

LOUIS C. JONKER

Defining All-Israel
in Chronicles

*Forschungen
zum Alten Testament
106*

Mohr Siebeck

Forschungen zum Alten Testament

Herausgegeben von

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (New York)

Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen)

106



Louis C. Jonker

Defining All-Israel in Chronicles

Multi-levelled Identity Negotiation
in Late Persian-Period Yehud

Mohr Siebeck

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e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-154596-2
ISBN 978-3-16-154595-5
ISSN 0940-4155 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen using Times typeface, printed by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of two of my former teachers, the late Hannes Olivier and Ferdinand Deist. They were both not only role models in scholarship, but also friends and mentors. They were also the first to raise the ideal of inviting IOSOT to South Africa, an ideal that will come to fruition in September 2016 in Stellenbosch. Both these colleagues died too young!

Preface

My journey with Chronicles started in 2000 when I was a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung in Greifswald, Germany. There I met Thomas Willi for the first time and he introduced me to the fascinating world of Chronicles and the Persian period. Over time, my fascination with this biblical book and historical period grew, and this led me to write numerous papers, articles and essays over the next decade and a half. Instrumental in my further journey with Chronicles was the inspiration (and mentorship) I found in colleagues and friends Gary Knoppers and Ehud Ben Zvi. By involving me in some of their deliberations at the Canadian Society for Biblical Studies (CSBS), I was exposed to a great variety of excellent scholarship and to opportunities to test some of my own ideas about and interpretations of Chronicles. Input from outside of biblical scholarship was also invaluable in my own development as Chronicles scholar: Josef Wiesehöfer (as expert on Achaemenid history) and Oded Lipschits (as historian and archaeologist) helped me to develop broader perspectives (than those viewed through the lenses of exclusively biblical literature) on the Achaemenids and their influence in Yehud. I remain indebted to these colleagues!

In my various studies on different parts of Chronicles I became increasingly aware of the complexity of the literature under review. No linear and/or one-dimensional models delivered satisfactory results. I therefore ventured into various different methodological directions in order to find models that could bring greater clarity to understanding this literature. Influenced by my own socio-historical context of post-apartheid South Africa, I also started working with theories of social identity negotiation, which explore the close relationship between processes of identity negotiation, the socio-historical context and literature formation. Over time the insight dawned on me (particularly through my exposure to postcolonial studies of the Bible) that one should not imagine a single-level socio-historical context during the post-exilic era, but rather that an array of power relations probably constituted a multi-levelled socio-historical existence during this period. Such a model of reading, informed also by social memory and utopian studies, delivered more satisfactory results on the complex literature in Chronicles. The present book is therefore an attempt to bring together those different fields of study and developments in my own Chronicles scholarship, in order to (hopefully!) offer a further development in the history of research on this fascinating biblical book.

The bulk of this book was written in Germany and the United States during a semester-long sabbatical in 2014 and a shorter research break during 2015. I hereby acknowledge the scholarships I received in 2014 which made the sabbatical possible: firstly, a scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (Bonn) for the period in Germany (Heidelberg and Kiel), and secondly, an HB Thom scholarship (granted by Stellenbosch University) and a Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (granted by the South African National Research Foundation) for the period in the United States (Princeton). I am also thankful for permission by my University to access research subsidy and incentive funding for my return to Germany (Munich) in 2015, as well as for research leave granted. All opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this book remain those of the author, however, and none of the above institutions accepts any liability whatsoever in this regard.

My sojourns in Germany and the United States also depended heavily on gracious hosts at the various universities. I thank Manfred Oeming in Heidelberg, and Josef Wiesehöfer in Kiel, for their support and friendship, not only with regard to my research, but also during a difficult time when I unexpectedly had to return to South Africa because of the illness of my youngest son. Thank you also to Choon Leong Seow, who received me at the Princeton Theological Seminary, and who facilitated my stay there as visiting scholar. My Munich colleagues Hermann-Josef Stipp and Christoph Levin received me at their university during the South African winter break and provided the library infrastructure for my further writing endeavours. During almost a month in Munich I was privileged to stay with good friends, Heinrich and Debbie Bedford-Strohm, to whom I remain grateful.

My dear family, Anita, Johannes and Cornelius, were and are a great inspiration! Not only do they allow me time to indulge in my scholarship, but always remain enthusiastic about and interested in what I am doing.

Since I am not a mother-tongue speaker (and writer!) of English, I always rely heavily on professional editing by Edwin Hees. A few years ago he also assisted me with the editing of a *Chronicles* commentary, and he was a logical choice for the next book. Whenever I was getting nervous about the time schedules for the present book, he constantly assured me that we will be able to say “*Habemus Librum*” soon! My assistant, Ruan Nieuwenhuizen, also was a great help in the proofreading and final checking of the manuscript.

I also thank the editors of *FAT* (Konrad Schmid, Mark Smith and Hermann Spieckermann) for the peer-reviewing of the manuscript and for accepting my volume in this prestigious series. Furthermore, it is always a pleasure to work with Mohr Siebeck. Thank you to Henning Ziebritzki, who encouraged me over the years to submit this manuscript and who remained enthusiastic about it, and to his professional team for guiding me through the process.

The year of publication of this book (2016) will be a great year for Old Testament/Hebrew Bible scholarship in South Africa, and for the African continent. It will be the first time in history that the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT) will convene on African soil, and only the second time that it will convene outside of Europe. My wish is that the present book will not only make some contribution to Chronicles research, but will also contribute towards marking this historic occasion in Stellenbosch.

Louis Jonker

Stellenbosch, September 2015

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Abbreviations

ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
IVBS	International Voices in Biblical Studies
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplementum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 From Cinderella to Blossoming Field

John Kleinig starts his 1994 overview of Chronicles research with the following words:

That Cinderella of the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles, has at last emerged from years of obscurity and scorn. Early last century she was all the rage among scholars who used her quite shamelessly in their battles over the reconstruction of Israelite history. But then, when the conflict was over, Wellhausen turned on her in favour of her Deuteronomistic stepsister and sent her packing for her unfashionable love of ritual and family ties, and for allegedly playing fast and loose with the facts. How things have changed over the last decade! She may not yet be the belle of the academic hall, but she has, at least, been noticed in her own right once again and has received long overdue attention from the scholarly community.¹

Since then Kleinig's poignant image of Chronicles having been the Cinderella of biblical scholarship had become a very popular opening line for those who want to highlight the remarkable developments in this section of Hebrew Bible scholarship over the past decades. The last quarter of the twentieth century saw the advent of many studies in the form of books, commentaries and scholarly articles. In the past decade and a half, particularly, a new wave of Chronicles commentaries (more than 30 since 2000!) has emerged, ranging from the technical and scholarly to more popular presentations aimed at laypeople and preachers.²

¹ John W. Kleinig, "Recent Research on Chronicles," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 2 (1994): 43–76 (here 43).

² In the technical-scholarly category, the following are the best in my estimation: Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2003); Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2004); Pieter B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005); Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); Thomas Willi, *Chronik (1 Chr 1,1–10, 14)*, BKAT XXIV/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009); Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). Although also with solid scholarly foundations, the following selection of commentaries presents more accessible studies of Chronicles: John M. Hicks, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Joplin: College Press, 2001); Steven S. Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Steven L. McKenzie, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004); Mark J. Boda, *1–2 Chronicles*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2010); Louis C. Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013); John W. Wright,

Without the pretension of being as exhaustive in my discussion as the previous overviews of Chronicles research have been,³ and without suggesting that I am updating those earlier descriptions here, selected stages in the study of this remarkable Old Testament book are highlighted below.⁴

1.1.1 Paraleipomena and Early Studies on Chronicles

It is common knowledge that the book is referred to as *דברי הימים* (literally, “the words of the days”) in the Hebrew and Rabbinic tradition. The same convention is followed in the Peshitta.⁵ However, the Septuagint translators referred to the book as *Ta Paraleipomena* (“the remaining/omitted things”). Knoppers and Harvey Jr., who made a study of the names given to this book in antiquity, see the name *Ta Paraleipomena* as “a reflection of the LXX translators’ conception of this work.”⁶ The understanding of this designation was that Chronicles formed a parallel tradition to Genesis through Kings, and that Chronicles simply supplied what was omitted in the former tradition. In this way the LXX translators and other traditions following this designation reflected a stance which failed to do justice to the Chronicler’s attempt at rewriting earlier biblical works. They also failed to acknowledge the independent contribution made by this book compared to the earlier traditions.⁷

1 & 2 Chronicles: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2014).

³ Kleinig, “Recent Research on Chronicles”; Thomas Willi, “Zwei Jahrzehnte Forschung an Chronik und Esra-Nehemia,” *Theologische Rundschau* 67/1 (2002): 61–104; Rodney K. Duke, “Recent Research in Chronicles,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 8/1 (2009): 10–50.

⁴ The discussion does not follow a strict chronological description of the history of research on Chronicles, but rather highlights certain important themes that have been the focus of Chronicles studies in the past.

⁵ The name “Chronicles” stems from Jerome’s reference in the fourth century A. D. to the book as “the *chronicon* of all divine history.” For a discussion of how this designation differed from other known chronicles and annals, see Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey, “Omitted and Remaining Matters: On the Names given to the Book of Chronicles in Antiquity,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121/2 (2002): 227–43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁷ It seems that the fourth-century church father, Jerome, valued the book nevertheless. In his Christian allegorical interpretations of the book he assumed that the book could give valuable information for the understanding of the Gospel. The following quote from Jerome is quite famous: “The book of *Paralipomenon* is an epitome of the Old Testament and is of such scope and quality that anyone wishing to claim knowledge of the scriptures without it should laugh at himself. For, because of the individual names mentioned and the composition of words, both historical events omitted in the books of Kings are touched on and innumerable questions pertinent to the Gospel are explained” (quoted in *Ibid.*, 232). It is clear that Jerome also saw Chronicles as a necessary supplement to Kings in order to fill in those historical events that were omitted by the latter.

This fairly negative appraisal of Chronicles continued into modern critical studies of the book. With the emergence of historical-critical scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this tendency continued.⁸ According to Julius Wellhausen, who wrote in the second half of the nineteenth century, Chronicles should be considered as a *midrash* of earlier and more reliable historical sources (particularly Kings), and can therefore not be used for the reconstruction of Israel's religious history. He situated Chronicles in the period of the scribes, and sees this *midrash* as an attempt to blend old and new in a new literary work.⁹ At the end of the nineteenth century C. C. Torrey followed Wellhausen's line. His very negative appraisal of Chronicles epitomises the scholarship on this book during that era:

No fact of Old Testament criticism is more firmly established than this; that the Chronicler as a historian is thoroughly untrustworthy. He distorts facts deliberately and habitually; invents chapter after chapter with the greatest freedom, and what is most dangerous of all, his history is not written for its own sake, but in the interest of an extremely one-sided theory.¹⁰

Although in more nuanced ways, later twentieth-century critical scholars, such as Martin Noth, also followed Wellhausen in a fairly negative assessment of the historical value of Chronicles.¹¹ The influence of these great German scholars probably contributed to the neglect of serious study of Chronicles for quite a long time, not least in Germany. Whereas other Hebrew Bible corpora, such as the Pentateuch and prophetic corpus, were meticulously studied in this part of the scholarly world, not many studies on Chronicles appeared. The main impetus for renewed research on this book came from other parts of the world, mainly from Israel (in the person of Sara Japhet) and the United Kingdom (in the person of Hugh Williamson). It was only in the 1970s that Thomas Willi, a Swiss-German scholar, opened the way for re-evaluating this book in the German-speaking

⁸ For a discussion of some early scholars' work on Chronicles (including those of De Wette, Graf and Wellhausen), see Sara Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles: The History of the Problem and Its Place in Biblical Research," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (1985): 83–88.

⁹ See Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 2. Ausg. (Berlin: Reimer, 1883); Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 2. Druck mit Nachträgen (Berlin: Reimer, 1889).

¹⁰ Quoted in Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles," 88.

¹¹ See Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, 2. Aufl., Unveränd. photo-mechan. Nachdr. d. 1. Aufl. 1948 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960). It is interesting that the late twentieth-century debate about the value of biblical writings (compared to epigraphical and archaeological sources) for the writing of a history of Ancient Israel also followed the tendency to devalue Chronicles as potential source for this endeavour. Chronicles is even considered to be a tertiary source, i. e. an interpretation of interpretative biblical writings, which do in any event not have value for historical reconstruction because of their ideological bias.

world.¹² Since then numerous scholars in mainly the United States and Canada have followed suit.

1.1.2 Historical Reliability of Chronicles?

We have seen above that the historical reliability of Chronicles was the main factor which was used to judge the value of this book in early critical studies. Sara Japhet therefore dedicated a study in 1985 to a survey of this contentious issue.¹³ She describes how Chronicles scholarship during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries compared the two versions of Israelite history, the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles, in order to judge their relative historical value. The question asked was: which of these two blocks of history writing offered the most reliable account of past events? Inevitably this early heuristic angle on the analysis of Chronicles revealed more about the conventions of interpretation of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than about the time, or the nature, of the book of Chronicles. Under the influence of positivism and historicism, biblical scholars regarded these texts as reflections of past events, resulting in Chronicles being judged as an inadequate version of those events.

However, after archaeological evidence (both material and epigraphic) increasingly became available from the beginning of the twentieth century, other scholars started emphasising the historical superiority of Chronicles over the Deuteronomistic History. Certain details mentioned in Chronicles but not in Samuel-Kings were confirmed by archaeological excavations (such as the reference to the Siloam tunnel in 2 Chron. 32:30). Together with the increasing archaeological evidence, scholars also started gaining more knowledge about historical geography. This newfound knowledge confirmed data in Chronicles in many instances. These developments in scholarship turned the tide of argumentation in favour of the historical reliability of Chronicles. However, although the argument was the opposite, the quest in this phase (or part) of Chronicles scholarship remained the same, namely to determine the historical authenticity of the book's account.

Japhet indicates, however, that the interest in the historical value of Chronicles started flowing in different directions in the wake of the collapse of historicism during the first part of the twentieth century. As in general historiography, bib-

¹² See references below where the contributions of Japhet, Williamson and Willi are discussed. More recently, during the 1990s two further German studies paved the way for renewed attention to this book in the German-speaking world, namely Manfred Oeming, *Das wahre Israel: Die "genealogische Vorhalle" 1 Chronik 1–9* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990); Georg Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik* (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995).

¹³ Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles."

lical scholars started realising that there is no way of establishing with absolute certainty and objective reliability what happened in the past. All history writing is influenced by the values and ideologies of the time of its origin. This also applies to biblical historiography, such as Chronicles. This shift of perspective can, according to Japhet, already be seen in Gerhard von Rad's appraisal of Chronicles.¹⁴ His interest was in investigating the historical picture that the Chronicler painted and not so much the historical facts that can be gleaned from the book. This turning towards the ideology influencing the Chronicler's reconstruction of history signifies an important watershed in Chronicles scholarship, a shift which will be discussed in a separate section below.

1.1.3 Composition History of Chronicles

Another focal point in Chronicles research in past decades is the composition history of the book.¹⁵ It is obvious for any reader of Chronicles that the writer(s) had some form of Samuel-Kings available that was used as a major source. This has been the consensus since nineteenth-century scholarship, and to this day most comparative studies proceed from this presupposition. In the past two decades this consensus view has come under scrutiny, particularly sparked off by an alternative view expressed by Graeme Auld.¹⁶ Auld concedes that Chronicles does follow Samuel-Kings in content, but both these works used a common non-Deuteronomistic source text. Auld calls this presumed source text "The Book of Two Houses" (referring to the House of Yahweh and the House of David), and he claims that the common material in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles can be traced back to this book. Both these traditions made use of this common source, each according to its own ideological presuppositions. Auld illustrates this by showing how Samuel-Kings and Chronicles made different use of the Moses and David traditions included in their common *Vorlage*. Although Auld found some support for his thesis¹⁷ – most recently in an adapted form in the work of Raymond Person¹⁸ – the majority of Chronicles scholars rather stay with

¹⁴ See *Ibid.*, 96–97.

¹⁵ See also my discussion in Louis C. Jonker, "Within Hearing Distance? Recent Developments in Pentateuch and Chronicles Research," *Old Testament Essays* 27/1 (2014): 123–46.

¹⁶ See his seminal formulation in A. Graeme Auld, *Kings Without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994).

¹⁷ See e.g. Craig Y.S. Ho, "Conjectures and Refutations: Is 1 Samuel XXXI 1–13 Really the Source of 1 Chronicles X 1–12?," *Vetus Testamentum* 45/1 (1995): 82–106; Craig Y.S. Ho, "The Stories of the Family Troubles of Judah and David: A Study of Their Literary Links," *Vetus Testamentum* 49/4 (1999): 514–31.

¹⁸ See e.g. Raymond F. Person, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Books of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010).

the traditional view that the Chronicler made direct use of Samuel-Kings and in doing so adapted, omitted and added to create his own text.¹⁹

However, since the discovery of the Qumran texts we have been cautioned not to over-interpret differences between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. Particularly in the case of 4QSam^a scholars have noticed that it often agrees with the material in MT 1 Chronicles and LXX Samuel, against MT Samuel. Chronicles scholars are therefore, particularly with reference to the Chronicler's use of Samuel, alert to the fact that different textual traditions might lurk behind Samuel and Chronicles respectively, and that textual criticism should form an important part of our methodological approach to Chronicles.²⁰

Whereas much research energy had been dedicated in recent years to the differences between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, the latest trend is to reflect on the similarities between these literary traditions again.²¹ However, the interest in these newer studies is not, as in earlier phases, to determine the relative historical value of this literature. The interest is rather to determine whether and how the Deuteronomistic tradition persisted in later literature, such as Chronicles.²² The emphasis in this trend of scholarly enquiry is therefore again focused on which ideologies determined the Chronicler's reformulation of older historiographical traditions.

1.1.4 The Nature of Chronicles

After scholarship of the early part of the twentieth century had shown – under the influence of the disillusionment with “objective history” – that Chronicles is *not* history in the positivist sense, scholars started deliberating on the nature of the book in subsequent research. Increasingly, it was acknowledged that this book contains tendentious history, that is, history-with-a-purpose. That Chroni-

¹⁹ See Steven L. McKenzie, “The Chronicler as Redactor,” in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 70–90 for a systematic criticism of Auld's position. See also Auld's response in: A. Graeme Auld, “What Was the Main Source of the Books of Chronicles?,” in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 91–99. For good discussions on this issue, also consult the introductions to the following two recent commentaries: Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9*, 66–71; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 30–44; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 1–2.

²⁰ See particularly the plea by Knoppers in this regard: Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9*, 52–56.

²¹ See e.g. Ehud Ben Zvi, “Are There Any Bridges Out There? How Wide Was the Conceptual Gap between the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles?,” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 59–86.

²² See particularly Gary N. Knoppers, “The Relationship of the Deuteronomistic History to Chronicles: Was the Chronicler a Deuteronomist?,” in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 307–41.

cles narrates the history of Judah (and Israel) does not necessarily mean that the writer(s) had a historical interest. History can (as we know from many examples in our own age and context) be utilised for different purposes.²³

One prominent theory in this regard comes from scholars who regard Chronicles as theology.²⁴ According to this view (in all its variety), the writer(s) of Chronicles wanted to convey a particular theology that shows continuity with the past (embodied in the fact that history forms the basis of the book) to an audience whose changed circumstances required innovation and adaptation. The main focus in the interpretation of Chronicles from this heuristic angle was the differences between Chronicles and the Deuteronomistic History. Differences and changes, so scholars interpreting from this perspective argued, are indications of the unique theology of Chronicles.

Other scholars attempted different answers to the question about the nature of Chronicles. Some advanced the opinion that Chronicles presents a very early form of commentary or exegesis.²⁵ According to this view, the writer(s) of Chronicles presented to his audience an exposition of earlier influential, or even authoritative, sources.²⁶

Still others emphasise the literary character of Chronicles, categorising the genre of Chronicles as historiography.²⁷ According to this view, the main em-

²³ See e.g. how history is functioning in societies of transition, such as in my own South African context. In these circumstances history writing is not merely done for the sake of reconstructing events of the past, but rather to create some self-awareness in new socio-historical circumstances. For one modern-day example of such an exercise, consult Hermann B. Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 1st ed. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007).

²⁴ See the volume M. Patrick Graham, ed., *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, JSOTS 371 (London: T & T Clark International, 2003).

²⁵ See Thomas Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Gestaltung der historischen Überlieferung Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

²⁶ The notion of a "rewritten Bible" is applied to Chronicles by some commentators. See e.g. the discussion in Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9*, 129–134. Although some argue that this category, which has been identified in a number of Qumran materials, is suitable to describe the Chronicler's usage of earlier sources, the designation does not cover all the distinctive characteristics of Chronicles.

²⁷ See Kenneth Hoglund, "The Chronicler as Historian: A Comparativist Perspective," in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Continuum International, 1997), 19–29; Isaac Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?," in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Continuum International, 1997), 73–89; Isaac Kalimi, *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2005); Erhard Blum, "Historiographie oder Dichtung? Zur Eigenart alttestamentlicher Geschichtsüberlieferung," in *Das Alte Testament – ein Geschichtsbuch? Beiträge des Symposiums "Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne" anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard von Rads (1901–1971) Heidelberg 18.–21. Oktober 2001*, ed. Erhard Blum, Christof Hardmeier, and Christoph Marksches (Münster: LIT, 2005), 65–86; Ehud Ben Zvi, "Shifting the Gaze: Historiographic Constraints in Chronicles and Their Implications," in *History, Literature And Theology in the Book of Chronicles*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2006), 78–99; Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Chronicler as a Historian: Building Texts," in

phasis in Chronicles interpretation should be to analyse the literary make-up and quality of the book in order to establish how the past is utilised in a new narrative construction (and not so much for its intrinsic historical value).

All these studies enquiring about the nature of Chronicles again point in the direction of identifying what ideological framework drove the writer(s) to construct this literature, and what the intended purpose of this new construction of Israel's past was.

1.1.5 Ideology and Rhetorical Aim(s) of Chronicles

We have seen that numerous developments in Chronicles studies during the twentieth century tended increasingly towards the analysis of the Chronicler's ideology. Two prominent scholars contributed to this aspect of Chronicles research and, in so doing, introduced a new phase in which the Cinderella of biblical scholarship could at last emerge as a blossoming bud.

Two publications in 1977, the one in English and the other in Hebrew, paved the way for renewed interest in the book. The first is the published dissertation (completed at Cambridge University in 1975) by Hugh Williamson entitled *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*.²⁸ Williamson starts his discussion of the theme with the following comments:

The author of the books of Chronicles lived during a period in which one of the major issues for the Jewish people was the precise definition of the extent of its own community. Before the exile to Babylon, this was less of a problem, because the community was co-extensive for the most part with the nations of Israel and Judah. The loss of sovereignty, however, combined with the divisions caused by the transportation of many of the leaders to Babylon and the later return to the land, created a quite new situation in which the 'terms of membership' had to be redefined.²⁹

Williamson is convinced that the Chronicler wanted to make a contribution to this redefinition of the "terms of membership" of Israel within the exilic and post-exilic circumstances. He qualifies this by adding:

This is not by any means to imply that the Chronicler had only one purpose in writing his history; it is evident, however, that in the circumstances of his day he could hardly avoid giving some attention to this question, and furthermore it will emerge that in fact he does present a distinctive point of view which is of value in the attempt to unravel the lines of thought in a period for which we have notoriously few sources.³⁰

History, Literature And Theology in the Book of Chronicles, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2006), 100–116.

²⁸ Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The second part of his study is then spent on the question of how Israel is portrayed in Chronicles.³¹ After examining *inter alia* the occurrence of the term “Israel” in Chronicles in conjunction with the narrative structure of the book, he comes to the conclusion that the Chronicler reacted against some of his contemporaries, who held fairly exclusivist understandings of “Israel”. Williamson indicates that the Chronicler is attempting a new definition of “All Israel” in terms of Jerusalem’s position as well as the temple’s role.

Sara Japhet’s dissertation (completed in 1973 at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and first published in Hebrew in 1977) argued along the same lines.³² Also proceeding from the presupposition that Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah were written by different authors, and that the former originated in the late Persian-era Yehud, Japhet identifies five themes that characterise the ideology (or theology) of the Book of Chronicles. The first is the view on “YHWH, the God of Israel”, the second “the worship of YHWH”, the third the Chronicler’s portrayal of “the people of Israel”, the fourth his portrayal of “Kingship”, and the last the book’s understanding of “The Hope of Redemption.”

In the third part on the Chronicler’s portrayal of “the people of Israel” she investigates how the Chronicler uses the term “All Israel”. After that the tribal system as reflected in the Chronicler’s genealogies (1 Chron. 1–9), the David and Solomon narratives (1 Chron. 10 to 2 Chron. 9) and the stories about the kings of Judah (2 Chron. 10–36) are scrutinised. Japhet remarks at the end of her discussion on the tribal system that

the book of Chronicles is not bound by a schematic view of the people and it therefore provides a freer, more diverse expression of Israel’s ethnic reality [than Samuel-Kings – LCJ]. At least some of its evidence on the subject reflects the political reality of the First Commonwealth and preserves sources dating from the period. Nevertheless, it must be said that both aspects of the tribal idea [i. e. the ongoing existence of two distinct entities, Israel and Judah, while at the same time describing each of the two sides as a unified body with no internal groupings or conflicts – LCJ] provide the Chronicler with an excellent means of expressing his own views. An emphasis on the people’s abiding unity and completeness is central to the book’s concept of Israel. ... At the same time, the tribal idea

³¹ In the first part he interacts with other scholars such as Sara Japhet and Thomas Willi on the scope of the book of Chronicles, as well as on its authorship. Whereas earlier scholars saw Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles as two parts of the same literary work, and with a common authorship, Williamson agreed with Japhet that Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles should rather be viewed as an independent literary work with separate authorship from Ezra-Nehemiah. This point of departure, which has become generally accepted in Chronicles scholarship in recent years, forms the basis for Williamson’s investigation into the Chronicler’s portrayal of Israel.

³² The first English translation of the Hebrew publication appeared in 1989 as Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, 1st ed. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989). It was reprinted several times and a new edition appeared in 2009 as Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009). For my review of the latter, see Louis C. Jonker, “Review of Sara Japhet’s *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*,” *Review of Biblical Literature* 05 (2010), http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/7303_7952.pdf (accessed 18/04/2014).

expressed the view that a number of different elements – the tribes themselves – were represented in the people of Israel.³³

Japhet closes her book by asking “the most basic question of all: . . . Why did the Chronicler feel a need to retell the story of a period in the distant past, a period that had already been described at great length? What impelled him to write his book?”³⁴ Japhet’s answer to this basic question is worth quoting at length (as I have already done in several previous publications of my own):

The past was increasingly sanctified by later generations; yet, at the same time, there developed a gap, which steadily increased, between their own complex reality and the reality they found described in the Bible (*sic!*). A gap of this sort, the inevitable result of historical development, undermines the stability of both realities: first, early history becomes incomprehensible to the present generation and the norms of a so-called formative period are in fact no longer appropriate to contemporary needs and aspirations; second, present-day institutions, religious tenets, and ritual observance are severed from their origins and lose their authoritative source of legitimation.

The book of Chronicles represents a powerful effort to bridge this gap. By reformulating Israel’s history in its formative period, the Chronicler gives new significance to the two components of Israelite life: the past is explained so that its institutions and religious principles become relevant to the present, and the ways of the present are legitimized anew by being connected to the prime source of authority – the formative period in the people’s past.

Thus, Chronicles is a comprehensive expression of the perpetual need to renew and revitalize the religion of Israel. It makes an extremely important attempt to affirm the meaningfulness of contemporary life without severing ties between the present and the sources of the past; in fact, it strengthens the bond between past and present and proclaims the continuity of Israel’s faith and history.³⁵

Williamson and Japhet have exercised an immense influence in recent research on Chronicles, and their views have been taken up in the majority of subsequent studies on the book. Many influential commentaries on Chronicles that appeared since 2000 also build upon these scholars’ views, such as those of Gary Knoppers and Ralph Klein.³⁶ The wave of scholarship introduced by Williamson’s and Japhet’s views on Chronicles also played a determining role in my own engagement with the book. The following section situates my own approach in this development.

³³ Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 2009, 241.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 403.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 403–404.

³⁶ Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9*; Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*; Klein, *I Chronicles*; Klein, *2 Chronicles*. See also further studies on the ideology of Chronicles, such as Jonathan E. Dyck, “The Ideology of Identity in Chronicles,” ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 89–116; Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

1.2 From Re-interpretation, via “Reforming History”, to Identity Negotiation

My own interest in Chronicles actually stems from a broader hermeneutical interest. Having experienced the transition from apartheid South Africa to a country with a democratically elected government – a transition which started with the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 – I was particularly intrigued by how such a situation of changing socio-political circumstances impacted on the understanding of the Bible. A renewed interest in Bible interpretation among church members, particularly those who were part of the Dutch Reformed Church, which had provided the apartheid regime with a theological basis during the 1970s and 1980s, brought an intense awareness of how socio-historical circumstances influence the interpretation of authoritative (literary) traditions. The very interesting hermeneutical dynamics of the transitional period in my country prompted me to do some research in this regard.³⁷

During this period it struck me how my context also shaped my own reading of biblical literature stemming from the post-exilic period of reconstruction in Ancient Israel. Although worlds (and centuries) apart, I realised how analogous the hermeneutical dynamics of re-interpretation of authoritative traditions of the past were in the post-exilic era and in my own time. Although my methodologies of studying Chronicles stand firmly in the Western (mainly German) tradition of scholarship, the impetus for studying this literature was strongly contextual.

1.2.1 Chronicles as Re-interpretation of Older Historiographical Traditions

A first phase in my scholarship on Chronicles was therefore aimed at determining and describing the hermeneutical dynamics of re-interpretation of older historiographical traditions that can be witnessed in this book. Since modern scholars are in the very fortunate position of having at their disposal the majority of the literary sources used as *Vorlage* by the Chronicler, comparative studies of Chronicles texts and related passages in the Deuteronomistic History and the Pentateuch formed the basis for these studies.

A concentration on the Josiah narrative formed an important part of this phase in my studies.³⁸ I showed how the Chronicler, with his changes, omissions and

³⁷ See e. g. the following studies: Louis C. Jonker, “The Influence of Social Transformation on the Interpretation of the Bible: A Methodological Reflection,” *Scriptura* 72 (2000): 1–14; Louis C. Jonker, “Social Transformation and Biblical Interpretation: A Comparative Study,” *Scriptura* 77 (2001): 259–70; Louis C. Jonker, “The Biblical Legitimization of Ethnic Diversity in Apartheid Theology,” *Scriptura* 77 (2001): 165–83.

³⁸ See particularly Louis C. Jonker, *Reflections of King Josiah in Chronicles: Late Stages of the Josiah Reception in II Chr. 34f* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003).