What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?

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Contents

Introduction

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All but two of the essays in this volume are revised versions of pa-
pers presented and discussed in sessions of the research program on "Is-
rael and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the
Persian and Hellenistic Period."[1] The sessions were held as part of the
annual meetings of the European Association of Biblical Studies in the
years 2008 and 2009. These sessions were structured around a seemingly
simple question, "What was authoritative for Chronicles?"[2]

The question was meant to be open enough to allow for an ex-
ploration and collaborative discussion of the "authority" of "real" or
"imagined" texts within or external to Chronicles or particular readings
thereof, traditions, central social concepts, world views, social order,
utopian visions, and even Chronicles' claims about its own authoritative
character.[3]

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1. This research program is chaired by the two editors of this volume. The edi-
tors invited Steven Schweitzer and Ingeborg Löwisch to add their perspectives to the
written conversation that this volume represents. We are very pleased that both of
them have accepted the invitation and have brought to the center of the conversation
salient matters that were not addressed in the other contributions.

2. To be sure, the question was directly relevant to the general agenda this re-
search group set for itself. Moreover, it was thought that one of the possible ways
of exploring this research agenda was to focus on a particular book. This research
program has already published two volumes: D. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi, eds., *The
Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (London: Equi-
nox, 2009); and E. Ben Zvi, D. Edelman, and F. Polak, eds., *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric,
Ideology, Stylistics and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias,
2009). A fourth and fifth volume are being planned at this moment. In addition, this
research program has advanced its agenda by collaborating with a "sibling" program
devoted to Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis, chaired by Pernille Carstens and
Kåre Berge. This collaboration has already resulted in a forthcoming volume edited
by Pernille Carstens.

3. Of course, the editors cannot take credit for raising any of these questions.
There is a long history of research on these matters. See, for instance, H. G. M. Wil-
liamson, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (FAT 38; Tübingen:
Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 232–43 and bibliography there. See also I. L. Seeligmann,

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It was also open enough to take into account the ambiguity of the concept of *authoritative* in ancient Israel at the time in which Chronicles emerged. Certainly what we may call *authoritative* was open to discursive negotiation, involved matters of power, and was used and continuously reshaped for clear rhetorical purposes. This being so, Diana Edelman and I, as chairs of this research program, added a second but very important question, "What might 'authoritative' have meant for the Chronicler?"

Mindful of different approaches to historical research in Chronicles, we once more left open the meaning of the term *the Chronicler*. Some contributors have assumed it signifies the historical author of the book while others have construed it as the implied author of the book as construed by its primary or intended readership. This diversity is meant to enhance the exchange of knowledge that emerges from reading the contributions to this volume as a collection; each reader will experience this exchange differently, based on his or her knowledge of issues surrounding the Chronicler or Chronicles and his or her careful attention to the implications of each paper and the way that other papers would respond to the same implications.

The "philosophy" behind this volume (and our discussions) is that one of the best ways of advancing a research agenda is to bring together a number of scholars with different perspectives to share their insights and to further their knowledge through conversation. This volume represents, indeed, a "written" conversation with multiple threads, viewpoints, and as usual, ever-shifting sets of converging and diverging lines. The main goal of this volume is to further discussion on the topic by presenting a wide picture of the ways in which these questions are being approached. This volume is not meant to provide a single or "definitive" answer to the question but is a conversation meant to evoke further discussion of the research question.

No volume can deal with all possible aspects of this question, and no attempt has been made to convey a sense of "completeness." Instead, Diana and I have tried to bring together a spectrum of perspectives and texts that relate to each other and might inform each other in multiple ways. At the same time, we decided to bring to the "table" issues and approaches that have rarely been at the center in this type of discussions (e.g., sociological

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approaches, gender matters, models differentiating between authoritative and authoritarian approaches, comparative historiography, perspectives informed by social memory and utopian studies). Being historians ourselves, we editors worked actively to include discussions on the historical circumstances[4] within which both Chronicles and its position about what is authoritative emerged.

The editors did *not* ask the contributors to focus on a particular set of texts within Chronicles. It is interesting to note, however, that patterns emerged. As one would anticipate, there are multiple references to pentateuchal material, but it is worth stressing that genealogical lists were also the focus of much attention. A substantial number of chapters addressed matters of prophecy and prophetic texts. It is easy to note an emphasis on Jeremiah in Chronicles, which raises the question why this is the case—it is answered from more than one perspective in this volume; see, for instance, the chapters by M. Leuchter, L. Jonker, and A. Warhust. As one would expect, comparative studies of Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah and references to the possible way in which these two works relate to each other are well represented. The development of significantly new approaches to these matters is particularly worth noting. A few pericopes within Chronicles (e.g., 2 Chr 36:21; the account of Hezekiah) are taken up in several contributions. This distribution of scholarly responses to the questions that the editors raised is interesting in itself and bears some hint at future potential paths in research about the book of Chronicles.

Although the editors have consistently maintained the formal independence of the chapters so that each may be read on its own, the volume as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. To be sure, readers will sympathize more with certain approaches than others and be more interested in some test cases/examples discussed in some chapters than others. However, they will easily recognize that the contributions of the participants link to each other, even if implicitly, and create an intricate web. Each single essay, along with its underlying arguments and explicit conclusions, relates to many others in this volume. This is a conversation.

Following this introduction, readers will find my own contribution. It is meant to open the volume by focusing on modes of reading "authoritative" literature exemplified in Chronicles as a path to a better understanding of what "authoritativeness" may have meant to the community. To achieve this goal, the essay explores Chronicles' tendency to prefer (or avoid) particular modes of reading through "authoritative" narratives, laws, prophetic literature, and psalms and explores the ways in which these

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4. *Historical* is used here in its widest possible sense, including the interlinked web of social, political, economic, cultural (including religious, cultic and ideological and discursive) aspects that characterized them.

modes served to characterize the Chronicler as a reliable, "godly" person-age and Chronicles as a book worthy of being read and reread, time and again, by the text-centered community within which it emerged. One of the main conclusions reached by this analysis is that "one size does not fit all." For instance, at times, the mode of reading will emphasize tempo-ral contingency but at other times multi-temporality (or a-temporality); sometimes "facts" to be abstracted from a narrative but, in other instances, the narrative plot. Cultural memory, the ancient reception of texts, and the concept of segmented national history figure prominently in this es-say. The essay uses as examples central cases in the ongoing debate about "what is authoritative in Chronicles." Most of these examples are later ana-lyzed from various perspectives in this collection. Both in terms of meth-odology and examples, this essay serves well as the opening round for the ongoing conversation.

The next essay by Steven Schweitzer contains a substantial survey of both the explicit references to external sources in Chronicles and the "unacknowledged" external sources from which texts were incorporated into Chronicles or to which Chronicles alludes. Schweitzer notes that the Chronicler was "highly selective in which material [he] used and how"—a master, not a servant of his sources. One of his conclusions is that

> Typically, he [the Chronicler] does not indicate when he is using or gloss-ing another text, especially when that text seems to be one that already has authoritative status (the Torah, Samuel–Kings, Psalms). When he does name a source, it is often when his source has named one . . . or to indicate the preservation of ancient records in writing . . . or to enhance the persuasive power of the source whether by emphasizing the information was written down . . . or by associating the writings with authoritative figures.

Chronicles seeks authoritative status and builds it with references to tra-ditional sources of authority (including figures, core concepts, texts) be-cause "[t]he ability of the Chronicler to convince his audience that the utopia presented in the text is indeed a *better alternative reality* (a utopia) rests heavily on the authoritative status of Chronicles itself" (emphasis original). Chronicles retrojects this utopia into the past in order to imple-ment it in the Chronicler's present. Due to its intention and message, Steven Schweitzer argues, Chronicles must employ but also subvert or even reject its sources.

David Glatt-Gilad raises the matter of the historical setting of Chron-icles. He maintains that, at a time in which

> the written Torah in its entirety had extended beyond the private purview of kings and priests to function as an authoritative text for everyone, surpassing even prophetic oracle. . . . [T]he famous Chronistic passage describing King

Jehoshaphat's Torah education campaign (2 Chr 17:7–9) . . . constitutes a crucial chain in the Chronicler's depiction of the Torah book's history, inasmuch as it gives expression to the conception of the Torah as a widely disseminated document.

It is in this context that Glatt-Gilad approaches Chronicles as "consensus literature." It was a document "designed to promote consensus around the institutions, principles, and holy writ." The most "innovative basis for the Chronicler's consensus-building approach is the ubiquitous appeal to the Torah of Moses as an authoritative source." It is this Torah that the Chronicler considers "a paradigm for communal consensus." Glatt-Gilad stresses that there were three pillars of the community: the temple; the Davidic monarchy, to "the extent that it facilitated and paved the way for active community involvement in promoting and maintaining the cultic order"; and the "Mosaic Torah." He argues, "The latter carried special significance for the Chronicler, not only as a unifying factor in its own right but also as a recent precedent for the Chronicler's own quest for wide acceptance and authoritative status." Glatt-Gilad also raises the issue of the relation of Chronicles to the Nehemiah material—a matter discussed in several other places in this volume (see, for instance, Leuchter's essay).

Philip Davies is also interested in the historical setting of Chronicles, the ways in which it contributed to the shaping of the text, and its use of authoritative sources, but his discussion is different and raises other issues. Davies approaches the question of the web of relations between Chronicles and authoritative texts in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period by first challenging some reconstructions of Jerusalem at the time that have been advanced by I. Finkelstein. Davies maintains that there was a scribal community and an archive in Jerusalem (which was "a small but vigorous temple-city" in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods) and that both explain the preservation of most of the biblical literature. Chronicles is a product of the period. He then explores the typological relation among the various concepts of Israel in different biblical corpora. He concludes that Chronicles' concept of Israel is typologically later than the concept of Israel in the Pentateuch but earlier than the concept in the Deuteronomistic History. He cautions, however, that typology is not chronology and stresses that "the various definitions of 'Israel' may well have existed together over a considerable period." Davies concludes with the suggestion that "Chronicles be taken neither as a work of midrash (of Samuel–Kings) nor as a utopian, theologically-inspired, unrealistic account of the past but as a creative work with a more complex relationship to Samuel–Kings and with its own positive political agenda." This political agenda is to be explored in terms of the "political context in which Chronicles seems to have been written."

Joseph Blenkinsopp's essay devotes much space to the historical setting of Chronicles and the ways in which it contributed to the shaping of the text and of what was authoritative for the Chronicler. Its starting point to address these issues is an approach to Chronicles as a utopia (cf. Schweitzer) in the sense of "an ideal counterreality in reaction to" the (perceived) "incongruent reality" within which it emerged. In his view, to understand the Chronicler's utopia requires exploring the Chronicler's incongruent reality. Blenkinsopp draws attention to the "ruinous situation" in which the entire area must have existed as a result of extensive warfare and war-related activities from the last years of the Persian Empire to the final conquest of Ptolemy I in 301 B.C.E. and the associated helplessness (though not necessarily hopelessness) felt by local populations.

He also discusses inner-Judean elements of the incongruent reality experienced by the Chronicler—in particular, the people associated with the temple cult and priesthood. Numerous utopian portrayals in Chronicles are then understood as reactions to or, better, as (construed) counterreality responses to particular aspects of this incongruent reality. Blenkinsopp then asks "on what authority the author legitimated this utopian image of the past, including his views about the role of Levites vis-à-vis priests and about the temple cult in general." He begins by noting "the importance attributed throughout the work to authoritative written texts," including among others, written genealogies and "inspired . . . texts attributed to prophetic individuals." Among these individuals is David, who

> is now not only a prophet but the mediator of new revelations with regard to worship, revelations dictated to him by Yahweh. . . . These new prescriptions, preserved in writing, serve as an extension, updating completion of the part of the Torah that deals with worship.

At the same time, Blenkinsopp stresses Chronicles' "emancipation from tradition" and the Chronicler's "remarkable freedom from traditional ways of thought and expression." Blenkinsopp relates both to the Chronicler's understanding of prophecy, which involves a "a greatly expanded semantic range for the standard terminology for prophetic mediation." The latter includes "the redefinition of the composition and rendition of liturgical music as a prophetic activity." Blenkinsopp argues that the latter development suggests a social location: "it was among the Levitical guilds of liturgical musicians during the period of the Second Temple that this idea of a prophetic ministry of liturgical song originated and matured." Blenkinsopp's essay concludes with a note about the importance of Chronicles' claims concerning authoritativeness "in the *longue durée* context of Second Temple history."

Texts can embed authority in various ways. Ingeborg Löwisch deals with authoritative gender constructions and with Chronicles as a historically-

contingent performance of memory that supports them, but she also points to their fragility. Her work is informed by cultural-memory studies (cf. Ben Zvi, Amit), Arendt's differentiation between authoritative and authoritarian, and a historically informed synchronic reception-oriented analysis of texts and is particularly attuned to types of cultural "acts of transfer." Her focus is on the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1–9. She writes, "Genealogies are . . . an apt means of constituting a normative past, legitimating hereditary authority claims, and conceptualizing collective identities with a focus on defining the self and the other," and elsewhere in the essay,

> the regular recurrence to the ancestral period is often analyzed as a means of establishing the ancestral period as authoritative for the memory of Israel. . . . [T]he genealogies propose the ancestral period as decisive or even normative for Israel's present . . . [and seem] to have embodied the essence of Israel and may consequently have been employed to legitimate sociopolitical structures and offices in the present. . . . It is crucial to the discussion of authority that the text propose and approve the ancestral period as a decisive period. Thus, the authority of the ancestral period is constructed as being based on general acceptance and group identity. The counterpart of this approach would be authority based on violence rather than acceptance. The latter would mark an authoritarian rather than authoritative approach.

Löwisch explicitly discusses crucial components of Judah's genealogy (which leads to David/Solomon and the temple) for constructions of gender and identity and their authoritative dimensions. She analyzes the portrayal of the patriarchal succession at risk in 1 Chr 1:3–4 (the case of Tamar) and 2:24–35 (the case of Sheshan's daughter) and two instances of gender fluidity in key roles (the cases of Ephrathah and Zeruiah)—that is, instances of fissure in the patriarchal succession. Her study shows that "the authority of patriarchal succession appears to have been based on ability to maintain symbolic order by correlating Israel's past with its present in a coherent and relevant way to different groups and interests within the community." She notes the exclusive but ambiguous character of patriarchal succession. Her work explores, in particular, "fissures in the patriarchal succession by referring to women," for they "highlight the complexity and inclusiveness of the notion of patriarchal succession." She studies the multiple social and ideological, interrelated dynamics at work in the shaping of authoritative genealogies, including one that repeatedly deconstructs the "attempt to preserve the authority of the patriarchal succession through restriction and exclusion" while, at the same time, paying attention to "references to women, which are framed as exceptions," and the risk of a "loss of control that was associated with such exceptions within this type of ancient discourse, the responses that this risk engendered, and its implications."

Yairah Amit's essay turns to the story about Ornan's threshing floor in 1 Chronicles 21 to learn about Chronicles' attempt to shape social memory and the historical circumstances of the endeavor. She examines allusions in the Chronicles story to leading figures of Israel (e.g., Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Hezekiah) and to texts or stories present in the books of, for instance, Genesis; Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers; Deuteronomy; Joshua; Judges; 1–2 Kings; Ezekiel, and Zechariah. She examines the roles of such allusions in the text and the ways in which they contributed to the success of Chronicles' version of the account in terms of (authoritative) social memory. Amit brings the focus back to the figure of David and to the temple and their central roles as "sites of memory."[5] Like Blenkinsopp, she concludes with consideration of the *longue durée*:

> the Chronicler's version of the story about David's purchase of Araunah's threshing floor that established the view that the Temple Mount was the site of the binding of Isaac and of the divine manifestation and salvation at Araunah's threshing floor. By turning the story of this acquisition from an almost marginal addendum into a key element in the status of Jerusalem vis-à-vis its rivals, and by loading the story with many allusions to the leading figures of the nation's epic, the Chronicler made a major contribution to the position of Jerusalem in Jewish monotheistic civilization and its inheritors.

Amit's reference to other temples brings her essay into direct conversation with Davies; her emphasis on social memory places her work in direct conversation with Ben Zvi and Löwisch.[6]

The next three essays focus on prophets and prophetic texts, though from different perspectives. Louis Jonker's essay begins with a survey of reports of prophetic activity in Chronicles and of contemporary research on the portrayal of prophecy and prophets in Chronicles, including its potential impact on questions about the existence and character of prophets and prophecy in the Persian period. Then he focuses on Jeremiah in Chronicles, especially in the Chronicler's account of the fall of Jerusalem—a text that is also discussed by Warhust. Jonker emphasizes the extent to which we must be cautious and refuse to ascertain matters categorically. He maintains, however, that "[t]he book of Jeremiah provided the Chronicler with a useful way of merging the Priestly and Deuteronomistic traditions," and that, no matter what else is uncertain, we can be quite sure that "the Chronicler was one of the early readers of the book of Jeremiah (most likely in a fairly

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5. Amit does not use this term.

6. See also Ben Zvi, "The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period Yehud" (forthcoming in a volume of collected essays edited by Edelman and me that is tentatively entitled *Bringing the Past to the Present in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period: Images of Central Figures*), in which social memories associated with the site of the temple, Abraham, and David are discussed.

advanced Deuteronomistic form).” Some aspects of Jonker’s contribution stand in direct dialogue with comments and approaches advanced in the essays by Warhust, Leuchter, and Ben Zvi.

Amber Warhust considers the question of what was authoritative for the Chronicler through the lens of a detailed study of two accounts that appear in Chronicles and in two other corpora: the Hezekiah narrative (Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles) and the account of the fall of Jerusalem (Kings, Jeremiah, and Chronicles). She finds that, although in Chronicles the role played by Isaiah is minimized, and although his “oracles, signs, and prayers which feature prominently in 2 Kings 18–20 and Isaiah 36–39 are left entirely unrecorded,” the narrative in Chronicles “is saturated with literary overtones from material attributed to Isaiah and that “Isaiah’s descriptions of a future restoration after exile are read back into the account of Hezekiah’s reign.” The result is not only that Hezekiah is portrayed as an ideal king but also that a prophetic vision of restoration assumes “timeless significance with relevance, not only for the future, but also for the past and the present.” Her study of Chronicles’ account of the fall of Jerusalem leads to the conclusion that

> Jeremiah’s authoritative influence on the Chronicler is evident in the explicit mention of him four times, the coordination of the account of the fall of Jerusalem with Jeremiah’s depiction, and the assertion that Judah’s history unfolded “according to the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.” As with the Hezekiah narrative, the Chronicler integrates not only the prophet’s portrayal of the past but also his vision of the future.

Warhust raises the important question of a recontextualization of prophetic texts that implies and communicates a timeless (or as I would put it, “multitemporal”) application. By doing so, she shows not only that these texts were “authoritative” but also what attributing “authoritativeness” to a text may have meant, practically speaking, in terms of the Chronicler’s (and the community’s) use of that text in some very important cases.

Mark Leuchter’s starting point is that Chronicles is “profoundly intertextual, taking up language from antecedent traditions that had obtained authoritative status by the latter half of the Persian period.” Leuchter sheds light on the way in which Chronicles directs its readers to grasp and “take control” of other authoritative texts and create links among them that serve as interpretative keys. The result is often a metatradition that brings together multiple preceding traditions. To explore this point further, Leuchter advances a comparative study with another work that is also “profoundly intertextual, taking up language from antecedent traditions that had obtained authoritative status by the latter half of the Persian period”—namely, Ezra–Nehemiah. He stresses the clear differences between the two works not only in terms of ideology—a position that is

widely accepted now—but also in the way that the authors of these works
"inherit and interpret their shared authoritative antecedent traditions."
He deals in particular with the concept of prophetic authority in both
compositions and with the different ways in which the Jeremianic doublet
works in them. Among his conclusions,

> the centrality of the temple [in Chronicles] is factored into a larger paradigm
> through the emphasis on Levites over Aaronide priests and prophecy over
> sacrifice. . . . [T]he Jeremiah doublet (and the leaving out of Ezra 1:3b–
> 4) . . . expands the prophet's authority beyond the confines of its func-
> tion within Ezra 1–6 (and, consequently, [Ezra–Nehemiah] en masse). . . .
> [From the Chronicler's viewpoint, it is not simply] the reestablishment of
> the sacrificial cult that realizes and sustains the divine דָּבָר bequeathed by the
> prophet to successive generations. Rather, the דָּבָר in question empowers
> history to unfold, directs empires to rise and fall, unifies embattled social
> factions, and equalizes law with liturgy.

Leuchter also maintains that, whereas the

> methodological and thematic genotype of [Ezra–Nehemiah] appears to de-
> rive from a time when the biblical writers identified their authority with the
> bastions of the Persian imperial administrative superstructure . . . , Chron-
> icles offers a response to this, turning inward and suggesting that external
> empires rise and fall according to principles fostered within Israel's religious
> and intellectual tradition.

The final two essays develop further the frame of methodological ap-
proaches to the question of what was authoritative for Chronicles and
what authoritative may have meant in this regard by reaching into socio-
logical and comparative historiographical studies. David Chalcraft enriches
the discussion by bringing into the mix a sociological approach that is
beginning to influence studies in ancient history but still is rarely heard in
studies of ancient Israel. Chalcraft's approach to Chronicles is informed,
among other things, by studies of "risk societies" (Sociology of Risk),
theoretical work on "ontological security," sociology of health and illness
and its studies of coping narratives, and the sociological concepts of "folk
devils" and "moral panics." For Chalcraft,

> What is authoritative to the Chronicler is the bureaucratic procedure, and
> the bureaucratic procedure includes acknowledgment of the importance
> of the document/archive/texts. This extends also to an appreciation that
> any new understanding of the past and the present and any positioning re-
> garding the nature of the future (colonizing the future) will also need to
> be embodied in written form and textualized if it is to have any authority
> for colleagues, external rulers, or other members of society that accord the
> temple and/or the priestly groups legitimacy.

He maintains that [the Chronicler's] "commitment to the authority of texts as a basis for claiming legitimacy in interpretation and/or application comes from organizational life," and

> [o]verall, the bureaucratic search for ontological security is found through creating order. This order involves ensuring that many actions are encoded in texts, that social relationships are defined in terms of role and function, that a record is kept of the occupiers of positions, that no project is not subject to assessment and accountability, that there are clear hierarchies, and that monitoring and control of populations (bio-power in Foucault's sense) can be achieved through the creating, recording, and monitoring of genealogy.

Diana Edelman and Lynette Mitchell highlight what comparative historiographical studies may contribute to the research agenda envisaged in this book. They focus on the book of Chronicles as a possible Jewish example of the Greek local history that became popular in the Hellenistic period, particularly in the fourth and third centuries B.C.E., but with roots tracing back to the seventh century B.C.E. Mitchell, a classicist, provides a very helpful survey of current understandings of the production, contents, and dissemination of local Greek histories, all of which are only preserved fragmentarily. Like genealogies and their archaic antecedents, the local city histories in the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. were essentially expressions of communal identity. Competing versions, offering variations in the accounts and different emphases, were encouraged, and competitions were known to have been used to elicit multiple compositions. The authority of local and more general histories was based "both in their location within the Homeric tradition, to which they often made deliberate allusion, and in their claims regarding empiricism and critical analysis of sources."

Edelman then picks up on five points from her presentation and discusses them in relation to Chronicles: (1) the simultaneous existence of many alternate histories and the apparent tendency to draw on existing versions to create new ones; (2) the prominent use of genealogy to link the mythic past with the present, tracing the descent of a group to a heroic figure, including the "first man"; (3) the tendency to use speeches to explore political ideas and problems and moral lessons; (4) the function of local Greek histories as vehicles for cementing and expressing group identity through a shared, common past; and (5) the critical attitude found in the Greek historians and in related genres that could question the gods as purveyors of truth and knowledge but could still declare a man to be god and "living law." The relationship between Kings and Chronicles differs from both the tendency to allude to canonical Homeric poetry, on the one hand, and the direct, accredited citation system in the Greek historiographic tradition, on the other. Based on Greek analogy, however, the

author of Chronicles, well versed in contemporary Greek literary trends in the late Persian or Hellenistic period, could have decided "to write a local history of Jerusalem to glorify his own group's past but did so in a style closer to other Jewish literature, adopting anonymity and specifically Jewish ideology, and used Kings as his primary source, which he felt comfortable enough to adapt to his own purposes."

The editors hope that this volume will contribute to the debate on the twin questions "What was authoritative for Chronicles?" and "What might 'authoritative' have meant for the Chronicler?" and stimulate further discussion on them.