

## PUTTING THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES IN ITS PLACE

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**Abstract:** *The book of Chronicles is found in more than one position in ancient canons of Scripture (Hebrew and Greek). The different canonical placements reflect post-authorial evaluations of the book and its contents. Each position has its rationale and potentially contributes to the understanding of readers. There is nothing to indicate that any one position is the earliest or best. In particular, there is no proof that the Chronicler composed his work to sum up and conclude the OT canon. When Chronicles follows Kings, this alerts readers that Kings (and the preceding books) recount the history of Israel from the vantage point of the prophets. Chronicles at the head of the Writings suggests that this canonical section has a liturgical or wisdom orientation. Chronicles at the end of the Writings sums up the witness of the OT to God's purposes that culminate in the rebuilt temple (= palace) of God that itself points forward to the consummated kingdom of God.*

**Key words:** *Chronicles, Kings, canon, paratext, Writings*

Chronicles is one of a number of OT books that are found in alternative positions in different canons, other prominent examples being Ruth, Lamentations, and Daniel.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the particular canon, Chronicles is found in one of three places: in Greek canonical orders it follows Kings; in the Hebrew Bible it is either at the head of the Writings or at the end of the Writings; and, of course, the third alternative also makes Chronicles the final book in the OT canon.<sup>2</sup> The positioning of a canonical book relative to other books is by no means value-neutral and reflects a construal of the book by ancient readers. In other words, it preserves evidence of the early history of interpretation of the book. The alternate placements of the book of Chronicles reveal that the compilers of these canons viewed its theological and historical meanings in different ways.

In recent times, what I would view as excessive claims have been made about the significance of Chronicles as the last book in the OT, some scholars arguing that it was actually designed and written to close the canon.<sup>3</sup> My aim is to unsettle

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Jordan Scheetz, "Daniel's Position in the Tanach, the LXX-Vulgate, and the Protestant Canon," *OTE* 23 (2010): 178–93.

<sup>2</sup> For an earlier brief discussion of Chronicles in this position, see Gregory Goswell, "Having the Last Say: The End of the OT," *JETS* 58 (2015): 15–30, esp. 19–22.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Georg Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik* (BBB 93; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995); idem, "Die Bücher der Chronik," in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (ed. Erich Zenger; Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 1/1; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1995), 165–74; Hendrik J. Koorevaar, "Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluß des alttestamentlichen Kanons," *JETb* 11 (1997): 42–76. For a slightly updated English version, see idem, "Chronicles as the Intended Conclusion to the Old Testament Canon," in *The Shape of the Writings* (ed.

any developing consensus that Chronicles *must* be read as the last book of the OT (in preference to other positions).<sup>4</sup> According to this theory, the canonical positioning of Chronicles at the end of the Hebrew Bible is an example of an “authorial paratext,”<sup>5</sup> whereas I would argue that the ordering of the biblical books (Chronicles included) is a *post-authorial* interpretive frame generated by readers as they sought to grapple with the meaning of the various Bible books, and as a result placed Chronicles in what they thought was an appropriate canonical setting as a hermeneutical guide to other users. On that basis, I seek to show the possible rationale for this position and the other two positions given to Chronicles, arguing that each encapsulates exegetical insights that deserve consideration.

In critically scrutinizing the biblical paratext, there is no cause to set biblical author against pious reader as hermeneutical competitors or, just as unfortunate, to confuse and merge author and reader,<sup>6</sup> for the distinction between a biblical book and the paratextual frame of that book (e.g. book order or book titles) is the difference between text and commentary on the text. We are closer to the truth if we suggest that the frame provided by the canonical position of a book has the effect of highlighting (or downplaying) certain inherent features of the book. According to this way of looking at things, the early readers responsible for the canonical ordering of the biblical books *found* meaning in the text rather than *created* meaning.

## I. CHRONICLES IN THE SHADOW OF KINGS

Whether it was the intention or not, placing Chronicles after Kings in the Greek ordering of the OT books runs the danger of making Chronicles look like an addendum and supplement to Kings.<sup>7</sup> Reinforcing this way of viewing its contents,

Julius Steinberg and Timothy J. Stone with the assistance of Rachel Marie Stone; Siphrut 16; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 207–35.

<sup>4</sup> On this issue, see also Edmon L. Gallagher, “The End of the Bible? The Position of Chronicles in the Canon,” *TynBul* 65 (2014): 181–99.

<sup>5</sup> For this literary term, see Gérard Genette, “Introduction to the Paratext,” *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 266; idem, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8–9.

<sup>6</sup> In this regard, the influence of paratext is overstated by Roger Chartier, in whose theory later hands (e.g. editors, correctors, printers, and publishers) play such a large role that the author ends up making little effective contribution to the final meaning of the literary work. In this scheme, the original text is in danger of disappearing altogether, buried by a multitude of paratextual accretions; see *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind* (trans. Lydia G. Cochrane; Cambridge: Polity, 2014); cf. Alvin Kernan, *The Death of Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 102–3.

<sup>7</sup> For Greek orders, see Matthias Millard, “Die alten Septuaginta-Codizes und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des biblischen Kanons,” in *Formen des Kanons: Studien zu Ausprägungen des biblischen Kanons von der Antike bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (ed. Thomas Hieke; SBS 228; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2013), 40–61; Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 439–42; idem, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (rev. and exp. ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 268–73. These Greek orders are Jewish in origin (though preserved by the church), so that, for example, Melito, bishop of Sardis (ca. AD 170), puts Chronicles after Kings in a listing of OT books that he claims comes from “the East” (= Palestine; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.13–14). For comments on Melito’s list, see Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 37–38. Likewise, Sir 39:1 (dated to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) has this

the Greek title assigned to Chronicles was: “[The books] of the things left out” (Παραλειπομένων), the name apparently displaying early Greek-speaking readers’ conception of the work.<sup>8</sup> This title is reflected in the Latin naming *Liber Paralipomenon*. It refers to the fact that in a number of passages Chronicles supplements the account of the history in Samuel and Kings. Such a name is clearly misleading, for it obscures the fact that Chronicles also repeats much material and eliminates other material from Samuel and Kings and, more importantly, it fails to do justice to the Chronicler’s own positive purpose in writing, which determined his selection and ordering of material. No doubt the influence of this misnomer in the Greek Bible and the Vulgate on the Christian church has contributed significantly to the subsequent neglect of this book until comparatively recent times. Chronicles has had to live in the shadow of Kings until the renaissance of Chronicles scholarship in the 1970s led by the likes of Roddy Braun, H. G. M. Williamson, Sara Japhet and Raymond Dillard.

The fact that only the Judean line of kings is traced might confirm the reader in the impression of Chronicles as an appendix to the story given wider scope in Kings with its coordinated history of both kingdoms. In line with this estimate of Chronicles, the title given in Codex Alexandrinus (both in the inscriptions and the subscriptions of the divided book) is “the things omitted regarding the kings of Judah” (Παραλειπομένων [των] βασιλέων Ιουδα),<sup>9</sup> and those texts of the Peshitta that follow Alexandrinus have as their inscription: “the book of Chronicles, namely, the book remembering the days of the kings of Judah”.<sup>10</sup> However, another ancient title given to the book in the Babylonian Talmud is “the book of the genealogies” (ספר יוחסי),<sup>11</sup> a name that draws attention to the extensive genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9 as a distinctive feature of the book. These chapters serve as an introduction to a story that includes all twelve tribes.<sup>12</sup> It would be a mistake to think that the Chronicler was not interested in the North (or even anti-North), for North-South interchanges are stressed,<sup>13</sup> namely when the northerners come south to worship and when reforms by Judean kings include tribal areas in the north (e.g. 2 Chr 11:13–17; 15:8–15; 19:4). When the resettlement is described in 1 Chr 9:2–3,

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sequence: law, wisdom, and prophecies, an order that evidently reflects the arrangement of the biblical books in the most common ordering of the Septuagint; see Siegfried Kreuzer, “Papyrus 967: Its Significance for Codex Formation, Textual History, and Canon History,” in idem, *The Bible in Greek: Translation, Transmission, and Theology of the Septuagint* (SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies 63; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 266–69.

<sup>8</sup> Melito uses the title in his listing of OT books.

<sup>9</sup> A. Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelsiftung, 1935; two volumes in one 1979), 752, 811, 873.

<sup>10</sup> W. E. Barnes, *An Apparatus Criticus to Chronicles in the Peshitta Version with a Discussion of the Value of Codex Ambrosianus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 1; W. Bacher, “Der Name der Bücher der Chronik in der Septuaginta,” *ZAW* 15 (1895): 306–7.

<sup>11</sup> B. Pesah. 62b.

<sup>12</sup> Rodney K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Sheffield: Almond, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> Roddy L. Braun, “A Reconsideration of the Chronicler’s Attitude toward the North,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 59–62.

Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh are listed, that is, the two southern tribes together with two larger (representative) northern tribes (cf. their representative role in 2 Chr 15:9; 30:1; 31:1; 34:9).<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with the Chronicler's desire to show that the North is an authentic component of Israel. As noted by Kalimi, "The city [of Jerusalem] was the center of the whole nation, of the northern as well as of the southern tribes."<sup>15</sup> Although the Chronicler organizes and presents the history of God's people quite differently than the author of Kings, the contiguity of Kings and Chronicles in the Greek Bible suggests their compatibility and also supports the idea that Chronicles is not to be seen simply as a history of the Southern Kingdom.

If we take for granted that Chronicles draws upon the books of Samuel and Kings,<sup>16</sup> and that, given its placement after Kings, it is meant to be read in conjunction with Kings (but not overshadowed by it), what effect might familiarity with Chronicles have on the reading of Kings? My suggestion is that one effect is to alert the reader to the presence in the book of Kings of significant authority figures *besides* the kings themselves, namely the prophets.<sup>17</sup> The book of Kings is the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> books of Kingdoms in the Septuagint (βασιλείων) and Vulgate (*Regorum*), corresponding to the Hebrew title מלכים ("Kings"). In the 1518 folio edition of the Bomberg Rabbinical Bible the book is not divided but there is a marginal note (in Hebrew) at 2 Kings 1: "Here the Greeks and Latins begin the Fourth Book of Kings." In the quarto edition of 1521, there is at 2 Kings 1 the marginal note "Book Four."<sup>18</sup> The evident relation of Samuel and Kings is signaled in the Septuagint, and following that, the Latin Bible, by their counting Samuel and Kings as four books of "Kingdoms." The change from "Kingdoms" to "Kings" is found in Vulgate editions (*Liber Regum tertius et quartus*) and has been followed by most English versions. In the first two chapters, aged David dies (1 Kgs 1:1: "Now King David was old, gone in years"),<sup>19</sup> so that Kings is largely occupied with the reigns

<sup>14</sup> The references are provided by Peter B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 143 and Pancratius C. Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (SSN 52; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 121. The list in 1 Chr 9:2–17 appears to depend on material from Nehemiah 11; see Isaac Kalimi, *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (SSN 46; Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2005), 90–92.

<sup>15</sup> Kalimi, *Ancient Israelite Historian*, 91 (addition mine).

<sup>16</sup> In Chronicles, reference is made to "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chr 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32) and "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chr 27:7; 35:27; 36:8). It is not certain, however, that either designation refers to the canonical book of Kings.

<sup>17</sup> For possible use of prophetic traditions and sources in Kings, see the survey of recent scholarship by Alison L. Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings: The Davidic Prototype in Deuteronomistic Poetics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 42–45.

<sup>18</sup> G. F. Moore, "The Vulgate Chapters and Numbered Verses in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Canon and Masorah of the Hebrew Bible: An Introductory Reader* (ed. Sid Z. Leiman; New York: Ktav, 1974), 816.

<sup>19</sup> Origen (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25) transliterates the Hebrew title Οὐραμέλχ Δαβίδ, i.e. the first two words of 1 Kgs 1:1 "and King David..." (וְיָדָה לְדָוִד) but then translates it: "that is, the kingdom of David" (ὅπερ ἐστὶ βασιλεία Δαβίδ) (PG 20.581). Jerome has *malachim* (*Prologus Galeatus*) (PL 28.598) and Epiphanius *δμαλαχεί* (construct plural), which reflect the MT title; see H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Appendix Containing the Letter of Aristaeus* (ed. H. St. J. Thackeray; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 198.

of the kings of Judah and Israel in the post-David era. In short, the traditional titular designations of the book place the focus entirely on the institution of kingship.

The division of Kings in the Septuagint (and that of the Vulgate following it) is at 2 Kgs 1:1 (“After the death of Ahab”). This evil king is described in superlative terms (1 Kgs 16:30: “Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all that were before him”), with this damning evaluation of Ahab at least in part due to the rejection and persecution of prophets during his reign (1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 19:10, 14; 2 Kgs 9:7), so that after the death of the *worst* Northern king there is perhaps hope for the nation. On that basis, it may be viewed as a favorable turning point.<sup>20</sup> These paratextual features of Kings construe the book(s) as chronicling the reigns of successive kings,<sup>21</sup> yet there is also a series of named prophets (e.g. Nathan, Gad, Abijah), and the book may be analyzed in terms of the repeated pattern of confrontations between kings and prophets.<sup>22</sup> The central positioning of and space devoted to the Elijah–Elisha narratives (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 13) highlights their importance within the book as a whole. The placement of Joshua–Kings under the heading “Former Prophets” (נביאים ראשונים) goes some way toward redressing the imbalance. The transition between 1 Kings and 2 Kings is also close to the point where the prophetic succession of Elijah to Elisha is effected (2 Kings 2).<sup>23</sup> In other words, Kings depicts a succession of kings and a succession of prophets. The expression found in 2 Macc 2:13, “the books about kings and prophets” (τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ προφητῶν βιβλία), probably refers to Samuel and Kings. All in all, a more apt title for Kings would be “Kings and Prophets.”<sup>24</sup>

This way of looking at Kings is assisted and reinforced by Chronicles (following straight after it in the Greek Bible). The Chronicler often refers to (now lost) works by prophets and seers (e.g. 1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 9:29),<sup>25</sup> suggesting that the

<sup>20</sup> T. R. Hobbs, “2 Kings 1 and 2: Their Unity and Purpose,” *Sciences Religieuses*/SR 13 (1984): 334.

<sup>21</sup> The titles of supplementary books alluded to confirm such an orientation, e.g. “Book of the Acts [דברי] of Solomon” (1 Kgs 11:41), “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” (1 Kgs 14:19), “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (2 Kgs 8:23).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Victor H. Matthews, “Kings of Israel: A Question of Crime and Punishment,” in *SBL 1988 Seminar Papers* (ed. David J. Hull; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 517–26.

<sup>23</sup> R. P. Carroll, “The Elijah–Elisha Sagas: Some Remarks on Prophetic Succession in Ancient Israel,” *VT* 19 (1969): 400–15.

<sup>24</sup> A similar title is used by A. F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings: A Late Ninth Century Document (1 Samuel 1–2 Kings 10)* (CBQMS 17; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1986).

<sup>25</sup> For other “lost books” mentioned in the Bible, see Gregory Goswell, “Titles without Texts: What the Lost Books of the Bible Tell Us about the Books We Have,” *Colloq* 41 (2009): 73–93. For the issue of lost books generally, see Stuart Kelly, *The Book of Lost Books: An Incomplete History of All the Great Books You’ll Never Read* (new exp. ed.; Edinburgh: Polygon, 2010). As noted by Kelly, “The entire history of literature was also the history of the loss of literature” (p. xvii). We cannot know, of course, just how much of this “phantom library” has been lost, because our knowledge of lost books depends upon the historical vagaries of whether any authors refer to these works and whether these literary references themselves have been preserved for posterity. For more on the Chronicler’s use of lost prophetic works, see Noel K. Weeks, *Sources and Authors: Assumptions in the Study of Hebrew Bible Narrative* (Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 12; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011), 218–30.

writing of history is viewed by the Chronicler as an essentially prophetic activity.<sup>26</sup> The role of prophets as God-appointed critics of kings takes the form of the chronicling of their reigns. Kings features a *series* of prophets as well as a succession of kings; however, what is only implicit in Kings—that history is told from a prophetic viewpoint—becomes explicit in Chronicles. In effect, the Chronicler depicts prophets as “men of letters.”<sup>27</sup> This is not all that dissimilar to the viewpoint of Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 1.38–41) who says, “From the death of Moses until Artaxerxes, the king of Persia succeeding Xerxes, the prophets after Moses recorded the events of their own times in thirteen books.” His tally of thirteen historical books must include books like Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, all of which were written (according to Josephus) by prophets.

Given the numerous references to prophetic works in Chronicles (“Records of the seer Samuel,” etc.), it comes as no surprise that the book adopts (in most instances) a critical stance toward the Judean kings, though the prophetic works are mainly mentioned in relation to the good kings who enjoyed prophetic support and guidance.<sup>28</sup> An effect of noting these prophetic works (e.g. 1 Chr 29:29) is to highlight the role played by Samuel (11:3), Nathan (chap. 17), and Gad (chap. 21) at three crucial stages of David’s reign. Likewise, the reference at 2 Chr 9:29 to “the records of Nathan the prophet” and “the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite,” brackets the reign of Solomon within prophetic boundaries, namely between Nathan, who was involved in his accession (cf. 1 Kings 1), and Ahijah, who prophesied of the division of the kingdom on his death (cf. 2 Chr 10:15). The notices suggest that we are not to interpret the Chronicler’s account as an attempt to whitewash or idealize these two kings.<sup>29</sup> The reign of Rehoboam was chronicled by Shemaiah (2 Chr 12:15). It was this prophet who prevented Rehoboam from an attempt to reclaim the North by military force (11:2–4) and who humbled him at the time of the invasion of Shishak (12:5–8). Jehu son of Hanani criticised Jehoshaphat for joint military ventures with the Omride dynasty (19:2–3), and his intervention is highlighted by the notice that the full account of Jehoshaphat’s reign can be found in “the records of Jehu son of Hanani” (20:34). Isaiah’s vision included a fuller account of Hezekiah’s reign (32:32) in which reign the prophet played a significant part (32:20). Finally, a lost book called “the laments” (הקינות) is said to contain Jeremiah’s lament for Josiah (2 Chr 35:25), and repeated mention is made of Jeremiah in the final chapter of 2 Chronicles (36:12, 21, 22).

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Formation of the Hebrew Canon: Isaiah as a Test Case,” in *The Canon Debate* (ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 55–56; Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation*, 130–32.

<sup>27</sup> Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 230.

<sup>28</sup> This is a point made by D. A. Glatt-Gilad, “Regnal Formulae as an Historiographic Device in the Book of Chronicles,” *RB* 108 (2001): 200.

<sup>29</sup> See Tomotoshi Sugimoto, “Chronicles as Independent Literature,” *JSOT* 55 (1992): 65–67; Gary N. Knoppers, “Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles,” *Bib* 76 (1995): 449–70.

As well, some Levites are described as giving messages under inspiration (e.g. 2 Chr 15:1–8; 20:14–17), so that there is the merging of prophecy and preaching, and this fits with the homiletical style of much of Chronicles, in which there is an attempt to explain the experiencing of weal and woe by the various kings.<sup>30</sup> The concept of prophecy is expanded to include the recording of the nation's past. The Chronicler presumably viewed his own work in light of this prophetic tradition as an exhortation using incidents in earlier Israelite history as moral examples in his extended historical sermon. If Kings is read in the same light, it becomes plain that it also is meant to be understood as drawing lessons from history, and scrutiny of 2 Kings 17 confirms that this is a proper reading of the book (e.g. 17:13: "Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, ...").

## II. CHRONICLES OPENING THE WRITINGS

In the oldest of the extant medieval codices (i.e. Aleppo and Leningrad), Chronicles is situated at the head of the Writings,<sup>31</sup> though the sequence with Chronicles at the end of the Writings became established in the printed editions.<sup>32</sup> What became the standard order is: the group of "three great writings,"<sup>33</sup> namely Psalms, Job, and Proverbs;<sup>34</sup> then a group of five shorter works, *Megillot* ("scrolls"); and finally Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles. This third canonical grouping of books is far more diverse than either Torah or Prophets, but it achieved a certain measure of cohesion through careful arrangement of parts into three more-or-less coherent subunits (as set out above). Either positioning of Chronicles could be justified,<sup>35</sup> for Chronicles as a comprehensive history (beginning with Adam) makes an appropriate closure for the whole canon which begins with Genesis, while its obvious similarities to Kings (upon which it draws), means that at the beginning of Writings it helps to bridge Prophets and Writings.

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<sup>30</sup> This is a view promoted by Gerhard von Rad "The Levitical Sermon in I and II Chronicles," in idem, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (London: SCM, 1966), 267–80; cf. W. M. Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy in the Books of Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Historian* (ed. M. Patrick Graham et al.; JSOTSup 238; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 204–24.

<sup>31</sup> *The Aleppo Codex: Part One: Plates* (ed. Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976); *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (ed. David Noel Freedman et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). The same tradition is found in the medieval treatise *Adath Deborim* by Joseph of Constantinople (AD 1207), which says that this canonical position is to be favored and represents the Western (Palestinian) practice. For comments on the treatise, see Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985), 201–204.

<sup>32</sup> See the tables of Hebrew orders provided by L. B. Wolfenson, "Implications of the Place of the Book of Ruth in Editions, Manuscripts, and Canon of the Old Testament," *HUCA* 1 (1924): 151–78, esp. 160–61; Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon*, 452–64; Michèle Dukan, *La Bible hébraïque: Les codices copiés en Orient et dans la zone séfaraïte avant 1280* (Bibliologia 22; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 65–70, with a table on p. 67; Peter Brandt, *Endgestalten des Kanons: Das Arrangement der Schriften Israels in der jüdischen und christlichen Bibel* (BBB 131; Berlin: Philo, 2001), 148–55.

<sup>33</sup> B. t. Ber. 57b.

<sup>34</sup> In all the varying sequences for Writings, Psalms, Job, and Proverbs are always found together, either in that order or as Psalms-Proverbs-Job.

<sup>35</sup> According to Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 2.

Chronicles at the beginning of the Writings, together with Ezra-Nehemiah at the end, form an envelope around the Writings, providing a unifying framework for the books enclosed by them. According to D. N. Freedman,<sup>36</sup> the major themes and emphases in the Chronicler's work are exemplified in the other associated works. In other words, Chronicles sets the agenda of the Writings as a canonical unit. David and Solomon are prominent in Chronicles (David as a founder of the Jerusalem cult and Solomon as a wisdom figure), and subsequently there is in the Writings a concentration of works connected with or attributed to these two figures.<sup>37</sup> The Psalter is closely connected to David. For example, 73 psalmic titles forge a direct link to David ("Of David" [לְדָוִד]), probably as author, given the longer and more specific title of Psalm 18, making David himself the chief Psalmist.<sup>38</sup> There is psalmic material in Chronicles, most notably in 1 Chronicles 16 (the account of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem), which shows close relation to Psalms 96, 105, and 106. In turn, Chronicles gives the poetic pieces of the Psalter a liturgical setting in the musical cult organized by David (cf. 1 Chronicles 23–26; 2 Chr 7:6; 23:18; 29:25–30; 35:15), and the various Asaphite and Korahite psalmic titles in the Psalter help to cement such a connection (e.g. Psalms 42, 44).<sup>39</sup> Within Book V of the Psalter, the model set by David is of one whose chief concern is to properly honor the divine king, whose rule over Israel is symbolized by the ark (132:1–10). A certain type of Davidism is in view at the end of the Psalter, one in which David is a model of devotion to God and to what the temple and Zion represent (God's palace and capital in that order), namely this "David" embodies the implied ethic of loyal citizenship in God's kingdom.<sup>40</sup> The psalms that follow Psalm 132 carry on the Zion focus and promote an ideal of Israel unified around Zion (133:1–3; 134:3; cf. 122:1–4),<sup>41</sup> much like the Chronicler, who desires all the Israelite tribes to be united in worship at Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> There is, therefore, a remarkable

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<sup>36</sup> David Noel Freedman, *The Unity of the Hebrew Bible* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 77–78, 86–91; idem, "The Symmetry of the Hebrew Bible," *ST* 46 (1992): 96.

<sup>37</sup> For a reading of the Writings from a wisdom perspective ("die weisheitlich-schriftgelehrte Sichtweise"), see Julius Steinberg, *Die Ketuvim: ihr Aufbau und ihre Botschaft* (BBB 152; Hamburg: Philo, 2006), 469–84. Hendrik J. Koorevaar places this canonical section under the heading "Wisdom Canon" (*Weisheitskanon*), see "The Exile and Return Model: A Proposal for the Original Macrostructure of the Hebrew Canon," *JETS* 57 (2014): 501–12, esp. 503.

<sup>38</sup> J. Stanley McIvor, *The Targum of Chronicles: Translated, with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (Aramaic Bible 19; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 13: "the position of Chronicles just before Psalms in the St. Petersburg Codex [= Leningrad B19a] may have been because Chronicles, in which David plays such a leading role, was regarded as a good introduction to the book attributed to him" (addition mine).

<sup>39</sup> See James Luther Mays, "The David of the Psalms," *Int* 40 (1986): 149–51.

<sup>40</sup> For fuller argumentation, see Gregory Goswell, "The Non-Messianic Psalter of Gerald H. Wilson," *VT* 66 (2016): 524–41.

<sup>41</sup> Jinkyu Kim also notes the Zion motif linking Psalms 132–134; see "The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV–V," *WTJ* 70 (2008): 156.

<sup>42</sup> As noted by Philip E. Satterthwaite, "Zion in the Songs of Ascent," in *Zion, City of Our God* (ed. R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 127–28, and K. Seybold, "Die Redaktion der Wallfahrtspsalmen," *ZAW* 91 (1979): 247–68. According to Adele Berlin, the union of "brothers" in Ps 133:1 is "a metaphor for an undivided kingdom. The psalm expresses a hope for the reunification of

convergence of the theology of the book of Chronicles with that of the final form of the Psalter.

At the end of the Writings, in Ezra-Nehemiah, the figure of David is recalled a number of times in his role as organizer of cultic worship (Ezra 3:10; 8:20; Neh 11:23; 12:24, 36, 45, 46) and Solomon his son once joins him in the same role (Neh 12:45; cf. 2 Chr 8:14). Certain prominent architectural features of the city act as memorials of David as a great figure of the past who had close connections with Jerusalem (Neh 3:15–16; 12:37), part of which is called “the city of David,” but they do not imply that there is a significant future for his descendants. References to David as the patron of the temple liturgy (Neh 12:45–46) and the inventor of musical instruments used in worship probably explain the attribution of prophetic status to him (Neh 12:36 [“the man of God”]; cf. Amos 6:5; 1 Chr 23:5; 2 Chr 7:6), for in Chronicles the performance of cultic musical duties is viewed as a type of prophesying (e.g. 1 Chr 25:1–3). However, none of these references to David in Ezra-Nehemiah has any messianic coloring.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, nothing in 2 Chronicles 36 suggests an expectation of the reestablishment of Davidic rule;<sup>44</sup> rather, the glowing portrayal of Cyrus confirms the termination of the Davidic dynasty, with the Persian king, in effect, substituting for David as world ruler and temple-builder (36:22–23; cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1).<sup>45</sup> The new beginning for God’s people made possible by the decree of Cyrus does not seem to include the restoration of the Davidic house. The Chronicler’s focus lies elsewhere. In this way, the frame provided by Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah sets the tone for the Writings as a whole, which appears to have little interest in the future of the ruling house of David.

The book of Proverbs is attributed to Solomon as author or collector or both (Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1). The book of Job as a major wisdom book is naturally enough attracted to the side of Proverbs (and usually precedes it).<sup>46</sup> It is regularly said that the five books that make up the *Megillot* are grouped together for liturgical reasons, due to their public reading at the five main festivals, but this rationale has recently

the north and south with Jerusalem as the capital of a united kingdom” (“On the Interpretation of Psalm 133,” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* [ed. Elaine R. Follis; JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987], 142).

<sup>43</sup> Gregory Goswell, “The Absence of a Davidic Hope in Ezra-Nehemiah,” *TrinJ* 33 (2012): 19–31.

<sup>44</sup> Donald F. Murray, “Dynasty, People, and the Future: The Message of Chronicles,” *JSOT* 58 (1993): 71–92.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 153–55, 178; James T. Sparks, *The Chronicler’s Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1–9* (SBL Academia Biblica 28; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 215–49, 365; Joachim Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (trans. David E. Green; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 82: “The theocratically inclined Chronicler reveres David and Solomon as founders of the cult.” For a different view, see Jozef Tiño, *King and Temple in Chronicles: A Contextual Approach to their Relations* (FRLANT 234; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010). Tiño does not, however, take into consideration the final two verses of Chronicles because of his uncertainty about their originality (pp. 73, 75).

<sup>46</sup> For Job as a wisdom book, see Lindsay Wilson, *Job* (IHOOTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 291–301. According to Wilson, “The book of Job is best understood as a protest, not against Proverbs, but against a misunderstanding of Proverbs” (p. 222). That is certainly a major *canonical* function of the book, whether or not the author of Job ever thought in such terms.

been questioned by Timothy J. Stone, who argues that the process was the reverse, namely it was due to the five-book grouping that Ruth, Song of Songs, and Lamentations in particular began to be read at feasts.<sup>47</sup> Certainly, the association of Ruth with Weeks and Song of Songs with Passover are not strong and could be viewed as contrived. However, the (later) liturgical character of the *Megillot* makes it an appropriate mini-collection in a section beginning with Chronicles, which has a cultic focus. The connection of the book of Ruth with David is explicit, for Ruth and Boaz are designated great-grandparents of David (Ruth 4:18–22), though its placement after Proverbs 31 (e.g. in the Leningrad Codex) suggests that the compilers of the Hebrew canon mainly had in mind the model of good behavior provided by the heroine (with the linking phrase “woman of worth” [אשת חיל] found in Ruth 3:11 and Prov 31:10). Its position following Proverbs invites a wisdom reading of the story of loyal and energetic Ruth.<sup>48</sup>

Within the cycle of love songs that make up Song of Songs, Solomon is referred to in the superscription (1:1: “which is Solomon’s” [לשלמה אשר]), in a simile (1:5: “like the curtains of Solomon”), in a mention of his vineyard (8:11–12), and more extensively in a description of his litter on the day of his wedding (3:6–11). Solomon is probably not, however, the lover depicted in the poems, despite his many wives (cf. 1 Kgs 11:1–3). Lamentations echoes the prominence given to the fate of Jerusalem in Chronicles and a further intertextual link is the role of Jeremiah as one who composed laments (cf. 2 Chr 35:25). The so-called “king fiction” in Ecclesiastes clearly alludes to Solomon (1:1, 12, 16; 2:3–9), but most scholars think that the connection is discarded after 2:26. Eric Christianson disputes the common supposition that the Solomonic “guise” is limited to the first two chapters of the book,<sup>49</sup> showing that the book as a whole can be understood as written from a Solomonic perspective. Y. V. Koh also argues for “the pervasiveness of the royal voice” throughout the book but, unlike Christianson, does not view the book as aimed at debunking the wisdom of Qoheleth.<sup>50</sup> This interpretation fits the positive portrayal of Solomon in Chronicles at the head of the Writings (esp. 2 Chronicles 9).<sup>51</sup> In addition, as explained by Koh, “Solomon’s reputation as Israel’s wise king *par excellence* would lend support and authority to Qoheleth’s pessimistic conclusions,”<sup>52</sup> since he had the wisdom and wealth to do a thorough investigation.

<sup>47</sup> *The Compilational History of the Megilloth: Canon, Contoured Intertextuality and Meaning in the Writings* (FAT II/59; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 105–11.

<sup>48</sup> See Gregory Goswell, “Is Ruth also among the Wise?,” in *Exploring Old Testament Wisdom: Literature and Themes* (ed. David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson; London: Apollos, 2016), 115–33.

<sup>49</sup> *A Time to Tell: Narrative Strategies in Ecclesiastes* (JSOTSup 280; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), chap. 6; cf. Tremper Longman III, “Qoheleth as Solomon: ‘For What Can Anyone Who Comes after the King Do?’,” in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually* (ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes; LHBOTS 587; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 42–56.

<sup>50</sup> *Royal Autobiography in the Book of Qoheleth* (BZAW 369; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 71.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 136.

<sup>52</sup> Koh, *Royal Autobiography*, 192.

Daniel is in its position because of the “court tales” (Daniel 1–6) that connect with other stories about Jewish officials serving the Persian court in the books Esther and Ezra-Nehemiah. Consistent with it being in a canonical section headed by Chronicles, the theme of the temple forms an important substratum in the stories and visions of Daniel, starting from the opening scene of the book (1:1–2; cf. 5:1–4; 8:11; 9:24–27).<sup>53</sup> As well, in line with a number of books in the Writings, there are clear wisdom connections in Daniel such as: Daniel himself is instructed in Babylonian wisdom (1:3–5, 20) and wisdom is prominent among his virtues (e.g. 5:11). Daniel’s God-fearing behavior shows what true wisdom involves in the difficult situation of a foreign court. Daniel is rewarded and placed over the wise men (2:48), and the book as a whole has a wisdom frame (1:4, 17; 11:33, 35; 12:3, 10).<sup>54</sup> The wisdom connections of the book of Esther have at times been exaggerated,<sup>55</sup> but do not need to be denied,<sup>56</sup> with Queen Esther modelling virtues such as courage, loyalty, shrewdness, and discretion. By contrast, Ahasuerus with his drinking bouts illustrates the warning in Proverbs about drunkenness (cf. Prov 20:1–2; 31:4–5), and wicked Haman dies the death of a fool (cf. Prov 16:18; 26:27).<sup>57</sup> All in all, Chronicles at the head of the Writings makes good sense, for it provides a theological introduction for a canonical unit whose works have liturgical and/or wisdom themes, and the effect of the book of Chronicles in this position is to highlight these themes.

### III. CHRONICLES ENDING THE WRITINGS

According to the Babylonian Talmud (B. Bat. 14b),<sup>58</sup> Chronicles is placed after Ezra-Nehemiah and closes the Writings,<sup>59</sup> and hence comes at the end of the tripartite Hebrew Bible (Tanak). Irrespective of whether or not it was the intention of the biblical author, Chronicles in final position can be understood as assisting to integrate the canonical sections Torah and Prophets into an overall theological

<sup>53</sup> For details of what is, in fact, a pervasive theme in Daniel, see Gregory Goswell, “The Temple Theme in the Book of Daniel,” *JETS* 55 (2012): 509–20.

<sup>54</sup> As suggested by James E. Miller, “The Redaction of Daniel,” *JSOT* 52 (1991): 121, 122.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Shemaryahu Talmon, “‘Wisdom’ in the Book of Esther,” *VT* 13 (1963): 419–55, who views it as a historicized wisdom tale. See the criticisms of Talmon by J. L. Crenshaw, “Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon ‘Historical’ Literature,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 129–42, esp. 140–42, and by Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 142–43.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. note the consulting of (wise?) counsellors in Esth 1:13 and 6:13.

<sup>57</sup> As noted by Timothy S. Laniak, “Esther’s *Volkecentrism* and the Reframing of Post-Exilic Judaism,” in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research* (ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Leonard J. Greenspoon; *JSOTSup* 380; London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 83.

<sup>58</sup> For the text, see *Baba Bathra* (Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud; ed. I. Epstein; New Edition in Two Volumes I; London: Soncino, 1976). Beckwith (*Old Testament Canon*, 122–27) goes as far as to argue that B. Bat. 14b represents the oldest order of the Hagiographa; cf. Julio Trebolle Barrera, *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 160–61, 166; Steins, *Abschlussphänomen*, 515.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. the list of books found in the Mishnah (m. Yoma 1:6): “Job and Ezra-(Nehemiah) and Chronicles.”

conception.<sup>60</sup> Features that support such a role are the frequent references in Chronicles to the “law” (e.g. 2 Chr 6:16; cf. 1 Kgs 8:25)<sup>61</sup> and the way the Chronicler makes use of prophetic doctrines (e.g. 2 Chr 16:9; cf. Zech 4:10).<sup>62</sup> As well, it is highly appropriate as the last book of the Tanak, seeing that it “book-ends” the biblical canon with Genesis and reviews the entire sweep of world history starting with Adam (1 Chr 1:1).<sup>63</sup> The title “Chronicles” (Vulgate: *Liber Chronicorum*) amounts to the same meaning as the usual Hebrew title ספר דברי הימים (“the book of the events/accounts of the days”),<sup>64</sup> with this generic title explained by the fact that the book recounts a history that stretches from Adam to the establishment of the Persian Empire (2 Chr 36:20). In this arrangement, the first and last books of the biblical canon both end with the prospect of a divinely-enabled going-up to the land (with the same Hebrew roots עלה and פקד appearing in Gen 50:24–25 and 2 Chr 36:23).<sup>65</sup> In a slight variation on this way of looking at things, Hendrick Koorevaar relates the opening of Chronicles to Genesis and the close of Chronicles to Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 1:2 [= 2 Chr 36:23]), with the Chronicler writing to summarize and seal the OT canon.<sup>66</sup> Koorevaar sees the Chronicler as aiming to summarize the whole biblical presentation by highlighting the two main themes of the message of the OT, namely the rule of the Davidic dynasty over the world and the temple as the locus of universal worship.<sup>67</sup> I would collapse these two Chronicist themes into one, for in Chronicles the primary role of the Davidic kings is to provide for the temple cultus, so that the ultimate concern of the Chronicler is the establishment of God’s worldwide rule, with the temple (= palace [היכל]) of God as a portent of his final kingdom.<sup>68</sup>

*Adath Deborim* uses an incipit as an alternative title אנוש שת אדם (“Adam, Seth, Enosh”), these being the three words that make up 1 Chr 1:1. This title alerts

<sup>60</sup> Steins, *Abschlussphänomen*, 515; idem, “Torabindung und Kanonabschluss: Zur Entstehung und kanonischen Funktion der Chronikbücher,” in *Die Tora als Kanon für Juden und Christen* (ed. E. Zenger; HBS 10; Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 245–47 (ET recently provided in Steinberg et al., ed., *Shape of the Writings*, 237–80). Steins quotes with approval comments to the same effect by P. R. Ackroyd, “The Theology of the Chronicler,” in idem, *The Chronicler in His Age* (JSOTSup 101; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 280; and by William Johnstone, “Which is the Best Commentary? 11. The Chronicler’s Work,” *ExpT* 102 (1990): 10.

<sup>61</sup> See the listing provided by Steins, “Torabindung und Kanonabschluss,” 225–35.

<sup>62</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, “History,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture; Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SJF* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 34–35.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, 159.

<sup>64</sup> The title is attested by Origen (Δαβρηγίαμεν) and Jerome (*Dabre Ajamin*), see David Goodblatt, “Audet’s ‘Hebrew-Aramaic’ List of the Books of the OT Revisited,” *JBL* 101 (1982): 78.

<sup>65</sup> As pointed out by Nahum Sarna, “Bible,” *EncJud* (2007?), 3.582.

<sup>66</sup> “Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluss,” 66–67. Koorevaar uses the term “Siegefunktion” (sealing function).

<sup>67</sup> “Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluss,” 55–59.

<sup>68</sup> *Pace* Stephen G. Dempster, who reads the OT canon ending with Chronicles through a “Davidic lens” (“Geography and Genealogy, Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* [ed. Scott J. Hafemann; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 82). For a reading of Chronicles that recognizes the primacy of God’s kingship, see Steven Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (LHBOTS 442; New York: T&T Clark International, 2007), 125–27.

the reader to the universal history provided in this work. In line with this understanding, Jerome in his introduction to Chronicles in the Vulgate, says: “All the teaching of Scripture is contained in this book” (*quod omnis eruditio Scripturarum in hoc libro continetur*).<sup>69</sup> Jerome suggested that a fitting title would be “a chronicle of the whole of sacred history” (*χρονικόν totius divinae historiae*), expressive of the universal scope of the Chronicler’s work (*Prologus Galeatus*).<sup>70</sup> It may have been Jerome’s influence that caused “Chronicles” to be selected as a title.<sup>71</sup> Jerome does not, however, show any knowledge of Chronicles as the last book in the OT, and so his evaluation of Chronicles does not rest on it being placed in last position in the canon. In fact, he reports that the “order” (*ordo*) of the Hagiographa known to him lists the last books as Daniel, Chronicles, Ezra(-Nehemiah), and Esther.<sup>72</sup>

Although it is not usually noticed, the arguments just rehearsed work equally well if Chronicles is placed after Genesis–Kings, and, for that matter, they function just as well if Chronicles is put at the start of the Writings, and so the logic cannot be accepted as decisive for *the necessity* of placing Chronicles as the last book of the OT. If placed after Kings, Chronicles can be understood as recapitulating OT history and providing a parallel to the “Primary History” (Genesis through Kings), before exilic and post-exilic developments are plotted in Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. The positing of an *inclusio* involving elements from Genesis 50 and 2 Chronicles 36 still makes sense, in this case enclosing the intervening books viewed as histories. The integrating function of Chronicles is just as effective if placed at the start of the Writings, forming a theological bridge between Prophets and Writings. As well, if Chronicles is placed at the beginning of the Writings, leaving Ezra-Nehemiah in final place, the *inclusio* around the whole Bible is still intact, for Gen 50:24–25 is matched by the opening of the alternate final book of the Tanak (Ezra 1:2 [= 2 Chr 36:23]). As well, the prayer of Nehemiah 9 provides a final survey and summing up of OT history (beginning with creation),<sup>73</sup> and on that basis, there is a still an *inclusio* involving Genesis, so that this confirms that Ezra-Nehemiah is also a suitable ending for the OT.

Recently, however, an even bolder claim has been made concerning the position of Chronicles at the end of some OT canons. While admitting its hypothetical

<sup>69</sup> *Praefationes Sancti Hieronymi in Liber Paralipomenon*; see *Biblia Sacra, Iuxta Latinam Vulgatam Versionem*, Vol. 7: *Verba Dierum* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1948), 9.

<sup>70</sup> PL 28.599.

<sup>71</sup> The suggestion is that of Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1). For an extensive discussion, see Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey Jr., “Omitted and Remaining Matters: On the Names given to the Book of Chronicles in Antiquity,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 227–43.

<sup>72</sup> PL 28.599. There are two other listings of the biblical books provided by Jerome, but Chronicles is never the last book; see *Epist.* 53.8 (Esther appears before Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah) and *Epist.* 107.12 (providing a suggested didactic reading program in which Chronicles follows Kings; PL 22.876–877). For these variations, see Jay Braverman, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible* (CBQMS 7; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1978), 48–49.

<sup>73</sup> As recently affirmed by Vincent K. H. Ooi, *Scripture and Its Readers: Readings of Israel’s Story in Nehemiah 9, Ezekiel 20, and Acts 7* (JTISup 10; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 57–58.

nature,<sup>74</sup> Georg Steins claims that Chronicles had an important role in the formation of the Writings as a third canonical section and was purposely composed as a conclusion to the Writings.<sup>75</sup> Along similar lines, Koorevaar views the Chronicler as writing with the motive and intention to close the canon.<sup>76</sup> The thesis of Steins rests on several foundations, but each is less solid than he thinks: (1) an early second-century BC dating for Chronicles; (2) his classification of Chronicles as “rewritten Bible” (cf. certain Qumran documents like the Temple Scroll); (3) the existence at this early stage of the tripartite Hebrew canon,<sup>77</sup> so that Chronicles in final position reflects the literary and canonical intentions of the Chronicler himself. A minimum requirement for the thesis of Steins to be possible is that the timing of the composition of Chronicles and of the formation of the third section of the Tanak overlap. It is unlikely, however, that the two processes were contemporary—whether it is claimed that they intersected in the second century (Steins) or the fifth century (Koorevaar).

With regard to the first argument, Steins views Chronicles as a direct response to the challenge to Israelite identity in the face of the Hellenistic program of Antiochus IV.<sup>78</sup> He argues that what the Chronicler wrote was not merely relevant to the crisis of the second century but that he was reacting to the tribulations of the Maccabean period. Such a late dating of the final form of the book is required for his thesis that the Chronicler was involved in the process of canonization (*Kanonbildung*) to be credible, but the postulated time of writing is much too late, and majority scholarship favors an earlier date for the completed book of Chronicles in the fourth century BC.<sup>79</sup> Disagreeing with the dating of Steins, Koorevaar says that Chronicles cannot be Maccabean, for he sees it having a Persian stamp.<sup>80</sup> Again, in the scheme devised by Koorevaar, the claim is that the process of canon formation and the composing of Chronicles chronologically overlap, but at an earlier date of around 400 BC.

As for Steins’s second argument, the classification of Chronicles as “rewritten Bible” is anachronistic.<sup>81</sup> The book of Chronicles does reinterpret Israelite history and draw on a range of earlier scriptural books viewed as authoritative but that

<sup>74</sup> *Abschlussphänomen*, 515: “die Hypothese vom Abschlußcharakter der Chronik.” The hypothetical character of his approach is also noted by Brandt, *Endgestalten des Kanons*, 88.

<sup>75</sup> *Abschlussphänomen*, 507–17, esp. 509, 514.

<sup>76</sup> “Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluß,” 59.

<sup>77</sup> *Abschlussphänomen*, 509–14. Stein accepts the arguments of Leiman, Beckwith, and others in favor of a canon ending with Chronicles in the early second century BC; see Sid Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 47; Hamden, CT: Archon, 1976), 131–34; Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, 150–53.

<sup>78</sup> *Abschlussphänomen*, 491–99, 516; idem, “Zur Datierung der Chronik: Ein neuer methodischer Ansatz,” *ZAW* 109 (1997): 84–92; idem, “Torabindung und Kanonabschluß,” 222–25.

<sup>79</sup> See, e.g., the arguments of Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 23–28) and Knoppers (*I Chronicles 1–9*, 101–117). For a review of the issue, see Isaac Kalimi, “The Date of the Book of Chronicles,” in *God’s Word for Our World. Volume I: Biblical Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries* (ed. J. Howard Ellens et al.; JSOTSup 388; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 347–71.

<sup>80</sup> “Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluß,” 65.

<sup>81</sup> *Abschlussphänomen*, 30–39.

exegetical procedure does not require an extraordinarily late provenance in the second century.<sup>82</sup>

Concerning the third argument of Steins, it is possible that a tripartite canon was established in some Jewish circles by the second century BC but the earliest conclusive reference to a canon that is structured in this way is the *baraita* preserved in the Talmud (B. Bat. 14b).<sup>83</sup> Even less likely is the view of Koorevaar who opts for a still earlier (pre-Maccabean) dating for the origination of the tripartite canon in the fifth century BC, relying on what is said in 2 Macc 2:13–15 about Nehemiah founding a library (βιβλιοθήκη) and collecting the books about the kings and prophets, the books of David and the letters of kings about votive offerings.<sup>84</sup> This probably refers to Samuel–Kings, Psalms, and Ezra–Nehemiah (n.b. Ezra 7:14–20), but the limited information available about this initiative in collecting sacred books means that this historical notice fails to provide evidence of the existence of the tripartite canon at this early stage.

Commonly rehearsed arguments for its existence at an early period include supposed allusions in the Prologue of Sirach (ca. 132 BC),<sup>85</sup> wherein, it is claimed, the grandson of Jesus Ben Sira three times differentiates the three sections of the canon, calling the first two “the law and the prophets (or prophecies),” but using a different expression each time for the third section, this indicating to Beckwith that this section did not yet have an agreed title. The names of the supposed third section are: (1) “and others that have followed in their [the prophets] steps” (καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατ’ αὐτοῦς ἠκολουθηκότων); (2) “and the other books of the fathers” (καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πατρῶν βιβλίων); (3) “and the rest of the books” (καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων). Given the general (and variable) wording, it is far from certain that these are references to canonical books.<sup>86</sup>

Beckwith sees the threefold structure of the OT canon also reflected in the post-resurrection saying by Jesus recorded in Luke 24:44: “everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms (ψαλμοί) must be fulfilled.” Beckwith views the third division as now given its own title (named after the first or most important book within the division), but “Psalms” may only be referring to that book, Jesus singling out the Psalter as a particularly important bib-

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman, ed., *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Zipora Talshir, “Several Canon-Related Concepts Originating in Chronicles,” *ZAW* 113 (2001): 386–403. Talshir discusses and rejects Steins’s view of Chronicles (pp. 402–3), her conclusion being, “The Chronicler is a theologian of the history of his people, but he is not a theologian of the canon” (p. 403).

<sup>83</sup> A *baraita* is a quotation of earlier rabbinic opinion, preserving traditions that originate in the Tannaic period (pre-AD 200).

<sup>84</sup> “Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluß,” 51.

<sup>85</sup> Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, 211–22.

<sup>86</sup> John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (new ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007), 47, 48. It is counter-challenged by Beckwith, but not convincingly in my view; see “A Modern Theory of the Old Testament Canon,” *V/T* 41 (1991): 385–95. For the view that these expressions refer to non-canonical works, including Ben Sira, see David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161, 162.

lical witness to him.<sup>87</sup> The reading of “Psalms” as a synecdoche for a third canonical division is, in fact, an improper retrojection of later evidence from the Talmud. Beckwith sees another dominical saying as alluding to the three groups of canonical books, namely: “that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar” (Matt 23:35; cf. Luke 11:51). This could reflect a canonical arrangement that began with Genesis and ended with Chronicles, seeing that the murder of Abel is recorded near the beginning of Genesis (4:3–15) and that of Zechariah near the end of Chronicles (2 Chr 24:20–22).<sup>88</sup> However, the same sweep of OT history could be referred to even if Chronicles was placed after Kings, and R. Laird Harris correctly points out that Luke’s wording is *temporal* rather than literary (“the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah”).<sup>89</sup> According to H. G. L. Peels, these two particular murders are chosen only because in each case there is a call for divine vengeance (Gen 4:10; 2 Chr 24:22).<sup>90</sup> My point is that while it is right to argue for the propriety of placing Chronicles in final position in the OT canon, neither literary nor historical considerations prove that this was its original position or that the Chronicler wrote his work to fill that position.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

My argument has been that the placement of Chronicles within the different canons reflects post-authorial evaluations of the book and its contents. Each position has its rationale and potentially contributes to the understanding of readers. There are no grounds for insisting that any one position is the earliest or best. In particular, there is no proof that the Chronicler composed his work to conclude the OT canon. Chronicles after Kings alerts readers that Kings (and the preceding historical books) record the history of Israel from a prophetic perspective. Chronicles at the head of the Writings suggests that succeeding books have a liturgical and/or wisdom orientation. Finally, Chronicles at the end of the Writings sums up the wit-

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<sup>87</sup> Likewise, the Halakhic Letter at Qumran (4QMMT), states: “We have wr[itten] to you so that you may carefully study the book of Moses [and] the books of [the p]rophets and Davi[d and in the events of] past generations” (DJD X.59). In this listing “the book[s] of ... David” can only be alluding to the Psalter, so that this is another text that singles out the Psalms for special mention, maybe because of the importance of the Psalms in liturgical usage; see Eugene Ulrich, “The Non-attestation of a Tripartite Canon in 4QMMT,” *CBQ* 65 (2003): 202–14; J. G. Campbell, “4QMMT and the Tripartite Canon,” *JJS* 51 (2000): 181–90; Timothy H. Lim, “The Alleged Reference to the Tripartite Division of the Hebrew Bible,” *RegQ* 20 (2001): 23–37.

<sup>88</sup> Though in Chronicles it is “Zechariah *the son of Jeboiada*,” and so the two individuals are not necessarily to be identified.

<sup>89</sup> R. Laird Harris finds fault with Beckwith’s argument; see “Chronicles and the Canon in New Testament Times,” *JETS* 33 (1990): 79.

<sup>90</sup> “The Blood ‘from Abel to Zechariah’ (Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:50f.) and the Canon of the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 113 (2001): 583–601; cf. Edmon L. Gallagher, “The Blood from Abel to Zechariah in the History of Interpretation,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 121–38.

ness of the OT to God's purposes that culminate in the rebuilt temple (= palace) of God as a precursor to the dawning of God's final kingdom.