

The Biblical Books of Kings and Chronicles: Their Value and Limitations for the Study
of Ancient Israelite History

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Introduction

Any student of the Bible¹ must inevitably ask him or herself the question of how much credibility one can assign to the historical claims found therein. To many modern readers of the Bible, especially professing Christians and Jews, it may seem somewhat out of place, or even presumptuous, to assume that the historical information in the Bible is anything less than infallible or absolutely reliable. Notwithstanding, biblical scholars for some time have recognized that the authors of the Bible likely weren't primarily interested in presenting the history of Israel from an objective, neutral, or even entirely factual way.² The modern scholarly ideal of presenting history *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*,³ to borrow the oft-cited German phrase, is just that—modern. The ancient historian, conventional biblical criticism informs us, was, apparently, not as concerned with preserving this ideal as the modern historian is.

For example, Bill T. Arnold succinctly explains that the biblical authors "wrote a discursive account, highly rhetorical in nature, that aimed for dramatic, theological, and religious effect more than for historical precision." This isn't to say that "their records are complete fictions, since the essential historicity of Israel's national epic may be accepted as generally accurate," but rather to acknowledge that ideological interests present in the biblical texts limit our ability to rely solely on biblical accounts to provide a reconstruction of Israel's past.⁴ The question of the Bible's historicity, therefore, has spawned two general camps in a spectrum of opinions: the "maximalists," or those who affirm maximal value in the Bible as history, and the "minimalists," or those who assert a minimal value of the same.⁵ Lamentably, both camps have produced their fair share of

crackpots, and emotions can easily run high in the debates revolving around the historicity of the foundational biblical stories that Christians, Jews, and even Muslims around the world accept not only as fact but the very word of God.

As such, any critical exploration into the history and historiography of the Bible must be cautious. Although it is easy, and even fashionable in some academic circles, to revert to an unjustified skepticism of the Bible's historical claims (motivated not strictly by critical judgment but instead by ideology), even the student of the Bible who professes some faith must acknowledge the historical limitations present therein. To illustrate this point, in this paper I will look at the account of Judah's history in 2 Kings 18 and 21 and compare it to the same recorded in 2 Chronicles 29 and 33.⁶ As I shall argue in this paper, when compared to both internal and external evidence, it becomes relatively clear that while these accounts seem to preserve a basic historicity, there are clear marks of ideological re-working of the narratives.

Section I

Before we look at the evidence for the historicity of the Hezekiah and Manasseh accounts, it is first needful to look at the origins, dating, and authorship of 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles. It is also needful to look at the process behind the composition and redaction of these biblical books to ascertain what exactly the author(s) of these books themselves possibly understood they were attempting to accomplish with their work.

We begin with the 1–2 Kings, which "for all practical purposes . . . is our only real source of information for the monarchical history of Israel and Judah."⁷ 1–2 Kings itself was originally a single book, having first been divided into two books in the Septuagint (LXX). "The division of Kings into two books is an artificial one from the

standpoint of contents," writes Steven W. Holloway. "In the textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible, this practice is attested no earlier than certain medieval manuscripts."⁸ This is important to remember lest the reader assume a division in the narrative of 1–2 Kings that actually doesn't exist.

For some time scholars have recognized that 1–2 Kings is a part of the corpus of writings in the Bible now called the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH), in that "the narratives [in 1–2 Kings] share a common vocabulary, literary style, and theological perspective that is heavily influenced by the book of Deuteronomy, which many scholars now regard as the introduction to the corpus."⁹ Or, as Robert R. Wilson explains, "[1–2] Kings clearly reflects the theological concerns of Deuteronomy," including worship of Yahweh alone, the importance of obedience to covenants, and the outlawing of worship at multiple places.¹⁰ As such, when the question of authorship of 1–2 Kings comes into discussion, it seems more appropriate, and reasonable, to speak not of a single author, but of the "school" of editors or redactors that collaborated on synthesizing the text into the larger DtrH corpus.¹¹ Ziony Zevit explains that these editors, in composing 1–2 Kings, were writing "an extended theological essay" and not "history in the contemporary sense of the word."¹²

The dating of the composition of 1–2 Kings has proven more problematic to determine with certainty. 1–2 Kings itself cites royal or courtly annals at a number of instances as the source of the information contained therein (1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Kings 1:18; 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 26, 31, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5).¹³ How much, if any, of the material in 1–2 Kings is therefore an original composition or a re-

working of this earlier material is impossible to determine, as these annals are no longer extant. What's more, scholars are divided as to whether 1–2 Kings was composed "as part of a large historiographical work" in the mid-6th century BCE or in a "double redaction" that began during the reign of Josiah and ended in the Exile.¹⁴

1–2 Chronicles shares a similar textual history to that of 1–2 Kings. For instance, 1–2 Chronicles was, like 1–2 Kings, originally one book; the division into two books first occurred in the LXX. It is also in the LXX that gave 1–2 Chronicles its name *Παραλειπομένων* ("things omitted"). "This is intelligible," writes Peter R. Ackroyd, "on the common assumption that Chronicles was intended to supplement the books of Samuel and Kings by providing information not given there." However, as Ackroyd stresses, this is only one limited, if not the least important, function of 1–2 Chronicles.¹⁵ Robert Jewett even goes so far as to call this understanding of 1–2 Chronicles "a serious misunderstanding," and insists that the purpose of 1–2 Chronicles is not primarily to "fill in the gaps," as it were, but to function "as another presentation of the story of Israel from creation to the end of the monarchy."¹⁶

Authorship of 1–2 Chronicles has traditionally been attributed to "Ezra and Nehemiah . . . although under scrutiny that convention appears problematic." That being the case, "the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are the principal source of evidence for the history and the social conditions that led up to the time of the composition of Chronicles,"¹⁷ which was likely the product of a post-exilic redaction and reworking of both earlier canonical and non-canonical sources.¹⁸ In this sense as well, 1–2 Chronicles is like 1–2 Kings in that it was the product of an anonymous group or school of redactors that presented the history of Judah and Israel in a manner that best suited their theological

sensitivities and contemporary concerns.¹⁹

Section II

With this brief introduction to the nature of ancient Israelite historiography, as well as a brief overview of the nature of 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles, we now turn our attention to the texts themselves. For the purposes of this paper, as I explained earlier, we shall look at the depiction of Hezekiah and Manasseh. Specifically, we shall look at the depiction of the cultic reforms of Hezekiah and the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, in addition to the brief depiction of Manasseh's reign.

2 Kings 18 begins with a standard introduction to Hezekiah: his name, date of ascension to the throne, and an initial assessment of his accomplishments as king (2 Kings 18:1–3). The text then immediately describes his cultic reforms, which included removing the "high places" (במות), tearing down "the pillars" (מצבת), and cutting down "the sacred pole" or Asherah (אשרה). These reforms climaxed with Hezekiah's removal of the "bronze serpent that Moses had made," called the "Nehushtan" (נחשתן). These reforms are praised with glowing words, and Hezekiah is extolled as being a righteous king (2 Kings 18:4–8).

Shortly after these reforms, however, crisis erupts as the Assyrian king Sennacherib invades Judah and sweeps across the countryside (2 Kings 18:13). Hezekiah proves no match for the dominating superpower, which had some decades previous decimated the northern kingdom of Israel, and is compelled to pay Sennacherib tribute and become as a vassal (2 Kings 18:15–16). The rest of the chapter is spent detailing the attempts of Sennacherib's officers to humiliate Hezekiah and convince the Judahite populace to accept the rule of their new Assyrian masters (2 Kings 18:17–35).

Skipping ahead a few chapters to 2 Kings 21, we are introduced to king Manasseh, who is depicted as the total antithesis to good king Hezekiah. After a standard, formulaic introduction (2 Kings 21:1), we're informed that Manasseh reverted Hezekiah's reforms and "rebuilt the high places . . . erected altars to Baal, made a sacred pole . . . worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them." His most grievous offense, however, was the erecting of altars "for all the host of heaven" in the temple in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:3–5). Just for good measure, the text also records that Manasseh consulted necromancers and practiced child sacrifice. Unsurprisingly, Manasseh, we are told, "did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger" (2 Kings 21:6).

These abominations prompted Yahweh to declare through his prophets that Manasseh and Judah could expect divine punishment for his wanton disregard for divine law and the sanctity of human life (2 Kings 21:10–16). In a rather terse sentence Manasseh's account is concluded with a report of his death and a disgusted reference to the annals that contained the details of "the sin that he committed" (2 Kings 21:17–18).

In turning to 2 Chronicles 29, we're greeted by the same formulaic introduction to Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:1–2). Directly thereafter we're informed of repairs and restorations Hezekiah made on the Jerusalem temple, which had inexplicably fallen into disuse and even corruption. In a rousing speech to the priests and Levites, Hezekiah pleads for a return to the temple cult and the execution of its sacred functions (2 Chronicles 29:3–11). Accordingly, Hezekiah leads the priesthood in reinstating the functions of the temple and the consecration of new priests (2 Chronicles 29:20–35). The chapter ends by optimistically reporting that "Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced

because of what God had done for the people" in leading to the restoration of the temple (2 Chronicles 29:36).

2 Chronicles 33's report of the reign of Manasseh is, at first, nearly identical to the same in 2 Kings 21. The same litany of offenses is catalogued, including the rebuilding of the high places, erecting altars to Baal, worshipping other deities, desecrating the temple, human sacrifice, and consulting necromancers (2 Chronicles 33:1–9). So deplorable are Manasseh's actions, according to the text, that "Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the people of Israel" (2 Chronicles 33:9).

At this point the reader expects this overwhelming negative assessment of Manasseh to conclude with a report of his death. However, the reader is immediately surprised with a hitherto unheard of account of Manasseh being taken captive by the Assyrians and exiled, only to be restored as king after repenting and calling on Yahweh for forgiveness (2 Chronicles 33:10–13). In a religious about-face, Manasseh returns to Jerusalem and undoes all of the evils he had previously committed (2 Chronicles 33:14–17). The account of his tumultuous life is ends with an overall positive assessment (2 Chronicles 33:18–20).

Section III

A number of significant differences exist in these two accounts. Although both accounts describe cultic reforms by Hezekiah, 2 Kings 18 and 2 Chronicles 29 seem to describe different actions taken by the Judahite king. Whereas 2 Kings 18 refers specifically to Hezekiah's abolishment of cultic sites and paraphernalia, including the brazen serpent in the temple, 2 Chronicles 29 omits this detail and instead focuses on

Hezekiah's restoration of the temple. 2 Kings 18 does briefly touch on the reforms Hezekiah made in the temple cult, but not nearly with the amount of detail that it does in 2 Chronicles 33. 2 Kings 18 seems to just mentions these temple reforms in passing, whereas in 2 Chronicles 33 there are multiple verses that spend considerable attention to not only the restoration of the temple, but the new implementations of the priests, their consecration, and the cultic activities they engaged in.²⁰

Similarly, while Manasseh is condemned in both 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33, only in the account of the errant king in 2 Chronicles 33 are we informed of his eventual repentance. There is positively no mention of Manasseh's exile or his humiliation in 2 Kings 21. Indeed, the ending of Manasseh's account in 2 Kings 21 leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader that he was as evil a king as they come. By stark contrast, the ending of the account of Manasseh in 2 Chronicles 33 does just the opposite! Not only that, but the source attribution is also different in the two accounts. 2 Kings 18:17 lists "the Book of the annals of the Kings of Judah" as a source, whereas 2 Chronicles 33:19 names "the records of the seers" as a source.

However, we can take solace in the fact that both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles employ similar rhetorical and literary devices in their accounts of Hezekiah and Manasseh. Both use the standard introductory formula to introduce the kings; both give positive or negative assessments of their roles; both give detailed accounts of their actions as kings, particularly with regard to their religious reforms (albeit perhaps not as detailed as we'd normally like); and both end their accounts with the standard formula used to report the death of a king. This is most welcomed, as it makes our role as

interpreters of the text much easier. The use of formulaic language leaves little ambiguity in these accounts as to what we're supposed to think of these kings.

In addition, Paul S. Evans has argued for the account of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem as an example of a "polyphonic" text.²¹ By this Evans means it is a text with "different voices [that] intersect in this pericope, revealing a plurality of viewpoints."²² As a polyphonic text, therefore, we should not suppose that the account of the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem was cobbled together from disparate sources, as has been supposed in the past by some scholars, but is rather a single literary unit created by the DtrH that uses polyphony as a literary device, which creates a multiplicity of voices or viewpoints for the characters within the text itself.

Section IV

In evaluating the historical reliability of 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles, the first, and almost obvious, factor we need to take into account is the dating of these texts. By virtue of it being composed much earlier, and thus much closer to the events described therein, 1–2 Kings must be preferred over 1–2 Chronicles as our primary biblical text describing the history of Judah and Israel. Indeed, 1–2 Chronicles itself partly relies on the text of 1–2 Kings as a documentary source. Given its relatively late composition (sometime in the mid- to late-Persian period)²³ and the fact that, as Marc Zvi Brettler points out, it has a tendency to "fill the gaps" just a little too often to inspire much confidence,²⁴ 1–2 Chronicles must be given secondary importance in reconstructing the history of Israel and Judah.

The prime example that compels us to take 1–2 Kings over 1–2 Chronicles as a more reliable historical guide is the two texts' treatment of Manasseh's fate. As we've

seen, 2 Kings 21 ends its depiction of Manasseh on an unambiguously negative note, and leaves us with a very low opinion of the wicked Judahite ruler. "Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he caused Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 21:16). The next verse directly after this woeful report simply informs us that Manasseh died and was succeeded by his son Amon (2 Kings 21:17). By contrast, 2 Chronicles 33 introduces the story about Manasseh that includes the king being brought "into Babylon" by "the commanders of the king of Assyria" (2 Chronicles 33:11). After being taken captive, Manasseh repents, is restored by the Lord, and enacts cultic reforms not unlike Hezekiah's before his death (2 Chronicles 33:10–20). We are thus left with an overall positive assessment of Manasseh.

For a number of reasons, not the least of them being the apparently anachronistic mentioning of Manasseh being led into "Babylon" by the Assyrians, it is generally concluded that the ending of Manasseh's account in 2 Chronicles is a post-exilic embellishment.²⁵ It seems, however, that the Chronicler had a specific theological point to make with his embellishment of the Manasseh account. As Brettler remarks, the Chronicler "wished to teach that even if you're as bad as Manasseh and have been punished for your grievous sins, if you repent, all will be forgiven and restored."²⁶ Although one might fault the Chronicler for embellishing the account of Manasseh's final days, one can still appreciate the sympathetic outlook he had for the reprobate king, who is condemned in no uncertain terms for his offenses in the DtrH.

The account of the siege of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18 by the Assyrian king Sennacherib preserves much authentic, and therefore useful, historical information, even

down to an authentic report of the titles and functions of the Assyrian officers sent by Sennacherib to coerce Hezekiah into capitulation (2 Kings 18:17).²⁷ That Sennacherib launched successful campaigns throughout Judah during Hezekiah's reign, culminating with the 701 BCE besieging of Jerusalem, cannot be disputed, as Assyrian annals, quite independent from any Judahite sources, document Sennacherib's campaigns.²⁸ In fact, both the Judahite (2 Kings 18:15–16) and the Assyrian²⁹ sources, for example, converge in their description of Sennacherib receiving tribute from the hand of Hezekiah, although the details of this tribute differ.³⁰

The question of the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms is somewhat trickier. Both 2 Kings 18:1–12 and 2 Chronicles 29:3–19 report that Hezekiah instituted cultic reforms to centralize the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem; though, as we've seen, the purpose of this reform seems to be different in the two books. Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman have argued that this reform was, in part, an attempt to centralize kingship and priesthood in Jerusalem due to an influx of northern refugees into Hezekiah's kingdom, and that archaeological evidence exists for the presence cultic sites at Arad, Beer-sheba, and Lachish that were shut down sometime around the end of the 8th century BCE, perfect timing for Hezekiah's cultic reforms.³¹ Finkelstein and Silberman's arguments have been challenged, however, by Diana Edelman, who has critiqued not only their use of the archaeological data to pinpoint a dating of the closing of these cultic sites to the time of Hezekiah, but also their arguments for the motivation behind Hezekiah's reforms.³²

There is, therefore, still very much an open debate about the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms. That these cultic sites once flourished, only to eventually be

suppressed and eliminated by the priestly bureaucracy in Jerusalem, is not debatable.³³ What is debatable is whether there is archaeological evidence to link Hezekiah with their suppression. The first thing that should be noted is that 2 Kings 18 does not specify which "high places" or cultic sites Hezekiah suppressed. Finkelstein and Silberman have assumed, based on their reading of the evidence, that Hezekiah closed the cultic sites named above, but the biblical text does not mandate such. What's more, 2 Chronicles 29 only reports temple reforms taking place in Jerusalem with the cleansing of the temple and the re-consecration of the priesthood. While it is true that 2 Chronicles 31:1 reports the destruction of cultic sites "throughout all of Judah and Benjamin," there is no indication in the text that this was one under the direction of Hezekiah.

It may very well be, then, that we would be expecting too much in hoping for definitive archaeological evidence for the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms in the Judean countryside. It may very well be that Hezekiah's reforms were limited to Jerusalem and perhaps a limited scale elsewhere throughout Judah, but not to the extent Finkelstein and Silberman seem to believe. J. R. Porter reminds us that the 2 Kings 18 rendition of Hezekiah's reforms makes it clear that the point of the reforms was "to remove Canaanite practices from the religion of Judah, notably the worship in the Temple of the bronze serpent that was traditionally said to have been erected by Moses."³⁴ Thus, even the DtrH account seems to focus on Hezekiah's reforms accomplished at the temple, even if it doesn't provide as much detail as in 2 Chronicles 29. If this is in fact the case, then the lack of definitive archaeological evidence for these reforms should not at all surprise us.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the accounts of Hezekiah and Manasseh, including the depiction of their reforms (or, in the case of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21, his apostasy) as well as Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, seem to preserve a core of historicity, despite literary or narrative re-workings that the redactors accomplished later. Ultimately, after having reviewed the evidence, I must concur with Dietrich that "even if it is currently fashionable (as it has occasionally been in the past) to place the historical reliability of the Bible as low as possible, the Deuteronomistic books of Kings [as well as Chronicles, for that matter,] especially are not only *stories*, but also *history*. . . . Although the historical value of each case must be carefully and critically checked . . . they still deliver a lot of essential historical information."³⁵

From a Latter-day Saint perspective, it should not be surprising that scriptural works, particularly the biblical books, underwent a process of redaction that, while still preserving authentic historical information, also potentially contained mistakes, embellishments, or re-workings. Joseph Smith himself was not at all uncomfortable with the potentiality of precisely this happening. In a statement that would find little contestation from modern biblical scholars, the Prophet once remarked: "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors."³⁶ Yet still one of our Articles of Faith affirms, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated [transmitted] correctly" (Articles of Faith 1:8).

As Latter-day Saints our understanding is benefited by additional scriptural works that underwent remarkably similar processes of transmission. The Book of Mormon and

Doctrine and Covenants are both the result of a long process of redaction and transmission that created scriptures we read today. (The difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon is, happily, that Mormon was kind enough to identify what he was doing and what sources he utilized.) The Doctrine and Covenants is perhaps the best analog to the process of redaction in 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles. Like these two ancient works, the Doctrine and Covenants was composed by disparate sources being brought together and formed into a coherent order by a school of redactors (Joseph Smith and his brethren in the leadership of the Church).³⁷

As such, we need not as Latter-day Saints be scandalized if a similar process lies behind the composition of biblical books like 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles. Likewise, we need not be scandalized if the history presented in these texts is not absolutely perfect or accurate, or if it is limited in its scope, as both the history contained in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are likewise selective and presented through the lenses of a certain theological understanding.³⁸

Notwithstanding the limitations inherent in 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles as historical sources, including potential historical and ideological embellishment in the narratives, when done critically we can profitably read these texts as historical sources and be confident that they preserve some authentic historical details. This is true also in these texts' portrayals of Hezekiah and Manasseh. The question then becomes how to responsibly read these texts, and how to best appreciate and use the historical details found therein.

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¹ In this paper, whenever I refer to "the Bible" I am referring to the collection of writings designated by Christians as the Old Testament, otherwise called the Hebrew Bible by modern scholars. (Of course, for Jews, the name "Hebrew Bible" is something of a redundancy, much like naming the primary book of Latter-day Saint scripture the "Mormon Book of Mormon.") For the sake of simplicity, I shall therefore simply employ "the Bible" throughout this paper. All biblical citations for this paper are from the New Revised Standard Version.

² William G. Dever, in a monograph exploring what archaeology can tell us about Israelite folk religion, explains that the ultimate shape of the Bible came after a series of revisions and redactions by a select group of theological and bureaucratic elites, and that any confidence in the Bible's ability to accurately represent Israel's history must be very cautiously accepted. See William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 64–73.

³ Or "as it really was." As explained by Richard N. and R. Kendall Soulen, the term was coined by the 19th century critic Leopold von Ranke, who, as his aphorism implies, focused on "presenting the past as it happened," free of any ideological or conceptual bias. As Soulen and Soulen explain, though, this ideal has proven difficult to fully enact. See Richard N. and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 231.

⁴ Bill T. Arnold, "History and Historiography, OT," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld et al.; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2007), 2:833.

⁵ For representative samples of "maximalist" and "minimalist" literature, see respectively Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2006);

Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York, N. Y.: Free Press, 2001).

⁶ For the sake of convenience, I shall call these passages the Hezekiah and Manasseh accounts.

⁷ Steven L. McKenzie, "Kings, First and Second books of," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 3:529. For some standard scholarly looks at the history of the monarchy as recorded in 1–2 Kings, see Edward F. Campbell, "A Land Divided: Judah and Israel from the Death of Solomon to the Fall of Samaria," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael D. Coogan; New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 206–241; Siegfried H. Horn and Kyle McCarter, Jr., "The Divided Monarchy: The Kings of Judah and Israel," in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple* (ed. Hershel Shanks; Washington, D. C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2011), 129–207.

⁸ Steven W. Holloway, "Kings, Books of 1–2," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 4:69.

⁹ Choon-Leong Seow, "The First and Second Books of Kings," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (ed. Leander E. Keck et al.; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999), 4.

¹⁰ Robert R. Wilson, "1 Kings," in *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (ed. Harold W. Attridge; New York, N. Y.: HarperCollins, 2006), 475.

¹¹ See also the discussion of the placement of 1–2 Kings in the DtrH in McKenzie, "Kings, First and Second books of" 523–527.

¹² Ziony Zevit, "1 Kings," in *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2004), 669.

¹³ McKenzie, "Kings, First and Second books of," 528, comments: "These . . . sources have typically been understood as some sort of official records, such as court annals, that were likely employed by the author of Kings. Such an interpretation seems reasonable as an explanation for the origin of certain details provided for the kings, such as the lengths of their reigns, names of the mothers of most of the kings of Judah, and specifics about their activities."

¹⁴ Gerald L. Mattingly, "Kings, the First and Second Books of the," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier; San Francisco, Cal.: Harper & Row, 1985), 531. For other views on the date of the composition of 1–2 Kings, see William McKane, "Kings, The Books of," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan; New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 411; Walter Dietrich, "1 and 2 Kings," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (ed. John Barton and John Muddiman; New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), 233–34; Holloway, "Kings, Books of 1–2," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 4:71–72.

¹⁵ Peter R. Ackroyd, "Chronicles, Books of," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 113.

¹⁶ Robert Jewett, "Chronicles, the First and Second Books of the," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 163.

¹⁷ Bruce Chilton et al., eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 165. See also the comments by David Rothstein in "1 Chronicles," in

The Jewish Study Bible, 1712; Gary N. Knoppers, "1 Chronicles," in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (ed. Michael D. Coogan; New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2010), 575.

¹⁸ Ralph W. Klein, "Chronicles, Book of 1–2," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1:996–97; See also H. P. Mathys, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 267–68.

¹⁹ For a detailed look at 1–2 Chronicles as not just a reworked or reformed history, which it unquestionably was, but also a theology as well as an attempted exegesis of early canonical sources, see Louis Jonker, "Reforming History: The Hermeneutical Significance of the Books of Chronicles," *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 21–44.

²⁰ For the reasons explained by Paul S. Evans, this should come as no surprise. See Paul S. Evans, "The Function of the Chronicler's Temple Despoliation Notices in Light of Imperial Realities in Yehud," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 1 (2010): 31–47,

²¹ Paul S. Evans, "The Hezekiah–Sennacherib Narrative as Polyphonic Text," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 3 (2009): 335–358.

²² *Ibid.*, 335.

²³ Gary N. Knoppers, "Chronicles, First and Second Books of," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 625; Klein, "Chronicles, Book of 1–2," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1:994; Mathys, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 267.

²⁴ Marc Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 129–133.

²⁵ See comments by Gary N. Knoppers, "2 Chronicles," in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 658–59n.11. James G. Dunn is much less sympathetic, and concludes that this account "more likely . . . lacks any historical basis." Nevertheless, Dunn recognizes the importance this account would have had in the exilic community. See James G. Dunn, ed., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 310.

²⁶ Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, 133.

²⁷ See Horn and McCarter, "The Divided Monarchy," 190; Zevit, "2 Kings," in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 763n.17.

²⁸ For translations and discussions of such, see A. Leo Oppenheim, "Assyrian and Babylonian Historical Texts," in *The Ancient Near East, Volume I: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), 199–201; Mordechai Cogan, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," in *The Context of Scripture, Volume II: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 302–303.

²⁹ Cogan, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," 303.

³⁰ There are other discrepancies within the two sources, such as the outcome of the siege, with both sources claiming victory for the other side. It lies outside the scope of this paper, however, to discuss this issue. Suffice it to say that these discrepancies are not fatal to the historicity of the account in 2 Kings 18.

³¹ Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, "Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30, no. 3 (2006): 259-285.

³² Diana Edelman, "Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 4 (2008): 395-434.

³³ See Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, for a look at the history behind the worship and eventual suppression of "folk religion" in ancient Israel that would've included worship at these "high places," or other similar cultic sites.

³⁴ J. R. Porter, *The Illustrated Guide to the Bible* (New York, N. Y.: Metro Books, 2007), 104.

³⁵ Dietrich, "1 and 2 Kings," 234, emphasis in original.

³⁶ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev.; Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:57. For an excellent treatment on the Prophet's understanding of the Bible, see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, 2nd ed. (New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. 10–79.

³⁷ For more on the history behind the composition of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, see generally Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2008), 1–17; John L. Sorenson, "Mormon's Sources," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20, no. 2 (2011): 2–15; Richard E. Turley Jr. and William W. Slaughter, *How We Got the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2011); *How We Got the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2012).

³⁸ Latter-day Saints also need not be afraid of the tools and methods of critical scholarship, as three Latter-day Saint scholars have shown how said tools and methods can tremendously benefit our understanding of the Bible when conjoined with insights gained from Restoration scripture and revelation. See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Dana M. Pike, and David Rolph Seely, *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2009).

Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* is his magnum opus. In it he analyses the rise and fall of all 26 of the great world civilizations; whereas, previous historians had mainly concentrated on the West. Toynbee traces general themes focussing on the genesis, growth, and disintegration of civilisations. More »

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27. *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. *Chronicles* is the final book of the Hebrew Bible, concluding the third section of Ketuvim, the last section of the Jewish Tanakh. It was divided into two books in the Septuagint, the *Paralipomenon* (Greek: ἱστορίαι, lit. "things left on one side").[1] In Christian contexts it is therefore known as the *Books of Chronicles*, after the Latin name *chronikon* given to the text by the scholar Jerome. Biblical commentator C. J. Ball suggests that the division into two books introduced by the translators of the Septuagint "occurs in the most suitable place", [8] namely with the conclusion of David's reign as king and the initiation of Solomon's reign. God is active in history, and especially the history of Israel. The faithfulness or sins of individual kings are immediately rewarded or punished by God.