

HISTORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

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Christian Frevel

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Christian Frevel is Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Catholic-Theological Faculty of the Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. He is also Extraordinary Professor at the Department of Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures of the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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## Preface

The history of ancient Israel presented here began in 2007 as an overview in one of the most important textbooks on the introduction to the Old Testament, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. When the editor, Erich Zenger, asked me to write about thirty pages on the history of ancient Israel—including the new trends and discussions—I soon realized that such brevity was impossible. Nevertheless, I greatly compressed my view in order for it to be included in the textbook. When the opportunity arose in 2015 to publish the new take on Israel's ancient history in a book of its own, I jumped at the chance. This new book provided space to take into account the rapid developments in archaeology, epigraphy, and historiography and to base the presentation on these rather than on the biblical account. The book was published in the same series as the *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* so that students could easily access both. Obviously, the presentation succeeded in hitting a point that was of importance beyond the classroom to the interested circle of scholars: a new conceptualization of the history of Israel that corresponded to the current state of archaeological research (beyond the tedious minimalist-maximalist controversies) and that also took into account the trends of the European discussion on the emergence and successive growth of biblical literature. For the English edition—which took far more time than I had originally anticipated—additions and adjustments to the state of research and the wealth of literature were made anew.

The publication of the book is indebted to many people who have constantly campaigned for an English edition. I am especially grateful to Brian B. Schmidt for his constant encouragement and for including the book in the Archaeology and Biblical Studies series. A very big thank you goes to Jordan Davis, who worked hard on the rough translation, and Jonathan M.

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I very much hope that the English edition can also serve the purpose of disseminating our increased knowledge of the history of ancient Israel.

Bochum, 5 July 2021  
(birthday of Erich Zenger, 1939–2010)

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## Abbreviations

<sup>14</sup> C	Radiocarbon, i.e., the <sup>14</sup> C carbon atom
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
ÄgLev	<i>Ägypten und Levante</i>
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
Anab.	Arrian, <i>Anabasis</i>
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATALA	<i>ATALA: Cultures et sciences humaines</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum

BG	Biblische Gestalten
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibEnc	Biblical Encyclopedia
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
<i>BK</i>	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
BM	British Museum
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNPSup	Brill's New Pauly Supplements
BThS	Biblich-Theologische Studien
BWA(N)T	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>C. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	conventional chronology
CG	Egyptian Museum Cairo
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CHJ	Cambridge History of Judaism
CIIP	Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds. <i>The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016.
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CWSS	Sass, Benjamin, and Nahman Avigad. <i>Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals</i> . Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DMOA	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
Dtr	Deuteronomistic
EA	el-Amarna



EB	Early Bronze Age
<i>Ebib</i>	<i>Etudes bibliques</i>
EBR	Klauck, Hans-Josef, et al., eds. <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
HACL	History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant
HAE	Renz, Johannes, and Wolfgang Röllig. <i>Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik</i> . Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2016.
HBAI	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HdA	Handbuch der Archäologie
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
<i>Hist.</i>	Herodotus, <i>Historiae</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTAT	Weippert, Herbert. <i>Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HvTSt	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies (HTS Theologiese Studies/HTS Theological Studies)</i>
<i>Hypth.</i>	Philo, <i>Hypothetica</i>
IA	Iron Age
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>
INJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement Series
JANEH	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JFA	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
JHebS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>

JJAR	<i>Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KAI	Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig, eds. <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002.
LAOS	Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien
LB	Late Bronze Age
LC	low chronology
Leg.	Cicero, <i>De legibus</i>
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
m.	Mishnah
MB	Middle Bronze Age
MCC	modified conventional chronology
MT	Masoretic Text
Nat.	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i>
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NEAEHL	Stern, Ephraim, ed. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSK	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica
OeO	Oriens et Occidens
OIM	Oriental Institute Museum
OJA	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta

OLB	Orte und Landschaften der Bibel
ORA	Orientalische Religionen der Antike
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
P.Anast.	Papyrus Anastasi
P.Harr.	Papyrus Harris
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts
PLoS ONE	<i>Public Library of Science ONE</i>
Prob.	Philo, <i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RevistB	<i>Revista Bíblica</i>
RINBE	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Period
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico</i>
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SMNIA	Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
Ta'an.	Ta'anit
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
ThRev	<i>Theologische Revue</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>

<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TRE	Krause, Gerhard, and Gerhard Müller, eds. <i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–.
TRu	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TTZ	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TUAT	Kaiser, Otto, et al., eds. <i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i> . Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1982–2020.
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VF	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
VSI	Very Short Introductions
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUB	<i>Welt und Umwelt der Bibel</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

## Notes on Detailed Dates and the Use of Text Editions

In order to facilitate orientation into a period of time that is wide and unfamiliar to most readers, the names of rulers were very often given dates. This should not be associated with the idea that the course of history is completely clear and datable. Chronologies have their own problems, especially if they are only based on the information of the Bible and no extrabiblical sources are available (see §§1.8, 5.2).

The New Revised Standard Version translation (NRSV) is generally used for quotations from biblical texts. The Tetragrammaton of the name of God is reproduced with <y> according to the transcription of the letter ך // *yod* as usual in comparative Semitics. In the case of extrabiblical texts, translations are typically not by the present author, but reference is made to standard text editions available in most libraries: (1) *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (TUAT), edited by Otto Kaiser et al. (1982–2020); (2) the one-volume handbook by Manfred Weippert, which was published in 2011 under the title *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (HTAT); and, for the English publication, (3) the four-volume handbook edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (COS). Text examples are given, if possible, from the more easily accessible latter work. Other inscriptions are quoted either from the standard work of Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (KAI) or the *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik* (HAE) edited by Johannes Renz and Wolfgang Röllig. For seals, either the *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (CWSS) edited by Benjamin Sass and Nahman Avigad or the multivolume *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit* by Othmar Keel are used.

Further literature is given at the beginning of each section. Excluded from this are basic textbooks and sourcebooks, histories of Israel, and

overviews, which are not listed in each case but are referenced at §10.3. The presentation dispenses with detailed footnotes, which would locate the respective explanations with references in the corresponding scientific discourses. To refer to specific positions and opinions, the authors are indicated in brackets.

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