thorough investigation of the texts in Chronicles shows that the Aaronide priesthood was respected and that the Levitical priesthood (technical) is never portrayed as a rival to them. However, the Chronicler, or some redactional hands (see §3.3), argued for equality in the priesthood between Aaronides and Levites (technical).

5.5 Kingship and Political Authority

It is abundantly clear that kingship is a central theme in Chronicles. Not only does the genealogical preamble to the book deal extensively with the Judahite line, from which all the kings described in Chronicles descend (1 Chr 2:3–4:23), but the rest of the book's plotline revolves around the histories and succession of the kings of the united kingdom and of Judah. The Chronicler relates these royal narratives to YHWH's actions, making clear that YHWH is sustaining his people through the kings. The king's basic inclination of "seeking" (*drš* and *bqš*) YHWH leads to his prospering and bringing rest and peace to all Israel. The actions of YHWH through the kings, according to the Chronicler's portrayal, are limited to the line of David and Solomon that continues in the

Judahite kings. The kings of the northern kingdom, Israel, are mostly omitted from the main narrative and can hardly do anything good.

Scholars and commentators have formulated mainly four lines of interpretation of the notion of kingship in Chronicles:

First, some scholars see in the Chronicler's treatment of the kings an attempt to resurrect the idea of the postexilic "all Israel" having their own king again (Tiňo 2010). The argument is that some of the restoration community in Jerusalem saw the exile only as a break in the Judahite monarchy and that political aspirations started emerging in this community to restore the kingship from the Judahite line. Although this might have been an idea still alive in the early Persian period, it is highly unlikely that it continued into the late Persian period, when the Chronicler wrote his work. Furthermore, if such political aspirations would have been made public, it could potentially have brought the wrath of the Persian Empire onto them to squash any attempt at rebellion.

Second, in the Chronicler's portrayal of the kings, some scholars see eschatological overtones (Williamson 1977a; Kelly 1996). Scholars adhering to this position agree on seeing a strong vision for eternal kingship in Chronicles, although most agree that this expectation for the future is not cast in messianic format. Especially the combined narrative of David and Solomon and the way Nathan's oracle plays out in the Chronicler's version convince these scholars that the Chronicler's view is eschatological. Some see a continuation of this expectation in the further royal narratives in 2 Chronicles. Although the Chronicler is undoubtedly oriented toward the future, our studies on the rhetorical fiber of the book (§4) rather emphasize the Chronicler's orientation toward his contemporary situation, in which all Israel needs to situate itself in a changed and ever-changing sociohistorical dispensation.

A *third* position is to see the royal narratives, particularly of Solomon, as attempts to indicate that YHWH is king. This position is mainly based on the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon as sitting on YHWH's throne. In 1 Chr 17:14 it becomes clear that David's son will be king over "*my* kingdom," that is, YHWH's kingdom. In 1 Chr 29:22–23 the text reads that Solomon was anointed as YHWH's "ruler/prince" (*nāgîd*) and that Solomon sits on YHWH's throne (*kisēʾ*). The last-mentioned statement is repeated in 2 Chr 9:8. In 2 Chr 13:8, Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom after the schism, is accused by Abijah, a king of Judah, that he withstood (or "made himself strong against," *hithpael* of *ḥāzaq*) YHWH's kingdom. These portrayals of YHWH as the actual king who reigns through the Davidide "rulers/princes" convince us that this could well be the intention of the Chronicler, to subordinate the earthly kings to YHWH's kingship. However, this portrayal probably stands in service of another possible perspective that is discussed next.

A *fourth* position is thus that the portrayal of YHWH as king fits into the broader framework of subtle polemics in the direction of the Persian imperial

leadership. One should not think that the Persian center was far away and that the empire would not have taken notice of these subtle representations of YHWH. Ramat Raḥel, at Jerusalem's doorstep on the south side, was the imperial administrative seat where governors appointed by the empire had to represent the interests of their imperial masters.

Chronicles was written in the late Persian period, when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had been destroyed long ago by the Assyrians and Babylonians respectively. As we have seen, the kingship of neither of these kingdoms was continued after the release from exile. The Chronicler is therefore telling the story of the kings of the past to position all Israel politically in his own present. No claims could be made on the basis of their glorious royal past because the monarchies were no longer in existence. The polemic must therefore have been instigated from another angle.

Lynch's work provides interesting perspectives on this issue. He points out that "imperial religious culture took a distinctive turn under the Persians, at least when compared with the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian Empires that Israel encountered. Notably, great temples and cults played virtually no role within the dominant imperial system" (2014, 61–62). "Despite these absences, there are strong lines of continuity between Achaemenid palace ideology and ancient Near Eastern temple ideology" (2014, 62). Root, expressing a similar view, detects probably conceptual fluidity between the "palaces" or "audience halls" seen in Persian imperial centers such as Persepolis and "temples" as "sites of religiously imbued observances focusing on the person of the king 'in residence'" (2010, 207).

When the Jerusalem temple is subtly portrayed as the equivalent of the royal audience halls in Persepolis and the other imperial centers, YHWH is also established as the counterpart of the Persian emperor (and not of the deity Ahura Mazda, "Lord of Wisdom"). The Yehudites had no earthly king who could be put in competition with the Persian emperor, but YHWH—as king, who owns earthly kingdoms—trumps the claims of the Persian royal ideology (Fried 2004).

In continuation of the above point, it is interesting that Cyrus of Persia is portrayed favorably in Chronicles (2 Chr 36:22–23). The same applies to other foreign monarchs such as the queen of Sheba, Huram of Tyre, and Neco of Egypt (Ben Zvi 2006e). However, all of them are portrayed as instruments in the hand of YHWH, the God of all Israel. Foreign kings, according to the Chronicler, are inspired by YHWH to act. This clearly implies who is the greatest King—not imperial masters, but YHWH (I. Wilson 2017; Goswell 2020).

A variation of the preceding position takes the above line of thinking even further. Some scholars (Willi and Pietsch 2012; Hartenstein 2019) see the Chronicler's construction of YHWH in relation to other earthly kings as an attempt to establish the concept of world dominion. Following Willi's earlier

studies (2001, 2005, 2009b, 2010), Hartenstein observes, "Whether Chronicles is to be dated to the late Persian or, as some argue, only at [*sic*] the (early) Hellenistic period, there is still widespread agreement in recent research that the Achaemenid idea of a world empire, if one may use this general term, has strongly influenced Chronicles' understanding on matters of kingship." Hartenstein therefore sets out to contextualize the book "within the world of textual and visual representations of the Achaemenids, some of which widely appeared on coins and seals in the west of the empire" (2019, 280). Hartenstein looks at how the Persian king is portrayed in the royal inscriptions (such as Bisitun) and iconography of the Achaemenid period and how the relationship of the king to Ahura Mazda is expressed. He also refers to the winged symbol and the continuing debate on whether the figure in the winged sun should be understood as Ahura Mazda or the Achaemenid king (Jonker 2021a). From all these, Hartenstein summarizes the Achaemenid concept of world empire as follows: "Darius the Great and his successors claim . . . that their kingship was given to them by Ahura Mazda, a 'great god' who was understood as the creator of heaven and earth. . . . Ahura Mazda wanted the original order of the world of nations to be restored and afterwards maintained by the great kings" (Hartenstein 2019, 280–82). Hartenstein sees corresponding concepts in Chronicles that are comparable with the main features of the Achaemenid concept of a world kingdom. He therefore argues that the authors of Chronicles (and Ps 2) "have adapted the Achaemenid concept for their established local Judean traditions" (2019, 282).

One of the clearest indications that the Chronicler deliberately latched on to the Achaemenid understanding of a world kingdom is the parallelism drawn between the temple building under King Solomon (2 Chr 2–7), and the order by Cyrus to build the Second Temple in Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:22–23). In the former instance, Solomon decides "to build a house" for YHWH, but he himself is indicated as the king who is sitting on "the throne of YHWH" (1 Chr 29:23). The house of YHWH is called a "house of rest," and Solomon himself is called a "man of rest" and a "man of peace" (Jonker 2008a). At the closure of the book, the Chronicler apparently recites from an edict of Cyrus, but he puts the following words in the Persian king's mouth: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: YHWH, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (2 Chr 36:23 AT). The idea of Cyrus being the king of "all kingdoms of the earth" clearly points in the direction of a concept of world dominion. However, the Chronicler's rendering of the words of the edict acknowledges that even the Great King of all the kingdoms of the earth, Cyrus of Persia, receives these kingdoms and his authority from "YHWH, the God of the heavens." The epithet for YHWH, "God of the heavens," only occurs in biblical literature from the Achaemenid period and later (Japhet 2009, 25–26; Klein 2012, 546). However,

it is difficult to associate this expression exclusively with Achaemenid religious conceptions and with Ahura Mazda (Niehr 1999; Beyerle 2010; Granerød 2020). In disagreement with Niehr, who links the epithet with the Canaanite deity called *Baʿal Šāmīn*, known from the first half of the first millennium BCE, Granerød indicates that the first association of the epithet with YHWH occurred in Elephantine during the fifth century BCE. He argues that the phrase "God of the heavens" cannot be associated exclusively with Achaemenid understanding, since the epithet never occurs in Achaemenid inscriptions. Instead, he associates the expression with the winged symbol, which is well known from Achaemenid iconography. If Granerød is right, it means that the Chronicler most likely got this epithet from Elephantine. We know that there was regular contact between the Jewish community on the island in the Nile and the provinces of Yehud and Samaria in the late Persian period, when Chronicles was written. In a time of imperial rivalry between Persia and Egypt, the Chronicler likely claimed that YHWH, the God whose house is the temple of Jerusalem, is indeed the "God of the heavens," the ruler of all world empires.

Although the conclusion to the book of Chronicles seemingly portrays a very positive picture of the Persian Empire, the reader should not miss the subtle polemics in the Chronicler's rendering of the Cyrus edict. Solomon, builder of the First Temple, and Cyrus, builder of the Second Temple, both stand under the authority of YHWH (Lynch 2014, 256–57).

6. Reception *in* Chronicles

6.1 Chronicles and the Dtn-Dtr Traditions

To any reader of Chronicles, lay or academic, it is abundantly clear that the author of Chronicles used the so-called Dtr History—specifically, the books of Samuel and Kings—as his main source for constructing another version of the history of preexilic Israel and Judah. Since this is such a central feature of Chronicles, as discussed in various contexts above, there is no need for an elaborate description here. Only three aspects are highlighted.

First, the Chronicler's method of using his main source texts shows sophistication. Although most of his literary work comes from Samuel and Kings, he added, omitted, adapted, and rearranged the materials in such a way that Chronicles can truly be called a literary work in its own right. Whether it was written to be a competing version over against the older one in the Dtr History is not certain. It rather seems that the term "reappropriation" is more suitable to describe what the Chronicler has done.

The *second* aspect therefore refers to the notion of reception. One should notice that a threshold is crossed in Chronicles. No longer is it simply a process of literature creation or production. Rather, the book of Chronicles reflects an

attempt to reinterpret and provide an exposition of the older historical traditions in new circumstances. Willi therefore aptly refers to Chronicles as "exegesis" (1972). Although the reception of other, earlier traditions can also be seen in other parts of the HB, Chronicles features as a prime example of text production as the result of text reception (Jonker 1999, 2003a, 2007b, 2008b, 2011b, 2011g).

Third, although the Chronicler used the Dtr History as the base text for constructing his own literary work, he did not fully buy into the Dtn theology reflected in his source texts. As we have seen above, the Chronicler attempted to bring pro-Dtn and pro-Priestly strands together in his work (see also §6.2). Furthermore, in some cases it even seems that the Chronicler wanted to be more Dtn than the Dtr History (Jonker 2013c, 2017b). In the Jehoshaphat narrative (2 Chr 19:4–11), for example, the Chronicler added some information about the organization of the judiciary from Deuteronomy, even though the Dtr History did not include that information in the Kings version of the same monarch.

6.2 Chronicles and the Other Pentateuchal Traditions

Can we detect any reception of the Priestly and non-Priestly pentateuchal traditions in Chronicles? When we consider that the Chronicler was one of the earliest readers of the Pentateuch, probably already containing the bulk of the material that we find in it today, a study of the reception of these materials can be illuminating for both Pentateuch and Chronicles studies (Jonker 2014a, 2014c).

First, we focus on the genealogical preamble of Chronicles. There is no doubt that the Chronicler got the majority of his genealogies and lists contained in 1 Chr 1–9 from Priestly material (Jonker 2012b). However, his usage of these materials is not limited to verbatim quotations; instead, he adapts these materials creatively. The Chronicler often exercises the freedom to change from the linear form (where only one person, normally the eldest son, from every generation is mentioned) to the segmented form (where all children of a person are mentioned, and where the later generations branch out from there) (or vice versa), depending on what he wanted to achieve with the specific genealogy.

The Chronicler seems to have preferred Priestly materials for the construction of his genealogies. This is, of course, understandable, because genealogies are characteristic of the Priestly literature, more so than with the non-Priestly materials. However, one should not make conclusions too quickly. Genesis 4, generally considered to be P material, was not used by the Chronicler. And Gen 10, which (as we have seen above) is normally considered to be of non-P character, was indeed used. From this fact one can deduce that the Chronicler most probably had a version of the Pentateuch at his disposal that already included P and non-P materials. He found these materials useful in his deliberate attempt to merge the Priestly traditions and the Dtn-Dtr tradition in his work.

A further Priestly tradition of the Pentateuch with which the Chronicler engages is the so-called Holiness legislation of Lev 17–26 (referred to as H). Scholars agree that this section of Leviticus (with some verses in the earlier part of the book) forms a special part of the P tradition and that it reflects both Priestly and Dtn-Dtr influence (Knohl 1995; Otto 1999; Nihan 2004, 2007, 2013b; Meyer 2012, 2015). Most scholars also now agree that H, as a post-P development, should be dated more or less in the last years of the fifth century BCE. This means that H, probably not as a separate collection but rather as part of a nearly complete Pentateuch, must have been available when the Chronicler wrote his work. One of the eminent characteristics of H is the redefinition of the understanding of holiness. Whereas the P tradition restricts holiness to cultic places and personnel (the Aaronide priests), H introduces a wider understanding of the concept, resembling the understanding of holiness in Deuteronomy (Rhyder 2019). According to H, the whole people should strive for holiness in all practical walks of their lives, because "YHWH your God is holy" (Lev 19:2 AT).

As already noted (§5.3) and as will be discussed in more detail in the commentary, the profile of the Levites is developed throughout Chronicles, culminating in the Hezekiah and Josiah Passover narratives (Jonker 2020b, 2020c). In these parts of the Chronicler's narrative, it appears that the more open understanding of holiness as expressed in H had influenced the author, directly or indirectly (see Excursus 7), to give such a positive appraisal of the Levites. This stands in contrast to the P tradition's negative portrayal of the Levites (as also reflected in Ezek 44, also strongly influenced by P). Since we know that the Chronicler, or the redactional hands that finalized the book, likely stood near Levite circles in the context of the Second Temple cult in Jerusalem (see §3.2), it can be argued that the redefinition of holiness in H encouraged the writer to promote an equal position for the Levites in comparison to the Aaronide priests, who also served in the temple in Jerusalem.

One might have expected more pentateuchal narratives to have influenced the Chronicler in his version of the history of ancient Israel and Judah. There are, for example, no explicit references to the exodus from Egypt, the period of desert wandering, the conquest of the land, or the time of tribal leaders. Some scholars have argued that such omissions indicate that the Chronicler was not interested in the prehistory of the monarchy. However, it seems more plausible to argue that the Chronicler used his genealogical introduction, beginning with Adam, to situate the history of ancient Israel and Judah in a universal framework and to span the time from the ancestors to the monarchy by means of family and other lists. It is highly likely that the Chronicler presupposed that his readers and hearers would have knowledge of the pentateuchal and Dtn-Dtr materials. The author therefore did not feel obliged to repeat everything or to fill in every detail.

In his reception of earlier traditions, the Chronicler employed these traditions to serve his rhetorical and theological purposes (Hutchison 2021).

6.3 Chronicles and the Prophetic Traditions

Numerous prophetic figures are mentioned in Chronicles. Various scholars have therefore gathered that prophecy is a central interest to the Chronicler (Hanspach 2000; Gerstenberger 2004; Beentjes 2011). It is remarkable, however, that most prophetic figures featured in Chronicles are not known from other biblical writings. Only the writing prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, whose literary works are known from the HB, are mentioned in Chronicles (apart from Elijah, who only appears as the author of a "letter" in 2 Chr 21:12–15). Other prophets who wrote more or less in the same time period as the Chronicler—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—are also not mentioned (Boda 2007; Redditt 2007; Viezel 2009; Snyman 2015; Jonker 2015d).

One could agree with Beentjes (2011, 39–40) on the role of unknown prophets in Chronicles. He sees these "invented" figures as "literary personages rather than historical persons." One should therefore expect that the narratives about these unknown prophets will contain the unique convictions and accents of the Chronicler. However, one could disagree with Beentjes on his interpretation of the writing prophets in Chronicles when he concludes, "As far as so-called 'classical prophets' are met in the Chronicler's text, they do not act as inspired messengers, but rather hold the position of keepers of the royal archives, being responsible for the records of a king's reign" (2011, 40). This may be true of Isaiah, but not of Jeremiah.

The figure of the prophet Isaiah is significantly downscaled by the Chronicler. Whereas the prophet plays an active role in the Dtr version of Hezekiah's reign (in 2 Kgs 19–20), the Chronicler mentions Isaiah only three times in passing in his version. In one case, 2 Chr 32:20, the Chronicler reports that Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to YHWH in the face of the Assyrian threat of Sennacherib, whereas 2 Kgs 19 and Isa 32 both mention only the prayer of Hezekiah. In the other two cases, 2 Chr 26:22 and 32:32, Isaiah is mentioned as an additional source of information on the reigns of Uzziah and Hezekiah, respectively—again differing from the *Vorlage* in 2 Kgs 15:6 and 20:20. It is not certain whether these notices in Chronicles refer to the written book of Isaiah or an earlier stage thereof. Jeremiah, however, appears only four times in Chronicles, but this prophet plays a much more prominent role, as discussed below (see also Jonker 2007c, 2011d, 2012c).

We should admit that for most prophetic voices in Chronicles, we do not have any idea whence they originated. Apart from the few known prophets borrowed from the Dtr *Vorlage* (except for Jeremiah), we have no idea what

the Chronicler's authoritative sources were for those new prophetic voices. Until we obtain access to extrabiblical textual sources that can prove us wrong (as in the case of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription, revealing much about the biblical Balaam narrative), Chronicles scholars may speculate in two directions: either these prophetic voices are literary creations (so Beentjes 2011), or they reflect the presence of some cultic prophets during the Chronicler's time.

It is very difficult to settle the question whether any prophets were still active around by the end of the Persian era, when the Chronicler wrote. The two scenarios considered by Gerstenberger (2004) could both be right: (1) active prophets uttered homily-like prophecies during this era within the context of a Torah constitution and religious gathering, or (2) no longer were active prophets around, but the Chronicler had written records of prophet stories and sayings available. However, apart from the presence of Jeremiah in Chronicles, we do not have any documentary evidence to support the second scenario. The best we can say is that the book of Chronicles shows that the phenomenon of prophecy was still held in high regard in the late Persian era. The Chronicler's references to prophets (again, apart from Jeremiah) are never focused on the exact prophetic utterances that have been or will be fulfilled. Rather, the prophets feature (mainly) as interpreters of historical events in light of the Torah. For the Chronicler, the overwhelming presence of prophecy as a phenomenon, so it seems, serves the purpose of gaining legitimacy for his reinterpretation of the Dtr History.

The views that prophecy had become integrated into the cult and that we should also consider the possibility of cultic prophecy in the Chronicler's era seem to be plausible conclusions from the available textual data. Chronicles scholars agree that the primary intended audience of this work was the cultic elite in Jerusalem. One can well assume that reference to prophetic figures functioning as interpreters of YHWH's Torah (1 Chr 25; 2 Chr 20:14; 29:30) would have been received favorably within this communicative context, especially when we observe that some Levite ancestors prophesied through their musical instruments (1 Chr 25). We can concur with Grabbe in his conclusion about cult prophets: "Some of these arguments carry more weight than others. . . . Still, the existence of cult prophets is now accepted throughout scholarship, and the real debate revolves around whether any of the writing prophets arose from cult prophets. . . . One cannot deny the close association that figures such as Isaiah and Jeremiah had with the temple" (1995, 113).

The treatment of Jeremiah in Chronicles stands out, as we have seen above. Because of the peculiar repetition of the concept "to fulfill seventy years" (2 Chr 36:21; cf. Jer 25:11–12; 29:10; Dan 9:2 in the HB), it seems that the Chronicler had a written version of the book of Jeremiah available. But difficult questions arise: Which text in Jeremiah is the Chronicler using in his own reference to Jeremiah's prophecy? From which version of the book of Jeremiah?

On account of the so-called *Babelschweigen* (silence about Babylon) in the Alexandrian LXX (Stipp 1994, 2010a), one could argue that this tradition was not the source used by the Chronicler in this case. The clear Babylonian presence in the Chronicler's allusion would then point toward some version of the Palestinian MT edition of Jeremiah. However, this cannot be determined with certainty. It is clear from Jeremiah (see ch. 26 and following) that any hesitation in referring to the Babylonians had been abandoned at a certain point. One could therefore also argue that the Chronicler, even if he did not find explicit reference to the Babylonians in his *Vorlage*, courageously made this element explicit in his reinterpretation. The so-called *Babelschweigen*, therefore, is not a criterion in determining which form of Jeremiah the Chronicler used as his source. The very negative portrayal of Zedekiah in 2 Chr 36:11–12 could, however, be an argument to confirm that the Chronicler did indeed use an Alexandrian source text (Stipp 1996).

Another indicator is the reference to "seventy years" in 2 Chr 36:20–21 (Jonker 2007c). We may conclude that the Chronicler was not alluding to Jer 25:11–12 here, but rather to Jer 29:10. In Jer 25, the phrase "seventy years" is followed by an announcement of doom for the Babylonians. The Chronicler's version in 2 Chr 36:21–23, announcing a time of liberation and restoration under Persian dominion after the fulfillment of the seventy years (instead of doom), shows more affinity with Jer 29:10 (which also shows no discrepancy between LXX and MT). One could argue that the Chronicler's positive interpretation of the period after the seventy years may be an indication that he was alluding to Jer 29:10, which is probably a Dtr reformulation of one of the oldest sections in Jeremiah.

Why would the Chronicler emphasize Jeremiah so much in the climax of his version of Judah's history in 2 Chr 36:21 and in the announcement of the liberation in 36:22? Why do we find textual allusions to the book of Jeremiah here, but not to any other prophetic writing? The answer probably lies in the Chronicler's strong tendency to merge different traditions in his version of the past (Knoppers 2003b, 92–93). The book of Jeremiah provided the Chronicler with a useful way of merging the Priestly and Dtr traditions on this point. The prominent occurrence of *hāšammâ* (desolation) in Jeremiah (more than half of all occurrences of this noun in the HB occur in this book, spread over all its compositional layers) gave the Chronicler the bridge to retrieve the P tradition in Lev 26:34–35, 43 (where the term is also used), in order to render the exile as a Sabbath. But Jeremiah, with its prominent Dtr contents, provided the possibility of appending his source text from the Dtr History with a Priestly understanding.

Much remains uncertain and open for discussion about the Chronicler's authoritative prophetic sources. However, one thing may be said with confidence: the Chronicler was one of the early readers of the book of Jeremiah (most likely in a fairly advanced Dtr form).

6.4 Chronicles and the Psalms

Two especially long sections, 1 Chr 16:8–36 and 2 Chr 6:41–42, clearly show that the author used materials also known from the book of Psalms (Klein 2005). In the former, three psalms are used selectively, Pss 96:1–13; 105:1–15; and 106:1, 47–48 (Diller 2002; Throntveit 2003; Berlin 2007; Jonker 2011e; Schnocks 2019); Ps 132:8–10 is featured in the latter passage (Barbiero 2013; Williamson 2019). Furthermore, some passages in Chronicles contain allusions to or echoes of phrases and passages from Psalms. Thus 1 Chr 29:15 contains an echo of Ps 39:13. The well-known refrain that occurs in various psalms (e.g., 136:1), *hôdû lyhwh kî ṭôb kî lᵊʿôlām ḥasdô* ("Praise YHWH, because he is good; because forever is his steadfast love"), also appears in 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21. Also, 1 Chr 29:10 includes a doxology taken over from 1 Kgs 8:15, that occurs in various psalms, namely *bārûk ʾattâ yhwh ʾelōhê yiśrāʾēl ʾābînû* ("Blessed are you, YHWH, the God of Israel our father"). Since Psalm language is so well known from liturgical passages throughout the HB, the last-mentioned allusions and echoes cannot solely be attributed to the Chronicler's deliberate choice. The first-mentioned two passages are, however, significant for the Chronicler's reception of Psalm material.

First Chronicles 16 forms part of the Chronicler's "ark of God" narrative (1 Chr 13–16). Within this chapter the Chronicler creates a new psalm from excerpts from three other psalms known from the biblical Psalter (1 Chr 16:8–22 || Ps 105:1–15; 1 Chr 16:23–33 || Ps 96:1–13; 1 Chr 16:34–36 || Ps 106:1, 47–48). Some scholars discuss the Chronicler's psalm as a unity and as a literary creation in its own right. Others focus on how the author created the psalm structurally from his source materials and on what rhetorical function this amalgam carries within the Chronicler's ark narrative. A detailed discussion of this chapter will follow in the commentary below (see also Jonker 2011e, 126–30).

The second explicit use of Psalm material, as noted above, is found in 2 Chr 6:41–42. These verses conclude Solomon's prayer while dedicating the temple in Jerusalem. The prayer fits into the wider section of 2 Chr 5:2–7:11, which tells how the ark of God was brought into the temple (2 Chr 5:2–14 || 1 Kgs 8:1–11), how the temple was dedicated to YHWH (2 Chr 6:1–11 || 1 Kgs 8:12–21), how Solomon prayed at this occasion (2 Chr 6:12–42 || 1 Kgs 8:22–53; Ps 132:8–10), and how sacrifices were offered on the altar and a festival celebrated (2 Chr 7:1–11 || 1 Kgs 8:54, 62–66). Although the Dtr source text 1 Kgs 8 was followed fairly slavishly in the majority of the Chronicler's version, some conspicuous deviations appear at the end of Solomon's prayer and in the concluding section (O'Kennedy 2006). The Chronicler omitted 1 Kgs 8:50b–51, 53; and 2 Chr 6:40 still parallels 1 Kgs 8:52; but the Chronicler chose to insert an excerpt from Ps 132 instead of including 1 Kgs 8:53. The omission of 1 Kgs 8:50b–51, 53 was probably determined by the reference to the exodus

and the Moses tradition in these verses. We have noticed (above) a tendency (although not absolute) in Chronicles to omit references to the exodus and the desert wanderings. The omission at the end of the prayer was filled with Ps 132:8–10. The following might be reasons for the inclusion: (1) In Ps 132:8 the call is made to YHWH to come to his "resting place," together with "the ark of might." We have seen that Solomon is portrayed by the Chronicler as "the man of peace and rest" and the temple as "the house of rest." At the dedication of the temple to YHWH, in Solomon's prayer, the Chronicler's inclusion of an invitation to the deity to come and occupy "your resting place" (2 Chr 6:41) might be a deliberate way of linking the temple with the above-mentioned portrayal of Solomon. (2) Furthermore, Ps 132:9 contains the plea that YHWH will not reject his anointed one and that he will remember his covenant love (*ḥesed*) to David. This might be an allusion to the eternal promise made to David (see the Nathan oracle in 2 Sam 7 || 1 Chr 17), which would be upheld for Solomon.

The inclusion of this excerpt from Ps 132 therefore demonstrates how earlier promises were fulfilled in Solomon and why the Chronicler considered him as the prototype of Israelite kingship (Williamson 2019). Accordingly, the temple becomes the prototype of the rest and peace associated with YHWH. The temple and the cultic worship taking place there reflect the harmonious interchange between Israel's God and his people. The temple symbolizes a reality that must have been pervasive in the Chronicler's society as well.

Can we then assume that the Chronicler already had access to a book of Psalms? It is noteworthy that almost all the Chronicler's quotations of Psalm materials come from books 4 and 5 of the Psalter, which is considered the latest part of that composition (DeClaissé-Walford 2014). This brings Berlin to the following conclusion: "I have no explanation for the Chronicler's preference for psalms in Books 4–5 over other psalms that were, I assume, known to him. I observe, though, that many psalms in Books 4 and 5 of the Psalter feature the terms *lhwdwt* [to give thanks] and *lhll* [to praise] and that these are precisely the Chronicler's terms to indicate cultic praise" (2007, 33). Williamson agrees that the terminology for cultic praise played a role in the Chronicler's choice of Psalms material (2019, 421).

The reception of earlier biblical traditions by the Chronicler that we have considered in this section indeed shows his genius in applying transmitted literary materials of the past in his new sociohistorical circumstances, thereby facilitating a new self-understanding among all Israel.

7. Reception *of* Chronicles

The inner-biblical reception that we observe in Chronicles (see §6 above) did not cease after the book had taken its final canonized form. What applies to all other literature—indeed, to all forms of art—also applies to Chronicles.

After its completion, the book was absorbed into further appropriations by later readers, faith communities, and scholars. An interest in the reception history of Chronicles thus flows naturally from an interest in the rhetorical motivations for appropriating a variety of older traditions in the book and in the reception witnessed in the book itself (see again §6). Therefore, the discussion now moves from reception *in* the book of Chronicles, to the reception *of* Chronicles in later interpretative traditions over time, "including religion, literature, art, music, and scholarship" (French 2014, 4).

When can one claim that a later work contains a reception of earlier literature, and on what basis? This methodological question remains disputed in scholarship. In our present discussion, to avoid the danger of being too comprehensive, we depart from the assumption that reception can either be deduced from direct quotations of, or allusions to, texts unique in Chronicles (not occurring in Samuel-Kings or in any other biblical witnesses), or from theological themes unique to Chronicles (such as idealized portrayals of David and Solomon; the promotion of Levite interests; immediate retribution; and emphasis on Passover). One can find more comprehensive discussions on whether later literature reflects receptions of Chronicles or not, available in secondary literature (Kalimi 2009; Sawyer 2013; French 2014, 2016, 2019; Pajunen 2017).

7.1 Chronicles in Ezra-Nehemiah

We start the discussion with reference to another example of inner-biblical reception, exploring the reception of Chronicles in Ezra-Nehemiah. Diachronic research into the latter's composition offers a glimpse of the very complex processes that brought about its final form (Pakkala 2004, 2006; J. L. Wright 2004, 2008; Boda and Redditt 2008; Heckl 2016, 2018). However, there is still no consensus on the composition of the book.

A fact that is crystal clear, however, is that Ezra 1 (vv. 1–4) starts with the same narration and quotation from an edict of the Persian king Cyrus as the section closing the book of Chronicles in 2 Chr 36 (vv. 22–23, with the last part of the quotation absent here). In this verbal similarity, one not only observes that the Chronicler and the writer of Ezra (particularly chs. 1–6) both held the Achaemenid emperor in high esteem, but also both claim that Cyrus was fulfilling the order of YHWH, the God of Israel. The verbal similarity between the ending of Chronicles and Ezra 1 therefore attests to the same ideological positioning vis-à-vis the Persian Empire. Scholars are not in full agreement on whether the section was duplicated from 2 Chronicles 36 and added to Ezra 1, or whether the direction of influence was the reverse. A minority of scholars even postulate that both texts quoted the decree from a common document or source. Yet it seems more likely that this section was added to both books by

a redactor at a later stage (probably by the end of the 3rd c. BCE; see below) to create one narrative running from the beginning of Chronicles to the end of Ezra-Nehemiah. Such a redactor would have observed that similar positive attitudes toward the Persian imperial government are evident in both books, and that this specific claim of Cyrus being ordered by YHWH to release the exiled Judahites and Israelites provides an appropriate link to illustrate the connection between the two books. This redactor also must have known that the (re)building of the temple forms a central theme in Chronicles (1 Chr 28–2 Chr 7) and in Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 1–6). The reference to Cyrus pledging his support for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem thus became a useful theme to connect the two literary works.

As we have seen above (§3.2), earlier scholarship assumed that the Chronicler wrote both Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. Thus it was easy to explain the similar tone in Chronicles and (particularly) the temple rebuilding account in Ezra 1–6. This view has been abandoned (Japhet 1968); the two works are now considered to be separate, with different authorships (although they both had their sociohistorical setting in Jerusalem in the restoration period). Scholars furthermore conclude that Ezra 1–6 must have been the last addition to finalize the book, and that this section is therefore younger than Chronicles (Williamson 1983, 1985). This confirms that, to build his own work, the writer of Ezra 1–6 could have latched on to certain themes in Chronicles, yet while including other themes (Edelman 2009).

In Ezra's description of the completion and dedication of the temple, the writer took over certain motives from Chronicles. These common motives are present in Chronicles but not in the parallel account in the book of Kings. A further motive that resembles the same in Chronicles is the inclusion of foreigners in the celebration of Passover in Ezra 6 (see v. 21). The inclusion of foreigners in the ritual does not correspond exactly with the description of Passover in the Hezekiah (2 Chr 30) and Josiah (2 Chr 35) narratives in Chronicles. However, the tendency to widen the scope of priestly service to the Levites and laypeople is already present in Chronicles. It is highly likely that the Chronicler continued the development of merging Dtn and Priestly ideas in the so-called Holiness material (Lev 17–26) to widen the understanding of, for example, the Levites' role in the cult (Jonker 2020c). This same development can be seen in Ezra 6, where this tendency to open the cultic celebration far beyond the original Priestly portrayal is featured. The more inclusive understanding of cultic participation therefore had its origin in H (where the Dtn idea of Levite participation was merged with the more exclusive Priestly ideas). Then the Chronicler expanded on this idea in his description of the Passover celebrations of Hezekiah and Josiah, whose idea the writer of Ezra 1–6 then took over from Chronicles to expand it even further (Jonker 2021d).

7.2 Post-Chronistic Reflections in Other Biblical Literature

In the last decade or more, HB scholars started emphasizing that the influence of older literature on younger literature in the biblical compositional history should not be seen as exclusively linear and one-directional (Choi 2010; Jonker 2014a, 2014c). Particularly in Pentateuch criticism, the idea of one-directional influence from older to younger literature became prominent. Scholars now know that many dynamics of the HB's literary formation, including finalization of the Pentateuch and Dtr History as well as the formation of books such as Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, continued into the Achaemenid period and even into Hellenistic times. Thus it has become plausible to hypothesize that the interplay among these literary dynamics could have stimulated bidirectional influence. In other words, as older literature influences younger literature, younger literature also exercises influence on the later stages of composition/redaction of the older literature.

The same can be assumed for Chronicles. It seems highly likely that the formation of Chronicles was profoundly influenced by Dtr literature (especially Samuel and Kings) as well as Priestly traditions (as from H—see §2.2 above). However, it is also likely that Chronicles (in its nearly finalized form) exercised influence on some of the late Priestly and Dtr redactions (Frevel 2022). Two texts, Num 16–18 and Ezek 44 (as part of 40–48), may notably contain material reflecting post-Chronistic critical responses. The background to these responses is most likely the development of the Levite profile in Chronicles (see §§ 5.4 and 6.2 above). We have seen earlier that the Chronicler probably took his cue from the development of H, where traditional Priestly views on the Levites' role in the Jerusalem cult were merged with the more positive Dtn tradition, where the Levites are already described as holy. With the redefinition of holiness in H (Lev 17–26) to include everyday life in its area of application, the Chronicler boldly elevated the Levites to near equal footing with the Aaronide priests. This strengthening of the Levite profile reaches its climax in the Passover accounts in the Hezekiah and Josiah narratives. Such is the subtext of Chronicles: the Aaronide priests cannot claim exclusive access to holiness, and therefore to holy spaces and rituals, with the Levites only serving in subordinate positions in the cult (Rhyder 2019). The Levites have the same status as the Aaronide priests and, except for the sin offering, may perform all cultic functions.

In the most recent studies on the finalization of the Pentateuch, the book of Numbers has proven to be of great significance (Römer 2002, 2008; Seebass 2008; Zenger and Frevel 2008; Nihan 2008, 2013b). Numbers was probably composed and redacted to form a bridge between the non-P and P materials of Genesis to Leviticus, on the one hand, and Deuteronomy, on the other (Frevel 2014). In a thorough investigation into this book, Achenbach has postulated that

three theocratic reworkings during the fourth century BCE concluded Numbers and thereby the Pentateuch (2003, 2007). One of these late theocratic reworkings is the so-called Korah legend in Num 16–18. In this section, Korah and some Reubenites challenge Moses and Aaron, claiming that they have gone too far in stipulating that only the Aaronide priesthood could be considered holy. In Num 16:3, Korah and the Reubenites state: "You have gone too far [*rab-lākem*]! All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them. So why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of YHWH?" Moses then responds in anger, rejecting their claim:

> You Levites have gone too far [*rab-lākem*]! . . . Hear now, you Levites! Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to allow you to approach him in order to perform the duties of YHWH's tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation and serve them? He has allowed you to approach him, and all your brother Levites with you, yet you seek the priesthood as well! (Num 16:7–10)

This interchange reflects a fierce debate about the status of the Levites within the broader priesthood. Could they be considered to be on equal footing with the Aaronide priests? The narrative line clarifies this once and for all. In the subsequent cultic standoff between Korah and his men vis-à-vis Aaron, YHWH opened the mouth of the earth so that the Levites were swallowed, descending alive into Sheol (Num 16:31–33). This is clearly a repudiation of any Levite aspirations to become an equal partner with the Aaronide priesthood in the cult.

Achenbach postulates that the three theocratic redactions were prompted by the emergence of H in Lev 17–26 as further extension of the Priestly strand (Achenbach 2003, 633; Frevel 2013, 139–40). As we have seen above, H tried to merge some ideas from the Dtn tradition with the P literature and thereby created an openness to rethink the holiness of all institutions, including everyday human life. The fact that H expanded the sphere of holiness to such an extent would have encouraged minor groups, such as the Levites, to claim holiness for themselves also (Rhyder 2021). Therefore, Num 16–18 could probably be seen as a post-Chronistic redaction still associated with the theocratic sentiments of the other redactions, but responding to another literary work that also emerged in the fourth century BCE, Chronicles (Mathys 2008, 2021; Jonker 2019c).

We can thus observe bidirectional influence here: first, the Holiness legislation of Lev 17–26 responded to the Priestly tradition included in parts of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The Holiness legislation then prompted some theocratic redactions in Numbers but also influenced the Chronicler in constructing his book. Chronicles specifically thematized the holiness of the Levites. Subsequently, Chronicles prompted those responsible for the theocratic redactions in Numbers to develop a further phase of redaction, in the narrative about Korah's rebellion and its ramifications (Num 16–18). This pentateuchal

text therefore represents a clear, albeit negative, reception of Chronicles, probably one of the earliest in its long reception history.

Another text that might have been part of the Persian-period debate about holiness and the status of the Levites is Ezek 44, which forms part of the concluding unit in chs. 40–48 (Konkel 2001; Häner 2014; MacDonald 2015; Kilchör 2017a, 2017b, 2018). Earlier scholarship considered Ezekiel (especially Ezek 44) as the link between the Dtn portrayal of the Levites as integral part of the priesthood, on the one hand, and the Priestly portrayal, where the Levites are not considered to be priests, on the other (Wellhausen 1885; Gese 1957). They attributed these diverging views to the time of Josiah. Gunneweg modified the earlier view, however. He did not attribute this difference to the time of Josiah but rather saw it as a reflection of some priestly conflicts between former Jerusalem priests and some non-Jerusalem and Levite priests in the postexilic era. Gunneweg also suggested that Ezek 44 and Num 18 were composed by the same hands (Gunneweg 1965). Scholarship has also confirmed that some relationship exists between Num 16–18 and Ezek 44 (Cook 1995). Above, we have seen that Num 16–18 was probably influenced by Chronicles. The question arises whether one could also postulate any relationship between Ezek 44 and Chronicles?

Ezekiel 44, like the texts discussed above, deals with the status of the Levites. The most pertinent part about the Levites is the pericope in vv. 6–14. The prophecy is directed against "the rebellious house, . . . the house of Israel" (v. 6). They are accused of having admitted foreigners and uncircumcised people into the holy sanctuary and have therefore profaned the temple. The Levites have also not attended to the holy things. Verses 9–14 clarify that the Levites had to carry the punishment for the defilement of the holy place. It is noteworthy that "the rebellious house" is accused here in exactly the same phrase as in Num 16: "Enough of all your abominations" (v. 6 ESV, *rab-lākem*) or, as in the NRSVue rendering of Num 16:3 and 7, "You have gone too far!" This phrase occurs eight times in the HB: Num 16:3, 7; Deut 1:6; 2:3; 3:19; 1 Kgs 12:28; Ezek 44:6; 45:9. In Deut 1:6; 2:3 and 1 Kgs 12:28, *rab-lākem* is used in a temporal sense ("long enough"); in Deut 3:19 it refers to the abundance of livestock; Num 16:3, 7 and Ezek 44:6 relate it explicitly to the issue of holiness; and Ezek 45:9 uses it to declare that enough violence and oppression have been committed by the "princes of Israel." The collocation is thus not unique to priestly parlance, but it does indeed show a clear textual link between Num 16 and Ezek 44. The contents of the accusation, as well as the punishment of the Levites, are related to the holy things: "They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near to any of my sacred offerings, the things that are most sacred; but they shall bear their shame and the consequences of the abominations that they have committed" (Ezek 44:13). In Ezek 44 a clear contrast is drawn between the Levites discussed in vv. 6–14 and the "Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok"

in vv. 15–16. The Zadokites, here portrayed as priests from the tribe of Levi, are associated positively with the holy things and places in the temple. It is also noteworthy in Ezekiel that Zadok occurs only in chs. 40–48 and not in the rest of the book. Zadok is, however, often called a *homo novus* in the cultic history, with this priest only receiving ancestry in the genealogies of Chronicles, in 1 Chr 6:8 (Schaper 2000; Hunt 2006). In Chronicles, this is the only instance in the HB where Zadok is embedded in a genealogy. Some scholars argue that the Zadokites only became an important part of the priesthood after the exile and that this genealogical embedding was an attempt to increase the group's influence in the postexilic era. If this is true, it means that Ezek 40–48, as the only section in the book where Zadok occurs as active priest, should also be dated in the postexilic period as a late addition to proto-Ezekiel.

Given the late dating of the final section's addition to proto-Ezekiel and considering the similar terminology, one may assume that Ezek 44 was another reception (like the Korah legend in Num 16) of the more open understanding of the Levites' status in Chronicles. In Ezek 44, we find a similar pushback against Levite aspirations as in the Korah legend of Num 16. Once again, the criticism against the Levites is formulated in terms of holiness. The Chronicler's reception of the democratizing effect of the Holiness legislation prompted the very positive stance on the Levites that we witness in the book. However, Chronicles, in turn, was received in later (theocratic) contexts in which the old Priestly understandings about the Levites were reinforced.

7.3 Post-Chronistic Receptions in Deuterocanonical and Extrabiblical Literature

In recent years, some scholars have started engaging the question whether Samuel-Kings or Chronicles was considered more authoritative in the late Second Temple era (Ben Zvi 2006c; Pajunen 2017). Although there is general agreement that Chronicles did in fact exercise some influence in this period, views diverge on whether its usage was due to it being considered authoritative. Ben Zvi answers the question negatively. After studying a wide range of literary materials, he comes to the following conclusion: "Besides the parallel account of 1 Esdras, T. Mos. 2.5–9, and the material concerning Manasseh's repentance, we did not find further evidence pointing to its authoritativeness as an account of the monarchic history in the late Second Temple period" (Ben Zvi 2006a, 259). Ben Zvi relates Chronicles' lack of authority to the facts that the book was included in the Ketuvim (i.e., the third part, the "Writings") of the HB, and not among the Nevi'im (i.e., the second part, the "Prophets"), such as the Dtr History; that the book is called *Paraleipomena* (the remaining things) in the LXX; that Chronicles is not included in the earliest Syriac translation of the HB; and that some rabbinical voices from much later periods also deemed the book negatively.

Although not in total disagreement with Ben Zvi, Pajunen presents a more nuanced point of view. He takes the presentation of history about the kings of Judah as a case study to examine how Chronicles influenced later literature. He established that in general (but not without exceptions) the traditions about the kings of Judah developed from more complex portrayals in Samuel-Kings to more idealized presentations in later literature. Josephus, writing in the first century CE, often gave a unique twist to these histories. The development of these traditions through the ages did not proceed in a straight line, but writers from the second century BCE often used Samuel-Kings and Chronicles eclectically, while also inserting their own views into their literature. From his investigations, however, Pajunen exposes a much stronger interest in Chronicles in the early Hellenistic period (2017, 583).

One therefore does not see clear influence of Chronicles and the other historical traditions in the literature from Qumran. Although signs of awareness of Chronicles appear among the Dead Sea Scrolls (see discussion below), it was not held in high regard. The same applies for the traditions that developed during the Hasmonean era, as well as for the Christian New Testament. It seems that the societal discourses of those periods were embodied in their own group-specific writings (such as the books of Maccabees or the Gospels), whereas the larger histories of old concerning the Jewish people in general were of less interest in the fragmented Jewish society.

After the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 CE, the situation changed again. Pajunen puts it as follows: "There was renewed interest in these traditions . . . after the destruction of the temple, when it was again necessary to highlight the unity of the people and hence also their common heritage. . . . Both Chronicles and Samuel–Kings, or traditions drawn from them, continued to be influential in all treatments of the kings of Judah. As it could no longer be decided which line of tradition was correct on all points, both traditions needed to be preserved" (2017, 584).

Some recent studies have focused specifically on the reception of Chronicles at Qumran (Knoppers 2003b, 109–11). Only one fragment of text, 4Q118 (also called 4QChr), might be directly connected to Chronicles. In the two columns of text (of only a few lines) on the fragment, the second column's letters can be brought into connection with 2 Chr 28:27–29:3, where the transition from Ahaz's reign to Hezekiah's is narrated. However, this fragment can just as well have another origin. As we noted above (§2.2), Auld (1994) hypothesized a common source, The Book of Two Houses, appropriated in different ways in Samuel-Kings and in Chronicles. Some scholars think that the Qumran fragment may rather be a remainder of the unprovenanced source suggested by Auld. Another theory is that 4Q118 was brought to Qumran only during the Hasmonean period, around 50–25 BCE (Trebolle Barrera 2000). Brooke agrees with this theory: "Its late arrival [at Qumran] corresponds with the apparent

sectarian reluctance to invoke Chronicles, probably because the authoritativeness of the work was endorsed as part of the political agenda of the Hasmonaeans. . . . While the Hasmonaeans were in power, particularly in their heyday, . . . there really may not have been any copy of Chronicles at Qumran" (2006, 40). The 4Q118 fragment is, therefore, no clear-cut evidence that Chronicles was valued and read at Qumran.

However, other Qumran literature may indeed point in that direction. Some portrayals of the sanctuary found in the Temple Scroll (11QT[a]) might resemble the *tabnît*, "plan," that David gave his son Solomon for building the temple. The section in which this information occurs (1 Chr 28:11–19) belongs to the Chronicler's own material and does not occur in Samuel-Kings. The Temple Scroll might depend on Chronicles, but more likely both utilized a common source. Resemblances to Chronicles appear also in the War Scroll (1QM). The twelve rotating military divisions mentioned in this Qumran text may come from 1 Chr 27:1–15 (also part of the Chronicler's own material), where a similar military organization is reflected. Stronger evidence comes from a variety of calendrical texts, 4Q320–330, that reflect a similar division of the cultic personnel as 1 Chr 24–27 (part of the Chronicler's own material).

Other themes in the Chronicler's own material resemble some Qumran literature. The Apocryphon of Joshua (4Q522), for example, reflects a part of Chronicles in its phraseology (1 Chr 21:18–22:1). Furthermore, one of the Qumran psalms not represented in the HB Psalter has a heading with the wording "A prayer of Manasseh and all with him, [because of] the king of Assyria." In the HB, the tradition of a prayer of Manasseh occurs only in Chronicles and not in Samuel-Kings (see below). Although many of these textual witnesses point to the Qumran scribes having some familiarity with Chronicles, the point remains valid that Chronicles did not receive much attention in this community.

Some of the apocryphal (deuterocanonical) and pseudepigraphic books also reflect connections to the biblical book of Chronicles. The book of 1 Esdras, dated in the second century BCE, contains a compilation of texts from Chronicles (2 Chr 35–36), Ezra (1:21–22; 3:1–5:6), and Nehemiah (7:73–8:12). It is also clear from 1 Esdras (in Greek) that this book does not rely on the Dtr version of Israel's history at all. In some cases, 1 Esdras contradicts information given in Chronicles, but this is due to its own material and not due to contradictory information from the Dtr version (Ben Zvi 2006a). The Testament (or Assumption) of Moses, a Jewish pseudepigraphon from the first century BCE, provides an overview of the history of Judah. The historical image reflected in this work can be related to both the Dtr version and Chronicles, but also to parts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Thus, one cannot deduce from the overall construction that Chronicles was used. However, some information referred to in this work is unique to Chronicles. The numbers of kings mentioned in ch. 2:5–9 of the work can only be found in the Chronicler's version of the same history. This

brings Ben Zvi to conclude, "If the numbers given in T. Mos. 2.5–9 are taken seriously, then these verses do not reflect Dtr History, but instead seem to reflect 1–2 Chronicles" (2006c, 248).

The Prayer of Manasseh is another significant source for our study of the reception of Chronicles. It is well known that the Chronicler's version of King Manasseh's history (2 Chr 33:1–20) differs significantly from the Dtr version (2 Kgs 21:1–18). The Chronicles version mentions that Manasseh was taken captive by the Assyrians and that while in shackles in Babylon, he repented and prayed to YHWH. Thereafter, he was pardoned by YHWH and continued his reign in Jerusalem. This stands in sharp contrast to the Dtr version, where Manasseh is depicted as the worst of all kings, for whom no pardon was available. The Chronicles text, however, does not give access to the contents of Manasseh's prayer. We do find versions of a prayer of Manasseh in extrabiblical and pseudepigraphic literature (Stenstrup 2001; Abadie 2003; Hulbert 2008). Two prayers *for* Manasseh appear among the noncanonical psalms found at Qumran (4Q381) (Pajunen 2012, 2013; Schuller 2018), but also a pseudepigraphic version, originally written in Greek (although some think it is a translation from a Semitic original) and originating in the second to first centuries BCE, or even in the first to second centuries CE. Pajunen indicates that these prayers were used together with the Chronicler's version of Manasseh's history in some late texts such as 2 Baruch. According to him, this clearly shows that the earlier receptions favored Chronicles, whereas the later works gave a more balanced portrayal (Pajunen 2017, 578–79). Ben Zvi (2006c, 251) emphasizes that it would be wise not to make too bold a claim from 2 Baruch about the reception of Chronicles. Further resemblances between Chronicles and some other apocrypha and pseudepigrapha also occur. However, they are not conclusively related to Chronicles.

Some evidence in the ancient historiographies, however, give more explicit witness to the reception of Chronicles in later contexts. The work of the Jewish historian Eupolemus, who wrote in the middle of the second century BCE, is often seen as evidence for determining the *terminus ante quem* of Chronicles (see §3.1). Eupolemus's *History of the Kings of Judah*, available to us only through its reuse in the Christian polemicist Eusebius's *Praeparatio evangelica* (4th c. CE), included some information that can be traced back to Chronicles. One clear example is the reference to King David's preparations for building the temple of Jerusalem, as witnessed in 1 Chr 22 and 29. These chapters belong to the Chronicler's own material and are not present in the Samuel-Kings version. The references to these preparations in Eupolemus's writings can therefore only stem from Chronicles. Even the explanation why David could not build the temple because he had shed too much blood (1 Chr 22:8, which is part of the Chronicler's *Sondergut*), is mentioned by Eupolemus. However, one should note that Eupolemus also made use of information from the Dtr version

of Judah's history and also occasionally included information in contradiction of all biblical accounts.

The same applies to Josephus, another Jewish historian who wrote his *Jewish Antiquities* in Rome about two decades after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. In his work, he drew extensively from the HB historiographical traditions. Interestingly, however, Josephus followed Chronicles in all the additions to the Dtr *Vorlage*, but not in the omissions. It therefore seems that this historian did not select one version over the other, but that he rather wanted to preserve both versions of Israel's ancient history. The fact that Josephus included the Chronicler's unique material into his work is no indication that he valued the book exclusively.

From this discussion it thus is clear that Chronicles was read and used since its completion till the early Christian era. However, there are only a few cases where one may argue that Chronicles was used exclusively over and against the Dtr version, or some other biblical traditions. Chronicles was thus one among many sources from which later interpreters drew their information.

7.4 Chronicles in the Christian New Testament and in the Early Church

Verheyden remarks that "Chronicles takes a modest but by no means unimportant place in the list of writings from the HB/LXX that have found an echo in the New Testament" (2013, 58). Although Kalimi admits that there are almost no direct quotations in the New Testament from Chronicles, he nevertheless finds various other passages that may echo Chronicles (2009). Most of Kalimi's hypotheses on the use of Chronicles in the New Testament have been refuted, however (Williamson 2010; Verheyden 2013). Kalimi relies too strongly on his own assumptions and resolute will to find parallels in the New Testament (which he considers part of the Jewish literary heritage). In one case, however, the use of Chronicles in the accounts of Zechariah's death, Verheyden agrees with Kalimi and even provides more arguments to explain the differences that do occur in the New Testament texts. This case study on 2 Chr 24:20–22 will be discussed in the commentary.

The early church fathers were especially interested in the Chronicler's version of King Manasseh's reign. The unique twist in the Chronicler's version of the royal narrative seemed to have provided the Christian fathers with excellent material to advocate repentance and to expound on redemption and the grace of God. French (2014, 72–73) summarizes the views of the Fathers in the following words: "The overwhelming majority of early Church Fathers accepted Manasseh's repentance without reservation. Their reception of Chronicles' Manasseh indicates that they conceived of redemption as an interior event of independent individual transformation, a private matter that is in immediate effect."

7.5 Chronicles in Rabbinic Traditions and Jewish Art

We have seen above (§1) that one of the fathers of critical Old Testament scholarship, Julius Wellhausen, denigrated Chronicles as "midrash" and claimed that it therefore should not be treated with the same gravity as other biblical texts. The word "midrash"—with the verbal root *drš*, "to seek"—means "an exposition" or simply "a story," and it occurs only twice in the HB, in 2 Chr 13:22 and 24:27 (Neusner 2004; Bakhos 2009). In Jewish interpretation, the rabbis used midrash to show the relevance of the Bible to their contemporaries and to teach moral lessons from it (Bakhos 2012).

Wellhausen's designation of the book has contributed to Chronicles being neglected in critical scholarship for quite some time, as noted above. However, some modern scholars point out that Chronicles represents an early stage in the development of midrashic interpretation and should for that reason be given its due attention (Willi 1972). In Chronicles, more than in any other biblical book, we see that the writers during the late Persian or early Hellenistic period had some written historiographic traditions available that were reinterpreted for new sociohistorical situations. These strategies of interpretation, typical of later rabbinical appropriations, can already be observed in Chronicles.

An axiom that underlies midrash as interpretation strategy is that "there is no before or after in the Torah" (French 2019, 713). This means that "texts can be called in to highlight and explain other biblical texts, even if they are in a different book, an entirely different context, and apparently unrelated to the topic at hand. . . . Biblical passages are linked together in order to explain one another. Interpretations are based upon analogy with another, more transparent, text" (Teugels 2011, 240–41). It is therefore not surprising that some early rabbis (R. Simon and R. Hama as quoted in Lev. R. 1.3 and Ruth R. 2.1) already recommended that Chronicles should be interpreted as a midrash. French therefore notices that the rabbinical commentators on Chronicles used intertextuality to relate unknown persons mentioned in Chronicles (compared to Samuel-Kings) to known persons in the primary history of the HB. Whether these known persons from the Torah or Dtr History could fit into the chronological order of Chronicles or not did not matter. It seems that the rabbis (e.g., in Lev. R. 1.3; Ruth R. 2.1–4; and b. Megillah 13a) denied any introduction of new people into the official record of ancient Israel on account of the Chronicler's version (French 2019). Therefore, a total of eighty-six names from the Chronicler's genealogies are interpreted by the rabbis. With fifty-nine occurrences of these in the genealogy of Judah, clearly "the numbers indicate that the Rabbis exercised utmost vigilance over Chronicles' genealogies in general and over Judah's genealogy in particular" (French 2019, 720).

French speculates about why the rabbis interpreted Chronicles in the way they did. She relates it to the late origin of the book: "Chronicles' interpretative

recasting of the Primary History opened the way for reshaping biblical tradition through midrash. Chronicles thus provided the sages with the means and opportunity to maintain Torah's relevance for the Israel of their day" (French 2019, 725).

The classical rabbinic literature of the centuries before the Middle Ages contains numerous references to, and debates about, texts in Chronicles, but this is not the appropriate place to comprehensively discuss them. Two examples representing the early rabbinic interpretations of Chronicle suffice.

The first example is the delightful information in some rabbinical literature that Chronicles was one of the books (together with Ezra, Job, and Daniel) that could be read to the high priest to keep him awake during the night before Yom Kippur. The Mishnah Yoma recommends that if a high priest is uneducated, the literati had to expound on Chronicles or the other mentioned books to the high priest to keep him from falling asleep. The background to this is the prescription in Deut 23:10, where it is indicated that men who had had an ejaculation at night were considered unclean for a day and could only be cleansed through bathing by the next evening. If this would happen to a high priest on the night before the Day of Reconciliation, he would not be able to perform the necessary cultic duties due to his uncleanness. Therefore, the rabbis made the ruling that the high priest should be kept awake during that night and that an exposition of (inter alia) Chronicles could assist in this regard. Some later Jewish intellectuals (such as Rashi of the 11th c. CE and Maimonides of the 12th c.) have speculated why Chronicles—together with Ezra, Job, and Daniel—were selected for this purpose, with no clear answer to this question.

The second example is found among the rabbinic interpretations of the prayer of Jabez, mentioned as a short narrative insertion in the genealogy at 1 Chr 4:9–10. This prayer proves to be a popular text for interpretation throughout the history of reception. In the Talmud tractate Temurah (b. Tem. 16a), a Jewish teacher indicates that Jabez was actually Othniel, who is known from the account in Judg 3:9–11. The teacher motivates this identification by relating Othniel's name to the Hebrew words for "answer" and "God." According to him, the name Othniel already indicates that God would grant Jabez's request, as stated in the Chronicles text. In the tractate, Othniel is further credited by Rabbi Abbahu for restoring the teaching of Moses that had been forgotten (French 2019). It is not completely clear why the rabbis gave explicit attention to this section from Chronicles. It could be because Jabez is not attested elsewhere in the HB. French suggests that the rabbis turned to interpretation because they did not think Chronicles had sufficient authority to be the only witness to Jabez in the HB. These two examples offer a mere glimpse of the rich and variegated rabbinic interpretations of Chronicles. However, they reveal the rabbis' unique method of reception and highlight some of the interesting associations with certain texts of Chronicles.

A further mode of rabbinic interpretation can be explored in archaeological discoveries at Dura-Europos. The Dura-Europos wall painting concerns 1 Chr 2:13–15, where David is portrayed as the seventh of seven brothers, the sons of Jesse. Dura-Europos was a city built on an escarpment east of the Euphrates in Mesopotamia. The city existed during the Hellenistic, Parthian, and Roman periods. Excavations in the first half of the twentieth century confirmed that there was also a Jewish diaspora community living there. This is especially attested by the synagogue (built in two phases) found in the excavations, dating from the middle of the third century CE. Sadly, about 70 percent of this site was looted during the Syrian civil war in 2015. Fortunately, some of the great finds of this site had been preserved in museums elsewhere. Wooden panels from the synagogue walls were decorated with numerous paintings depicting narratives from the HB. Detailed research on these well-preserved paintings revealed that no narrative unique to the book of Chronicles had been illustrated in these artworks. However, there is one scene that reflects information from Chronicles. One painting shows David being anointed as king by Samuel the prophet. David stands prominently in front of his brothers, who are also present in the scene. Six brothers are shown. The Chronicler's genealogy in 1 Chr 2:13–15 also mentions six brothers, with David as the seventh and youngest son. The Samuel text about this event (1 Sam 16–17) mentions four sons by name (who are also mentioned in Chronicles, namely Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah/Shimeah, and David). Although the other four are not mentioned in 1 Sam 16, a summary verse (16:10) mentions that Father Jesse had seven sons pass before the prophet Samuel. Only then David was called. Thus, a total of eight sons. The Chronicler's genealogy is the only instance in the HB where it is mentioned that Jesse had seven sons. The Dura-Europos painting, therefore, clearly reflects that the artist had a knowledge of Chronicles.

7.6 Chronicles in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages (from ca. 800–1500 CE) brought some new developments in the reception of Chronicles (French 2014), consonant with the hermeneutical developments during this period. It is especially the Christian church fathers such as Origen, Augustine, Gregory the Great, John Cassian, and St. Jerome who followed the so-called fourfold meaning of Scripture, which, however, many Jewish interpreters also followed. The Christian church fathers' assumption of the fourfold meaning of Scripture guided them to expose meanings that go beyond the literal. They advocated that the exploration of the other levels of meaning had to be done according to the rule of faith and to contribute to the moral development of interpreters and their audiences for whom they interpreted (Jonker and Lawrie 2005; Levy 2018). This development during the Middle Ages resulted from the insight that the allegorical interpretations

associated with the earlier Alexandrian school had to be complemented with understandings rooted in the literal sense of the biblical texts, as advocated in the Antiochene school of interpretation.

Within this intellectual climate, various commentators also turned to Chronicles to expound the polyvalent meanings of the book to contemporary audiences. With the aim of contributing toward the moral development of society, interpreters of Chronicles increasingly started offering the book as a guide for exemplary leadership and good governance, both in church and secular circles. During this phase, many Christian commentators turned to the Chronicler's version of the dynastic promise to David (1 Chr 17:10b–14). Many—such as the author of the first Christian commentary on Chronicles, Rabanus Maurus (ca. 780–856 CE)—argued that the promised son in the Chronicles text cannot be associated with David's earthly son, Solomon, but that the promise was rather a divinely inspired pointer toward God's son, Jesus Christ, who came in the fullness of time.

A further development of the Middle Ages was the fresh mode of reception facilitated by illustrated Bibles. Since literacy was low among laypeople, some clergy and artists had the task of illustrating the biblical narratives so that they would become accessible for lay Christians. These illustrations necessarily reflected the theological interpretations of the artists, who in turn reflected the exegetical and hermeneutic climate of their time.

One interesting example is the way in which David is depicted in some of these old Bibles. In the Vivian Bible of the ninth century CE, an illustration of David is given as introduction to the Psalms. In this illustration, David can be seen playing the lyre with only a loose cloth over him: he is mostly naked. This was clearly based on the text of 2 Sam 6:21–22, where the narrative portrays David as dancing nakedly before the slaves. The Samuel text was interpreted in the context of the ninth century CE as showing David's humility. Later illustrated Bibles, such as the thirteenth-century CE *Bible moralisée* (Codex Vindobonensis 2554), depicted David as well-dressed. This illustration relied on the Chronicles version of the incident, where David is indeed portrayed with clothing (1 Chr 15:27). Although this portrayal of David has him fully clothed, the explanation given together with the illustration in this Bible indicates that David was dancing with Jesus Christ, and that his nakedness (which is no longer indicated in the illustration) is proleptic of Christ's suffering (French 2014). The illustration of David in this Bible was therefore not only a deliberate turn toward the Chronicles text but also a reinterpretation of the earlier illustrations of the naked David.

7.7 Chronicles in the Protestant Reformation Period

Under the influence of the Renaissance and humanism, the early Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century and later developed a keen interest in the

original biblical languages. They opposed the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, centralized in the Vatican, to interpret the Scriptures from the Latin translations (that included additional writings other than the HB). The reformers therefore called for a return to the original-language versions, which also resulted in their favoring the shorter version of the Old Testament, as represented in the HB. The Protestant Reformation, consequently, stimulated new interest in the exegesis of biblical texts as well as generated new vernacular translations of the Old and New Testaments from the original languages.

Martin Luther, the most prominent Protestant reformer, also had a keen interest in Chronicles. He found many texts in Chronicles quite useful for interpreting his contemporary world (French 2014). One prominent example is his interpretation of the dynastic promise to David in 1 Chr 17:11–12. In this text Luther saw an indication that the promise did not refer to Solomon (the one coming from David's body, according to the Samuel text). The promised offspring of David, according to Chronicles, would proceed to build a house for the Lord. Luther believed that no mortal could build a house for the Lord and that the promise was therefore a prefiguration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Luther further motivated his christological interpretation of the dynastic promise from another line in 1 Chr 17:17 (part of David's prayer in response to the promise), which is difficult to translate. One possibility is to take it as "and you look upon me as a man of high rank, O LORD God" (as suggested in a footnote in ESV). Luther insisted that his own translation (rendered in English as "Thou hast regarded me as in the form of a Man who is God the LORD on high") was the correct one. According to his explanation, David knew that his true son, whom God will raise from him, will be the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Luther, furthermore, referred to Chronicles during a time of a possible invasion by the Ottoman Empire. He used the Chronicler's portrayal of King Jehoshaphat to encourage his contemporaries to pray so that they could avoid God's wrath (2 Chr 20). From the sixteenth century, Protestants in this tradition thus used Jehoshaphat's prayer as a case study to teach their communities about the hows and whys of Christian (*evangelische*) prayer. Martin Luther himself had objections against how prayer and praying was described in the prayer books of his age, particularly against the fact that prayer was portrayed as an achievement by the one who is praying (Haemig 2004). He therefore referred to many prayers in the Bible, inter alia Jehoshaphat's prayer in Chronicles, as examples of how prayer should function in the Christian community. Many Lutheran prayer books of the sixteenth century included Jehoshaphat's prayer as a model to be used in times of despair, temptation, persecution, or great need. It was even recommended as a prayer in times of war against overwhelming enemies. However, Jehoshaphat was also portrayed as a model supplicant. His example was used to encourage Lutherans to address their prayers to the right person, Jesus Christ, and not the saints. One should not be ashamed to go before

the faith community to pray to God in times of need. The same lines of interpretation can be seen in some of the Lutheran sermons of the sixteenth century. What is noticeable in all these examples is that the ambivalent figure of the king in the Chronicler's portrayal seems not to function in any of these interpretations. Jehoshaphat is simply the model for faithful praying, and no shadow sides of the Chronicler's narrative are reflected in the interpretations. These examples make clear that Luther's and the Lutheran tradition's interpretations of Chronicles were suffused by the hermeneutical strategies of contextualization in their own time.

The same applies to the interpretations of Chronicles by the famous church musician and composer of the Reformation period, Johann Sebastian Bach. After a few shorter stints as organist of parishes in the east of Germany, in 1723 Bach became the choirmaster of the "Thomanerchor," a famous boys' choir affiliated with the Protestant St. Thomas Church in the city of Leipzig. He occupied this position until his death in 1750. His responsibilities included not only leading practices and performances of the Thomas choir (whose history goes back to 1212, and which still exists and performs regularly in the same church in Leipzig), but also composing cantatas for every Sunday's worship service.

During Bach's time, and even until today, some Protestant circles mustered strong opposition against the use of musical instruments and choir performances in worship services (Kleinig 2003; French 2016). In 1733, Bach bought a three-volume study Bible containing Martin Luther's translation and commentary, which was also annotated by a Protestant theologian of Wittenberg, Abraham Calov (also known as Calovius). Calov strongly opposed the pietistic movement in Protestantism, which probably explains Bach's interest in this Bible. What makes Bach's copy of the so-called Calov Bible so remarkable is that he underlined certain texts and made some further notes in the page margins.

Three texts in Chronicles were highlighted by Bach. The first was 1 Chr 25:1, which reads: "David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals" (cf. Luther Bibel). Bach underlined these words, but also Calov's annotation of the verse: "They were to turn God's word into spiritual songs and psalms and sing them at the temple set to the accompaniment of music played on instruments" (trans. Kleinig 2003, 7). Bach's high regard for what is written in this verse is indicated by his "NB" in the margin, together with his handwritten remark: "This chapter is the true foundation for all God-pleasing church music" (trans. Kleinig 2003, 8).

Bach's second remark relates to 1 Chr 28:21. It suggests that the organization of the clergy was part of the temple blueprint that David had received from YHWH. Calov added, "It is clear from this divine model and the whole prophetic directive given to David that he did nothing by his own efforts, in building the temple and arranging the divine service, but did everything for it

and its offices according to the model which the Lord presented to him through his Spirit" (2003, 8). Clearly, Bach was impressed by Calov's comment, and he himself added in handwriting: "NB. A wonderful proof that, together with the other arrangements for the divine service, music too was instituted by God's Spirit through David" (2003, 8).

The third Chronicles text that clearly made an impression on Bach was 2 Chr 5:11–14. On this, Abraham Calov commented that it illustrates "how the glory of God appeared during the performance of beautiful music" (2003, 8). Bach entered the following remark in the margin of verse 13: "NB. In a reverent performance of music God is always present with his grace" (2003, 8). Kleinig is of the opinion that this one sentence contains Bach's whole theology of church music.

The elaborate descriptions of the Jerusalem temple cult in Chronicles thus provided Johann Sebastian Bach with relevant information that he appropriated in his contemporary context to oppose the pietistic movements in Protestantism and to theologically legitimate his own understanding of the role of church music.

7.8 Chronicles in Feminist Interpretation

Since the 1960s biblical scholarship has witnessed a turn toward contextual interpretation. One prominent branch within this movement was the development of various modes of feminist interpretation. It is not the task of the present discussion to go into the detail of the various phases of development, or into the distinctions made between feminist, womanist, gender, and queer approaches. These can be traced with the assistance of some excellent overviews that have appeared in recent years (Newsom, Ringe, and Lapsley 2012; Schottroff, Wacker, and Rumscheidt 2012; Byron and Lovelace 2016; Sherwood and Fisk 2017; Scholz 2020).

Although numerous women are mentioned in Chronicles, full feminist engagements of this book have been rare (as an exception, see Kelso 2008, who conducts an Irigarayan reading of the book). Female figures normally appear only in passing remarks in Chronicles, but some exceptions (e.g., the queen of Sheba in the Solomon narrative in 2 Chr 9; and Huldah, the prophetess in the Josiah narrative, in 2 Chr 34) occur in more extensive narratives. Most female names appear in the genealogies of the first nine chapters. These genealogies have therefore attracted several feminist interpretations (Labahn and Ben Zvi 2003; van Wieringen 2011; Lowisch 2017).

Wacker (2012) shares some interesting observations about women in the genealogies: first, some textual traditions and translations of Chronicles let some of the female figures "disappear" from the Masoretic Text; second, some names for clearly female figures are apparently sometimes identified as males in

Chronicles; and third, women are most often mentioned as "sisters of brothers," that is, not as persons in their own right, but as relatives of men. With reference to the mentioning of female figures in the Saul-David history, Wacker states that many women present in the *Vorlage* text of Samuel simply disappear from the Chronicler's equivalent narratives.

A very interesting reference to a woman occurs in the Chronicler's Solomon narrative. In 2 Chr 8:11, the Chronicler reports, "Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter from the city of David to the house that he had built for her." A motivation for this action is given in Solomon's direct speech: "My wife shall not live in the house of King David of Israel, for the places [presumably the rooms] to which the ark of YHWH has come are holy." This text relies on the *Vorlage* in 1 Kgs 9:24, which reads: "But Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house that Solomon had built for her; then he built the Millo." The Chronicler's text differs from the source text in two important respects. First, whereas the Kings text reports that Pharaoh's daughter "went up" herself (*qal* perfect of *ʿlh*), the Chronicler's text has David "bringing her up" (*hiphil* perfect of *ʿlh*). Second, the Chronicler's text has, in addition, a motivation for this action, put in Solomon's direct speech. Furthermore, whereas the text of 1 Kgs 9:24 stands in the Dtr context within which various foreign wives of Solomon are mentioned, this is the first reference to a foreign wife of Solomon in Chronicles. In the Dtr version, the many foreign wives illustrate the apostasy of King Solomon, while the occurrence in Chronicles stands in the literary context of his greatest triumph, namely, the building of the temple for YHWH in Jerusalem. Many explanations for the Chronicler's peculiar presentation have been attempted in scholarship (Jonker 2016c). Wacker, in line with some commentators on this text (Japhet 1993; Klein 2012), remarks: "Behind this, as the reflection placed in Solomon's mouth makes clear, lie both her foreign provenance as the daughter of Pharaoh and her female gender as wife of the king" (2012, 185). Klein also thinks along this line when he remarks, "The Chronicler may represent an early feeling about the uncleanness of women, which would be developed more stringently in postbiblical texts" (2012, 125).

Although from the above-discussed example, Wacker concludes that the Chronicler's text reflects a negative view of females, some further examples in Chronicles point in the opposite direction. In many of the Chronicler's narratives about Judahite kings, wives and children are considered part of the respective kings' success and dedication to YHWH. Remarkably, daughters are consistently named alongside the royal sons. Furthermore, the kings' mothers are regularly named as individuals. However, it seems problematic that, in contrast to the list in 2 Kings, the names of the final seven kings' mothers are absent from the narrative, even in the case of an exemplary king such as Josiah.

A special case in Chronicles is the portrayal of Huldah the prophetess (Jonker 2012a). The text in 2 Chr 34:22–28, in which Huldah is mentioned, is almost

a verbatim quotation from the source text in 2 Kgs 22. However, the Chronicler's version of the Josiah narrative offers a different order of events. Wacker sees significance in the Chronicler's rearrangement (Wacker 2012, 185–86). The Chronicler portrays Huldah and Jeremiah as contemporaries, with Huldah speaking prophetic words of doom, while Jeremiah composes a lament after King Josiah's death. Huldah as female prophet therefore plays a role normally reserved for male prophets. Jeremiah, in contrast, is grouped among the singers. This tendency toward the equality of male and female roles also occurs in some other parts of Chronicles. Wacker points out that the portrayal of Levites (male and female) in Chronicles leaves the same impression. There are also other "unsung heroines" in Chronicles such as Sheerah, who performs the male role of building cities (1 Chr 7:24).

Wacker's study has emphasized that the whole book of Chronicles should be studied to get a thorough impression of how females feature in the Chronicler's world. The discussion above clarifies that a negative bias is certainly present in the book (such as in the case of Solomon's Egyptian wife), but that other parts (e.g., Huldah the prophetess, and Levite singers) reflect gender equality between men and women.

7.9 Chronicles in Contexts of Transition and Reconstruction

Chronicles was clearly meant to contribute to the Jerusalem community's reflection on how to position themselves politically and cultically in the period of transition since the release from exile in 538 BCE. The historiography contained in this book was meant to be a "reforming history" (Jonker 2007b), simultaneously a redescription of the glorious past as well as a reorientation in a new sociopolitical and socioreligious dispensation (Jonker 2003b, 2009a, 2012c; Lipschits, Knoppers, and Oeming 2011; Tal 2011; Janzen 2016, 2021). Such a period of transition foregrounded the question about all Israel's identity as a religious and ethnic community in the Achaemenid province of Yehud (Jonker 2016b), calling for a reinterpretation of authoritative traditions of the past in the changed sociohistorical circumstances. Chronicles clearly fulfilled the function of bridging the inevitable gap between the past and the present in late Persian period Yehud (Japhet 2009).

In this commentator's context of South Africa, the international developments in the last decade of the twentieth century also exercised an immense influence in local and regional politics. The apartheid regime gained control over the legislative in 1948 and suppressed movements and individuals who revolted against the policy of separation of races in this country; suddenly it came to its end in 1990. The Nationalist president of the time unbanned many freedom movements, including the African National Congress, and released

political prisoners, among whom Nelson Mandela was the most important. A process of negotiating a new constitution for South Africa started, and the first democratic elections were held in 1994.

These developments prompted varied reactions in the different communities of the country. Those who were suppressed during the former regime celebrated the fall of apartheid and experienced the transitional period as a release from exile into the promised land. Others, especially those favored by the apartheid regime, had a different experience. Shock and disillusionment about the past atrocities that came to light during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission emerged but also uncertainty about the future dispensation created an intense period of sociopolitical transition. In some Christian communities, particularly in the Dutch Reformed Church that provided the theological and spiritual context within which the apartheid policy could thrive, an interesting question started to emerge during this time of transition: "Why do ministers of the Word now tell us from the Bible that apartheid was a sin, while former ministers, based on the same Bible, told us that apartheid was God's providence for his chosen people on the southern shores of Africa?" This question emerged within church environments that held the Bible in high esteem as the literal and unalterable Word of God. In these circumstances, some ministers started discussing the book of Chronicles with their congregants to create a deeper understanding of the reinterpretation processes that had already been present in the formation of the Bible. Although Chronicles is not at all featured in the Revised Common Lectionary, the book was viewed as a guide to communities of faith who had to navigate through intense periods of sociopolitical and socioreligious transitions. In an analogous way, many ministers and congregants appropriated the hermeneutic of the book of Chronicles in their own contemporary contexts of transition (Jonker 2007b, 2020a).

Another example of the reception of a Chronicles text in the South African and African context dates to the year 2000. After a few years into the new political dispensation in South Africa and during the transition from one millennium to another in 2000, some Christians—mainly from the pentecostal church traditions in South Africa—started speaking out against the moral decay in society as witnessed in the high incidence of criminal offenses, rape, murder, neglect of families, corruption, and the like. A very successful person in the construction industry, Mr. Graham Power, started playing a leading role in creating an awareness that Christians should pray for their country, so that the Lord would bless South Africa again. Power claimed that he saw a vision in the year 2000 in which the text of 2 Chr 7:14 was given to him. The narrative context of this verse follows the completion of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and its dedication to YHWH, the God of Israel. "In the night" (7:12) after Solomon had finished the temple, YHWH appeared to the king with the

call to lead the people in humbling themselves before YHWH in the temple. YHWH declared that the temple is where the people should call on the name of YHWH, especially in times when YHWH seemingly kept back providence from the people. Power saw YHWH's call to Solomon, as witnessed in 2 Chr 7:14, as literally applicable to the South African nation and government. He therefore made financial resources available from his own wealth to start organizing a national prayer meeting in March 2001. A well-known sports stadium in Cape Town was used for the event, which attracted around 45,000 people from all over the country. The focus at this event was clearly on the local context, and the identification of the Israel of Solomon's time with South Africa was strongly evident.

The enthusiastic response to this call to repentance before YHWH led to the widening of the scope and vision of these meetings in following years. Power claimed that he had received another vision in 2002, in which he was called to extend the prayer meetings into the rest of the African continent, which would eventually become God's shining light to the world. The understanding of "the land" in the Chronicles text was thereby expanded to include Christian communities outside South Africa. The result of this movement was the creation of a Global Day of Prayer, which attracted the participation of Christian communities in 156 countries on Pentecost Sunday in 2005. After further visions, Power also established a movement across Africa called "Unashamedly Ethical." This movement was meant to extend the people's repentance and prayer mentioned in 2 Chr 7:14 into the third element of the text, the call to "turn away from their wicked ways."

The debate on a theology of reconstruction on the African continent also relates to Chronicles. After many African states started shedding the yoke of colonialism in the 1960s, a debate developed in theological circles on how the postcolonial reconstruction of societies on the African continent could be facilitated. Some theologians suggested that Ezra-Nehemiah would be an appropriate biblical paradigm to facilitate such a process of reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio 1992; Mugambi 1995). The narrative line of Ezra-Nehemiah obviously played a role in the selection. However, this suggestion was heavily criticized by some South African scholars who highlighted the sociohistorical circumstances of the time of origin of the books and warned against the exclusivist tones in some of its parts (such as Ezra 9–10 and Neh 13) (Farisani 2002a, 2002b; Cezula 2013, 2018). Cezula then suggested another biblical paradigm for a theology of reconstruction on the African continent, the book of Chronicles (2013). He did so on account of the inclusivist tone of the book, in contrast to the exclusivist sentiments in Ezra-Nehemiah. According to Cezula, the book of Chronicles could contribute to creating an inclusivist society in South Africa and on the African continent. It thus could be an appropriate biblical paradigm for a theology of reconstruction.

A final example of the reception of Chronicles on the African continent is the interest that developed in what actually happened to the ark of the covenant (van Dyk and Enstrom 1997; Day 2007; Milikowsky 2015). Many writings from the Second Temple period attest that the ark was not present in YHWH's postexilic abode, and the Chronicler thus told the story about the ark retrospectively. Consequently, many scholarly and popular theories have emerged over the centuries, explaining what really happened to the ark.

One interesting ancient tradition about the ark of the covenant might be connected to information in Chronicles (although this stands in parallel to the narrative in 1 Kgs 10): some believe it ended up in Ethiopia and even today is hidden in the temple at Axum of the Tigray region (Hancock 1992; van Dyk and Enstrom 1997; Thomas et al. 2000; Le Roux 2003, 2004, 2009; Parfitt 2003, 2008; Zoloth 2003). Varied versions explain how the ark came to present-day Ethiopia, with the most well-known legend connecting it to Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of the Kings*)—a fourteenth-century CE conglomerate of biblical and earlier Jewish and Christian texts written in Geez and still revered by Ethiopian Christianity—contains a narrative in which the queen of Sheba is said to have given birth to a child fathered by King Solomon of Israel. The visit of the queen of Sheba is described in 1 Kgs 10 || 2 Chr 9 in the HB. The *Kebra Nagast* recounts that the son born from Solomon and the queen of Sheba, Menelik, visited his father in Jerusalem when he was nineteen years old. Menelik had a replica made of the ark of the covenant; before returning to the Kingdom of Cush, whence he hailed, he exchanged the true ark with the replica and carried the true one off to Cush, with the help of some young Israelite men. The Church of St. Mary of Zion in Axum claims that the ark was hidden in ancient times in some secret passages beneath the church and that it was later placed in the so-called Chapel of the Tablet, which was built in the twentieth century, sponsored by Empress Menen, the wife of Emperor Haile Selassie. Only the guardian monk has access to the true ark (called the *Tabot*); thus experts have no way of investigating the veracity of these claims. Until today, some centuries-old rituals are performed by priests at this church and elsewhere in Ethiopia. For example, at the ceremony of *Timkat*, celebrated on February 19 as an epiphany festival commemorating Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, a model of the ark of the covenant (kept in every church) is draped in embroidered cloth and carried in a procession on the priest's head.

A hypothesis advanced by Hancock (1992) is the connection with the so-called Knights Templar. He was reminded of the Ethiopian tradition when he visited the Cathedral of Chartres in France and studied the figures of Solomon and the queen of Sheba on the side posts of the northwest portal. Together with these figures, Melchizedek is also portrayed with a cup in his hand containing a stone. Elsewhere in the cathedral is a bas-relief of the ark of the covenant. From

these depictions in the Chartres Cathedral, rebuilt by the Knights Templar in the thirteenth century after a fire had destroyed it, Hancock hypothesized that the "holy grail" cup with the stone symbolized the ark with the stone tablets of Moses. The depiction of an African person at the foot of the queen of Sheba furthermore brought Hancock to the hypothesis that the Knights Templar had knowledge of the true ark being kept in Ethiopia.