

DISCONTINUITY, CONGRUENCE AND THE MAKING OF THE HEBREW BIBLE¹

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Virtually every commentary on a book or part of a book in the Hebrew Bible pays some attention to the overall literary structure of the work which it deals with. Scholars who write such a commentary nearly always attempt to discern formal patterns in the contents, style and language of the works which they study. One aspect of the occurrence of such patterns, however, has apparently never been studied in depth, namely the degree to which structural traits may be derived from other works. Only a few scholars have ventured to the point of supposing that there is a clear analogy between certain books, usually attributed to comparable or parallel processes of redaction. Perhaps we should say that the basic question of whether such derivation exists has never been asked, because even a cursory glance at some biblical books reveals that there are striking agreements between their overall structures and those of other biblical and non-biblical books. A nice example is furnished by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, two Jews living in the eastern part of

- 1 I want to thank Ms. Ann Simpson of the *Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study* (NIAS) in Wassenaar, where I wrote this study during my year as a fellow-in-residence (1997/8), for improving my English style. The ideas set forth here are to be found in a preliminary form in my "Analysis, Imitation and Emulation of Classical Texts in the Hebrew Bible", *Dutch Studies-NELL* 3 (1996), 43-68, and in various articles in Dutch, the most important of which is "Herodotus, vader van de bijbelse geschiedenis?", *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie* 14 (1995), 9-61. See also my "Transformation of Literary Texts and the Writing of Primary History" [to appear]. Unless stated otherwise, biblical texts are quoted according to the *New Revised Standard Version*.

the Persian empire, who go to Jerusalem to put affairs in order there (Ezra 7-8, Neh 2), with especial emphasis on the separation from other nations, in particular through avoiding and annulling mixed marriages. In both books we also find an extensive reference to the earlier journey which Zerubbabel made to Jerusalem (Ezra 2, Neh 7), and a long confession of guilt at about three quarters of the book (both in ch 9).² The chiasitic placement of the journeys and the agreement in place of the confession of guilt in these two books, which are the only to deal with the practical side of the restoration after the Captivity, is certainly striking, but in the extensive scholarly literature about the books virtually no attention is given to it. We shall see that as soon as one contemplates in such cases the option of direct derivation of the structure of one book from the other, it becomes in many cases much more attractive than the basically rather problematic alternatives proposed in the scholarly literature.

A phenomenon which I would also like to discuss here, is the interruption of what we suppose to be the normal flow of a book, through the insertion of a passage, chapter or section, which clearly deviates from it through language, style, focus, subject or time of narration. In the books which will be discussed here, especially notable is the shift from first-person account, where the main person reports about himself, in most cases without actually having been introduced as speaking, to third-person narrative and vice versa, such as found in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel, the shift of language from Hebrew to Aramaic and back to Hebrew, which is found in Ezra and Daniel, the presence of chapters dealing with a different main person and another subject than the main series of stories, like Genesis 38, the story of Judah and Tamar which interrupts the description of the life of Joseph in Genesis 37-50, or Daniel 3, where Daniel's three companions play the main part, while Daniel is conspicuously absent from the story, and the placement of chapters which tell about events which have not yet taken place at the time of the main action narrated in the surrounding chapters, such as (part of) Ezra 4 and Nehemiah 5.

These "rough ends" have traditionally been taken by critical scholarship to be the hallmarks of editorial processes, showing the seams between the sources which are supposedly underlying the texts

2 The last trait is shared with the book of Daniel, which has a long confession of guilt spoken by Daniel, also in ch 9. See also below.

as we now have them.³ Though literary researchers have pointed out that in the case of many of such supposed traces of editorial work there is nothing to be said from a literary point of view against the unity of the text as we now have it, few scholars will be ready today to defend the basic unity of books such as Ezra, Daniel or the nine books traditionally making up the so-called Primary History at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible, which tells the history of mankind and of the people of Israel from the Creation to the taking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 586 BCE.

I will attempt to show that in many of these well-known cases, the discontinuity or irregularity can be shown to be the mirror-image or echo of a characteristic pattern in another work. Usually the source text is in, and more rarely outside of the books of the Hebrew Bible. The resumption of these irregularities opens our eyes to the observation which started this study, namely that there are a number of less obtrusive cases of congruence of the pairs of works studied here (and probably of others also), sometimes to be identified with confidence, sometimes only probable in the light of other agreements. I will try to demonstrate that the most likely explanation is that the authors of some books of the Hebrew Bible deliberately copied the structure of other works in a sophisticated way which is often not easily visible, though they evidently had no wish to hide their dependence from the perceptive eye. Indeed, had they desired to cover up the traces of their method of working, the slightest of changes, additions or omissions would have been sufficient. On the contrary, they evidently did not consider their sophisticated imitation of certain examples as something to be ashamed of, nor was it a factor which would diminish the value or the aspirations to the historical correctness of their works. The discussion of Biblical books will be limited here to Primary History, Nehemiah, Ezra and Daniel. It is perhaps not accidental that these are all books which contain a considerable amount of narrative historiography, but it seems at least possible that the principle of congruence as outlined here has been operative for other works also.

3 Cfr J. Barton's article "Source Criticism (OT)" in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols., New York 1992), vol. 6, 162-165: 163, with a characteristic formulation: "The source critic must note each point where there is a break, inconsistency, or discontinuity in the text, and so [sic!] establish for each chapter how many different pieces of underlying material are present".

Each one of the parallels noted here has potentially far-reaching consequences for the study of the works connected by such congruence, because the process of transformation of one text into the other provides us with a nexus between one complete earlier text (sometimes two or three) as read by a capable reader and author, and what usually appears to be the final and complete text which he wrote himself. I will refrain from discussing these consequences in detail, in order not to burden the survey of the phenomenon studied here with the pros and cons of the supposed consequences. It is possible that some readers may consider it over-ambitious, perhaps even preposterous, that in these few pages I seem to propose the abolition of well-established branches of biblical studies like source criticism, and it may be in order to state that my ambitions are far more modest. To mention only one example, I am not attempting to come to terms with the Documentary Hypothesis here, but I only want to point out that a few vital characteristics of the literature of the Hebrew Bible have hitherto remained virtually unobserved, but need to be taken into account before nearly all other considerations because of their fundamental nature. In all instances of structural connection presented here, however, a possible course of events leading to it will be given, along with some conjectures about the way in which further research could be affected by this assumption.

Daniel, Ezra and the history of Joseph (Gen 37-50)

Even the most glaring instance of books literally looking like each other has rarely been studied in this light. Texts in Biblical Aramaic are found almost exclusively in two books, namely Ezra and Daniel. As noted above, in both the Aramaic middle part of the book is sandwiched between Hebrew sections at the beginning and end, and in both cases the Aramaic is introduced by means of the (probably Hebrew) word ^א*ramit*, “(in) Aramaic”, which at first sight appears to be used for introducing the language of the Chaldeans (in Daniel 2,4) and of a certain document (Ezra 4,7), though in reality the Aramaic section runs on for a number of chapters after the end of the Chaldeans’ speech and the document which is quoted; in Daniel this Aramaic part is continuous, while it is itself interrupted by a passage in Hebrew in Ezra 6,19-7,11. See table 1, where the indication of the contents of the chapters mainly serves to structure the correspondence. The parallel between the two books has not passed entirely unnoticed, but no one has gone any further than J. E. Miller, who supposed redactional analogy, which he called “bilingual

editing”, to be the cause of the agreement, without, however, providing a really convincing model for this analogy.⁴

An equally clear agreement between the two books is the distribution of parts with the main person in the first and the third grammatical person. Ezra starts with a number of chapters dealing with the return of the exiles, the rebuilding of the Temple and related matters, which subjects are described by an anonymous narrator, as is the first chapter dealing with Ezra’s activities (Ezra 7). At the end of that chapter (7,27-28), however, Ezra is suddenly speaking in the first person (and in Hebrew, in contrast with the document which is quoted before it, which is in Aramaic), praising God with the words: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of our ancestors, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king to glorify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, (28) and who extended to me steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king’s mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the Lord my God was upon me, and I gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me”. After this, the account continues in the first person, until it returns to the third person in the middle of the account about Ezra, right after his confession of guilt on behalf of the people (Ezra 9,6-15); the following verse is in the third person again: “While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God...”.

The book of Daniel also has a first-person section between sections speaking about Daniel in the third person. It has often been noted that all the visions in the second part of the book are told by Daniel in the first person, though formally speaking there is a difference between chapters 7 and 10-12 on one hand, and 8 and 9 on the other, as in the first cases Daniel is introduced in the third person first, after which he begins his first-person account; there is no such introduction at the beginning of chapters 8 and 9. The introductory remarks of 7 and 10-12 thus serve to transform the distribution of first-person passages in these chapters from their logical use for all the visions into a rather precise parallel to the situation in Ezra (or the other way round, of course). In other words, they make this distribution combine congruence with Ezra with functionality within the book of Daniel.

4 J.E. Miller, “The Redaction of Daniel”, *JSOT* 52 (1991), 115-124. Miller supposed that a complete Hebrew book was mixed with a complete Aramaic book with the present Book of Daniel as a result.

A third point of agreement of Ezra and Daniel is the fact that both can be divided very conveniently into two parts. Ezra 1-6 contains the history of the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Temple, Ezra 7-10 the account of Ezra's mission. Daniel 1-6 is a collection of stories about Daniel and his companions at the courts of the Babylonian and Persian kings, the chapters Daniel 7-12 contain visions of Daniel.

We will refrain from pursuing all the remaining parallels between Ezra and Daniel in detail here, but discuss one very characteristic instance only. It can hardly be accidental that Ezra 9 and Daniel 9, the last chapters in both books to have a first person account without introduction, contain a confession of guilt pronounced by the main persons, namely Ezra and Daniel, respectively. We have already seen that this feature is shared with the book of Nehemiah, where the Levites pronounce a confession in ch 9 also. This case is also interesting in this respect, that a separate internal analysis of the books assigns these confessions to a completely different function. In Ezra it serves to ask forgiveness for the mixed marriages which Ezra had heard about, in Daniel it follows Daniel's noting that the seventy years ordained for the destruction of Jerusalem have passed, and introduces a revelation in which this prediction is extended to the remote future.⁵ Only through noting the parallel we do see the true reason why this confession is present exactly where we find it now, whereas a separate analysis may easily judge it to be secondary, as has indeed often been done.⁶

There is really nothing new about comparing the figures of Joseph and Daniel: two persons of high birth carried away from their homeland to a foreign kingdom, who rise to power in the king's court through their uncommon capacity to interpret his dreams as divine predictions, and further the interest of their people there.⁷ It has apparently passed unnoticed, however, that the entire series of divinely inspired predictions about the future in the Joseph cycle is nearly parallel to the one in Daniel, especially with regard to the scale of the prediction, whether it refers to the near future (within, let us say, a few years), or the intermediate or remote future (during or

5 Note that the latter elements are paralleled in Genesis, see below.

6 See for Daniel, for example, the discussion of various opinions in J.J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis 1993), 347.

7 See, for example, Collins (n 7) 39-40; R. Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurrent Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 7 (1990), 29-53.

after the lifetime of the receiver of the prediction, respectively). See table 3, where all the ten predictions in the Joseph cycle and the eight in the book of Daniel have been listed, in the same order in which they are found in the Bible. In some cases, two predictions with essentially the same character in Genesis correspond with one in Daniel (Gen 37/40/41 vs. Dan 2/4/5), and *vice versa* (Gen 46 vs. Dan 7-8); in this way we reach the number of seven for both. Of course the recipients, the persons (if any) who pronounce the predictions, the contents and the circumstances will differ considerably, though it may be interesting to note that precisely in the case in which we see the greatest difference, the two dreams of Pharaoh predicting seven years of hunger in Genesis 41 against the famous mene-tekem-inscription in Daniel 5, the outcome is the same: the main person is to be given semi-royal dignity, wearing a beautiful garment and a golden chain around his neck, for solving the riddle (Gen 41,41-44 and Daniel 5,29). Additionally, the predictions in Daniel 9 and Genesis 48 have in common that both are introduced with the mention of a divine promise, in Daniel the famous 70-years prophecy of Jeremiah (Daniel 9,2; Jeremiah 25,11 and 29,10; cfr. also 2 Chron 36,21; Zech 1,12 and 7,5),⁸ in Genesis God's promise to Jacob in Bethel (Gen 48,3-4; Gen 28,13-14).

This is a good opportunity to take a closer look at the various types of predictions in Genesis 37-50, especially since it would seem—as I will argue below—that a very conscientious close reading of these episodes led the author of Daniel to make the particular use of them which we see in the book of Daniel. We first find three “double dreams”, pairs of dreams where the same or a comparable message is expressed twice. These dreams have a function within the life of the persons dreaming them, with the crucial difference that Joseph's dreams in Genesis 37 refer not only to his becoming more powerful than his brothers and father, but also to the fact that the tribe which issues from his son Ephraim is to become the most important one among all the tribes of Israel, Ephraim being the main tribe of the Northern Kingdom. In the centre of the seven predictions we find God's promise to Jacob in Genesis 46,3-4 that he will let his offspring go away from Egypt again, a reference to the all-important event of the Exodus of course. At the end of the series we find three instances in which either Jacob or Joseph continues the theme of this

8 See about the various reflexes of this prophecy especially M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford etc. 1988), 479-485.

vital promise. Keeping this situation in mind, the parallel with the predictions in Daniel becomes much easier to understand. The first three cases lose their reduplication and are all cast as dreams of the oriental kings which are to be interpreted by Daniel. These dreams play an important role within the story, but only the dream in Daniel 2 refers not only to something relatively near in time, namely Nebuchadnezzar's empire being succeeded by another one, something Daniel himself witnessed when the Persians took Babylon, but also to the eschatological future. In this connection it is certainly meaningful that Daniel 2,28 uses the Aramaic expression *'aḥrīt yomayyā*, which occurs in its Hebrew form *'aḥrīt hayyāmīm* in Daniel 10,14 and Genesis 49,1. The link which is made in this way between the predictions of Daniel 2 and 10-12 is certainly present implicitly in Genesis 37 and 49 also: one chapter briefly describes the relation between the tribes of Israel at a much later date, the other one gives a detailed account of this future situation.

The central place of the promise of Genesis 46, the only direct communication with God in the Joseph cycle of stories, is in a way shared by Daniel 7-8, the only chapters in which the final victory over the evil forces and the subsequent judgment are described (7,9-14 and 26-27; 8,14), and the only one in which a figure probably representing God appears (7,9-10, the "ancient of days"). The predictions of Daniel 9, 10-11 and 12 do not contain these major elements with the same explicitness, though their description of other features is much more detailed. It would seem that the reduplication of Daniel's visions in ch 7-8 (compare the words *ḥezwī 'im lelyā*, "my vision at night", in Dan 7,2, *ḥezwī lelyā*, "visions of the night", in 7,7 and 13, and *ḥāzon*, "vision", in Dan 8,1 and 2, with *bemar 'ot hallaylā*, "in a night vision", in Gen 46,2) in a way replaces the reduplication of the dreams in Genesis. All the predictions in Daniel 9, 10-11 and 12 are told to Daniel by heavenly beings; all deal with the remote future alluded to in Daniel 2 and sketched in outline in Daniel 7. Thus the last three predictions are remarkably similar to the last three predictions in Genesis, especially in this respect that they also seem to serve for elaboration and clarification of the earlier major prediction. In this way we are apparently also shown the way in which the author of Daniel read the book of Genesis (see below), and one could even maintain that our modern understanding of the literary nature of that book may benefit considerably from observations such as these.

There are other instances where a striking agreement between

Genesis 37-50 and the book of Daniel can be observed against the linear framework resulting from these correspondences, but we will leave them for discussion elsewhere, apart from the very interesting case of the chapters Genesis 38 and Daniel 3. As noted above, both stand out from their context because they interrupt the biography of the main persons (Joseph and Daniel, respectively) right after the beginning with a story in which one or more of the minor characters of the chapter or the two chapters preceding it play the main part, after which attention returns to the main persons Joseph and Daniel again, with the main characters of the intervening chapter playing either a minor role (Genesis), or probably no role at all (Daniel, unless the unnamed companions of Daniel 10,7 are to be identified with the three friends of Daniel 3). The close relations between the two chapters have been noted in rabbinical literature, where it is pointed out that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego are descendants of Tamar and Judah through King David, and attention is drawn to the punishment of burning with which Tamar is threatened on the one hand, and the three men on the other.⁹

In my view, when the parallels with Ezra and with the story of Joseph are viewed together only one model can explain them, namely that the author of the book of Daniel deliberately chose these stories as the model for various structural features of his book, probably partly because they were well suited to his needs for the structure which he had in mind, but even more because their main persons were in a way role models for his Daniel: Joseph, who like Daniel was taken from his country and furthered the interest of his people when living at the court of a foreign king, and Ezra, who completed the return from the Exile, spanned by Daniel's lifetime, by firmly re-establishing the cult and annulling the unallowable marriages which had been contracted. Formal descriptions of what we will call the structural derivation (see p 56) are to be found in table 2 (from Ezra to Daniel), and in tables 4 and 5 (from Genesis to Daniel). It should be noted that all the main parts of the book of Daniel are firmly attached in the resulting structure, so that it becomes impossible to detach major parts from the canonical book. For the purpose of this

9 See the various texts of the Palestinian Targum on Genesis 38,25-26 and the analogous passages from rabbinical literature which are adduced in R. Le Déaut & J. Robert, *Targum du Pentateuque I* (Paris 1978), 350-355. The treatment of this theme in rabbinical literature is discussed at length in an older study by Beno Fischer, *Daniel und seine drei Gefährten in Talmud und Midrasch* (Temesvar 1906).

study it is evidently not very useful to examine all the correspondences in detail, but it is indeed very illuminating to note that, though the literary genre of the various parts of Ezra and Daniel is evidently not the same, their number appears to correspond rather closely, as well as some other aspects, such as the embedding of a story in Daniel 4 (in a proclamation by king Nebuchadnezzar) and in the corresponding passage Ezra 5,7-17 (in Tattenai's letter to king Darius).¹⁰

It thus becomes very likely that the book of Daniel as a whole is a late composition, the structure of which is based on characteristic features which the author recognized in Ezra and in Genesis 37-50.¹¹ The former observation is largely in agreement with the date usually supposed for the final redaction of the book, which is based on the supposed attachments between Daniel 10-11 and the course of history until just before the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt.¹² By contrast with accepted opinion, however, it would seem that the entire book was composed as a whole at that time, rather than being the result of redaction of pre-existing texts.¹³ This unitary origin for the book is also partly supported by the manuscripts of Daniel among the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating to a comparatively short period after the last events referred to in the book, which as far as can be ascertained contain what is for this purpose the same text as the Masoretic Text, without any trace of a different text-form.¹⁴

- 10 For a comprehensive treatment of the relation of the book of Daniel with the rest of the books of the Hebrew Bible, see my *Language, Style and Structure in the Book of Daniel* (forthcoming), and, for a more elaborate discussion of the relation between Ezra and Daniel, my "Continuity, Discontinuity and the Writing of the Book of Daniel", which is to appear in J.J. Collins & P.W. Flint (ed), *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Repetition* (Leiden 1999).
- 11 There seems to be a comparable link with the first book of the *Histories* of Herodotus also, see for the time being Fig. 3 in my "Analysis, imitation and emulation" (n 1), 62-63.
- 12 Collins, *Daniel* (n 6), 61.
- 13 Collins, *Daniel* (n 6), *passim*, but especially 24-38.
- 14 See the texts discussed in E. Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 1: A Preliminary edition of 4QDan^a", *BASOR* 268 (1987), 17-37, and id., "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 2: Preliminary Editions of 4Qdan^b and 4Qdan^c", *BASOR* 274 (1989), 3-26. Cfr also B.A. Mastin, "The Reading of 1Qdan^a at Daniel 2:4", *VT* 38 (1988), 341-346, and for the Daniel material in general the survey of P.W. Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran", in: C.A. Evans and P.W. Flint (ed.), *Eschatology, Messianism*

Ezra and Nehemiah

The book of Ezra, which we saw to have such striking agreements with Daniel, is not an independent book in either the Jewish or the early Christian canon, but is joined with what we usually designate as the book of Nehemiah in one book, the two being detached only in the later Christian tradition. They are now in what appears to be the right chronological order, with events in Ezra dating from the return in the beginning of the reign over Babylon of the Persian king Cyrus the Great until the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, when Ezra came to Jerusalem, and in Nehemiah from the twentieth to the thirty-second years of the same king. It has often been observed, however, that there are good reasons for separating the two, as Nehemiah, the later part of the combined book, begins with a sentence which seems well fit to serve as the introduction to an entire book (Neh 1,1): "The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In the month of Chislew, in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capital..."¹⁵

Having in mind the way in which Daniel corresponded with Genesis and with Ezra, we quickly see that Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit a curious kind of congruence also. See table 6, in which the indication of the contents of Ezra and Nehemiah mainly serves to structure the correspondence. After the introductory first chapters in which the background of the events of the book is set forth, namely Cyrus' edict for the return and rebuilding of the Temple, and the sorry state of Jerusalem, respectively, we find in both books two parts which are clearly different, each introduced by a journey from the east to Jerusalem. In the book of Nehemiah the first one is Nehemiah's own journey, in Ezra the return of the exiles under the somewhat shadowy Zerubbabel. The first parts of both books end with the completion of the work which was undertaken at the beginning, namely the restoration of Jerusalem's defences in Nehemiah (ch 6), and the rebuilding of the Temple and reinstatement of the cult in Ezra (ch 6).

The second half of Ezra and Nehemiah also starts with a journey from the east to Jerusalem. In the case of the first book this is Ezra's own return with a large retinue, in the case of Nehemiah we find a

and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids 1997), 41-60.

- 15 Cfr H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (Waco 1985), xxi, who himself, however, summarily dismissed the possibility that Nehemiah was originally a separate book. Without intending to slight Williamson's excellent commentary, I would say that such a position represents the ultimate victory of scholarship over the literal meaning of a text.

new reference to Zerubbabel's return of many years before, in the framework of a list of those who returned with him (which is essentially identical with the one in Ezra 2). In Nehemiah this reference is followed by a public reading of the Law (ch 8), which apparently takes place in Nehemiah's days, perhaps (though the text is not completely clear about this) in the year of his coming to Jerusalem and rebuilding its walls.¹⁶ This reading is followed by the separation from the foreigners who were present (*ni wayyibbad^flu*, "they separated themselves", 9,2) and a confession of guilt (9,2) voiced by the Levites (9,4-38), which is concluded with the proposal to sign a covenant with God (9,39), which is duly effected (ch 10).

In Ezra, by contrast, there is no such reading when he arrives in Jerusalem, but he is said to have put the resources which he acquired for the Temple service at the disposal of the priests, and offerings are made by those who returned with him. After that, when Ezra hears that the Israelites have not separated themselves (*lo nibd^flu* (*ni.*)) from the nations (9,1), he mourns and at the time of the evening sacrifice in the Temple he pronounces a confession of guilt on behalf of Israel (9,6-15), which is followed by the people's promise to expel the foreign wives and their children (10,3).

As noted above, both books contain parts which are told in the first person as well as sections told by an anonymous narrator. From table 6 it becomes clear that the distribution of these in the two books exhibits a curious mirror-like image, with only Ezra 10,1-5 corresponding with a passage in the same grammatical person in Nehemiah (9,38-12,26). A minor agreement is that the corresponding episodes Nehemiah 5 and Ezra 4,6-23 both appear to interrupt the normal course of events, the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls and the rebuilding of the Temple, respectively, with a completely different episode, Nehemiah's social justice and the rebuilding of the walls of

16 Neh 7,73-8,1 reads: "When the seventh month came—the people of Israel being settled in their towns—(8,1) all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel". It is not, however, clear whether the text really runs on across the chapter boundary. Note that Ezra 3,1, where an almost identical sentence also follows the list of the people who returned with Zerubbabel, has nearly the same text referring to the time of the first gathering of the people in Jerusalem in the time of Zerubbabel: "When the seventh month came, and the Israelites were in the towns, the people gathered together in Jerusalem". It is fairly generally agreed upon that Ezra depends on Nehemiah here, see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (n 15), 29-30.

Jerusalem, which is apparently dated to a later period (note the reference to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes in Neh 5,14, and the dating in the reign of Darius in Ezra 4,5 and of Artaxerxes in Ezra 4,7 and 23).¹⁷

Traditionally, scholars have attempted to see some sense in the two books together, while assuming that both are collections of various materials. Thus the Ezra episode in Neh 8-12 (or part of it) is often taken together with the chapters of Ezra which deal with him, and there is a multitude of proposals for dating Ezra in one of the three reigns of kings called Artaxerxes. In view of what we noted about the congruence of the two books, however, it would seem preferable to see them first as two complete entities, and then to determine which of the two has served as a model for the other. Only afterwards can the historical questions, which have occupied so much attention in the past, be approached anew, with the insight that the relation to historical reality was probably secondary to the relationship with the other book. In this case it turns out to be much more difficult to judge from the text alone which of the two is the earlier work. Though a very sophisticated analysis may finally yield results, it may be preferable to turn to the external evidence first, which clearly points to Ezra as being the later work. For Ezra is a relatively shadowy figure, who is omitted from the list of the famous forefathers in Ben Sira 49 (dated to ca. 200 BCE or somewhat earlier), where Nehemiah is mentioned with great distinction (Ben Sira 49,13).¹⁸ When coupled with the comparatively realistic account in Nehemiah in comparison with the ideal narrative about Ezra (note, for example, that Nehemiah receives a retinue for protection on his journey in Neh 2,9, whereas Ezra declines to ask for one in Ezra 8,22), these considerations make it very likely that the book of Ezra was written as an imitation and emulation of the book of Nehemiah. It was probably composed firstly in order to provide an answer within the canon to questions which in earlier days need not have been asked, such as how the exiles returned from Babylon, how the Temple was re-built and how the cult was re-established and secondly, to provide a kind of priestly counterweight to the worldly

- 17 The dating of Nehemiah 5 after the episode of the wall-building is not entirely mandatory, but its likeliness in the eyes of modern and ancient exegetes is sufficient for our purpose here.
- 18 Of course it is possible to think of many reasons why Ben Sira could have deliberately omitted Ezra, but the simplest solution may be preferable here, namely that he simply did not know his book.

power of Nehemiah, who even felt free to kick someone out of the Temple who had been invited there by the high priest himself (Neh 13,4-9).

It would therefore seem preferable to assume that the book of Ezra reflects on the book of Nehemiah as a whole. It has the relatively minor personage of Ezra from the book of Nehemiah as its main person, and contrasts the emphasis on the worldly affair of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem with the rebuilding of the Temple and the re-establishing of the cult. In keeping with the inclusion of events of an earlier period at the beginning of the book of Ezra, the grammatical persons in the two books have been mirrored, as well as the journeys of the main persons and of Zerubbabel; see the formal description of the structural derivation (see p 56) in table 7. The resulting work was used to complement Nehemiah very literally, being joined with it in one book, so that the result is a kind of dyptich: a book in two parts which each have their separate points of interest. The dating would then probably represent a reflection on the dates of Nehemiah's activities: just as Nehemiah was active on behalf of his people for at least 13 years, from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes until the thirty-second (Neh 1,1; 13,6), so Ezra before him had worked in Jerusalem for 13 years, from the seventh (Ezra 7,8) until and including the nineteenth year of Artaxerxes (i.e. the year before Nehemiah's mission); there is no reason to assume that we are dealing with more than one king with that name.¹⁹

A problem for which, unfortunately, I do not know a solution is why the book of Nehemiah looks the way it does. One suspects another case of imitation behind its irregular appearance, but no biblical model comes easily to mind. Of course his memoir looks somewhat like that of Moses (which takes up a large part of the book of Deuteronomy) or of Samuel (in 1 Samuel 12), but no clear parallel could be established.

19 With some hesitation I note that there seems to be complete or partial identity of narrated time in all three the cases discussed here: Daniel is active for 93 years (20 years of Nebuchadnezzar, 70 years of exile and three years of Cyrus), just as Joseph (Gen 37,2 and 50,22), the Persians wage war in Greece for two consecutive years (480-479), and the Israelites appear to conquer the major part of Canaan in two years also (compare Deut 1,3 with Joshua 5,10). See for details my forthcoming monograph *The Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus' Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of the Bible* (to be published by Sheffield Academic Press).

Primary History and the Histories of Herodotus

In recent years, much attention has been given to the parallels between the historical books at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible, Genesis until and including 2 Kings, and the first great historical work in Greece, the *Histories* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus (ca. 485-ca. 425 BCE), which describes the wars between Greeks and Persians in the years 490-479 BCE, and a lot of other historical and ethnographical material.²⁰ The studies which discussed their relationship usually treated the subject either on a rather abstract level, or in the parallelism of certain details, and on the whole endorsed the traditional critical assumption that Primary History is the result of putting together material from a number of different sources, so that the comparison with Herodotus' work would hardly need to take into account the completed form of Primary History as we now have it.²¹ This must be one of the main reasons for the remarkable fact that few, if any, scholars noted that the main action of both works is almost the same, namely a great campaign, ordered by the divinity, of an army of millions of people through the water between two continents as if on dry land to conquer a rich and fertile land on the other side.²² In the Bible we are dealing, of course, with the Exodus from Egypt and the subsequent Conquest of the promised

- 20 Three recent studies occupied partly or completely with this parallel: J. Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven and London 1983); S. Mandell and D.N. Freedman, *The Relationship between Herodotus' History and Primary History* (Atlanta 1993); F.A.J. Nielsen, *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield 1997). A useful translation of large parts of the *Histories*, with short extracts from secondary literature: Walter Blanco and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, *Herodotus. The Histories... New Translation, Selections, Backgrounds, Commentaries* (New York and London 1992). Cfr also the translation by Aubrey de Selincourt (Penguin 1954) and the edition with translation in the Loeb series by A.D. Godley (4 vols., London and New York 1920-1924). About Herodotus' history of the Near East: R. Drews, *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* (Washington 1973). See also D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto 1989), and J. Gould, *Herodotus* (London 1989).
- 21 As supposed in, for example, the studies of Van Seters and Mandell and Freedman (see above).
- 22 Not even in works dealing specifically with the Exodus, such as S.E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (Jerusalem 1992, English translation of second Hebrew edition, Jerusalem 1987), N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus. The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York 1986) and Y. Zakovitch, "And You Shall Tell Your Son". *The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem 1991).

land of Canaan. The Israelites leave Egypt, where they had been severely oppressed over a long period, and can cross the Red Sea (Hebr. *yam suf*) at its border, whatever its precise location, by foot as if on dry land because its waters have receded through a strong east wind (Exod 14,21). The pursuing Egyptians, by contrast, drown when the waters suddenly return while they are still in the middle and the Israelites have reached dry land already. In the work of Herodotus the water of the Hellespont is crossed by the Persian king Xerxes' tremendous army setting out for the conquest of Greece on two enormous bridges of boats (VII, 54-56). We will not deal here with all the smaller and greater details connecting these two great works, but merely discuss, firstly, two aspects of both works where there appears to be a considerable agreement between the two, namely the genealogy of the main family in relationship with the country from where the great campaign starts, Lydia in the *Histories* and Egypt in the Bible, and the theme of the crossing of the waters as if on dry land, and secondly the relation between the division of both works into books and the position of the main action.

There are three instances in Herodotus' description of Xerxes' campaign of the theme of the Persians crossing or desiring to cross the sea as if on dry land, two in vital places of the main narrative, one in a less obtrusive, but still highly interesting episode.²³ The first instance is the already-mentioned crossing of the Hellespont by Xerxes' army on two bridges of boats. The second one is after the dramatic defeat of Xerxes' fleet under the eyes of the king himself near the island of Salamis, where many of the Athenians had fled before the onslaught of the Persians, who indeed destroyed their city. Xerxes pretended to want another bridge of boats built to reach Salamis and indeed let work begin on it, though in reality, according to Herodotus, he considered the campaign as good as lost and wanted to return to Asia (VIII, 97). The third case is when the Persians wanted to take the city of Poteidaia at the entrance of the peninsula of Pallene in northern Greece. When the water of the sea suddenly receded and the sea-bed became visible a number of Persian soldiers decided to wade to Pallene, but surprised by a sudden and uncommonly high flood they all drowned or were killed by the

23 Though a crossing of the sea with bridges of boats also appears elsewhere in the *Histories*, notably Darius' crossing of the Bosphorus for his campaign against the Scythians (IV, 83-89.118; VII, 10), very little attention is given to this detail there in comparison with Xerxes' bridges over the Hellespont, the building of which is described at length (VII, 33-36).

defenders (VIII, 128-129). Now it should be noted that the theme of the water level of the sea lowering by itself and soldiers wading through the remaining water or even walking over the sea bed, sometimes attaining victory in this way and sometimes being drowned by the returning water, is commonplace in antiquity, as can be seen, for example, from the instances mentioned in Strabo, *Geography*, 16.2.26.

Still, it remains surprising that there are also three cases in which a large group in the Bible pass through the water as if on dry land.²⁴ The first two are the Israelites on the one hand and the Egyptians on the other passing through the Red Sea in Exodus 14, the third instance is the passing of the river Jordan under Joshua in Joshua 3-4, after Moses has been forbidden to cross it, in spite of his entreaties to be allowed to enter the Land (see below). They can be lined up conveniently against the three cases of Herodotus (table 8), and it becomes clear that one of the main differences is that the unexpected or miraculous aspect of the Poteidaia affair in Herodotus is present in all three instances in the Bible. Apart from this difference, hardly unexpected because one does not readily imagine a bridge of boats in the biblical account, the agreements are rather striking. The main crossing of the sea as the single most important event in both works hardly needs further comment. Like the Persians near Poteidaia, who are said to have desecrated a temple of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, close to the city, which by the way even bears his name in its Dorian form, the Egyptians are punished by drowning especially for a comparable crime committed with water, namely their killing of the Hebrew boys by throwing them into the water of the Nile (Exod 1,22): the drowning is in both cases a divine sanction for a crime which also has a connection with water. Finally, just as Xerxes sat powerless, watching the island of Salamis from the mainland without being able to reach it (see especially VIII, 90), so Moses is shown the Promised Land while on Mt. Nebo, without being allowed in (Num 27,12-14; Deut 3,24-27; 32,48-52; 34,1-4); he is specifically prohibited from crossing the Jordan in Deut 3,27. Additionally, just as Xerxes' starting to build a new bridge of boats seems to refer back to his building of the bridges across the Hellespont, so the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua has a lot in common with the crossing of the Red Sea—so much so, in fact, that some scholars tend to consider

24 There is a literary connection, of course, with the crossing of the Jordan by Elisha and Elisha in 2 Kings 2,8 and 14, which need not occupy us here.

one as derived from the other.²⁵

As the first state in Asia to be opposed to the Greeks in historical times, the country of Lydia takes up a lot of Herodotus' attention (see especially I, 6-94). A second and possibly more important reason why he discusses the fate of this land at length is the fact that Xerxes' campaign against mainland Greece started from there, specifically from its capital Sardes. He reports three different encounters of Medians and Persians with Lydia. Firstly there is the war which the Median king Cyaxares waged against it, which ended with the marriage of Aryennis, the daughter of the Lydian king Alyattes, with Cyaxares' son Astyages (I, 73-75). Secondly we have the conquest of Lydia by Astyages' grandson Cyrus and the capture of its king Croesus (I, 76-91). Thirdly and most importantly there is the departure of Xerxes' army setting out for Greece. We noted already that Egypt as the point of departure of the great campaign appears to have in the story of the Exodus a comparable function to Lydia in the *Histories*, and there are indeed also exactly three instances of intensive contacts of the patriarchs with Egypt, of persons in the same generations of the genealogy, with circumstances which appear to mirror those in Herodotus' work (table 9). Abram goes to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan (Gen 12,10-20); in connection with his Egyptian adventure he almost loses his wife Sarai to Pharaoh's harem, and he apparently picks up his concubine Hagar, "the Egyptian handmaid" (Gen 16,1 etc.) there, whether or not she is among the slaves whom he receives from Pharaoh (Gen 12,16). Joseph is sold to Egypt by his brothers, and finally gains power over that country, becoming Viceroy through his capacity to interpret dreams (Gen 37, 39-41); various elements in the description of his life look a lot like those of Cyrus: the two dreams, the threat of death through exposure, the being hidden from their families etc.²⁶ Moses, finally, is the one who takes the Israelites through the Red Sea and the Wilderness to Canaan.²⁷ There are numerous other

25 See especially Van Seters, *The Life of Moses* (Kampen 1994), 139-149, who supposed that the crossing of the sea was secondarily developed out of the crossing of the river Jordan. For other scholars with the same opinion, see C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. I (in Dutch; Kampen 1986), 194.

26 See my "Analysis, Imitation and Emulation" (n 1) 55, and "Herodotus, vader van de bijbelse geschiedenis?" (*ibid.*), 20-22.

27 Though from Abraham onwards all the family members have some connection with Egypt (apart from Isaac, who is prohibited from going there by God himself in Gen 26,2), these contacts all derive from the activities of

parallels between these and the other members of the two families, most of which will not, however, be discussed here.²⁸

It may, however, be useful to mention here that Moses being a grandson of Levi through his mother Jochebed (Exod 2,1, Exod 6,13-26 and Num 26,58-59), so much a stumbling-block for exegetes that many do not mention it at all²⁹, is perfectly understandable through the analogy with Xerxes being a grandson of Cyrus the Great through his mother. Here the analogy leads to the problematic situation that the people of Israel would have grown from 70 persons to some 3.5 million within two generations! Even for an ancient author this must have been very problematic, and we can only conclude that extremely great value was apparently attached to retaining the genealogical parallel with Herodotus (see below).

Interestingly, the idea that only two, albeit rather long, generations passed from the person who first attained power over the starting-point of the great campaign (Joseph and Cyrus, respectively) until the campaign itself (under Moses and Xerxes) appears to be mirrored in what is told about the ruling family of Egypt and of Lydia. When Xerxes arrives in Sardes, the Lydian capital, for his expedition against Greece, he is greeted by a very old and very rich man called Pythios, son of Atys (VII, 27-29). Ever since antiquity readers of Herodotus have noted that this Pythios is probably the grandson of King Croesus of Lydia, who (according to Herodotus' account) received mercy after being defeated by Cyrus, was extremely rich, had a son called Atys and was especially interested in the cult of Apollo Pythios in Delphi in Greece (*Histories*, I, 26-91 *passim*). It is very curious indeed that Herodotus makes no remark at all about this possible ancestry, if only to deny or affirm this possibility which no conscientious reader will miss, as this Atys is the main person of a long story which is bound to keep him in the reader's mind (I, 34-45). When Pythios wants to keep the oldest of his five sons home from Xerxes' expedition, the latter gets very angry and orders the son to be cut in half, after which the army passes between the pieces (VII, 38-39). The Pharaoh of the Exodus, of course, also loses his oldest son, together with all the first-born of man and animal in Egypt (Exod 12,29-30), but it is more important

the three persons mentioned above.

28 See for the time being especially my "Herodotus, vader van de bijbelse geschiedenis?" (n 1) *passim*. All the certain and probable parallels are also discussed in my *The Origin of the History of Israel* (n 19).

29 For example J. Van Seters, *The Life of Moses* (n 25).

for our purpose that he is the successor of the successor of the Pharaoh of Joseph's days, without it being actually said that he is his grandson, as appears from the verses: "Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exod 1,8), and: "After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God" (Exod 2,23).

Of course, the entirely different position of Israelites and Medians and Persians is reflected in the nature of the encounters. Firstly, the Israelites do not attack a far-away foreign country, but the land of Canaan, where their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had already dwelt: in the comparison of these episodes with the *Histories* Canaan corresponds either with Media, the country of origin of the Median and Persian royal family, or with Greece, the country which they want to conquer. Secondly, while the contacts of Medians and Persians with Lydia are mainly characterized by war, either when they fight against that country (Cyaxares, Cyrus), or when they use it as their point of departure for the campaign against Greece (Xerxes), the family of the patriarchs have more humble and largely negative reasons to move to and from Egypt, whether escaping a famine (Abram, Jacob and his sons), being abducted as a slave (Joseph) or fleeing from oppression (Moses and the Exodus). In the case of the Exodus, this difference accompanies a well-known ambiguity in the narrative: the Israelites are wretched fugitives on one hand, but so extremely numerous (600,000 adult men: Exod 12,37-38; cfr. Num 1,46) on the other hand, that Pharaoh's 600 chariots (Exod 13,7) dwindle in comparison.

Having noted that the crossing of the water as if on dry land, the most important single theme of the great campaign in both works, is congruent in both, firstly in its three occurrences and secondly in the relationship of the members of the main family with the land which serves as the point of departure for the first and most important crossing, we may well wonder what other agreements we are to expect for the two works. For the subject of this study the most important observation may be that the episodes in which the crossings and the attempted conquest are reported are mirrored in comparison with the separation between books six and seven of the two nine-volume works.³⁰ In the Bible, Exodus and Conquest are

30 Though we do not know whether the division of the *Histories* into nine books is original, the rather artificial separation between the last two books,

related in books two to six, Exodus until and including Joshua, in the *Histories* Xerxes' great campaign against Greece is the subject of books seven to nine inclusive. This echoes, of course, the relative importance of the great campaign for the two works: for Herodotus the earlier books are a kind of preparation for this tremendous onslaught of Asia against Europe which is related in his last three books, in the Bible, by contrast, the Exodus, the stay in the Wilderness and the Conquest explain the origin of the people of Israel and its especial relationship with God, and set the stage for the account of the introduction of kingship and the history of the two Israelite kingdoms, but it remains remarkable that the accounts of the two episodes are exactly mirrored in this way in the overall structure of the two works. When we add to this that the earlier two encounters with Lydia and Egypt, respectively, are told in the first book of the nine in both works³¹, accidental agreement can safely be excluded as a possibility. A diagram of this mirrored situation, in connection with the agreement in genealogy, is to be found in table 10, and table 11 contains the formal description of the structural derivation (see p 56). Other cases of congruence, such as the crossing of the sea as if on dry land, have been left out here for clarity's sake.

Though there are many more smaller and greater agreements between the two works, they will not occupy our attention here, apart from one congruent episode at the end. It should be noted that both works, though the actual conquest is told in entirely different parts, end with the coming to nothing of the conquest. In the *Histories*, the

which is in the middle of an episode and also not easily explained from the length of the books, seems deliberate and may indicate that the present division is original. The number of nine books as the division of Primary History seems to be original also, if only because each of the books has a clearly defined character of its own: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (the division of the latter two into two books each is clearly secondary). Mandell and Freedman, *The Relationship between Herodotus' History and Primary History* (n 20) 179, point out the curious parallel that the separation between the last two books of Primary History is also in the middle of an episode, namely David's Succession History, which stretches from 2 Sam 9 to 1 Kings 2. See about the exact boundaries of the Succession History also my "Joab's Death and the Central Theme of the Succession Narrative (2 Samuel ix-1 Kings ii)", *VT* 40 (1990), 336-351: 340-343.

31 Note also that Genesis and the first book of the *Histories* end with the death of Joseph and of Cyrus, respectively, the persons who attained power over the country which is to serve as the starting-point of the great campaign.

Persian campaign against Greece ends in disaster after yet another string of defeats, in Primary History the partial conquest by Joshua is completed during the period of the monarchy, but finally both Israelite kingdoms disappear again before the power of Assyria and Babylon, with the last episode being the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BCE. Even the fate of the person commanding the last city in the hands of the conquerors is comparable. King Zedekiah, having made his escape from beleaguered Jerusalem during the night, but captured after a pursuit, is blinded by the Babylonians after seeing his children killed before his eyes (2 Kings 25,1-7). Artayctes, the commander of Sestos on the Hellespont, the last city in Europe to be mentioned as being in the hands of the Persians, also caught after making his escape from the city during the night, is crucified by the Greeks, after which they kill his son before his eyes while he is still alive (IX, 120). Zedekiah and Artayctes thus suffer two gruesome fates with a great similarity: the last thing which the last leader will see is the death of his offspring.³²

The most likely scenario for the origin of Primary History therefore seems to be that a Jewish author (alternatively, leader of a group of authors) who was well versed in Greek literature set out to write a history of his own people at some time in the third quarter of the fifth century BCE or a little later (see below for the date); such a person may not have been very common in the Persian era, but a few decades later, still before or a short time after the conquests of Alexander the Great, it was considered conceivable that there would be Jews who would know the Greek language and culture very well, so there is no reason why such a combination of religion and knowledge would have been impossible earlier.³³ He was apparently well-informed about this history from his own days back until sometime around the beginning of the monarchy in Israel, and he

32 The parallel between the two cases has been noted by, among others, M. Weinfeld and R. Meridor, "The punishment of Zedekiah and the punishment of Polymestor" [in Hebrew], in: Y. Zakovitch and A. Rofé (ed.), *Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* [*Festschrift Seeligmann*], vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1983), 229-233.

33 Cfr Clearchus of Soloi's story about his teacher Aristotle making the acquaintance of a learned Jew, which proves that to the contemporaries such a person was by no means unimaginable, and there is no real argument against small groups of Jews or individuals perhaps living in Greece itself and anyway acquiring Greek learning in this period. Cfr A. Momigliano, "Die Juden und die griechische Kultur", in his: *Die Juden in der alten Welt* (Berlin 1988), 28-48: 35.

probably also had at least some idea of conditions in the preceding period. But as his ambition seems to have been to start his account with Creation itself, even after the account of the early history of the world and of mankind in Genesis 1-11, he still had to bridge a tremendous gap for which he may have had various traditions, but hardly a linear historical account. He filled this lacuna by abstracting from Herodotus' work the genealogy of the kings of Media and Persia with the stories dealing with each of its members and, combined with this genealogy, the theme of the great campaign which crossed the water between two continents as if on dry land. To this framework he attached his account of the formative period of the people of Israel, with its origin traced to the patriarchs, the oppression in Egypt, the Exodus and the journey through the Wilderness, and finally the conquest of the Promised Land.

Our author had apparently analysed the *Histories* as consisting of an introductory first book, dealing among other things with the origins of the Persian empire, five books describing its history during the reigns of Cyrus' son Cambyses and Darius, and three books about Xerxes' great campaign. He took care to make the same division of his own work, with the great campaign and "ordinary history" changing places: Genesis describes the origins of the people of Israel, the five books from Exodus until and including Joshua tell about the great campaign, and Judges, Samuel and Kings about the history of the Israelites in their land. See table 10, where this shift is visualized together with the genealogy of the main families and their relationship with Egypt and Lydia, the starting points of the great campaigns.

It seems extremely unlikely that he invented the names of the more important patriarchs, and he apparently combined indigenous traditions about the forefathers with the material from the *Histories*. The theme of the two Israelite monarchies he projected back to the periods preceding their rise, even to the days of the patriarchs, especially the idea that, though the northern kingdom Israel was much more important at first, its less obtrusive relative Judah was destined to carry the ancient traditions on, a perspective which is very much present in all parts of Primary History³⁴, and he expanded

34 As, to mention only two examples, in the presence of the chapter Genesis 38, which deals specifically with Judah and his offspring, in the Joseph cycle of stories (in the person of his son Ephraim Joseph stands for the northern kingdom), and in the fact that Abraham travels around especially in the later area of Judah (especially Hebron), whereas his grandson Jacob /

their family into a twelve-tribe system, whether or not there were attachments for this in the traditions available beforehand. This work must of course have been written after the publication of the *Histories*, which may or may not have been connected with the traditional story of Herodotus reading his work in public in Athens in 445 BCE, and being richly rewarded for it by the grateful Athenians.³⁵

Having thus established a *terminus post quem* of ca. 440 BCE for the writing or final redaction of Primary History, we may turn to the question of a possible *terminus ante quem*. As elements of Primary History are fundamental for nearly all other biblical books, it seems rather likely that the work appeared not very long afterwards, as there must have been some time left for the literary processes described here; a date before 350 BCE seems almost certain. One interesting piece of information emanating from the Jewish community of Elephantine in the fifth century BCE may narrow down the period of its composition even more. In 419 BCE the Jews of Elephantine were enjoined through a letter from a certain Hananiah to celebrate Passover, or rather the festival of Unleavened Bread, as sanctioned by the Persian authorities, though it seems reasonable that the impulse for this came from Jerusalem, rather than from the king himself.³⁶ Unless we assume that Passover, the festival celebrating the Exodus from Egypt, had been very prominent already before the writing of Primary History, this move seems to indicate the

Israel, the eponym of both the entire nation and of the northern kingdom, appears to be based predominantly in the North (in particular Shechem). I do not know whether originally separate traditions underlie such reflexes of the North-South opposition, as maintained by the adherents of the Documentary Hypothesis (e.g. M. Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land* (Berkeley etc. 1993), 14, 17 and *passim*), but it would seem that the concept is not necessary to explain the present form of the text of Primary History.

35 It has often been noted, e.g. in A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago 1948), 317, that this is also the year of Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem (Artaxerxes 20), and thus perhaps also of the public reading of the Law in Neh 8, but it is not easy to see this as more than coincidence.

36 A good discussion of various opinions about this fragmentary letter in P. Schäfer, *Judeophobia. Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass. & London 1997), 124-128, though the conclusion which is cautiously stated there, namely that the letter is a reflection of a conflict between the Jews of Elephantine and the priests of the Egyptian god Khnum, may have to be reconsidered in the light of the above.

imposition of its regulations on the Elephantine community. For the time being, therefore, it seems very likely that Primary History was indeed written between 440 and 420 BCE.

Of course, this view of the origin of Primary History is completely different from what has been proposed before, though the idea that these books belong together and have at least been redacted as a whole has gained some popularity in recent years.³⁷ It remains to be seen how much is to remain of various theories explaining the present shape of the work from an amalgamation of various sources, because many of the criteria used for separating the supposed sources may have to be explained according to the lines set out here.

A Caveat: Two Aspects

It may be useful to point out that there are two completely different aspects to the congruence of certain biblical books which is noted here. Firstly there is the phenomenon of the congruence itself, no more and no less than a mere observation about certain regularities in the relation between two books. Secondly we need to find a literary and historical explanation for this congruence, which is an almost completely separate step. It should therefore be noted that the supposed refutation of a proposal for a literary and historical cause leaves the congruence unexplained unless a superior proposal would be presented. Thus one need not believe what is written above about the way in which the book of Daniel has supposedly been composed on the basis of Ezra and the description of the life of Joseph in Genesis 37-50, but in that case the congruence of Daniel with these two as exposed above will have to be explained differently. Likewise, one need not accept what is stated here about the relationship between Primary History and Herodotus' work, but in that case another solution for the close agreement between certain aspects of the two works will have to be found.

Of course, in order to safeguard against arbitrary assumptions for the words, episodes or styles to be treated as parallel, only those elements which have already been accepted as highly characteristic of both works should be used to establish the existence of

37 See, for example, the cautious conclusions in C. Houtman, *Der Pentateuch. Die Geschichte seiner Erforschung neben einer Auswertung* (Kampen 1994), 421-455, and the interesting attempt to reconcile historical criticism and literary study in D. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant. Transformations of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (1st ed. San Francisco 1987, 2nd ed. Ithaca 1991).

congruence. In all the cases studied here this rule applies. To mention only a few examples, there is general agreement that the predictions of the future are very important, both for Daniel and for the story of Joseph, the crossing of the Hellespont in the *Histories* and the episode of the Red Sea in Primary History belong to the most important events in both works, and the change of language in Ezra and Daniel is one of the characteristic features of these books.

Such agreements, as soon as it has been established that they cannot be accidental or be ascribed to a common origin, are therefore of a very fundamental nature, comparable with an acrostych in poems: they are there to be explained and may not be neglected or treated on a par with the outcome of complex philological or linguistic considerations.

A Literary Model

One of the reasons why the questions posed in this study have apparently never been asked before is probably the almost universal adherence to models of the genesis of most biblical books which presume gradual growth accompanied and concluded by redactional activities, which leave no room for the assumption of a highly creative and powerful author, coupled with a severe under-estimating of the literary capabilities and sophistication of the authors of the ancient Near East.

A good example of such extremely sophisticated techniques is the link which I showed to exist between Daniel 2 and 3 in the echo-like character of the dialogue between the Chaldeans and King Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2,8-11, and between Daniel's three companions and the King in Dan 3,14-18.³⁸ Only afterwards did I realize that this repetition of the type of dialogue must be a reflex of the well-known connection of the dialogues at a distance between Jacob and his sons in Gen 37,32-33 and Judah and Tamar in Gen 38,25-26, which are formally characterized by the fact that both begin with *hakkēr-nū*, "recognize!"³⁹ Additionally, it may be noted that in both cases the dialogues refer to similar acts or objects: in Genesis they are connected with the deceit of Jacob by Judah and his brothers (in ch 37), and of Judah by Tamar (in ch 38), in Daniel 2 the

38 "Language and Style in Biblical Aramaic: Observations on the Unity of Daniel ii-vi", *VT* 38 (1988), 194-209: 204-208.

39 See, among the many modern commentaries which mention this link, which is already to be found in rabbinic literature, already B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora. Genesis* (Berlin 1934, repr. New York s.a.), 719.

dialogue concerns the king's dream, in which a huge statue figures, whereas in Daniel 3 it refers to the statue set up by the king, which Daniel's companions refuse to do homage to. See also table 5, where the structural derivation (see p 56) with regard to this aspect is described. In other words: in both cases the "deviating" chapter has been connected with the preceding one by means of a very similar dialogue, which refers to similar events or objects, but the congruence remains on this remarkably abstract level: the participants and their place within the narrative, as well as the function of the agreement are completely different.

A second reason may be that we are used to the idea of derivation either on the completely abstract level, or on the level of one work or element of a work being copied and subsequently redacted, or on the level of small units of information being transferred from one work to another.⁴⁰ The concept of a structural analysis of one work in order to use all or part of its characteristic structural traits for another one is foreign to our notion of the ancient Near Eastern author.

In the world of classical Greece and Rome, however, the procedure reconstructed here is well-known, especially for Virgil's *Aeneid*. Already in antiquity it was common knowledge that Virgil had thoroughly studied Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and based his own work on various aspects of these poems. The most striking aspect of this derivation is that the *Aeneid* combines the great themes of these works in reverse order, with Aeneas travelling from defeated Troy like Odysseus and coming to Italy in the first part, and waging a war much like that told in the *Iliad* in order to establish himself there in the second part. In a way this procedure is comparable to the relationship between *Histories* and Primary History, which both have an introductory first book, the story of a great campaign and a long stretch of ordinary worldly history divided over their books 1, 2-6 and 7-9, with this crucial difference that the great campaign is found in books 2-6 in the Bible, and in 7-9 in Herodotus' work, with "ordinary" history relegated to books 7-9 in Primary History and 2-6 in the *Histories*. If we combine this with the observation that Virgil also used many narrative elements from Homer's work, working from a careful analysis of the narrative structures of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to an expert imitation and emulation in his own work⁴¹, we

40 See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (n 8).

41 See about this aspect of Virgil's work G.N. Knauer, "Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer", reprinted in: S.J. Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's*

see close parallels between the making of the two works. This information should be added to the dossier of parallels of Primary History and the *Aeneid* which M. Weinfeld collected in various publications.⁴² Weinfeld explains these parallels, surely somewhat unexpected in a work like the *Aeneid*, which was written long after the conclusion of the canon of the Hebrew Bible, partly from the fact that Virgil made use of Greek examples, some of which have now been lost.⁴³ This explanation seems very likely to account also for at least part of the parallels between the making of the *Aeneid* and of Primary History which we have discussed here.

Attempting to draw some general conclusions from the cases discussed above, we can make the following cautious statements. Unless a common origin or model for these congruences, of which hitherto no trace has appeared, and which is not easily conceivable anyway, could still be found, the only explanation would seem to be that the author of one work analyzed the structure of another one (sometimes of more than one), which for some reason he deemed worthy for this purpose, and deliberately used part of this structure for making his own composition. The idea must have been that on the one hand this method of working conformed to the ideal of *imitatio et aemulatio* which is very common in many literatures, and that on the other hand by following examples which had already been accepted as canonical, a book was prepared which would itself be especially worthy of this dignity (with Primary History the latter reason was not present, of course).

On the literary level this emulation is particularly clearly visible in those cases where the author elaborated on a theme or concept which he found in his source text. Thus the "double dreams" of Genesis 37, 40 and 41 probably are to be traced to the "double dream" of King Astyages in Herodotus' *Histories*, I, 107-108, where he receives a prediction that his grandson will remove him from power through two highly similar dreams: a flood of urine and a vine issuing from his daughter's belly. The author of Primary History

Aeneid (Oxford & New York 1990), 390-412 (originally appeared in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 [1964], 61-84), and also G.N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer: Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis* (Göttingen 1964). Cfr also K.W. Gransden, *Virgil's Iliad. An Essay on Epic Narrative* (Cambridge [UK] etc. 1984).

42 Especially in the first two chapters of his *The Promise of the Land* (n 34), 1-51.

43 Weinfeld, *op.cit.*, 16-17.

apparently expanded this theme into three pairs of dreams, the first and the last of which give one prediction by means of two dreams (cfr. Gen 41,25, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same"), whereas the two dreams in the middle pair, the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker in Genesis 40, though highly similar like the other pairs, turn out to mean something completely different: disgrace and death for one, and restoration to the former position of honour for the other.⁴⁴

There are four factors which make the recognition of such structural dependence more difficult than it would otherwise have been. Firstly, in many cases corresponding elements have to be abstracted from the running texts in which they have been inserted, which in itself is not very easy. Once one has correctly identified them, however, there is little residue of doubt, because coincidence as the cause of a regular congruence is extremely unlikely as long as the elements assumed to be parallel belong to the most characteristic and important aspects of the text. Secondly, in not a few cases corresponding elements are shifted or mirrored in various ways, for example with regard to their place within the book (see also below). Thirdly, more or less the same goes even more strongly for the parts connecting the parallel features, where literary genre, action or main person may be different to a considerable degree. Thus the stories in Daniel largely correspond with documents in Ezra, and visions with stories, though the correspondence is not entirely consistent. Finally, literal quotation is almost completely absent, though certain words and expressions may be found in both books which are to be compared.

This dependence of one book on another is also a very important observation for the origin and history of the entire literature of the Hebrew Bible, because for the first time in the history of biblical studies we are now in a position to examine usually elusive notions such as authorial intention and the final form of some of its books. The use which the biblical author made of other works informs us, firstly, about the form which these works had at the time, and secondly, often about the way in which he read and analyzed them. The dependence of one work upon another also provides us with relative chronological information, which may occasionally lead to a rather precise date of origin, such as in the case of Primary History, where we probably narrowed down its time of writing from the 500

44 For details, see my *The Origin of the History of Israel* (n 19).

to 800 years previously supposed for it, to a mere two or three decades.

It is important to note, by the way, that literary dependence as outlined here should make us very wary of two commonly accepted scholarly approaches, which would be methodologically sound nearly everywhere, but may lead to misleading conclusions in the field of the Hebrew Bible, namely reasoning exclusively on the basis of an internal analysis of structural characteristics of a text and attempting to make a direct connection between the text and events in the real or supposedly real history. Since it turns out that in many cases texts refer more closely to other texts than to a supposed reality underlying it or to features of the text itself, one may only start to perform such types of analysis when the links with other texts have been clarified. There is something extremely unfair about the results of this observation, because it suddenly devoids a lot of good and responsible scholarship of significance, whereas a number of studies which, through intuition or some other reason, disregarded part of the evidence, remain meaningful.

It is also very interesting, though probably somewhat embarrassing for many scholars, that an uncritical reading of the text, as practiced in conservative Jewish and Christian circles, is in some respects superior to the sophisticated analysis proposed by modern scholarship. The reason for this is, of course, that they assume the unity of the text as a matter of course, whereas biblical scholarship has hitherto been of the opinion that this unity should be proved first, certainly an arduous task in view of so much diversity.

Thus the very many theories about the origin of the book of Daniel, which take the variety of language, style, person of the narrator, and other characteristics of the book as their point of departure, to a large degree consist of reasonable considerations, based on equally reasonable suppositions (though the nearly complete disagreement on nearly all issues should arouse suspicion), but once one realizes that many or all of the characteristic features of the book which they are based on refer to other texts instead of being the traces of the supposedly very complicated history of the text, they suddenly appear groundless, while the essay by H. H. Rowley about the unity of the book retains its value, though it has often (and, in a sense, rightly!) been criticized for disregarding the problem of the discontinuities in the book, merely placing the onus of proof on those

who would use these to dissect the book into various parts.⁴⁵ The same is true for the analysis of Ezra and Nehemiah. If one does not note their special relationship as described above, it is a perfectly legitimate approach to take similar materials from both books and to construct a genealogy for the books on this basis. Once it has become clear, however, that there are good reasons why the distribution of these features is as it is, most of these arguments lose their value, and the order and form of the books as they are now are to be considered as original, in agreement with a completely uncritical reading of the text! Finally, the tremendous variety of sundry kind as found in Primary History appears to necessitate some sort of historical explanation, until it becomes clear that the variation is largely deliberate, whether or not individual instances can be ascribed to a pre-history of the text. We find ourselves again in the position of somewhat uneasy companions of those who would favour a completely uncritical reading of the text. It should be noted, however, that the question of the sources of the material found in Primary History may be far more complicated than in the case of Ezra or Daniel, so that some sort of historical analysis, but of a different type, may still prove to be necessary.

The Palette of the Author: Parallel, Shifted and Contrastive Derivation

We noted that in some cases there is a very close linear agreement between the two books, which can hardly escape the reader's attention, such as between the languages employed and between the persons who tell the story in Daniel and Ezra (tables 1 and 2). Another good example is the shifting of attention from the main person to one or more other persons for one chapter, a short distance from the beginning of the book or series of stories, as is the case with the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 and the episode of Daniel's three companions in Daniel 3 (table 5).

At other times the agreement, incorporated in the narrative line of the story, is not visible to the unprepared eye, though it can hardly be denied to exist once attention has been drawn to it. The relationship between the various means for being informed of the future in the Joseph cycle and in Daniel is a very good example. If one lines up all

45 H.H. Rowley, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel", in his *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London 1952), 235-268 (originally published in *Hebrew Union College Anniversary Publication 1* [1952] 233-273).

the instances of divinely inspired information next to each other (as is done in table 3, see also table 4) one sees a close correspondence, with neither of the two having any additional instances. The genealogies of the main families, or rather the family trees of Xerxes and Mōses, in Herodotus and in Primary History with their relation to the point of departure for the great campaign (tables 9 and 10) is also a clear instance of linear and exclusive correspondence: each forefather of one corresponds with a forefather of the other, for five generations back, and the contacts with Lydia and Egypt, respectively, occur in exactly corresponding generations.⁴⁶

Still, in all the cases mentioned above there is a positive, identical and linear congruence: if one puts all the cases where text A has phenomenon X, and text B has phenomenon Y beside each other, no lonely X or Y is left in either of them, and there is no need to shift places in one of the two. Some exceptions must occasionally be taken for granted because of the author's practical needs, but it turns out that their number in the cases under discussion here is exceptionally small. A good example is represented by the instances of the crossing of the waters as if on dry land during the great campaign in the *Histories* and in Primary History: two crossings found in the *Histories* have been put together in the Bible in the episode of the Red Sea, one for the Israelites and one for the Egyptians, with the result that the chronological order is released.

In other cases the parallel parts are shifted either with regard to some aspect of the parts themselves, or with regard to their position within the entire work. In such cases there appears to be a criterion of agreement between the two, but the two works complement each other rather than being parallel. Still, it would seem that we are indeed dealing with a very sophisticated type of literary connection here, rather than with the result of accidental factors. The remarkable mirrored situation of the parts of Primary History in relation with the *Histories* has been discussed above. Sometimes the shift is so great that the mirror-image assumes the character of a contrast. In view of the fact that the distribution of points of view of the narrator was copied faithfully from Ezra to Daniel, with a section put in the mouth of the main person in the middle, between two sections which are told by an anonymous narrator, it seems very likely that the

46 For other agreements between the members of the two families, see my *The Origin of the History of Israel* (n 19), and for the time being my "Herodotus, vader van de bijbelse geschiedenis?" (n 1), 14-37, *passim*.

contrasting situation in Nehemiah, with an anonymous section between two sections which are told by the main person, was transformed into the distribution in Ezra. This becomes even more likely in view of the switch of places of the journey of the main persons Ezra and Nehemiah and that of Zerubbabel as noted above: Nehemiah's framework is a first-person narrative which encloses some third-person material, whereas Ezra's is a historical survey in the third person with a first-person account included.

This may be the right place to give some precise definitions of terms which we have been using in an intuitive way up to this point, while adding a few new ones; this may prove useful for the uniformity of further study along the lines suggested here. With a book of the Bible we usually designate the entity defined as such in the Hebrew canon, with as minor modifications for the time being only the originally belonging together in one book of some present-day pairs of books, notably Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, and the splitting of Ezra-Nehemiah into its constituent parts. An agreement between two books is a major element in the field of contents, style or lexicon occurring in both. It should be noted that agreements are by themselves almost useless for establishing the relationship between two books, only through an especial quality or quantity can they attain such a status. An especially important type of agreement for the comparison of two books is that of two discontinuities, parts of the text where its normal flow seems to be interrupted (see above). We will speak of congruence when a series of agreements belonging together is found in linear order in both books, or one agreement is found in a very characteristic place, for example at the beginning or the end of the books. Parallelism is defined as the belonging together of the pairs of elements in a congruence, and of agreements which fit in the framework of such a congruence: all these are said to be parallel.

The process of the transition from the structure of one work to another we will describe as structural derivation. A formal description contains three or four different sections, each representing a step in the process of transition from one text to another. Analytical statements are observations about the division of the source text in relation with the distribution of important and characteristic features. Rules of transformation describe the relation between these observations and the form of the target text, and can only take the form of "copy" (of the situation described in one or more analytical statements) or (more rarely) "mirror" (two features

change place). Rules of adaptation represent minor modifications of the resulting structure because of the needs of the new work. The rubric "other changes" is optional and does not belong to the derivation in the strict sense; it contains some of the changes and additions which serve to make the derived work into a composition in its own right. Formal descriptions of the three cases of structural derivation discussed in this study are to be found in tables 2, 4, 5, 7 and 11. It should be noted, of course, that this is a highly abstract description, which serves to clarify the derivation to modern readers; the processes taking place in the author's mind may have been far more intuitive.

There are two additional aspects to be noted. Firstly, ideally we should make a separate formal description for each case of congruence between the works, as in most cases structural derivation will rest on two, three or even more congruences. Secondly, some congruences are interrelated or cause interference in the target text, for example the observations about the two parts of the book of Ezra on one hand, and the central position of God's promise to Jacob in Genesis 46 between three pairs of dreams dealing with the near or intermediate future and three spoken predictions concerned with the remote future on the other, which together appear to determine the two-part division of Daniel: a narrative part followed by visionary chapters.

Another example is the reduplication which is apparent in Daniel 7 and 8 in comparison with the corresponding passage in Genesis, God's promise to Jacob in Gen 46,3-4, which is formally a mirroring of the reduplication of the first three predictions in Genesis (see table 4), but which was undoubtedly also caused by the desire to have parallel chapters to both Ezra 7,12ff. and Ezra 8 (see tables 1 and 2).

These two factors cause that the choice between treating congruences together in one formal description and discussing them apart will often be difficult and at times arbitrary. Generally speaking, it would seem preferable to treat each congruence apart as a matter of principle, unless it is too closely connected with another one to be understood or evaluated without it. The connections between the division of Primary History and the *Histories*, the genealogy of the main family and the contacts with the starting point of the great campaign are a good example of a set of congruences which are best described together (see tables 10 and 11).

Though the exact wording of the rules may vary, it proved very useful to assume one unequivocal form for the presentation of the

structural derivation, in order to remove any doubt about its scope and meaning. Every instance in this study is to look like this:

Rules for the structural derivation from S to T (with regard to) [C1 <chapter:verse | chapter:verse>; C2 <chapter:verse | chapter:verse>...]

where S is the source text (usually a book), T is the target text, and C1, C2 etc. are the congruences. Wherever applicable, there are quotations from both texts between angular brackets, with a vertical line between quotation(s) from source text and target text.

Of course, even when all congruences are taken into account, these descriptions do not exhaust the common features of these texts, nor the structural features of the target texts. We can, for example, observe that words, expressions and situations from Ezra or the story of Joseph as found within the framework of the congruences have been used in corresponding places in Daniel⁴⁷, and that the Aramaic part of Daniel has received a nice concentric structure.⁴⁸

There is much more to be said about the integration of elements from Ezra and Genesis, as well as from other books of the Hebrew Bible, in the book of Daniel, but this issue I hope to discuss at length elsewhere.⁴⁹

Unity and Diversity

A traditional scholarly way of looking at many biblical texts is to search for the seams between parts which are for some reason different, and to assume that these parts were originally separate, but finally ended up together through the work of a redactor. On the basis of our observations it would seem, however, that in not a few cases such seams are functional within a carefully and deliberately composed whole, because they refer to a literary reality outside of the work under discussion. It would seem, in fact, that in a number of instances discontinuities confirm rather than disprove the basic unity of the work. For this reason it may be preferable to assume as a

47 For example, the use of the word *sārīs*, “eunuch”, in Genesis 37,36 and 39,1 and in Daniel 1, or the accusations in Daniel 3 and 6, which appear to correspond with those in Genesis 38 (perhaps also 39) and 44.

48 See especially A. Lenglet, “La structure littéraire de Daniel 2-7”, *Biblica* 53 (1972), 169-190. Note that this case (and others like it) should make us wary to make the automatic assumption of a separate pre-existence of well-formed sub-units such as, for example, the Succession History in 2 Sam 9-1 Ki. 2.

49 See my *Language, Style and Structure in the Book of Daniel* (n 10).

general rule the unity of biblical books first, and shift to the assumption of a separate origin of its parts only if there are external indications for a composite nature.

A question which follows directly from these considerations is how we are to explain the retention of such irregularities, or rather why apparently at first no need was felt to harmonize them, in marked contrast with later periods, when clear uneasiness with them was not rarely translated into changes which were intended to make the text more consistent.⁵⁰ On the one hand there must have been social pressures to refrain from modifying the texts, and one can well imagine that the preservation of master copies of these books in or near the Temple would serve this purpose, and be a partial explanation why the texts were hardly modified at first. On the other hand, authors and early readers may have taken a different look at these biblical texts than later students were and are wont to do. In fact, many of the books which together form the literature of Ancient Israel as preserved in the Hebrew Bible can apparently be read as a unity only if one presumes them to be of the literary genre of the literary or composed dossier: a supposed collection of documents, lists, songs, prayers, stories or other units dealing with one subject or centering around one event or person. We are used to thinking in terms of the concept that many biblical books have been intended for presentation as a unity, though it can clearly be seen that they are, in fact, collections of sometimes disparate material from various sources. It may well be that the true state of affairs is often the other way round, namely that in not a few of these cases we are dealing with deliberate and sophisticated compositions which have been set up to appear as collections of various materials.

Such a view apparently also underlies the making, and particularly the retention, of doublets of episodes in narrative texts, in particular those which are mutually exclusive, such as the two accounts of creation (Gen 1-2,4 and 2,4ff.) and the two accounts

50 The process continues to the present day. Note, for example, that Exodus 2,1, *wayyelek 'is mibbet lewi wayyiqqah 'et-bat-lewi*, translated literally by the King James Version as "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi" (maybe "the daughter" would be even more precise), is rendered in nearly all modern translations in such a way, that the problematic genealogy of Moses (see above) disappears (in spite of the fact that it is confirmed in Exod 6,18-20 and Num 26,58-59). Compare, for example, the rendering of the *NRSV*: "Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman".

which describe how David first made the acquaintance of King Saul (1 Sam 16 and 17). The repetition of certain scenes, such as the patriarch's wife posing as his sister (Gen 12,10-20; 20,1-18; 26,1-11) and David sparing king Saul's life (1 Sam 24 and 26), may also belong in this category, beside having a literary function in their respective contexts.⁵¹

Daniel provides an excellent example of such apparent diversity: in its present form the book looks like a variegated collection of stories about Daniel and his friends and visions reported by him, some in Hebrew and others in Aramaic. Though it has often been recognized that the book can easily be read from one end to the other as a unity, its irregular character made nearly all critical scholars of this century assume that it is the result of a complicated editorial process.⁵² The considerations set forth above, by contrast, make it rather likely that the book is the result of a sophisticated process of composition, with the question of a possible pre-history of the parts of the book receding to the limited importance which it always has for well-composed literary works, namely as an independent problem, of little interest for the study of the book in its present form. Ezra looks like a number of variegated documents dealing with the rebuilding of the Temple and the re-establishing of the cult, such as letters, lists and stories, which would have completely different origins and have been assembled for incorporation in the book⁵³, whereas it is in all likelihood a consistent addition to the book of Nehemiah in reality, answering the questions left open by that book and providing the priestly and cultic side of the restoration, which is largely lacking in Nehemiah, by reporting on events in the years before Nehemiah's mission.⁵⁴ Finally, each of the original nine

51 See the discussion of such cases in my *The Origin of the History of Israel* (n 19).

52 Collins, *Daniel* (n 6), 24-38.

53 Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (n 15) *passim*. See, for example, about the first half of Ezra also H.G.M. Williamson, "The Composition of Ezra i-vi", *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 34 (1983), 1-30; B. Halpern, "A Historiographic Commentary on Ezra 1-6; Achronological Narrative and Dual Chronology in Israelite Historiography", in W.H. Propp, B. Halpern and D.N. Freedman (ed.), *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (Winona Lake 1990), 81-142.

54 It seems rather likely that the use of the Aramaic language for the official documents and their connecting stories in the book of Ezra was meant to indicate this character as a dossier: it strengthens the idea that an earlier Aramaic-language collection of such documents with notes lay at the base of

books which together form the Primary History of Genesis-2 Kings retains a distinct character of its own, at times stressed by a unique framework such as the cycle sin-repentance-deliverance in Judges or the two-monarchy account in (1 & 2) Kings, and the first five have apparently been intended to form the collection of the "Books of Moses", while only when read together do they exhibit the close parallels with the work of Herodotus which are discussed above.⁵⁵

A Historical Model

The method of working described above, which results in one complete book being dependent on one or more other complete books or discrete parts of books, has important consequences for our view of the way in which the books of the Hebrew Bible have been collected in the Jewish canon. Hitherto we could only see the completed result, with the understandable misgivings about the status of unusual Biblical books such as Esther or Song of Songs. The dependence which we established, however, allows us to put a number of books in their correct literary and presumably also chronological order. The importance of the theme of Exodus, Wilderness and Conquest for nearly all books means that Primary History as a whole must have been the starting point of the collection. Daniel being at the end or thereabouts (maybe it was followed by Esther), being based on Ezra and on the history of Joseph, while Ezra is dependent on Nehemiah, which in turn presupposes either the Biblical History or something like it (but in view of what was stated above it is likely that there never was anything "like it" before the composition of the work itself), we can draw a preliminary flow diagram of the structure of most of the historical books (table 12); note that these books may additionally draw upon information from any and all earlier books. It is possible that in the aspect of structural derivation these books were different from those of other genres, but it seems more likely that also in the case of those other books rules of structural derivation from one book into another can be discovered.

the first part of the book. This function of the language of these chapters does not, of course, render it impossible that the documents are authentic. Intention and accident cannot be distinguished easily here.

55 See about this ambiguity in the composition of Primary History especially E. Ben Zvi, "Looking at the Primary (Hi) story and the Prophetic Books as Literary/Theological Units within the Frame of the Early Second Temple: Some Considerations", *SJOT* 12 (1998), 26-43.

It seems therefore that in the formative period of the Hebrew Bible we are at all times dealing with a basically closed and complete collection, to which at times new works were admitted; we will use the term "canon" in a very loose sense here. The moving factor of this process has probably been especially the desire to fill apparent lacunae in the literary heritage of ancient Israel, either of works or genres mentioned in canonical works, or treatments of episodes not yet represented in the canon. This slow process presumably left every period with a complete and balanced canon of its own, with the additions being selected to fit in a consistent overall view of the history and religion of the people of Israel.⁵⁶ This presupposes an authoritative body safeguarding the final form of canonical works, deciding upon the admission of new works and perhaps even commissioning them, while belonging to or being in contact with a literary culture in which such works could be written. The only historical situation where this can readily be imagined is the ruling classes of Jerusalem in the years 450-165 BCE. The fact that the canon appears to end with Daniel, presumably composed in this last year (see above), may well indicate that the rise of the Hasmoneans caused a break with this tradition.

Needless to say, this thesis about the origin of the collection of the books of the Hebrew Bible is radically different from the one commonly accepted among scholars, where the idea that the Hebrew Bible is a reasonably consistent work stands in contrast with the conviction that it arose from a basically opaque process of redaction of texts and books during a long period.⁵⁷ This is hardly the right opportunity to follow the lead of these thoughts to the end, but it is clear that many established ideas about the origin of the Hebrew Bible may have to be revised considerably.

It seems very likely that in most books of the Hebrew Bible we

56 For some of the consequences of the identification of this process for the study of the history of the Hebrew language, see my "The language of the Hebrew Bible in contrast with the language of the Ben Sira manuscripts and of the Dead Sea Scrolls", to appear in the papers of the Leiden symposium on the Hebrew of Ben Sira and the Dead Sea Scrolls in December 1997, to be published by J. Elwolde and T. Muraoka.

57 See, for example, J. A. Sanders' article "Canon" in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols, New York etc. 1992), where we find both his firm conviction that the canon of the Hebrew Bible is a consistent whole and a statement that: "Modern critical study has shown that the stories of the patriarchs and matriarchs in Genesis stem from various ancient sources..." (op.cit. vol. I, 844 l.).

are dealing with a literary and religious universe, created by generation upon generation of highly capable authors, where the connection with the outside world in past and present really comes on the third place only. This is not to say that all the accounts which are presented of certain events have been invented, especially since we can safely assume that these authors were far better informed about Israel's past than modern research will ever be, only that they now serve a new religious and literary purpose. The book of Ezra serves to outline Israel's religious restoration after the Captivity in contrast with Nehemiah's worldly restoration, and this contrast is indicated by the parallel with the book of Nehemiah. This does not allow any direct conclusions to be made about whether the information provided in the book of Ezra is correct or not. The life and career of Daniel are seen in the light of two other great Israelite luminaries, namely Joseph and Ezra, and this is indicated through the dependence of the book of Daniel on the accounts dealing with them. Though this makes it very unlikely that Daniel presents us with precise historical accounts only, we may not conclude that there never was such a person, nor that individual episodes of the book did not take place in some way. Within the Hebrew Bible the Exodus from Egypt serves the religious purpose of making clear how Israel came to have a completely unique position among the nations⁵⁸ and the literary purpose of achieving congruence with Herodotus' great historical work. Whether or not there ever were such events as the oppression in Egypt, the Exodus of the oppressed and the death of the oppressors in the waves of the sea is a historical question, which is addressed by our considerations to a limited degree only, let alone that it can be answered in that way.

What has become clear is that the books of the Hebrew Bible are, to a far greater degree than we used to think, deliberately planned and formed literary compositions, written by highly capable authors who liked to imitate and emulate other works in such a fashion that many readers would not notice it, while remaining so close to their examples that the link between the two texts cannot be denied once

58 See especially Y. Zakovitch, *"And You Shall Tell Your Son". The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (n 22), *passim* but especially the third chapter, 99-133. He expressed this idea very concisely on 133: "The intimate relationship between the children of Israel and the Canaanites necessitated the reinforcement and intensification of the Exodus myth, the belief that the people of Israel were created in Egypt and received their law and culture in the wilderness".

attention has been drawn to it: a hidden, but reliable, testimony to their intentions and literary capabilities. In their works, these authors interspersed well-structured literary units with seemingly random other materials, and deliberately inserted discontinuities in form and contents, often with the intention to indicate a link with another text. We apparently simply did not understand what their literary culture involved, nor can we be certain that there are not a number of new surprises still waiting for us.

What is hardly surprising any more is that they apparently had a profound understanding of the works of their predecessors and analyzed them with ease, taking a bird's eye view of those books, noting all kinds of intertextual links and reading the discontinuities in the right literary context. They probably understood far more of this literature than modern scholarship will ever be capable of.

Together these authors represent a literary culture which, on the crossroads between Jewish and Greek knowledge, with undoubtedly also influences of other cultures of the Near East, produced the series of books which we now know as the Hebrew Bible. During a period of some three centuries their literary activity and occupation with the past of their nation and of its culture resulted in a collection of books which has exerted a greater influence on the world's religion, history and literature than anything else.

Table 1: parallels between portions in first and third persons and in Hebrew and Aramaic in Daniel and Ezra. Thick black line = sections in Aramaic; double line = sections in which the main personage speaks in the first person; horizontal line = separation between first and second parts of the books. Bold type only serves to structure the correspondences. In Daniel 7 and Daniel 10-12 the parts in which Daniel is speaking are introduced with a remark about him.

Daniel	Ezra
1 Story about beginning of exile	1-3 Story about end of exile
2,1-4 Exposition of problem	4,1-7 Exposition of problem
2,4 "In Aramaic"	4,7 "In Aramaic"
2,4-49 Story no. 1	4,7-16 Document no. 1
3,1-28 Story no. 2	4,17-22 Document no. 2
3,28-30 proclamation of king (belonging to story no. 2)	4,23-24 Connecting story (belonging to doc. 2)
3,31-33 proclamation of king (belonging to story no. 3)	5,1-7 Connecting story (belonging to doc. 3)
4,1-33 Story no. 3 (story embedded in proclamation)	5,7-17 Document no. 3 (story embedded in document)
4,34-37 proclamation of king (belonging to story no. 3)	6,1-2 Connecting story (belonging to doc. 3 & 4)
5 Story no. 4	6,2-5 Document no. 4
6,1-25 Story no. 5	6,6-12 Document no. 5
6,26-29 proclamation of king (belonging to story no. 5)	6,13-18 Connecting story (belonging to doc. 5)
—	6,19-22 Connecting story
<hr/>	
—	7,1-11 Connecting story
7 Vision	7,12-26 Document no. 6
7,28 Reaction of Daniel	7,27-28 Reaction of Ezra
8 Vision	8 Story
9 Confession of guilt (addressed to God) at time of <i>minḥā</i>	9 Confession of guilt (addressed to God) at time of <i>minḥā</i>
10-12 Vision with fasting, "be strong!"	10 Story with fasting, "be strong!"

Table 2: rules for the structural derivation from Ezra to Daniel [parts of book <1-6 and 7-10 | 1-6 and 7-12>; languages <Hebrew-Aramaic-Hebrew-Aramaic-Hebrew | Hebrew-Aramaic-Hebrew>; use of the word 'arāmīt in <4,7 | 2,4>; grammatical designation of main person <3rd-1st-3rd | 3rd-1st>; confession of guilt <9 | 9>; change of literary genre].

Analytical statements

- The book of Ezra can be divided in two parts: ch 1-6 return of the exiles and restoration of Temple and cult, 7-10 return of Ezra and restoration of the community.
- It contains a stretch of Aramaic surrounded by Hebrew and interrupted by Hebrew in 6,19-7,11; the use of Aramaic thus connects the two parts of the book.
- The beginning of the Aramaic section is indicated with the word 'arāmīt, “in Aramaic”, seemingly denoting the first text only.
- The book contains a section in which Ezra speaks in the first person (without being introduced as such), from 7,27 until and including ch 9.
- The last first-person chapter (ch 9) contains a confession of guilt on behalf of the people.

Rules of transformation

- Copy the division of the work in two parts.
- Copy the distribution of Hebrew and Aramaic.
- Copy the indication of the beginning of the Aramaic.
- Copy the distribution of third- and first-person accounts.
- Copy the place of the confession of guilt.

Rules of adaptation

- Transform the first part into a series of court stories about Daniel and his companions.
- Transform the second part into a series of Daniel’s visions and predictions to him of the future, except for the confession of guilt followed by a prediction in ch 9.
- Delete (the counterpart of) the Hebrew interruption of the Aramaic.
- Let all the visions and the predictions in the second part of the book be told in the first person by introducing Daniel as speaking at the beginning of the two which were not in the first person yet (ch 7 and 10-12).

Table 3: parallels between predictions of the future in Daniel and Genesis. All the predictions of the future in both cycles have been included here.

Daniel	Genesis 37-50
2 predicting dream of king Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel (intermediate and remote future; 'ah ^a rīt yomayyā)	37 two predicting dreams of Joseph, interpreted by brothers and father (intermediate and remote future)
4 predicting dream of king Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel (near future)	40 two predicting dreams of chief baker and chief steward, interpreted by Joseph (near future)
5 inscription in palace of king Belshazzar with prediction for near future of the realm, interpreted by Daniel	41 two dreams of Pharaoh with prediction for near future of the realm, interpreted by Joseph
7-8 two night visions of Daniel with predictions (remote future), interpreted by divine beings	46 night vision of Jacob with promise of God (remote future),
9 prediction by Gabriel to Daniel (remote future)	48 prediction by Jacob to Joseph (remote future)
10-11 vision with detailed prediction by divine being of course of history in the remote future ('ah ^a rīt hayyāmīm)	49 detailed prediction by Jacob to sons of course of history in the remote future ('ah ^a rīt hayyāmīm)
12 vision with prediction by divine being to Daniel of salvation in the remote future	50 prediction of salvation by Joseph to brothers in the remote future

Table 4: rules for the structural derivation from the Joseph cycle to Daniel [predictions of the future].

Analytical statements

- There are seven instances of predictions of the future in Genesis 37-50, the first three are double dreams (ch 37, 40 and 41), one a promise of God to Jacob in a night vision (46), two are predictions by Jacob (48 and 49), and one is a prediction by Joseph (50).
- The first double dream has a dual purpose, namely to predict Joseph's exalted position both during his life and, in his descendants, during the history of the people of Israel in its land. The two dreams in ch 40 and 41 refer to the immediate future only.
- The three predictions spoken by Jacob and Joseph are elaborations of the promise to Jacob in Gen 46; all refer to the remote future.

Rules of transformation

- Copy the order and character (dream, night vision or spoken prediction) of all seven the predictions.
- Mirror the dreams and the promise to Jacob with regard to reduplication.
- Copy the scope of all the predictions: near, intermediate and remote future (to become reality within at most a few years, during the life of the main person or much later only, respectively).

Rules of adaptation

- Let the first two dreams be predictions to the king, to be interpreted by Daniel.
- Change the third dream into an enigmatic inscription, likewise meant for the king and interpreted by Daniel.
- Make the fourth prediction into real night visions, supplemented by predictions spoken to Daniel by a celestial being.
- Let the last three predictions be spoken to Daniel by celestial beings.

Table 5: rules for the structural derivation from the Joseph cycle to Daniel [position of the chapter with another main figure or other main figures <38 | 3>].

Analytical statements

- After the first chapter (Gen 37), the series of stories about Joseph is interrupted by a story about his half-brother Judah, who also played a part in Gen 37.
- The chapters Gen 37 and 38 are linked by means of similar dialogues between the main persons (the brothers and Jacob in 37, Tamar and Judah in 38).

Rules of transformation

- Copy the especial position of a chapter with a different main person.
- Copy the link of similarity between the dialogues of persons in the chapter with the different main person and the one preceding it.

Rules of adaptation

- Change the place of the deviating chapter from the second to the third position in the book.
- Change the character of the similarity from repetition of words to the use of a mirror-like structure in both.
- Let both dialogues be exchanged between the king and his subjects.

Table 6: parallels between Ezra and Nehemiah. Thick line = first person account of Ezra / Nehemiah; horizontal line = separation between first and second parts of the books.

Nehemiah	<i>Common and contrastive elements</i>	Ezra
1 information about situation of Jerusalem	<i>starting point of events</i>	1 edict of Cyrus for return to Jerusalem
2 Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem	<i>from the East to Jerusalem</i>	2 Zerubbabel's journey to Jerusalem
3 start of rebuilding of walls	<i>walls // altar</i>	3 rebuilding of altar
4 opposition to rebuilding of walls	<i>walls // Temple</i>	4,1-5 opposition to rebuilding of Temple
5 Nehemiah's social justice	<i>intermezzo dealing with later period</i>	4,6-23 opposition to rebuilding of walls of Jerusalem
6 opposition and completion of walls	<i>walls // Temple</i>	5-6 opposition and completion of Temple
7 Zerubbabel's journey to Jerusalem, 1st person note at the beginning	<i>from the East to Jerusalem</i>	7 beginning of Ezra's journey to Jerusalem, 1st person note at the end
8 reading of the Law	<i>Law // Temple cult</i>	8 names of Ezra's company, rest of journey
9 confession of guilt addressed to God	<i>confession of guilt</i>	9 problem of mixed marriages, confession of guilt addressed to God
9,38-12,26 consent of people ("we") to the Law and oath, various lists	<i>consent of people and oath</i>	10,1-5 consent of people ("we") to action against mixed marriages and oath
12,27-47 coming together of all Levites etc, inauguration of wall and contributions	<i>assembly</i>	10,7-9 coming together of entire people
13 various actions of Nehemiah, among others against mixed marriages	<i>actions of main person</i>	10,10-44 Ezra's action against mixed marriages, list of mixed marriages

Table 7: rules for the structural derivation from Nehemiah to Ezra [parts of book <1-6 and 7-13 | 1-6 and 7-10>; grammatical designation of main person <1st-3rd-1st | 3rd-1st-3rd>; confession of guilt <9 | 9>]; especial position of chapter in first part <5 | 4,6-23>; document quoted in second part <7 | 7>].

Analytical statements

- Nehemiah consists of two parts: ch 1-6 describe the material restoration of Jerusalem, ch 7-13 various other aspects of the restoration of Jewish life in Jerusalem.
- Both parts have right after the beginning a journey from the East to Jerusalem, one of the main person (Nehemiah, ch 2) and one of Zerubbabel (ch 7).
- One chapter before the end of the first part there is a chapter (Nehemiah's social justice, ch 5) which is more closely related to the second part of the book than to its immediate surroundings.
- The second part begins with the quoting of a document concerning Zerubbabel's journey to Jerusalem (the list of persons who came with him, ch 7).
- The book is told by Nehemiah in the first person, apart from ch 8-12,26.

Rules of transformation

- Copy the division of the work in two parts.
- Mirror the positions of the journeys of the main person and of Zerubbabel.
- Copy the especial position of ch 5 and ch 7.
- Mirror the position of first- and third-person account.

Rules of adaptation

- Make the first part into a collection of documents concerning restoration of Temple and cult after the captivity, and the second into an account of Ezra's activities.
- Make the counterpart of Nehemiah 5 into a chapter referring to the second part of Ezra-Nehemiah (the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem).
- Make the counterpart of Nehemiah 7 into a letter of king Artaxerxes about Ezra's mission.

Other changes

- Quote the documents and most of their accompanying text in the Aramaic language.

Table 8: the three crossings of the water as if on dry land in the Bible and in the work of Herodotus, in the order in which they are found in Primary History.

Herodotus	<i>Common elements</i>	Bible
Hellespont (VII, 54-56) across bridges of boats	<i>successful crossing of the leader with his millions to another continent</i>	Israelites through the Sea (Exod 14,21-22 and 29) water recedes
Poteidaia (VIII, 128-129) water recedes and returns	<i>drowning as divine punishment</i>	Egyptians in the Sea (Exod 14,23-28) water returns
Salamis (VIII, 97) unsuccessful building of bridge of boats	<i>leader cannot cross</i>	R. Jordan (Josh. 3-4) water recedes and returns

Table 9. genealogy of the patriarchs and of the Median and Persian kings, and their occupation with the starting point of the great campaign. In larger type than the other names are the three members of each family who play a major role in the contact with Egypt and Lydia, respectively.

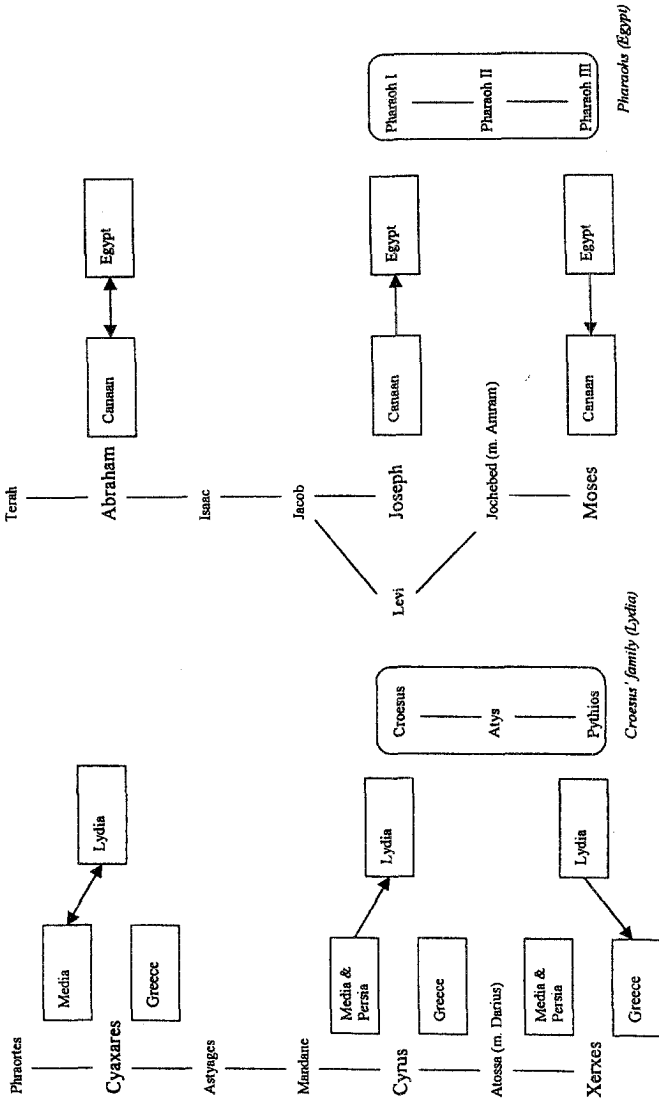
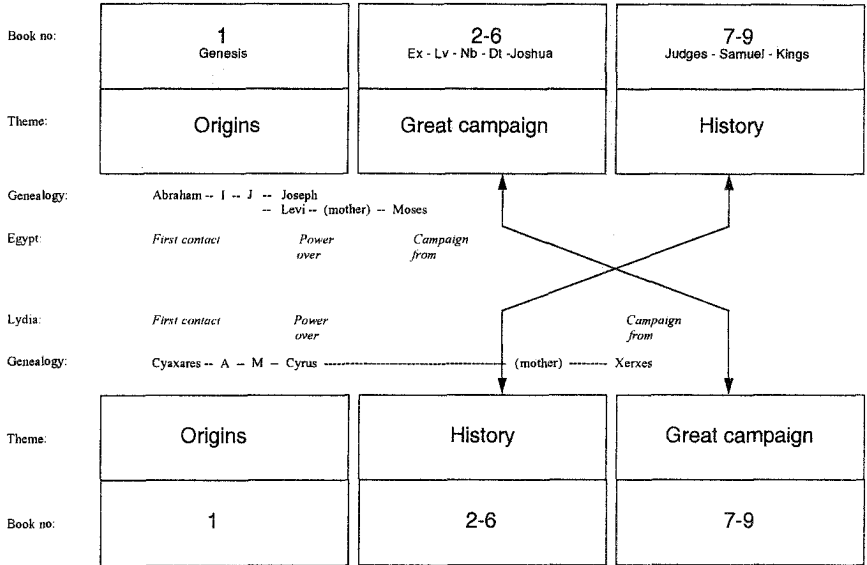


Table 10: the division of Primary History and of the Histories in relationship with the genealogies of the main families and their occupation with the starting point of the great campaign.



Abbreviated names: I = Isaac, J = Jacob, A = Astyages, M = Mandane (Cyrus' mother);
Moses' mother is Jochebed, Xerxes' mother is Atossa.

Table 11: rules for the structural derivation from Histories to Primary History [parts of work <1, 2-6 and 7-9 | 1, 2-6 and 7-9>; genealogy; contacts with starting point of great campaign].

Analytical statements

- The work is in three parts: *Origins* (of the Persian empire) in book 1; *History* (of the empire until Xerxes) in books 2-6; *Great Campaign* (of Xerxes, from Lydia against Greece) in books 7-9.
- The grandfather of the leader of the Great Campaign (on his mother's side: Cyrus) gains power over its starting point (Lydia); his ancestor in the fifth generation (Cyaxares) is the first to establish contact with it.
- The death of the person who gains power over the starting point of the Great Campaign (Cyrus) concludes the first book.

Rules of transformation

- Copy the division in three parts over nine books.
- Mirror the position of History and Great Campaign.
- Copy relationship between persons in the genealogy of the leader of the Great Campaign and contacts with its starting point.
- Copy position of person who gains power over the starting point at the end of the first book.

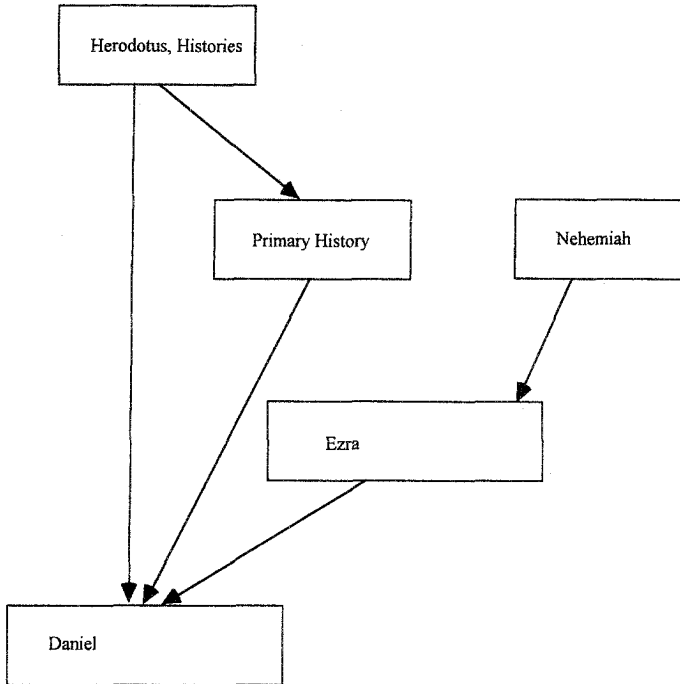
Rules of adaptation

- Divide the generation of the grandfather of the leader of the Great Campaign over the eponyms of the tribes of Israel.

Other changes

- Change the subject from the history of the Persian Empire into that of the people of Israel.
- Change the starting point of the Great Campaign from Lydia to Egypt.
- Change the target of the Great Campaign from Greece to Canaan.

Table 12: the structural dependence of a number of historical books of the Hebrew Bible.



Abstract

The interruptions of the normal flow of the narration through change in, for example, narrator, literary genre, language or subject, in various discrete literary works (usually “books”) of the Hebrew Bible have often been taken to be the signs of an involved process of addition and redaction which finally resulted in the work as we have it now. Here it is argued that one of the principles of composition of books of the Hebrew Bible was that certain striking structural features, for example such interruptions, were derived from other books in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere, which explains the presence of many of these irregularities or discontinuities. The same process can account for many other instances of structural similarity of two works. A model for its formal description, effectively serving as a check on the assumption of structural dependence, is also presented here. The result is usually a work which is best described as a “literary dossier”, the structure of which is defined through its relation with another text. Three cases of such structural derivation are studied here: the dependence of Primary History on the *Histories* of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, of the Book of Daniel on Ezra

and on the Joseph cycle of stories in Genesis, and of the Book of Ezra on Nehemiah. These unexpected structural links provide us with new information about the relationship and the date of origin of the books of the Hebrew Bible.