



8

Who Wrote the Hebrew Bible?

Although the scientific evidence for the reality of YHWH's Law may seem to invalidate Israel's charge of unrighteousness, many compelling arguments remain. Scripture's origins pose difficulty with consequences relating to Scripture's overall validity. Modern scholars view the Tanakh (Old Testament) as having been redacted for political reasons during the reign of Josiah (c. 630 BCE).¹

The first writing phase of the Torah writing, according to some scholars, lasted from the tenth to the eighth centuries (BCE). Scholars identify four primary writers. Two writers have become known as "J" and "E" based on their prevalent usage of two names used for God. The former preferred to use "Yahweh" and the latter "Elohiym," as the name for Israel's God.² The second wave of invention occurred, according to currently accepted views, during the 7th century and is attributed to the Deuteronomistic ("D") and Priestly ("P") sources: the first redactor or group of redactors favored the Torah, and the latter showed bias toward the priesthood.³ According to this theory, redactors or editors worked from the earlier J and E texts to compile a comprehensive narrative of the first four books of Torah. The Book of Deuteronomy was created during Josiah's reign and was incorporated into the J work. Recently, a newly developed computer algorithm program confirmed this general distinction of the predominate use of names of God based on variations of language and style, points of view, and duplications and repetitions in the text.⁴

Scholars are discovering that the Documentary Hypothesis, as it has come to be known, is not without problems.⁵ Rolf Rendtorff, Professor of Old Testament at the University of Heidelberg, has identified formidable obstacles to identifying the J, E, P, and D sources as have Egyptologist James Hoffmeier and Assyriologist William Hallo.⁶ Thankfully, Scripture preserves a record of its own authorship, so that we can know how to assign authorship to the various texts that developed during the course of the nation's history.

I. THE TORAH

A. *The Law of Moses*

The Book of Exodus records that Moses wrote the Law as it was given to him from the mouth of YHWH (Exod 24:4 and Deut 31:9). The Book of Numbers states that Moses recorded Israel's historical events (Num 33:2; Exod 17:14). The text then proceeds to list the places where Israel had journeyed and a description of which Moses had recorded.

And *Moses wrote all the words of YHWH*, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Exod 24:4)

And *Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of YHWH*: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. (Num 33:2)

And *Moses wrote this law, and delivered it to the priests the sons of Levi*, which bare the ark of the covenant of YHWH, and to all the elders of Israel. (Deut 31:9)

And it came to pass, when *Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished*, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of YHWH, saying, *Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of YHWH your God*, that it may be there for a witness against you. (Deut 31:24–26)

One custom associated with ancient covenants was to store them inside a temple's sacred precincts (see pp. 66–68). The last text quoted above (Deut 31:24–26), states that Moses wrote all the words of "this law" in a book. This is a specific reference to the Book of Deuteronomy and its constitutional law code, which had been covenanted on the Moab plains. Moses gave this book to the Levites (Deut 31:9) to deposit in the Ark of the Covenant in the sacred precincts of Israel's Tabernacle. It was this Book of the Law that the Levites rediscovered (2 Kgs 22:8; 2 Chr 24:14) when making repairs to the First Temple during Josiah's reign.

According to texts listed above, in addition to recording Israel's covenantal Law and keeping a formal log of the nation's journeys, Moses recorded Israel's battles and other historical events. Some of these histories were written with prophecies, which were based on historical events.

Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And YHWH said to Moses, *Write this for a memorial in a book*, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek⁷ from under heaven. (Exod 17:13–14)

According to these texts, Moses wrote down: (1) the Law given to him at Sinai; (2) Israel's journeys in the wilderness; (3) Israel's history or chronicles; and the Moabite (Deuteronomy) covenant that was archived within the Ark of the Covenant. This would seemingly leave very little room for the Law to be originally recorded by another person other than Moses. However, scholars justifiably cite the account of Moses' death in Deut 34:5-7 as one of the most formidable challenges to Moses' authorship of the Torah.⁸ If Moses wrote the Law, how did he record his own death?

Isaac de la Peyrère, a French Calvinist, added another criticism. He thought that the phrase "across the Jordan" (Deut 1:1) implied that Moses spoke to Israel on the other side of the Jordan, inside the Promised Land.⁹ According to Scripture, YHWH banned Moses from entering the Promised Land (Num 20:12), and he died before entering Canaan. So how could Moses state that he was speaking to Israel "across the Jordan" if he never entered Canaan?

In yet another polemic about authorship, Spinoza, a sixteenth-century philosopher in Holland, observed that there were many third-person accounts of Moses, statements that Moses was unlikely to have made about himself.¹⁰ In particular, Moses was unlikely to call himself "the humblest man on earth" as recorded in Num 12:3. The American Revolutionist Thomas Paine also noted that statements such as "unto this day" or "no man knows where the sepulcher is unto this day," (Deut 34:6) indicate that Deuteronomy was written well after Moses had lived.¹¹ If Moses did not write these portions of the Pentateuch, how can we be sure what Moses wrote?

Thankfully, Israel's scribes acknowledged the man who made editorial notations to Moses' work. Shortly before his death,

Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be **on the day when you shall pass over Jordan** in to the land which YHWH your God gives you, that you shall set you up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: And you shall write **on them all the words of this law**, when you are passed over, that you may go in to the land which YHWH your God gives you, a land that flows with milk and honey; as YHWH God of your fathers has promised you. . . . and you shall write **on the stones all the words of this law very plainly**. (Deut 27:1-3, 8)

Israel passed over the Jordan River about one month later (chap. 9.III.C.2, p. 359). On the day Israel passed over the Jordan River, Joshua obeyed Moses' command to write a copy of the Law. Scripture records:

And he [Joshua] wrote there on the stones a **copy of the Law of Moses**, which he wrote in the presence of the Children of Israel. (Josh 8:32, brackets added)

Joshua wrote a copy of the Law *after* Israel passed over the Jordan and obeyed Moses' command. Joshua's phrase "across the Jordan," refers to the Moab plains where Moses had indeed

spoken to Israel. Joshua had worked side by side with Moses, knew his character, and saw the patience that Moses extended to a hardened and rebellious people. He was qualified to make character assessments regarding Moses' humility and to add more retrospective commentary to Moses' script.¹² The reason that YHWH commanded Moses to rehearse Israel's battle with Amalek in Joshua's ears (Joshua was not present on the hill with Moses, Exod 17:14, above) was so that Joshua could record this event in Israel's histories. YHWH had already chosen Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of his people and to chronicle the nation's history. As we will see, Joshua's role as chronicler was soon delegated to other scribes, who added yet more clarifying observations to Moses' original writing.

B. The Testimony

Scripture formally recognizes Israel's Law as the *Law of Moses*.¹³ The *Law of Moses* comprised at least five parts: YHWH's charge, his statutes, his commandments, his judgments, and his testimony (1 Kgs 2:3; Ps 19:7–9). *'Eduwth*, Hebrew for "Testimony" means a 'warning' or a witness.¹⁴ It is derived from the root *'ed*, meaning 'to bear witness.'¹⁵ Though the Testimony was part of the Law, its division was far more distinct than the statutes or judgments (Isa 8:20). The Testimony was Israel's actual covenant, stating the terms of the Creator's pact with Israel.¹⁶ It recorded the sign of YHWH's covenant, its blessing for compliance, and its penalties or consequences should Israel breach the covenant's regulations. These terms were given to Moses on two stone tablets formally known as the "Testimony."

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, Speak you also to the Children of Israel, saying, Truly **my sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am YHWH that does sanctify you. . . .** Why the Children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a **perpetual covenant**. It is a sign between me and the Children of Israel forever: for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave to Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him on Mount Sinai, **two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.** (Exod 31:12–18)

YHWH said to Moses, Write you these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel . . . And he wrote on the tables **the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.** (Exod 34:27–28; see also Exod 24:12; 31:18; 34:1; and Deut 4:13)

Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the **two tables of the testimony** were in his hand: **the tables were written on both their sides;** on the one side and on the other were they written. (Exod 32:15)

Although YHWH wrote the Ten Commandments on the two stone tables, these tablets were formally called the *Testimony*.¹⁷ YHWH ordained the original Testimony to be housed in the ark,¹⁸ hence the ark became known as the *Ark of the Covenant* or *Ark of Testimony* since it housed the original constitution, on which Israel was to base her theology, her government, and her way of life.

You shall put into the ark *the testimony* which I shall give you. . . . And you shall put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark you shall put the *testimony* that I shall give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on **the ark of the testimony**, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the Children of Israel. (Exod 25:16, 21–22)

The rich, golden ark encased the originally engraved covenantal Testimony.¹⁹ Scripture consistently interchanges the terms for the ark calling it both the *Ark of the Testimony*²⁰ and the *Ark of the Covenant*²¹ since the Testimony was the formal written contract between YHWH and Israel (see chap. 3.I–II and chap. 14.I). Should any discrepancies arise among later documents, Israel's scribes could always ask the high priest to consult the original.²² Since only the high priest had access to the original copy (written in stone and kept inside the Most Holy Place), YHWH limited the possibility that the authentic record could ever be altered (Exod 26:33; 28:29–35, 43).²³ The presence of YHWH communing with Israel above the mercy seat, which was atop the actual Testimony, implied that all discussions or negotiations would be based on the written constitution (Testimony) contained within the *Ark of Testimony*.

Moses or Joshua eventually merged the Sinai Testimony (inscribed on two stone tablets) into the collective written *Law of Moses*.²⁴ The practice of merging documents into a new canon is evidenced in ancient Egypt as early as the 18th Dynasty. Egyptologist K. Ryholt observes that five different sources were merged into the Turin King List. He theorizes that these sources were merged in the early 18th Dynasty,²⁵ directly from the kings' annals.²⁶ This date coincides with the very time that Israel had exited Egypt and Moses had written YHWH's Law.

As mentioned before, the Testimony comprised YHWH's written constitutional covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai. The original Testimony consisted of three formal parts.²⁷ The first part instituted the 10 requirements. Today, this record is found in Exodus 20. The Sabbath sign constituted the second part of YHWH's Testimony and is today found in Exod 31:13–18. The third part of the Testimony listed blessings for compliance and penalties (or curses) should Israel breach her covenant with YHWH. This portion of the prophetic Testimony is today found in Leviticus 26.²⁸

After those who rebelled after hearing the scouts' report had died in the wilderness (Num 14:23; 32:13; Deut 2:14), YHWH enacted the Moab-Deuteronomy Covenant with their children, who had *not* entered into the earlier Sinai compact. Though Deuteronomy's

Covenant (Testimony) enumerated more-detailed stipulations for breach of pact (Deuteronomy 27–30), these stipulations both clarified and expanded the stipulations of the original Sinai pact (Leviticus 26). The Moabic Covenant or Testimony was then added to the original constitutional covenant and housed in the Ark of Testimony.

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of *this law in a book, until they were finished*, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of YHWH, saying, *Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of YHWH your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.* (Deut 31:24–26)

Both covenants were binding on Israel's people. The formal Testimony—the warning part of Israel's Law that described consequences for breach of pact—would encompass both the Sinai (Leviticus 26) and Moabic (Deuteronomy 28–30) contracts. The actual legal covenant was then edited into a story form with Moses' log of the nation's travels. YHWH commanded that Moses rehearse Israel's battle with Amalek and include it in Israel's "memorial" (Exod 17:13–14). When Joshua obeyed this command, it added further detail to the "Law of Moses."

Thus, the entire Testimony has been divided in *The Law of Moses* and today is commonly called the Pentateuch. Later, when we study the Testimonial Law, we will see that the consequences for Israel's breach of pact (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28–30) constitute the formal "Testimony." This division of the Law not only outlined consequences should the Israelites break their pact with their Creator, it *also provided a law for all prophecy*. Every one of Israel's righteous prophets based their prophecies on this chronologically prophetic law.

C. Colophons and Glosses

Colophons are "scribal notations" made at the end of a particular portion of text.²⁹ Colophons in ancient times were separated from the original text, thus allowing the scribe to append additional information that either helped to clarify the text he had just been working with or supplemented it with more information not recorded in the original record.³⁰ Colophons are readily attested in Akkadian as well as Ugaritic documents.³¹ Today, these colophons are not distinguished from the original copy but have been edited to appear as part of the original text. This is why we read that "Moses wrote" or "Joshua wrote" something in Scripture. A scribe appended a colophon to acknowledge the actual author but today this notation has become part of a particular chapter and verse in Scripture.

A gloss is a minor change or addition, such as the word *Ramesses* in Gen 47:11; Exod 12:37; and Num 33:3, 5. Glosses update obsolete terms or foreign words.³² As we will see throughout this chapter, glosses and colophons consistently preserved knowledge about the original authorship. It is also the ancient practice of colophons that has unjustifiably given rise to criticism of anachronistic histories in Israel's Scriptures.

D. The Book of Wars

The Law of Moses, The Log of Israel's Wonderings, The Memorial of Israel's Battle with Amalek, and the *Testimony* were not the only books written before Israel's entry into Canaan. The Book of Numbers refers to a separate scroll that registered Israel's military campaigns:

Wherefore it is said in the **book of the wars** of YHWH, (a) What he did in the Red Sea, and in the (b) brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goes down to the dwelling of Ar, and lies on the border of Moab. (Num 21:14–15)

The *Book of Wars*, which recorded Israel's battles, was originally a separate book from the *Law of Moses*. A later editor took the war book and interspersed it between the laws that YHWH had given to Moses. This is why the Torah retains a “story-like” feel rather than adhering to a formal law code (such as Hammurabi's Code), which would only have listed YHWH's laws. The merging of the *Book of Wars* into the Torah is what leads scholars to see different writing styles in the Torah and conclude that the Law had multiple authors.³⁴

Today, the record of (a) “what YHWH did at the Red Sea” is Exodus 10–15, and Israel's victory at (b) Arnon is found in Numbers 21. YHWH's command for Moses to record Israel's battle with Amalek and the curse Moses issued against him may be another reference to the war chronicles. Portions of both Exodus and Numbers were excerpted from Israel's war chronicle, and it is likely that the books of Joshua and Judges, which primarily focus on military operations, were originally part of this scroll as well.

E. Archaeological Confirmation

Another piece of evidence supporting these conclusions is a text recently discovered by archaeologists working at modern Khirbet Qeiyafa.³⁵ Not only does this text date to King David and King Solomon's era, it bears implications for modern redactionary theories. Professor Gershon Galil of the University of Haifa, who deciphered the inscription, comments:

It indicates that the Kingdom of Israel already existed in the 10th century BCE and that at least some of the biblical texts were written hundreds of years before the dates presented in current research.³⁶

This text was written in a very ancient language that pre-dates Hebrew.³⁷ This demonstrates that the Law that Moses and Joshua had transcribed was also written in a language that foreshadowed scripts that eventually became known as Paleo-Hebrew or biblical Hebrew. What this ancient text confirms is that scribes existed at a very early time in ancient Israel's history. They were literate and capable of writing the nation's past. Additionally, the text confirms that the early Hebrew Law Code was indeed transmitted from one generation to another *via a written form*.

When Haifa University's Galil finally deciphered the text, he not only identified words unique to the Hebrew language but concepts in line with the Hebrew Law.

“It uses verbs that were characteristic of Hebrew, such as *asah* (‘did’) and *avad* (‘worked’), which were rarely used in other regional languages,” Galil said. “Particular words that appear in the text, such as *almanah* (‘widow’) are specific to Hebrew and are written differently in other local languages.”³⁸

Unlike most ancient texts, which are inscribed in clay (actually pressed into the stone), this ancient text is written in ink on a trapezoid-shaped piece of pottery about 6 inches by 6.5 inches (ostrakon, an ancient kind of note paper). The text also appears to be a social statement, much in accord with the Hebrew Law, about how people should treat slaves, widows, and orphans (see Illustration 8.1). The ostrakon may even have served as an order directly from King David or Solomon to direct local policies. In English, it reads (by numbered line):

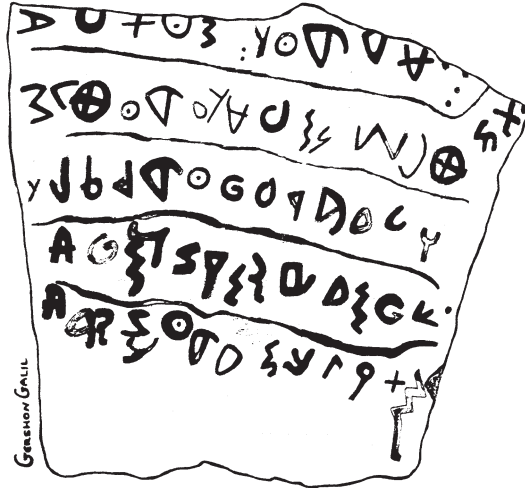


Illustration 8.1. The ancient Hebrew inscription known as the “Galil-Ostrakon.”

- 1' you shall not do [it], but worship the [Lord].
- 2' Judge the sla[ve] and the wid[ow]/Judge the orph[an]
- 3' [and] the stranger. [Pl]ead for the infant/plead for the po[or and]
- 4' the widow. Rehabilitate [the poor] at the hands of the king.
- 5' Protect the po[or and] the slave/[supp]ort the stranger.³⁹

The content, which has some missing letters, is similar to some Scriptures, such as Isa 1:17, Ps 72:3, and Exod 23:3. Its form gives rise to the fact that it predated later authors. Similar to modern scholarly methods, David and Isaiah quoted directly from the Law in order to teach or draw parallels, in the same way that modern scholars quote from an article or other scholarly work they wish to study or advance.

II. JOSHUA

Titles for books of Scripture are often misleading. Titles that bear a person's name imply authorship. The Book of Joshua is a case in point. It is questionable whether Joshua made any entries into the chronicle that bears his name or whether the narratives were simply registered by several scribes who served under Joshua's administration. The Book of Joshua originally consisted of at least three books, though probably more.

The first few chapters of Joshua (through ch. 5) were, in their original state, part of the modern Book of Deuteronomy. This conclusion is drawn from the chronology presented in both books. The first chapter⁴⁰ of Deuteronomy states that Moses outlined the conditions and blessings for the nation's re-covenanting with YHWH in the "fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month" (Deut 1:3). No other chronological information is presented until Moses' death, when the chronicle states that Israel mourned for him "thirty days" (Deut 34:8). The Book of Joshua continues this chronicle as though there is no break in text or chronology, and no clarification of dates is given. Rather, the opening of the book states that in three days (after the mourning period for Moses had ended) Israel needed to be ready to enter the Promised Land (Josh 1:11). This chronicle continues its account, stating that Israel crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, four days before Passover (Josh 5:10).

Clarification and a context for the "year" when these dates occurred are not provided until Josh 5:7, where the scribe clarifies that Israel crossed the Jordan in the 40th year after the exodus. This means that Moses had only died about 40 days prior to the account in Joshua 5. The fact that the first four chapters of Joshua continue the chronology established in Deut 1:3 indicates that the two records were originally one book. The scribe's reaffirmation that it was the 40th year when Israel actually entered Canaan in ch. 5 may signal the beginning of a new chronicle (or book) or the hand of a new scribe. What this evidence strongly supports is that Joshua or a scribe(s) under his administration originally edited the Book of Deuteronomy along with the first four or five chapters of Joshua. A later scribe, who organized various documents into the coherent history we read today, later divided the two records based on Moses' life. The scribe ended Deuteronomy with Moses' death and began the Book of Joshua with the beginning of Joshua's administration after Moses' death. If the chronology in these two books was quite well known at the time, the scribe may have missed the lack of clarity that this division brought to the date of the chronicle (see Table 9.4 on page 359).

The first significant break in the Joshua narrative⁴¹ occurs in chaps. 14–17, which represent a summary of the "lots of inheritance" that Moses had established in the plains of Moab, about one month before Israel entered the Promised Land.⁴² Well after Joshua had carved out a base area for Israel to launch her campaigns, Joshua charged scouts to record the unknown geographical features of Canaan's unexplored territories and to "write them in a book." Record of these territories is today found in Josh 18:10–19:51. *The Book of Distribution*, as some scholars call it, records the territories distributed to seven of Israel's tribes. The Book of Distribution was then entered into the "Joshua Chronicle" during the Shiloh (Release Year) assembly (Joshua 23–24) or at a later date.

Some of the confusion about the Joshua narrative may arise from the scribal practice of dual witnesses: two or more scribes provided an account of an event. Additionally, both Joshua and Judges manifest a relatively great number of editorial (colophons and glosses) remarks that served to clarify the context or update the nation's records (Josh 13:1–14; Judg 1–2). This is especially apparent in the section pertaining to the territories that Israel failed to conquer (Josh 15:63; 16:10; 17:12–13; Judges 1).

Recent scholarship has demonstrated genuine scribal practices in the Joshua narratives.⁴³ Egyptologist James Hoffmeier demonstrates contemporary scribal protocol in written

Egyptian records during the reign of Thutmoses III (c. 1458–1425).⁴⁴ What we learn from these records is that the Joshua narratives were drawn from other sources such as a Daybook and were written using a “history formula” that was common during the fifteenth century BCE. Hoffmeier cites six different components of the Joshua entries that demonstrate similarity with Egyptian formulas.⁴⁵ Not only are Egyptian scribal practices reflected in the Joshua account; many contemporary customs of warfare are included.⁴⁶ This lends credence to the possibility that, not only had Israel been in Canaan for several decades before Thutmoses III’s campaigns in Canaan, but also that Israel was well-versed in Egyptian scribal practices during the fifteenth century. This indicates that Israel had entered Canaan long before the thirteenth-century date commonly accepted in modern academia, evidence that we will examine in chaps. 9–11.

III. JUDGES

The Book of Judges follows the same heavily edited pattern as Joshua. The first chapter of Judges through the Bochim (2:1–5) incident were probably originally part of the original Joshua narrative. In its original state, the Judges chronicle probably opened with Judg 3:1. A later scribe added the Conquest Summary that charted the military leave that Joshua gave to Israel’s armies (2:6), which allowed the soldiers to establish their tribal heritages. This opening compendium repeated Joshua’s death, giving an account of the Israelites’ righteousness during the lives of those who outlived Joshua (2:10). Thus the scribe established both the terminus of the Joshua narrative and an overview of the entire Judges Era. Not only does Judg 2:6–23 begin a new record, it attests the hand of a scribe who lived long after the Judges Era and who could qualify and grant context to the events that the book recorded.

Levite scribes are the most likely candidates for authoring and editing other narratives found in the Book of Joshua. History writing was primarily a governmental function associated with the Temple.⁴⁷ In Israel’s premonarchic history, chronicling was sporadic. The Song of Deborah, written about 200 years after Joshua’s death, may attest to the chronicling and updating of the Book of Joshua and the beginning portions of the Book of Judges (Judg 1–5:31) during Deborah’s administration.⁴⁸ Deborah tells us that, after Israel’s battle with Jabin, scribes residing in Zebulun’s territory (Judg 5:14) came to her. The tribe of Zebulun may have housed the Levite branch that registered the nation’s chronicles during this era. The fact that Deborah used scribes (plural) indicates that more than one person edited and recorded parts of Joshua and Judges. Deborah and her scribes updated the nation’s archives and they would have been contemporary with Ramesses II.⁴⁹ After Deborah’s administration, the record of Israel’s archives goes silent until Samuel’s school of the prophets (1 Samuel 10). What role this school played in the nation’s archives is uncertain. More certainly, Samuel (1 Chr 9:22) instructed David regarding the institutional aspects of the nation’s archives in preparation for the time when he would inherit Saul’s kingdom (1 Sam 19:18–22). We will return to the issues of editing in Israel’s early history when we examine evidence for the Canaan Conquest in chap. 11, pp. 574–82. The entries in the books of Judges and Samuel indicate that the Levites inserted notations regarding events in the nation’s history during the sabbatical years, when the nation had opportunity to renew the covenant (see chap. 9).

IV. PSALMS

In chap. 5.IV (“Vanquishing Modern Myths”), I mentioned that Israel’s psalms were similar to psalms written for Temple services throughout the Near East. In Israel, psalms were official “state” prophecies that were hidden in praises to man’s Creator. *Each psalm was an individual prophecy.* Some songs prophesied specific events. Psalm 137, for instance, foretold Israel’s Diaspora in Babylon, while other songs prophesied of people who would play a role or function in Israel’s history.

David wrote Psalm 72 as prophecy, ordaining events to occur during Solomon’s reign. Psalm 72 is entitled “for Solomon”: vv. 10 and 15 foretold Sheba’s queenly visit, and v. 17 ordained that Solomon’s name would endure forever!

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of **Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.** Yes, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. . . **His name shall endure forever:** his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.
(Ps 72:10–11, 15, 17)

The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in 1 Kings 10 and 1 Chronicles 9. Even to this day, most people who attend church have heard of Israel’s King Solomon; thus his name has endured “forever”. One of the primary functions for the books of the Psalms was to ordain and prophesy about events and people that would play a role in Israel’s history—whether it was for good or for evil.

In many ways, the prophecies in the Book of Psalms served as another witness to the prophets’ testimony. The Psalms’ “record of prophecies” not only ordained future commissions; it served as a mechanism to ensure the truthfulness of a later prophet’s testimony. Should there be any question about the credibility of a prophet’s claim, it could be compared with the Law of Moses (Josh 8:31), the Testimonial Law (Isa 8:20) and the Books of Psalms. We will further examine the Psalms’ role in prophecy below, then pick up the topic again when we examine the Testimony, Israel’s prophetic law, in part two of this book (chap. 14).

A. Authorship

The Hebrew title for Psalms is “Book of Praises.” Although David was the Psalms’ greatest contributor, he was *not* the book’s only author. After Samuel anointed David to be king, he and David collaborated to establish Israel’s various priestly offices for the Monarchy Era (1 Chr 9:22).⁵⁰ They instituted “the sons of Korath” as prophets and choir members to praise and prophesy in the Temple.⁵¹ The sons of Korah were Levites who did not receive a commission to the priesthood (Num 4:2–4; 16:1–40) but usually served in the role of prophet (2 Chr 20:19–21). Samuel was a descendant of Korah (1 Chr 6:38–33) and the prophet whom YHWH had raised for Israel in Moses’ stead (Deut 18:15–19).⁵²

Israel's Temple choir consisted of singers (1 Chr 15:16; 16:4–7), harpists (1 Chr 25:3), trumpeters (1 Chr 25:5), and cymbalists (1 Chr 25:1). Asaph, the chief singer, served as a multifaceted conductor. He ministered before the ark, played cymbals (1 Chr 16:5), led the choir, prophesied, and contributed significantly to the Book of Psalms.

The Book of 1st Chronicles records:

Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of *Asaph*, and of *Heman*, and of *Jeduthun*, who should *prophesy with harps*, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was. (1 Chr 25:1)

Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons were also prophets. 2 Chr 29:30 states that Asaph was a prophet whose prophetic songs were sung by the Levites. Jeduthun is listed both as a harp player and as David's prophet (1 Chr 25:52; 2 Chr 35:15), and Heman's sons are also listed as David's seers (prophets) in 1 Chr 25:5.⁵³ These three men wrote songs for the Temple, their sons inherited their role as choir members and prophets (2 Chr 20:14–19), and they greatly contributed to authoring the Book of Psalms.

Individual titles for each psalm usually provide the name of the person who authored it.⁵⁴ Asaph wrote 12 psalms (Psalm 50; 73–83). Heman authored Psalms 88 and 89. Moses authored Psalm 90, while Haggai and Zechariah wrote Psalms 146–148. And David probably authored many of the remaining praises.

B. Psalm Titles

Titles of psalms are crucial for understanding a particular prophecy's scope and intent. Many psalms ordained the epistle of Israel's prophets and are entitled "For instruction of the sons of Korah." David provided instruction for prophecy to Korah's sons in Psalms 42 and 44–49. Asaph instructed Korah's prophets in Psalms 85, 87, and 88. Asaph is himself listed as a Korite in 1 Chr 26:1 (and 6:39), and all three of the families that David established in the Temple choir were descendants of Korah (1 Chr 26:1; 6:33–37).

In some cases, a psalm's title contains a particular prophet's oracle instruction. David directed Jeduthun's prophecies (in Psalms 39; 62; 77; and 2 Chr 35:15), and he passes a "baton" or ordains a song for the singer (1 Chr 6:33) Hemen in Psalms 53. In other cases, a psalm may foretell or ordain prophets to receive YHWH's commission. For instance, Psalms 138 foretells of Haggai and Zechariah. Both of these prophets fulfilled David's prophetic instruction by prophesying during King Darius's second year. The Septuagint⁵⁵ titles this song: "A Psalm of David: For Haggai and Zechariah." David not only ordained their ministries, but provided their "prophetic" instructions.

Interestingly, Asaph often supplements a previous prophecy (psalm) by entitling it "*a song of a song*." David also uses this "song of a song" method, opening a window on a prophetic song written in *earlier Scripture*⁵⁶ or on other prophecies in the Book of Praises itself. Thus, these additions further augmented David's, Deborah's, Asaph's, and Moses' many prophetic songs.

V. KINGS AND CHRONICLES

The books we know today as 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles were, in their original format, voluminous manuscripts that were eventually edited into six simple books.⁵⁷ Israel's prophets wrote the Book of Kings. According to Scripture, the proper title for the Book of Kings is *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.⁵⁸ At the beginning of the Kingdom Era, these annals comprised the prophets' independent manuscripts.⁵⁹ During the reign of Asa, the prophets' record became a formal state document in a single archive: *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (2 Chr 16:11).

One special branch of the priesthood constituted the office of the scribe who narrated the Book of Chronicles.⁶⁰ Originally, there were two sets of Chronicle books: *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah* and *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*.⁶¹ Unhappily, the latter book has not survived and was probably destroyed during Samaria's siege.

A. Chronicles' Scribalship

Ancient Israel's scribal practices were contemporary with other nations'. By the twelfth to tenth centuries (BCE), royal Assyrian scribes were already using chronicles and other sources when composing their texts.⁶² Ancient Israel similarly used chronicles, monuments, archives, and ancient sources to write history⁶³ that is not very different from the way we "remember the past" today. Assyriologist William Hallo observes:

When biblical authors appropriated Bronze Age sources for the early Israelites history, they did so intelligently, purposefully, and selectively. . . . Their reflexes in biblical literature are neither free creations *de novo*, nor uncritical imitations of everything available. The case for the use of ancient Near Eastern materials is thus the same whether we are studying early Hebrew history or early Mesopotamian or Egyptian history.⁶⁴

While the Scriptural record is virtually silent regarding how Israel recorded her history prior to the Monarchy, the evidence is quite substantial once the Kohite priest-prophet Samuel helped David to organize the nation's government institutions.

One of the first official posts that David established in the New Monarchy Era was the office of national historian. David

appointed **certain of the Levites** to minister before the ark of YHWH, and to record, and to thank and praise YHWH God of Israel. (1 Chr 16:4)

The recorder marked or "remembered" events and registered them.⁶⁵ The second and more common designation was that of common scribe.⁶⁶ Basically, the scribe's duty was to count.⁶⁷ Isaiah gives some indication of this, inquiring: "Where is the scribe? Where is the receiver? **Where is he that counted the towers?**" (Isa 33:18). 2 Chr 26:11 also indicates that counting "fighting men" was the scribe's task.⁶⁸

Uzziah had a host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe. (2 Chr 26:11)

In Hezekiah's days, Jeiel was reckoned among the sons of Levi (2 Chr 29:12–13). Early in Israel's kingdom years, the recorder wrote chronicles while the scribe provided numbers and was in charge of tallies, such as the composition of armies, or garrisons, the number of battle casualties, etc.; perhaps he was similar to a news reporter today.⁶⁹ The recorder no doubt used the scribe's data when he wrote the king's annals. In her study on Israel's administrative offices, Nili Fox argues that the recorder had a more oral role such as a herald, rather than a scribal position. She sees the position as referring to an individual who makes announcements throughout the kingdom.⁷⁰ Perhaps a more accurate comparison of this post would be with the modern "press secretary" with expanded duties. The recorder's and the scribe's sons filled their offices when their service years were terminated (Num 4:47; 8:24–26).⁷¹

During the nation's righteous epochs, the Monarchy faithfully acknowledged Chronicles' authors. The first entry to record Israel's chroniclers appeared during David's reign:

Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder . . . and Seraiah was the scribe. (2 Sam 8:16–17)⁷²

Jehoshaphat wrote Israel's history during David's reign, a narrative preserved in 1 Chronicles 10–22. Seraiah provided the names of those who united with David during Saul's persecution as well as the Levites who ministered before the ark (1 Chronicles 11–12, 16), while Jehoshaphat compiled them into the actual Chronicle record. That the Levites authored the Book of Chronicles is confirmed by the following account:

And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, one of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and before the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites: one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar. (1 Chr 24:6)

Shemaiah's record of Eleazar's and Ithamar's House is today found in 1 Chronicles 23–27. During this time, the "Acts of Solomon," chronicles of Solomon's reign, were also written. Scripture registers the historian and scribe who held these offices during Solomon's days, indicating that Jehoshaphat chronicled both David's and Solomon's reigns: "Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; **Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder**" (1 Kgs 4:3). Following Solomon's annals, however, the names of Israel's scribes and recorders rarely appear. Hezekiah's reign is the most notable exception, indicating that Hezekiah himself ordered the entry, following in the footsteps of his father David (2 Kgs 18:18; see also 2 Kgs 18:37; Isa 36:3).

B. Transcribing and Updating the Archives

Scripture evidences that one of the first tasks that the Levites undertook during King David's administration was copying, updating, and codifying the nation's loosely organized annals. Toponyms (names of geographical locations) are the primary evidence for the scribes' use of glosses for the purpose of clarifying context.

Scribes would update references to ancient cities or acknowledge that a certain feature (e.g., Rachel's pillar, Gen 35:20) still existed in their day.⁷³ The purpose of this practice was at least twofold: to update out of date material (1 Sam 9:9);⁷⁴ and to verify the historicity of the texts that the scribe was updating.⁷⁵ For instance, the scribe's eye witness account that the story of Achan was indeed factual was verified by the fact that the stones over Achan's body were still visible during the scribe's lifetime (Josh 7:26). This was in contrast to Moses' burial site, which the scribe could not verify (Deut 34:6).

The scribes' glosses primarily centered on ancient locations, such as cities or previously destroyed sites. For instance, a scribe used a gloss to state that Ai was still a "heap of stones" that had not been rebuilt "unto his day" (Josh 28:8–9). Another text states that the ancient city of Luz was the same place as "Bethel," since Jacob had renamed the former city, "Bethel" (Gen 28:19). Therefore, the scribe continually reminds the reader that Luz is Bethel (Gen 35:6; Josh 18:13; Judg 1:23). Why did the scribes consider all these editorial remarks so important?

Throughout the ancient world, cities were destroyed and rebuilt.⁷⁶ Sometimes they fell into decay, but more often they were conquered and destroyed by their rivals. Usually, parts of one city were used to build another city either on the same site or on another site some distance away (see the Tel Dan inscription, p. 605). In other instances, one city was destroyed only to be relocated at another site but using the same name. In the case of Luz, the scribe uses a colophon to explain the changes to the reader after the Joseph tribes had destroyed Bethel/Luz during the conquest. Later, a man went into Hittite territory to establish another city by the same name (i.e., Luz). Thus, the scribes' colophon preserved this information so that future generations would not confuse the two sites (i.e., *after the scribe's lifetime*, the older Bethel would not be confused with the modern Luz, which was separated from Bethel by a great distance. This would avert the readers from wondering how Jacob could rename the Hittite city of Luz).⁷⁷

We also have evidence about the transcribing of Israel's records prior to David's administration. An earlier scribe used a gloss ("unto this day") to document the fact that during his days the Benjaminites still shared Jerusalem with the Jebusites (Judg 1:21). David purchased Jerusalem from Araunah, the Jebusite king (2 Sam 24:21–23), thus taking full possession of the mount. The scribe's notation may even have served as a record explaining when the text had been transcribed.

Some of the most controversial editing occurred with regard to the cities associated with Israel's exodus. As I have mentioned, cities did not always stand the test of time. They were often destroyed. This was especially true regarding the cities to which the scribe referred in Exodus: Pharaoh's store-city of Pithom and Pi-Ramses. By all *Scriptural accounts*,⁷⁸ Ramses would postdate the exodus by some 150 years. So the reference to a city of Ramses

would be anachronistic and suspect. However, this gloss (the practice of updating outdated terms) poses a number of questions in regard to scribal practices.

How would a scribe refer to ancient cities that no longer existed? What protocol would a scribe follow if a capital city had been abandoned by a later monarch? How should a scribe refer to a city that not only had been abandoned but whose monuments, temples, and other relics had been relocated to another site? In the Hebrew Scriptures, it appears that the scribe used a gloss to refer to the cities that Israel built during her time in Egypt.⁷⁹ The only conclusion that we can draw with certainty is that the reference in Exod 1:11 to Pithom refers to a store city,⁸⁰ while Pi-Ramesses refers to Egypt's capital city. The scribe may have used Pi-Ramesses so the reader would associate it with the Egyptian capital during his day, or the scribe could have been updating a reference to Avaris, an older city that lay buried underneath Pi-Ramesses. I will return to the problems associated with this gloss when we look at the Exodus and Conquest.⁸¹

While the first official catalogue of Israel's history was organized under David's administration, the second or third commission for bringing the nation's archives up to date probably occurred during the righteous epochs of Hezekiah's and Josiah's reigns. As we will see below, each time a monarch commissioned this task, Scripture recognizes the Levites who held the official scribal office of national historian. These later modernizations and archiving of the nation's history provide evidence for the modern historian that the entire Pentateuch had been written by the sixth century (BCE).

C. The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah

1. David

Before David ascended Israel's throne, Israel's histories were privatized, and had not yet become a function of the royal court. These annals were usually written by the Levitical prophet(s) who had direct interaction or direct contact with the king. The Hebrew Scriptures evidence that the books that the King James Version calls 1st and 2nd Samuel were, in their original state, three separate scrolls. Scripture uses a colophon⁸² to acknowledge the original authors for this portion of its history.

Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are **written in the book of Samuel the seer**, and in the **book of Nathan the prophet**, and in the **book of Gad the seer**. (1 Chr 29:29)

This verse attests three separate manuscripts written by three different prophets who recorded David's life. 1st Sam 10:25 states that Samuel wrote "in a book" the "manner of kingdom" Israel would have under a monarch. This indicates Samuel documented Israel's history before Saul and continued to record the first events of David's life before his (Samuel's) death.

The conclusion here is as follows: The prophet Samuel wrote 1 Samuel 1–21. Gad wrote about David's exile years, which constitute 1 Samuel 22–24–2 Samuel 6 and 2 Samuel

13–2 Samuel 23. The prophet Nathan wrote about David’s last years, which constitute 2 Samuel 7–12 and 2 Samuel 24–1 Kings 1–4. Notice that each prophet/seer recorded one epoch of David’s life with the exception of 2 Samuel 24. Although Gad might have recorded what is today 2 Samuel 24, the events in this text occurred toward the end of his life, when it is presumed that Nathan had assumed the recorder’s role. At a much later date these manuscripts were edited into three books (1 and 2 Samuel [originally one book], and 1 Kings), which placed events in chronological order, ignoring actual authorship.⁸³

2. Solomon

1 Kgs 11:41 records that Solomon’s chronicles were originally written in a book entitled “The Acts of Solomon.” Today, Scripture records these “acts” or “chronicles” in 2 Chronicles 1–9. As in the account of David’s life, the scribe uses a colophon to acknowledge the persons who actually recorded “the acts of Solomon”:

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat? (2 Chr 9:29)

This verse demonstrates that three prophets recorded both Solomon and Jeroboam’s acts (annals or chronicles). Nathan began the writing of Solomon’s life where he had ended the recording of David’s. This constitutes 1 Kings 1–10. Ahijah wrote the prophecy regarding Jeroboam’s claim to the ten tribes found in 1 Kings 11, having written this text during Solomon reign. Much later, Iddo wrote the words (vision) of Ahijah against Jeroboam I found in 1 Kings 12–14, because Ahijah was blind in his old age (1 Kgs 14:4) and could not write the prophecy for himself. Interestingly, although the prophet Ahijah was unable to write this vision for himself, a fellow prophet did record his words, thus maintaining the consistency of the Book of Kings’ Levitical or prophetic authorship.

Other evidence for the prophet’s authorship of *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (today 1 and 2 Kings) is found in a colophon appended to the record of Manasseh, king of Judah.

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers that spoke to him in the name of YHWH of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also,⁸⁴ and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places where he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers. (2 Chr 33:18–19)

There are no independent books written by Israel’s prophets that record these “sayings of the seers.” However, the words of Israel’s seers against Manasseh are found in 2 Kings 21:10–15.

And YHWH spoke by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, and has done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus said YHWH God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil on Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the House of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. (2 Kgs 21:10–15)

The books of Kings serve as a testimony in the same manner as the works of Isaiah or Jeremiah. Israel's prophets wrote the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, ensuring the truth regarding Israel's history and YHWH's written word. And it appears that the "Sayings of the Seers" has been edited into the prophets' chronicles of the nation's history (see Table 8.1).

3. Rehoboam

Scripture provides evidence that two separate annals were begun at the dichotomy of Israel's kingdom (1 Kgs 14:19, 29). The proper titles of these two works were *Chronicles of the Kings of Judah* and *Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*. With respect to the authorship of Kings during Rehoboam's reign, the prophets' colophon states:

Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? (2 Chr 12:15)

Table 8.1. Prophets and Kings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Judah</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Prophets</i>	<i>Reference</i>
1023	David		Samuel	1 Sam 16
			Gad	2 Sam 24:11
			Nathan	2 Sam 7:2
			Asaph	2 Chr 29:30
			Jeduthun	1 Chr 16:41; 2 Chr 35:15
			Zadok	2 Sam 15:27; 1 Sam 9:9
			Heman and sons	1 Chr 25:5

Table 8.1. Prophets and Kings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Judah</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Prophets</i>	<i>Reference</i>
983	Solomon		Nathan	1 Kgs 1:45
			Asaph, Jeduthun	2 Chr 5:12
			Heman and sons	2 Chr 5:12
			Ahijah	1 Kgs 11:29
			Iddo	2 Chr 9:29
944	Rehoboam	Jeroboam	Iddo (cont.)	2 Chr 12:15
927	Abijam		Ahijah	1 Kings 14:2
			Shemaiah	1 Chr 12:5; 1 Kgs 12–14
925	Asa	Nadab	Jehu ben Hanani	2 Chr 16:7; 1 Kgs 16
		Baasha	Azariah ben Oded	2 Chr 15:1, 8
		Omri		
885	Jehoshaphat	Ahab	Jehu ben Hanani	2 Chr 19:2
		Ahaziah	Micaiah ben Imla	2 Chr 18:18
			Eliezer ben Dodavah	2 Chr 20:37
			Elijah	1 Kgs 17–21
			2 Kgs 1:3; 2 Chr 21:12	
864	Jehoram	Joram	Elisha ⁸⁵	2 Kgs 5:8
857	Ahaziah	Jehu		
	6 yrs. no king			
851	Joash	Jehu (cont.)	Elisha	2 Kgs 11–12; 2 Chr 22:10–24:27
		Jehoahaz	Jonah?	2 Kgs 14:25
814	Amaziah	Jehoash	Elisha	2 Kgs 13:14–25
			Hosea	Hosea 1:1
796	Amaziah/ Uzziah	Jeroboam II	Amos	Amos 1:1
		Menahem	Hosea	Hosea 1:1
		Pekahiah	Isaiah	2 Chr 26:22; Isa 1:1
744	Jotham	Pekah	Micah	Mic 1:1
			Oded	2 Chr 28:9
736	Ahaz	Hoshea	Hoshea	Hosea 1:1
722	Hezekiah		Isaiah	Isa 1:1
			Micah	Mic 1:1; Jer 26:18
694	Manasseh			
640	Amon			
639	Josiah		Jeremiah	Jer 1:1
			Zephaniah	Zeph 1:1
			Huldah	2 Chr 34:22
608	Jehoiakim		Uriyah	Jer 26:20
			Jeremiah	Jer 1:3
			Daniel	Dan 1:1
597	Zedekiah (Jehoiachin)		Ezekiel	Ezek 1:2