
THE GROWTH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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1. THE ISRAELITE-JUDAEAN SCRIBAL CULTURE

The growth of the Old Testament presupposes the Israelite-Judaean scribal culture. From it the biblical tradition took over the practices, knowledge, and literary remains of the scribes. At the same time they pioneered with what they took over, or produced independently on the basis of it, a very particular way that was also unique in the whole of the ancient Near East. The genre and the content of the biblical books burst the limits of the usual praxis of the scribes. From the scribes developed the scribal scholars, and from the Israelite-Judaean scribal culture they developed the Jewish tradition in the Old Testament. In order to describe this development, it is necessary first to make clear the literary-historical presuppositions.

1.1 Scribes and Scribal Schools

As in the whole of the ancient Near East, the scribal culture in Israel and Judah developed with the rise of the monarchy. The economy of the court and the temple, as well as that of trade, made the establishment of a bureaucracy necessary. As well

as priests, prophets, those skilled in the law, and soldiers, it needed scribes, who practised their trade within and outside the court. Among their tasks belonged the following: bookkeeping and correspondence, as well as the writing, recording, and archiving of important political, legal, economic, and religious documents, as well as literary compositions.

There is a good deal of evidence for the view that schools were established in order to educate scribes. These dealt with not only reading and writing, but offered the widest possible education, which enabled those who completed it to undertake service in the court or the temple. The would-be scribes were made familiar with the traditions and literatures of their culture and educated in the correct behaviour in relation to themselves and others. The content of their education was collected and passed on in the context of so-called Wisdom.

It is difficult to say to what extent the scribal or wisdom schools worked in broader circles and educated other members of the upper class in addition to those who would be future servants of the state. This must be assumed, however, at least for trade and legal matters, that were not entirely centrally organized. Nevertheless, the ability to read and write as the basis for a broad education was confined to a small minority of professional scribes and other professional groups. It must be assumed that the dissemination of literature was similarly limited.

There is evidence in inscriptions for the existence of professional scribes both before and after the Exile, and some are known by name. The composition of inscriptions found in Israel and Judah as well as in the Diaspora can be attributed to them and to those like them. However, the fact that scribes copied, wrote, or even themselves composed biblical books (cf. Jer. 36; Baruch 1: 1 ff.) is never mentioned outside the Bible itself or the literature influenced by it. The reason presumably lies in the fact that scribes were trained in schools, and as a rule were active in state positions, whereas the biblical writings are somewhat reserved in their view of the court and the temple. The likely conclusion is that the authors and copiers of biblical books consisted of people who came from the scribal schools and the higher ranks of administration, but who had distanced themselves either privately or publicly from these and had gone their own ways.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the comparison of two Jewish archives that have been preserved archaeologically: those at Elephantine and Qumran. Neither the municipal archive of Jedaniah nor the private family archive of the Jewish colony from Elephantine from the fourth century BCE contain any mention of biblical books. On the contrary, the literature that was read here confines itself, so far as can be seen, to the Aramaic version of the well-known Behistun inscription of the Persian king Darius I and the book of the scribe Ahikar, a non-Israelite Wisdom writing which has left its traces in the apocryphal book of Tobit (1: 21–2; 2: 10; 11: 18; 14: 10). As, over against this, there are, with the exception of Esther, fragmentary copies of all the books of the Hebrew canon and related literature at Qumran and other places near the Dead Sea. Here, a Jewish community lived since

the second century BCE, which had separated itself from the cult of the temple in Jerusalem and had founded its own scribal institutions. In the scribal chamber at Qumran and in other settlements the literary activity of the everyday life of the community and its correspondence was undertaken, but also numerous copies were made of biblical and related books, and their own writings were composed. At what point biblical books also began to be kept in the archive of the temple in Jerusalem as well as in the synagogues of the motherland and the Diaspora, we do not know. The first indications of a broader dissemination are the Greek translation of the Jewish law, the Torah, presumably from the middle of the third century BCE (the Letter of Aristeas), and the evidence for the three parts of the later canon—Torah, prophets, and additional writings—in the book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) (44–51 and its prologue 1: 8–10: 24–5) as well as in the instructional writing 4 QMMT (4 Q397 fr. 14–21, line 10 = 4Q398 fr. 14–17, line 5).

1.2. Script and Writing Materials

During the first half of the first millennium scribes used the old Hebrew script, a local variant of the Phoenician alphabetic script, which had developed in the transition from the late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The first known example of the old Hebrew alphabet is on the stele of the Moabite king Mesha, and afterwards this alphabet is also met in inscriptions from Israel and Judah from the eighth century. In the second half of the first millennium it was displaced by the Aramaic square script, which was a further development of the old Aramaic variant of the alphabetic script.

The oldest biblical manuscripts that we possess, the fragments from the Dead Sea (Qumran and its neighbourhood), are mostly written in the Aramaic square script, which is still in use today. A few manuscripts, legends on coins, and the writing of the divine name in old Hebrew letters in both Hebrew and Greek manuscripts show, however, that the old Hebrew alphabet was not entirely superseded even well into post-Christian times, although it was by then something of a curiosity. In the tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch it lives on even today.

The writing materials used were stone, ceramic, wood, metal, papyrus, and leather. The choice of materials was dependent upon the reason for writing and what it was possible to use. Stone was suitable above all for monumental and tomb inscriptions. In daily life ceramic was widespread. Ceramic vessels, handles, and bullae were inscribed—before or after firing—according to their function, while ostraca served for commercial matters and correspondence. Wood was used for dictation or instruction, in the form of a tablet covered with wax. Inscription upon metal was mostly for decorative purposes.

In the second half of the first millennium BCE papyrus and leather (later velum) established themselves as the most important writing materials, on which the text

was written with ink. Like the other writing materials, papyrus had also been in use for a long time. However, up to now only one ancient Hebrew papyrus is known, a palimpsest from the seventh century (Wadi Murabba'at). Ceramic bullae, which were used for fastening and had a seal on the one side and a reproduction of a papyrus on the other, are an indirect proof for the use of this writing material in the pre-exilic period. Papyrus and leather were suitable both for use in daily life as well as for archiving and disseminating. Smaller texts like treaties or letters were written on single sheets, while longer compositions, in particular literary works, were written upon rolls in which the leaves were fastened (glued or sewn) together. The pages were divided into columns, and lines which were drawn by the scribes beforehand and then written upon.

Papyrus and leather are also the materials upon which the biblical books were written. From the pre-exilic period no biblical manuscripts have been preserved. The oldest witnesses known to us are the fragments from the Dead Sea, which date from between the third century BCE and the second century CE. They are mostly written upon leather. This material was preferred because of the length of the texts. A roll had an average length of eight to ten metres, but could also be shorter or longer. As a rule, a roll at Qumran contained one biblical writing or group of writings (e.g. the Twelve Prophets and possibly also the Pentateuch). From the time after Qumran fragments of Hebrew manuscripts are known from the sixth to the eighth centuries CE (the Cairo Geniza), and complete copies are known from the ninth century onwards. These are mostly no longer on rolls but, as in the case of the text of the Bible in Greek, written in the form of a codex. Unlike the majority of the written documents of the first millennium BCE, which are found on stone, ceramic, wood, metal, or also papyrus and leather, the biblical books and the related texts with religious content, which were found in Qumran or have come to us in other ways, exist in many, sometimes divergent, copies which have been carefully looked after by scribes by way of improvements to the text or the materials. While the other writings have been forgotten, the biblical manuscripts have been continually produced.

1.3. The Literary Evidence

Only a few examples of the Israelite-Judaean scribal culture have survived. These include the Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions that have been found in Palestine and elsewhere, as well as the literary remains that found their way into the biblical tradition. The first are authentic witnesses of the Israelite-Judaean scribal culture, whereas the latter can be reconstructed only hypothetically by means of literary analysis, the criterion for this being obtained from the authentic witnesses.

As might be expected, the inscriptions deal mostly with *documents of the economy and administration*: accounts, lists, and letters (from Samaria, Arad,

Elephantine), as well as seals, stamps, and weights which are widely distributed as to time period and geographical region (Davies 1991: 118–263; Gibson 1971: 59–70). Such documents coming from daily life are hardly, if at all, attested in the Old Testament. Only in the case of certain lists, such as those of the sons of David (2 Sam. 3: 2–5; 5: 14–16), of David's officers (2 Sam. 8: 15–18), or of the administrative districts of Solomon (1 Kgs. 4: 1–19) may old traditions lie at their basic core, or have served as examples. All in all, the biblical tradition is far removed from everyday affairs.

More attention has been paid to the *administration of justice* in the Old Testament. As can be concluded from the petition of a labourer on the ostracon from Yavne Yam (Davies 1991: 77 f.; Gibson 1971: 26–30), law was administered at a particular place; by the 'elders' at an assembly of the full citizens 'at the gate' or, as here, by a royal official. The labourer has been deprived of his outer garment by his employer and pleads his case to a higher authority: 'let my lord, the commander, hear my case!'. Cases like these were decided on the basis of simple legal principles, the law of parity (*ius talionis*) or the principle of appropriate compensation, and it was used as a precedent. As time passed, there developed a sophisticated casuistry which was written down in collections of legal statements according to the scheme 'if—then'. An example of such a collection, for which there are also examples in the ancient world, is found in the so-called Book of the Covenant (Exod. 21: 1–22: 19). In it, cases from civil law are collected together and, in particular, laws dealing with compensation and bodily injuries in neighbourly common life, and relationships with 'neighbours' are dealt with. However, this collection remained the exception. Normally, the practice of law depended upon customary usage, and thus can be deduced only from particular cases. The family archive at Elephantine offers a view into covenant law dealing with marriage and exchange of property.

The only extant ancient collection of Israelite legal sentences in the Book of the Covenant was either collected for the purposes of education or, as in the Codex Hammurabi, put together to give honour to the king as the divinely commissioned highest defender of law and justice. In the context of the biblical tradition, in which Moses was advanced to the position of lawgiver *par excellence* and the corpora of laws were multiplied, law lost its *Sitz im Leben*. It was promoted to the rank of divine revelation, and was correspondingly ordered theologically. In consequence of this, the legal case of the labourer on the ostracon from Yavne Yam gained new meaning. The question was now no longer whether the labourer had had his cloak taken justly or unjustly. The question was that of his social status. God himself will hear the complaint of the poor so that he receives his cloak back before the sun sets (Exod. 22: 25 f.; Deut. 24: 12 f.).

In the general area of *religion*, it is above all *tomb and votive inscriptions* that have survived (Hirbet el Qom, Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Silwan, Hirbet Bet Lei). They display a quite different theological profile of the religion of Israel and Judah compared with

that in the Old Testament, and in particular in relation to the First Commandment. In addition to YHWH the chief god, who is differentiated according to different places, they recognize Ashera as a divine force that gives blessings, and several other gods (El, Baal) who were worshipped alongside YHWH. One sees in the inscriptions evidence of popular religion that differed from the official or traditional religion of YHWH. There is no reason to marginalize the epigraphic evidence. The dominant position of YHWH, which is also expressed in personal names of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE and in many formulae such as those of the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6: 24–6) in one of the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Davies 1991: 81, 8. 021) and the two (later) silver amulets from Ketef Hinnom (Davies 1991: 72 f.), suggests another conclusion. The boundaries between temple theology and the popular religion of the people in the pre-exilic monarchy and, if one thinks of Elephantine, also later, were fluid. The separation of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the biblical tradition which expects blessing from YHWH alone (cf. Gen. 12: 1–3), comes from later theological construction.

Formulae of blessing and curse in inscriptions and amulets touch on a further area of religion: *magic* and *manticism*. Belief in hidden divine powers and the possibility of influencing them by means of magic can be recognized in many ways in the epigraphic and iconographic remains. However, the functionaries who presided over the art of magic and the closely connected practice of foretelling the future—namely priests and prophets—are only seldom mentioned in the inscriptions. They existed also in Israel and Judah.

In the Lachish Ostrakon number 3, a letter sent from the battlefield by a lower-ranking person to his superior (Davies 1991: 1 f.; Gibson 1971: 38–41), a letter written by a royal official is referred to which mentions a prophet. In the tense situation of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (around 597 BCE), the anonymous prophet speaking no doubt in the name of the national god YHWH had counselled caution: 'be careful!', whether to warn the king against a hostile attack (cf. 2 Kgs. 6: 9), or whether because he was full of anxiety and wanted to secure the help of YHWH against his enemies (cf. Isa. 7: 4). Although this evidence is not clear, it fits best into the picture that one gets from parallels in the ancient Near East (the Mari Letters, neo-Assyrian prophecies, and the Zakur inscription). According to this, prophets were cult officials who worked in the name of the national god for the ruling king, who advised him in political, military, cultic, or ethical matters, and whose messages were conveyed in letters, and in this and in other ways were retained in archives. In the ancient Orient and also in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, prophecy was a means of politics and propaganda.

The prophets, indeed, did not always have only good news to announce. From the closer circle of Israel come the words of Balaam, the son of Beor the seer of the gods from Deir 'Alla in the land Gilead (TUAT ii. 1: 138–48). He is none other than the Balaam of the Bible (Num. 22–4), but one meets him here in his original setting and in his time around 700 BCE, before he was taken over into the biblical tradition

in connection with Israel. The inscription was written with red and black ink upon a whitewashed wall. Balaam, as Germans say, had painted the devil on the wall: a shocking catastrophe decreed by the gods, which he related to his people with tears. From the badly preserved remains it is not possible to say what caused the proclamations of disaster and curse, or the intention with which they were written down. At best they can be understood as a warning and a threat about improvements needed to appease the angry gods Shagar and Ashtar, El and the gathering of the Shaddin (cf. Num. 24: 4, 16!). The inscription recalls the old oriental science of omens, and other forms of manticism, which is concerned with the recognition and meaning of good and bad signs.

In the Old Testament not only the genres and methods of speech, but also the remains of old Israelite and Judaeen prophecy, have been preserved. The *prophetic legends* in the books of Samuel and Kings stand closest to the phenomenology of the classical old oriental prophecy. Here one meets king-makers and political-military advisors of the king (Samuel in 1 Sam. 9–10; Nathan in 1 Kgs. 1–2; Elisha in 2 Kgs. 3: 11 ff.; Isaiah in 2 Kgs. 18–20), as well as the wonder-workers who are clothed with magical powers (Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kgs. 18: 41–6; 2 Kgs. 4). However, not all the narratives in Samuel and Kings have an old literary kernel which goes back to the time of the monarchy. Some were composed later, under the influence of the older material. They were all later reworked in the sense of redactions, which gave them their present forms in the books of Samuel and Kings.

The words of the prophets are collected in the books of the prophets, but here also only a few authentic words can be discerned which can be attributed to the heritage of the Israelite-Judaeen scribal culture. From the time of the so called Syro-Ephraimite war around 730 BCE come the oracles of salvation of the prophet Isaiah, who prophesied the demise of the enemies of Judah in the north—namely, Aram and Israel (Isa. 7: 4, 7–9; 8: 1–4; 17: 1–3)—and just as a hundred years later, Nahum prophesied the demise of the Assyrians. Words from both sides of the Syro-Ephraimite war seem to appear in Hos. 5: 8–11. The authentic speech of the prophet Hosea, however, is in Hos. 6: 8–7: 7, and deals with the threatened demise of the kingdom of Israel, which became true in 722 BCE. The parables and woe-oracles of the prophet Amos in chapters 3–6 (Amos 3: 12; 5: 2, 3, 19; 5: 18; 6: 1 ff.; cf. 3: 12bβ; 4: 1, 5: 7) have the same purpose, in that they present the downfall of Samaria as inevitable, whether (from an Israelite perspective) these prophetic words are originally intended to induce regret and perhaps even avert this or (from the perspective of Judah), to welcome it and to some extent wish to influence it. Unambiguously spoken from the point of view of those affected are the words of the prophet Jeremiah in the form of laments about the imminent demise of Judah in the years 597–587 BCE, which erupt from the deep sympathy felt by the prophet in his innermost being (Jer. 4: 7, 11, 13, 19–21; 6: 1, 22–3). In the laments it is Jeremiah who speaks, not YHWH. He is deeply shocked by what he hears and sees about what is to come. What it is, he only hints at, but this much is clear: it is not YHWH

who punishes Judah and Jerusalem for their sins, but a monstrous war machine that marches towards them—the ominous ‘foe from the north’. The laments of Jeremiah can be compared with the words of Zephaniah concerning the ‘day of YHWH’ (Zeph. 1: 14–16), that is reminiscent of the perverted world of Balaam’s presentiments of disaster from Deir ‘Alla.

After all this had taken place, and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah no longer existed, the prophets lost their social setting and, with it, their meaning. Several prophets none the less uttered words here and there. Some adhered to the end to the received tradition and proclaimed a victory over the enemies in the name of YHWH (Jer. 27–8). Others made their voices heard when it became clear who would rule the land in the future and take over the custody of the temple. Two oracles have been preserved under the date of the second year of Darius I which call for the rebuilding of the temple and proclaim the entry of the glory of YHWH (Hag. 1: 1, 4, 8 and 1: 15b/2: 1, 3, 9a). From the time of the Second Temple we hear practically nothing more about prophets, which does not mean that they did not exist (Neh. 6: 7, 10–14; Zech. 13). However, the prophetic spirit was active no longer in the prophets themselves, but in the written tradition which circulated in their names and gained strength in the time of the Second Temple.

The epigraphic finds unfortunately afford us no view of the literary activity of the priests in the temples of Israel and Judah. On the basis of parallels from the ancient world, one would expect them to consist of lists of gods, rituals of sacrifices, liturgical calendars, hymns, and prayers, as well as myths about the gods. However, nothing has remained to this day except several inscriptions on cult objects. Thus one has to look to the Old Testament.

It can be assumed that behind the laws concerning sacrifices in Leviticus 1–7 and the decrees about purity in Leviticus 11–15 are the *traditions of the priests*. Also, the law of the altar in Exod. 20: 24–6 and the cultic calendar in Exod. 23: 14–16 could well rest upon older pre-exilic traditions.

Hymns and prayers can be found in the psalter. The old hymns such as Psalms 29 or 93 indicate that they are such because they stand in an unbroken line of tradition with Canaanite texts and represent the myth of the kingdom of God in a short poetic version. The hymns are close to the declarations of property in one of the inscriptions from Hirbet Bet Lei, to the phrase in the cave inscription from Ein Gedi, and to a description of a theophany in the old Phoenician wall inscription from Kuntillet ‘Ajrud. The YHWH of Samaria and the YHWH of Jerusalem are no different from the Baal of Ugarit and the Baal or Hadad of the Phoenicians and the Aramaeans. Old prayers are the lament (e.g. Ps. 13) and the thanksgiving of the individual (cf. Ps. 118: 5, 14, 17–19, 21, 28). They are part of the liturgy that accompanied the ritual of sacrifice, which is hinted at in the text of the thanksgivings, but about which we know nothing further. Also for these prayers, the Canaanite mythology gave the inspiration, in so far as the divinity constantly conducts the supplicant from death into life. In the Ugaritic Baal epic, death (in

Hebrew Mot) is the second foe after the sea-god Yam, with whom the weather god Baal struggles for the kingship.

A particular case is *Hebrew narrative*. Myths about the gods—that is, stories from the sphere of the gods, which explain conditions upon earth, as in the Baal cycle in Ugarit or Atram Hasis and Enuma Elish in Mesopotamia—are not preserved in the Old Testament. The nearest things to myths from the ancient Orient are the narratives that underlie the primal history in Genesis 1–11: the Canaanite anthropogony in Genesis 2–4, the account of the Flood in Genesis 6–9, and the Noachite table of nations in Genesis 10. Rather, the Hebrew narrative culture stood closer to the north-west Semitic tradition of hero legends, as one knows them from the epic of Gilgamesh, and concentrated upon relationships in various social milieux, such as the family (Genesis), the tribe (Judges), or the royal court (Samuel and Kings). Only later were the individual stories brought together in larger narrative wholes and overarching historical accounts, in the course of which they were transformed into the myth of the history of God with his people Israel.

With the exception, perhaps, of the primal history, the Hebrew narrative tradition was situated not in the priestly milieu but in that of the court. The scribes who were active there had, in addition to their daily world of which the ostraca from Samaria, Arad, and Lachish are indications, first and foremost a concern with *royal annals*. From them appear to be taken the information about changes of rule and length of reign upon which the chronology of the books of Kings rest. In connection with this, as was common in such royal chronicles, other happenings were occasionally mentioned, such as military undertakings and building works. These episodes are the point of departure for historical narratives which originally arose separately and which were later incorporated into the annalistic scheme of the books of Kings (e.g., 1 Kgs. 20 and 22, 2 Kgs. 3 and 9–10). It is possible to study the transition from the one to the other in three inscriptions: the stele of King Mesha (Gibson 1971: 71–83; Pritchard 1955: 320 f.; which is the Moabite version of 2 Kgs. 3), the inscription from Tell Dan (TUAT Suppl. 2001, 176–9; which is the Aramaic version of 2 Kgs. 9–10), and the Siloam inscription (Davies 1991: 68; Gibson 1971: 21–3), the only epigraphic remains of old Hebrew prose and an episode in which neither the king nor YHWH plays a role.

Closely connected with the court was *wisdom*, the spiritual home and school of the scribes. Here the various traditions and sources of knowledge of Israelite and Jewish culture were written down, edited and taught, in so far as they were not the preserve of specialists such as chroniclers, priests, and prophets. Here, the individual stories were collected and put together into a literary form.

As the example of the Aramaic version of Ahikar, which was read at Elephantine, shows, Wisdom understood its function to be that of narrating as well as putting things into poetic form. In polished proverbs and various poetic genres, the phenomena and orders of nature as well as of human conduct and its psychology

are analysed and brought to expression. Examples can be found in the ancient collections of the book of Proverbs (10: 1–22; 16; 22: 17–24; 22 and 24: 23–32; 25–9), of which Proverbs 22: 17–24: 22 possesses an Egyptian parallel (Pritchard 1955: 421 ff.). The portrayal of nature in the divine speeches of the book of Job (38–41) also stands in this tradition.

Didactic stories such as the story of Ahikar are examples of wisdom as practised and woven into the life of an exemplary sage at the end of a successful career. In the Old Testament this genre is represented by the fable of Jotham in Judg. 9 and the story of Joseph in Genesis 37–50. In addition, there are later representatives of this genre, in which the exemplary sage has become the exemplary pious believer, and increasingly, the suffering of the wise believer in God and wisdom is taken into account (Daniel, Job). Indeed, in the old narratives which come from other milieux, the narrative art of wisdom is often also at work.

2. THE BIBLICAL TRADITION

The biblical tradition was not born with Israel and Judah; but without it the two kingdoms would have disappeared like their neighbours. With the end of their political existence, they would have disappeared along with their scribal culture and fallen into oblivion, until the accident of archaeology brought one or the other to light. So it is rather astonishing that Israel and Judah have survived to this day in their memory in the biblical tradition. The transformation of the scribal culture of Israel and Judah into the biblical tradition is like a transformation into another kind, and grounds the Jewish tradition in the Old Testament. The phenomenon can barely be explained historically. By means of the differences between the epigraphic and the literary remains of the ancient scribal culture, one can none the less identify the stages by which the moves to the growth of the Old Testament were made.

2.1. From Prophets of Salvation to Prophets of Disaster

The main difference in relation to the scribal culture consists of the picture of God in the Old Testament. It bears the marks of a religion of revelation, and comes from theological reflection: YHWH has chosen Israel to be his people, and requires from Israel a conscious decision for or against him. This means that the relationship is not self-evident, but was specially established and is connected with

conditions. Out of the natural symbiosis of YHWH and his worshippers in Israel and Judah, which are indicated by the remains of the ancient scribal culture, there has come in the Old Testament an exclusive relationship with God grounded upon faith and confession. As far as we can see, this picture of God has its roots in the prophetic tradition.

The transformation can be seen in the theological interpretation of the prophetic oracles. This interpretation brought about a change in the picture of God, in that it declared YHWH, the national God of Israel and Judah, to be the enemy of the two monarchies, and turned the previous court or cult prophets into prophets of disaster, who were committed not to God and to the king, but solely and only to YHWH.

Thus the oracles of salvation of the prophet of Judah, Isaiah (Isa. 7: 4, 7–9; 8: 1–4; 17: 1–3), were reformulated as oracles of disaster in a literary context, first in the so-called memorandum of Isaiah (Isa. 6–8). Just as destruction is prophesied for Judah's enemy, the kingdom of Israel (and Aram), so now the destruction of Judah is itself prophesied, a destruction that has been provoked by the people's lack of faith in God and decreed by YHWH himself. Both the nations, Israel and Judah, will suffer the judgement with which YHWH has threatened his own people (Isa. 6; 7: 9b; 8: 5–8). The memorandum in chapters 6–8 was the starting-point for the book of Isaiah: for the ring-formed composition of 'the vision' or, more precisely, the words concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 1: 1; 2: 1) in Isa. 1–12, as well as for the so-called Assyrian cycle, Isaiah 28–32, which centres on the fate of Zion, and for the oracle against the nations of Isaiah 13–23, and the scenario of the judgement of the world in Isaiah 24–7 and 33–5.

In the same way the words of Hosea in Hosea 4–9 and of Amos in Amos 3–6 were collected together and given their theological meaning. From the announcement of coming disaster for Israel come declarations of the divine judgement. Out of the complaints come charges and grounds for the judgement, out of the bemoaned shortcomings and the denounced bad behaviour, come sins against God. And in all this, the political barriers between the monarchies of Israel and Judah are removed. Israel stands for the whole of the people of God, which implicitly or explicitly also includes Judah. The destruction of both kingdoms means that YHWH has decreed the end of the people Israel. In both books, Hosea and Amos, the tradition thinks intensively about this end. The theological reflection has left its mark above all in the framework parts that were added later, in the stories of marriage and the historical-theological reflections in Hosea 1–3 and 9–14, as well as the oracles against the nations and cycles of visions in Amos 1–2 and 7–9 (cf. also Amos 4: 6 ff.).

The consequences for the picture of God are obvious. YHWH is no longer the national god of the two monarchies, only locally different from the YHWH in Samaria and the YHWH of Jerusalem. He is seen much more as the one God of the one people of God, who reveals his true nature and will in judgement. It is the end of Israel that makes clear the past and future of the relationship with God: what in

the theological meaning of the prophets has led to the break is the standard by which the people of God have been guided in the past, and by which they must be guided in the future. The restoration of the broken relationship with God presupposes the repentance of the people.

The cause of this theological new interpretation of the prophetic oracle is not difficult to discern from the prophecy of disaster. It is the destruction of Samaria and the kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE which also threatened Judah at least in 701, and caused the guardians of the tradition to think of the relationship between YHWH and Israel beyond the limits of merely political concerns. The same situation repeated itself about a hundred years later in connection with the fall of Jerusalem in 597 to 587 BCE. The laments of prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 4: 7, 11, 13, 19–21; 6: 1, 22–3) were, according to the example of the older tradition, retrospectively rewritten as predictions of the divine judgement upon (Israel and) Judah (Jer. 4–6; cf. especially 4: 5–6 with 6: 1, 22). Also, here, a core tradition, the poems concerning the ‘foe from the north’ in Jeremiah 4–6 constituted the point of departure for the literary development of the book: for the addition of further sayings material, the symbolic actions, and the prose speeches, the stories of the suffering and the personal confessions of the prophet, and not least the extensive oracles against the nations which in the Greek version of the book stand in the middle, as also with Isaiah, but which come at the end of the Hebrew version.

In general the prophetic tradition inserts authentic oracles with a theological new interpretation of them in the sense of prophecies of judgement. In spite of the political reverses, those who passed on the tradition held fast to YHWH as the God of Israel and gave up for it the people and the God of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In place of the rival national gods came the God of ‘both houses of Israel’ (Isa. 8: 14) and in place of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah came Israel the people of God. In all books a process of interpretation and actualization followed the understanding of the destruction of Israel and Judah as God’s punishment. The extensive rewritings paint the judgement in various colours and present ever new grounds for the turning away of YHWH from his people. With time oracles against the nations and oracles of salvation for Israel were added which in many books won the upper hand (Isa. 40–66; Hag. 1–2; Zech. 1–8). They take up the old, pre-exilic tradition of the prophecy of judgement or recent oracles of that old nature (e.g. Hag. 1: 1, 4, 8 and 1: 15b/2: 1, 3, 9a) but thoroughly presuppose the destruction of both kingdoms and the literary tradition of the prophecy of judgement.

In this fashion the books of the three great prophets and that of the twelve Minor Prophets gradually came into being. They cannot be ascribed definitely to a particular epoch, because they grew over the course of centuries, until the rewriting within the books (apart from small details) came to an end at the beginning of the second century BCE. Only the beginning of the tradition can be identified according to its content. It was the end of the kingdom of Israel under Assyria at the end of the eighth century BCE that was the trigger for the prophetic tradition in the books

of Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos. The end of the kingdom of Judah under Babylon set a second wave in motion, which began with the tradition in the book of Jeremiah and there, as also in the book of Ezekiel, continued a kind of midrash concerning the prophetic tradition. The next turning-point was the building of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (520–515 BCE), which was the impulse for the tradition in the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Between these times Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah are situated, prophetic books which reflect the end of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and await the end of the world. For the main part they come from the Persian-Hellenistic time, in which the other books were also considerably edited and received their extant forms.

2.2. From Secular Nation to the People of God

The idea of the people of YHWH is connected with the picture of God of the prophetic tradition. The prophetic tradition sees the mixed population, which was kept together in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah by means of the monarchy, united as standing under the judgement of God. Thus there emerged the higher unity of 'Israel', the people of God, an ideal entity which crosses the political boundaries and represents a theological claim. This claim was never realized in historical reality, but rather in the biblical literature. On the basis of the prophetic message about the end of the relationship with God was reconstructed the beginning of this relationship, the foundation story of the people of God, in order to gain a positive perspective for the future. For this purpose various single traditions were collected from diverse areas of the population in Israel and Judah, and these were formed into narrative cycles and historical narratives, which related the history of God with his people, the saving history of Israel. In this way the myths were born of the original unity of the two monarchies and of pre-monarchic Israel.

The development began in the pre-exilic period, between the end of Samaria in 722 and the fall of Jerusalem in 597/587 BCE. From this time come three literary works, each of which in its way offers a legend of the origin of Israel and at the same time indicates the relation to Judah: they are the legend about the beginning of the kingship and the kingdom of David in 1 Samuel–1 Kings 2, the Yahwistic primal history and history of the Patriarchs in Genesis 2–35, and the story of the Exodus in Exodus 2–Joshua 12.

1 Samuel–1 Kings 2 refers back to the beginnings of the kingship. This composition has been put together from old sources, which for their part have behind them a long period of growth: a tradition from the house of Saul in 1 Samuel 1–14 and that of the succession to the throne of David in 2 Samuel 11–1 Kings 2. By means of the hinge verse 1 Samuel 14: 52 and the linking narrative in 1 Samuel 16–

2 Samuel 5: 8–10 David and Saul are brought together for the first time, and the house of David, the southern kingdom, Judah, is declared to be the legitimate heir of the house of Saul, the northern kingdom, Israel. In this way Israel and Judah become a unity under the roof of the dynasty of David both on the political plain and also as a people. The Yahwistic primal history and history of the Patriarchs in Genesis 2–35 refer back to the beginnings of the people. They have been put together from various originally separate traditions of a sub-national and family milieu. They are woven together by means of genealogy and geography, and they are given a national identity and united with the national God of Israel and Judah, YHWH, in order to establish the unity of Israel and Judah. A preliminary step to this is provided by the old composition Genesis 26–35, which comes from a joining of the south Palestinian Isaac/Esau tradition in Genesis 26–7 with the north Palestinian Jacob/Laban tradition in Genesis 29: 16–32: 2. This was the example for the redaction which made Jacob into the eponymous ancestor of Israel (Gen. 32: 28 f.) and the father of Judah (Gen. 29: 35), and which in the form of family history described the genesis of the Syrian-Palestinian small nations. The turning- and crucial point of this redaction is the hinge passage Gen. 12: 1–3, which sets up a narrative arch from the primal history to the story of Jacob, and formulates the main perspective which sees the people Jacob/Israel that comes from Abraham in relation to Judah and the other neighbouring countries after 720 BCE.

Similarly, the story of the exodus in Exodus 2–Joshua 12 refers back to the origins of the people. However, in opposition to the two above-mentioned cases, it represents an exclusively Israelite standpoint. The nucleus of the composition are the Israelite and Benjaminite narratives about war (Exod. 14; Josh. 6 and 8) which honour God as the God of war, as does also the Song of Miriam in Exod. 15: 20 f. Through the insertion of the call of Moses in Exodus 2–4 and the bridging traditions about a wandering through the wilderness, there arose the story of the exodus of Israel from Egypt and the occupation of the land under Moses, Miriam, and (by means of the literary connection of Num. 25: 1a/Deut. 34: 5–6*/Josh. 2: 1 ff.; 3: 1 ff.) Joshua. The redactional plan is determined by the view that what has become Israel, the people of YHWH which is stateless and homeless, has come into the land from outside and is thus something very special. The Israelites of the exodus story do not feel themselves ‘related’ to Judah and the other neighbouring peoples, as opposed to what comes in the primal history and the patriarchal stories in Genesis, but they stress their independence. The Exodus creed was first applied after 587 to the brother nation which had now become stateless.

All three literary works, which react to the demise of the Israelite monarchy, remain situated within the parameters of the pre-exilic scribal culture in Israel and Judah. What distinguishes them from it is not so much their content as the situation that the conditions of life and the ideas that they portray have lost their institutional framework and therefore their validity. What was previously taken for granted now requires a particular grounding and legitimation in a historical

context. And what grounds and legitimates does not simply relate to one of the two monarchies, but binds Israel and Judah together into a unity without political existence. The unifying bond is no longer the monarchy but the idea of the one God which absolutizes the practice of monolatry within the former national cult and which ascribes transcendent aspects to the former national God.

As in the case of the books of the prophets, these three narrative works were permanently revised and enlarged in the course of the seventh century, and above all after the fall of Jerusalem in 597/587 BCE. The most far-reaching alterations that affected them were the successive incorporations of the legal collections in the area of the Pentateuch (the Book of the Covenant in Exod. 20–3, Deuteronomy, the Ten Commandments, and the holiness laws) and the redactions that were inspired by them in the books of Joshua to Kings, which together formed the diverse legends of the origin of the kingship (Samuel to Kings) and the people of Israel (Genesis, Exodus to Joshua) into one single large narrative story (see below section 3).

This great historical narrative story served in its turn as the basis for further accounts of the history of the people of Israel as well as of the kingdoms in Israel and Judah. These date from the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The origin of the people, so far as it is recounted in Genesis to Joshua, is the content of the so-called Priestly Writing. In a strict form, structured through programmatic divine speeches (Gen. 1, 17, etc.), genealogies (Gen. 5, etc.) and itineraries (Gen. 12: 4b–5; 13: 6, 11b–12; 19: 29, etc.), it recounts the primal history, the patriarchal history and the story of the exodus, originally from the creation of the world (Gen. 1) to the founding of a sanctuary at Sinai (Exod. 24: 15b–18; 25–40) which is the prototype and ideal of the Second Temple at Jerusalem. The ‘law’ of Genesis–Kings is here replaced by the ‘covenant’: the covenant with Noah, who guaranteed the survival of the world population (Gen. 9), and the covenant with Abraham and Sarah which guaranteed YHWH’s being for Israel (Gen. 17; Exod. 6: 7) and which is experienced and ritually mediated in the sanctuary (Exod. 25: 8; 29: 45 f.; 40: 34). Only later was the law (in Lev. and Num.) integrated, as also in the opposite way the law in Exodus–Kings was designated ‘covenant’ (Exod. 24; 34; Deut. 28: 69, etc.). These and other instances of harmonization stem from the fact that the Priestly Writing, which was conceived originally as an independent composition, was incorporated into the non-priestly account of the origin of Israel.

What remained independent was the new account of the history of the kingdom in the books of Chronicles, which recapitulates the history from Adam to Saul in genealogies (1 Chr. 1–9) and afterwards takes excerpts from the books of Samuel and Kings, which it then interprets. In the basic account the material is composed as the history of the kingdom of (Davidic) Judah, and is formed into the cult legend of the Jerusalem sanctuary by means of various insertions and particular traditions in a priestly sense. The work finds its continuation in the history of Judah and the Second Temple under Persian rule in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which, together with 1 and 2 Chronicles constitute the so-called Chronicler’s History.

With these two literary works, the Priestly Writing and the Chronicler's History, we meet in the Old Testament with the phenomenon of the 'rewritten Bible' that is widespread outside the Hebrew Bible, in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha.

2.3. From Secular Law to Divine Law

With the picture of God in the prophetic tradition, not only has the role of Israel altered but so has the will of YHWH. The decision to end the relationship with God because Israel has become guilty in relation to its God implies a will of YHWH, the fulfilment of which makes the difference between the life and death of the people of God. In the prophetic tradition it is made clear above all what YHWH does not desire. The social and cultic criticism of the prophets mentions conditions, including misdemeanours, which have happened at all times but which became the basis for the divine judgement of sin against God. In the call to repentance the will of God can be discerned: do good and not evil (Amos 5: 14 f.); devotion and the knowledge of God are preferable to sacrifices and burnt offerings (Hos. 6: 6; cf. Mic. 6: 8). But the will of God is found in no book. In order to fulfil God's will in the future, and thereby to avoid judgement, there is required the positive execution and fixing of that which is good in the eyes of YHWH, and in which devotion and knowledge of God can be concretely expressed. This gap was filled with the law, whose codification as the divine revelation of God's will goes back to YHWH himself and the mediation of Moses, and which thus in a theologically qualified sense has become divine law. It is not the secular law that has been theologized and become divine law, but rather the prophets who are the origin of the divine law and the theologizing of secular law.

The origins of the theologizing of the secular law probably occurred in the seventh century BCE following on from the prophetic and narrative tradition, in the editing of the old collection of legal sentences (*Mishpatim*) in Exod. 21: 1–22: 19 and its inclusion in the story of the exodus in Exodus 2–Joshua 12. The editing added social and cultic laws to it, following the social and cultic criticism of the prophets, and put the whole into a new framework. At its head stands the law of the altar (Exod. 20: 24–6) and at the end the cultic calendar (Ex. 23: 14–17). A particular hallmark of this edition is its stylization as a speech of YHWH and the use of the second person singular by which the nation and every member of it is addressed. As for the content, it contains nothing new. What is new is the paraenetic style which expresses the legally regulated solidarity with one's neighbour and the usual cultic obligations to YHWH as divine law. Its inclusion in the story of the exodus contributes to a new understanding of this story in the following way: the revealed divine law which Israel receives on the divine mountain in the wilderness of Sinai, an intermediate station on the way from Egypt to the promised land, stamps the

original legend of Israel's origin with the stamp of the divine law. The law book, which is called the Book of the Covenant on the basis of Exod. 24: 4–8, thus to some extent becomes the foundation document of the chosen people of God.

The next step on the way to the development of divine law took place in Deuteronomy, a rewriting of the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20–3), which stylistically and in its content follows the redaction in the second person singular. The original version in Deuteronomy 12–26 is completely dominated by the idea of the centralization of the cult and wishes to know nothing about the proliferation of cultic places sanctioned by the stories of the Patriarchs in Genesis and by the law of the altar in the Book of the Covenant in Exod. 20: 24 and was usual in the pre-exilic period both in Israel and in Judah. The central place of Judah, the royal seat and the temple in Jerusalem, which was lost in 587 BCE, was replaced by the 'place which YHWH will choose', in order to warn people about the threatened destruction of what held the people together. The framework in Deut. 6: 4–6 ('Hear, O Israel') and 26: 16 adds to the oneness of the cultic place in Judah the oneness of YHWH as well as the oneness of the people of God, consisting of Israel and Judah, by the address 'Israel'. As with the Book of the Covenant, so also Deuteronomy is taken up into the story of the exodus. This latter makes possible its historicization, which can still be heard in the election formula for the 'place which YHWH will choose' and introduces Moses as a spokesman. Deuteronomy finds its literary place between the arrival in Shittim (Num. 25: 1a), where Moses begins to speak (Deut. 5: 1a¹ + 6: 4–6; 12: 13 ff. to 26: 1 ff., 16) and the death of Moses, which is followed by the exit from Shittim under the leadership of Joshua (Deut. 34: 1a, 5f*; Josh. 2: 1 ff.; 3: 1 ff.). Moses makes the people familiar with the law in the land of Moab immediately before the crossing of the Jordan and the occupation of the land, the law that YHWH has revealed on the holy mountain, and adds the alterations that were considered to be necessary.

The Decalogue led to further alterations in the late Babylonian or early Persian period. Following the example of 'Hear, O Israel' in Deut. 6: 4–5 as the prologue to the collection of laws in Deuteronomy 12–16, it was added in Exodus 20 as the prologue to the Book of the Covenant, and then later added in Deuteronomy 5. In the same way that the Book of the Covenant is codified into being the will of God, the formulation of the Decalogue draws upon prophetic sources (cf. Hos. 4: 2) as well as a legal source: namely, the theologically edited Book of the Covenant itself. From now on it was not simply the unity of the cult (Deut. 12: 13 ff.) or just the oneness of YHWH (Deut. 6: 4), but the First Commandment and the exclusiveness of YHWH which was the chief commandment of the Old Testament law. It was then just a small step to the monotheistic confession that developed in the post-exilic period and received explicit expression in Isaiah 40–55. Belief in the one and only God not only forbade the worship of 'other gods' but denied their existence.

The development of the Book of the Covenant via Deuteronomy to the Decalogue is presupposed again in the account of the law giving in the Priestly Writing.

Just as Deuteronomy is a rewriting of the Book of the Covenant, so is the so-called Holiness Law in Leviticus 17–26 a rewriting of Deuteronomy under the sign of the First Commandment and the priestly idea of holiness. The Holiness Law and other laws were probably added to what was already an independent Priestly Writing. In the process a leading idea was not only the category of holiness but the idea of propitiation. The whole sacrificial cult, from which the rituals and the prescriptions come, was interpreted as a propitiatory cult in the context of the Priestly Writing. With the incorporation of the Priestly Writing in the non-priestly narrative, the giving of the law was enlarged in Leviticus and Numbers and also stretched over the older laws—Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, and covenant renewal at Sinai in Exodus 20–4; 32–4, as well as Deuteronomy in the land of Moab. It was revised and expanded in many ways in a mixture of Deuteronomistic and Priestly language. In this way there came into being the over-large Sinai pericope in Exodus 19–Numbers 10 which, according to the historical fiction, was recapitulated in Deuteronomy and which drew after it the law giving in the wilderness (Num. 15, 18, 19) as well as the plains of Moab (Num. 26–36). With the separation of the Pentateuch as the Torah of Moses or the Torah of YHWH—that is, the part of the canon later known as the Torah—the process of the theologizing of the law in the Old Testament came to an end.

This process affected not only the Pentateuch but also the other narrative books in Joshua–Kings. On the basis of the original form of Deuteronomy and its main commandment, the command for centralizing the cult, there was composed a first version of the so-called Deuteronomistic History in 1 Samuel 1–2 Kings 25. It was put together from the older narrative about the beginnings of the kingship in 1 Samuel 1–1 Kings 2 and the synchronistic chronicle of the kings of Israel in Judah in 1–2 Kings which the first Deuteronomist had taken from the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah and had commented upon in the sense of Deuteronomy. Against the background of the original unity of the kingship under David, the divided kingship which existed until 720 BCE is taken as an infringement of the command to centralize the cult. The division of the kingdom and of the unity of the cult is described as the ‘sin of Jeroboam’. The ‘sin of Jeroboam’ leads Israel first of all to its downfall by making it guilty *per se*, followed by the downfall of Judah caused by its ‘high places’.

After the introduction of the Decalogue into the law (Exod. 20, also Deut. 5), the First Commandment became the yardstick by which the people of God, ‘Israel’, consisting of Israel and Judah, was to be measured. This had far-reaching literary and theological-historical consequences. Under the sign of the First Commandment, the foundation legend of the people of Israel, (the story of the exodus in Exod. 2–Josh. 12) was bound into one continuous narrative sequence with the history of the kingship, the basic narrative of the Deuteronomistic History in 1 Samuel 1–2 Kings 25. The book of Judges served as the connecting narrative, a collection of old heroic stories whose oldest redaction can also be called Deuteronomistic,

but which presupposes the First Commandment and is thus younger than the original Deuteronomy and the first Deuteronomistic redaction in the books of Samuel and Kings. Out of the once independent literary work in (Genesis) Exodus–Joshua and 1 Samuel–2 Kings came the overall story of the history of Israel. From now on and following the incorporation of the Priestly laws and the priestly laws in Genesis–Numbers, there took place the secondary later, or post-Deuteronomistic, redactional activity in the area of Genesis–Kings over a long period, in many ways influenced by Priestly redactions. It continued until the overall narrative was divided into individual books and into the parts of the canon called the Torah (Genesis–Deuteronomy) and the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings).

2.4. From Divine Kingship to the Kingdom of God

Although hymns and prayers, as much as the oracles of prophets and the old legal sentences, belong to the earliest body of the literature of Israel and Judah, the biblical tradition adopted them at a comparatively late period. The decisive moves in the origin of the Old Testament were taken, as we have seen, after the end of the kingdom of Israel, first of all in the prophetic traditions and, later, in the narrative and legal traditions. The appropriation of the hymns and prayers into the biblical tradition first occurred, as far as one can see, after the end of the kingdom of Judah and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. This appropriation can be observed above all in those psalms in which an ancient core has remained. The examples are not very numerous; neither is criticism in this area very well advanced. Of the hymns, it is the group of YHWH royal psalms (29, 47, 93–5) that have been well researched. After that, Psalms 29 and 93 can be taken as fairly intact representatives, which praise YHWH as king and mighty victor over chaos. In addition, both hymns have undergone a few significant additions. The additions bring the people of God (Ps. 29: 10–11) and the law (Ps. 93: 5) into play, and add to the myth of the kingship of God the character of a personal (Ps. 92: 2) or national confession (Ps. 29: 11).

One can presume the existence of the old myth also behind the remaining examples of the YHWH royal psalms as well as some others, the closely related hymn of the theology of Zion which underwent much stronger revision. The revisions go in various directions: they declared the former weather-god, the lord of the whole earth and the king of the gods, to be the creator and sustainer of the world (Ps. 104), the saviour of Israel, and the judge of all nations (Pss. 48, 96, 98); they include the history of Israel and Judah (Pss. 47, 95, 99) or they allow only a selection of people in Israel to participate in the salvific actions of the royal God (Ps. 97; cf. Pss. 24: 3–6; 104: 35); the representative of the heavenly king upon earth, the earthly (Davidic) king, is stylized to be the messiah or the example of pious believers (Pss. 2; 18; 21: 8; 72). The revisions live from citations or allusions to the

other biblical literature and can be classified under the key words of universalization, nationalization, individualization, and the eschatologizing of the basic myth of the kingship of God.

The same tendencies have been disclosed by the form and tradition history of the laments and the psalms of thanksgiving. The old scheme of thanksgiving in Psalm 118 (vv. 5, 14, [15–16], 17–19, 21, 28) in verses 1–4 and 29 as well as 22–7 was collectivized, and in verses 6–13 individualized, and in verses 15a and 20 connected with a group of the righteous. The rescue of the psalmist from the threat of death and action of enemies had become an example that is only told in the public offerings of thanks (vv. 17, 19), but affects the assembled temple community itself. The ritual of lament and thanksgiving, as it was originally practised at the temple, is transcended in two ways: the individual psalmist and his fate stand on the one hand for the history of suffering of the people of God, Israel itself, and on the other hand for every just and pious believer in Israel.

Both tendencies have left their trace not only in the editing of older material but also in the creation of new genres and new types of psalm. The collectivization of lament and thanksgiving found expression in the new genre of the lament of the people. The national catastrophe of 587 BCE becomes the occasion for lament and request (Pss. 44, 74, 137; cf. Lam. 1 f.). God's presence and help are no more sought in the (destroyed) temple but in the recalling of the history of God with his people Israel (Ps. 74: 2–3). The historical remembering results in reflection on the guilt of the people at its destruction (Pss. 78, 79, 106) but is also a warning and something that brings new hope (Pss. 77, 81); sometimes it has realized itself in the pure praise to God in the historical psalms (Pss. 68, 105, 114, 135–6). In these psalms the history of salvation has come in the place of the old myth of the kingship of God or has united with it.

The other tendency, the individualization or making interior (spiritualization) of the lament and thanksgiving of the individual moves the personal relationship to God into the foreground. Here the mythological pictures and images of the old hymns and prayers become theological metaphors for the existence of the pious individual. For the upright, the godless both within and outside Israel are the enemies. His distress is opposition, while his deliverance is the certainty of faith. Several marks of the genres of the lament and thanksgiving psalms gain a particular meaning and come to expression in new compositions. In the dispute with the enemies, the godless, forensic language becomes more frequent. The pious believer protests his innocence and pleads for a just sentence (Ps. 26). On the other hand, there is greater awareness of having sinned against God. The psalmist confesses his sins, is prepared to repent, and prays for the forgiveness of his sins (Ps. 51). Both protesting the innocence and confessing the sins are grounded in deep trust in God that is expressed in the song of confidence, an exaggeration of the respective elements, the acknowledgement of confidence, within the psalms of lament (cf. Pss. 13: 6; 23). The relationship to God is formed in this text in immediate fashion; in other psalms it is mediated through the Torah (Pss. 1, 119).

Collectivization (nationalization) and individualization are based upon the universalization of the myth of the kingdom of God, which is met not only in the hymns but also in the individual prayers (cf. Pss. 22, 103). The universalization has come to be expressed in revision of older material, as well as in new compositions. There exist Psalms that are not just single texts, but which were created for the literary context of the Psalter, which is characterized over wider areas by the universalization of the idea of God. According to the Torah, which is referred to right at the beginning of Psalm 1, the Psalter is divided into five books by concluding doxologies (Pss. 41: 14; 72: 18; 89: 53; 106: 48), and the fourth and fifth books are structured through doxological formulae as well as *Toda* and *Hallelujah* psalms. In this structure is mirrored the long history of development of the Psalter. Individual psalms and their revision led to small collections and then, by means of various steps, to the extant Psalter. One of these stages was the addition of the collection of YHWH royal psalms 93–9, to the basic collection of Psalms 2–89. In the redactional conclusion to this collection, in Psalm 100, is expressed the theocratic concept which rules the composition of the Psalter from there on through diverse caesurae and conclusions in Pss. 103–6/7; 117/18; 135/6 to the end. The kingship of God over all gods, all peoples, Israel, and the righteous finds its culmination in the kingdom of God in which all creatures are cared for and the pious are heard and protected (Ps. 145, also Pss. 146–50).

2.5. From Wise to Pious

Like the hymns and prayers, the proverbs of the wise and wisdom instruction stories found their way into the biblical tradition comparatively late. One speaks here also, as in the case of law, of a continuous theologizing of Wisdom, a term which is also applicable to many areas of tradition: prophets, narratives, law, sacrificial rituals, cult lyrics, as well as wisdom. The process of theologizing can be seen in the comparison of the writings that are taken into the Old Testament: Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. It can also be observed in the proverbs, and indeed not only in the relation of the old collections from chapter 10 to the younger instruction sentences in Proverbs 1–9, but in the transmission of the sayings themselves. As with the Psalter, criticism is not very well developed in its attempt to distinguish the older proverbial material from the younger theological commentary.

The knowledge and ideals of old wisdom are brought together in the proverbial collections in Prov. 10: 1–22: 16; 22: 17–24: 22 and 24: 23–32; 25–9. Like the old collection of laws, the *Mishpatim* in Exodus 21–2, such proverbial collections originated in the pre-exilic period for educational purposes in the wisdom schools of the scribes. The passage into the biblical tradition begins with theological glossing of these collections of proverbs. In the process, at least three tendencies

become clear. The first is the connection of Wisdom with the fear of God. Prov. 24: 21 teaches that the fear of God, next to the fear of the king, is a wisdom virtue among many. This view of old Wisdom is the starting-point for later additions, which declare that the fear of God and trust in God are the basis of the older wisdom rules of life (cf. Prov. 15: 33 with 18: 12, 2: 4 with 21: 21), which substitute other standards with religious maxims (cf. Prov. 14: 26 f. with 13: 14; 23: 17 f. with 24: 13 f.) and in this way make belief in God the basic principle of wisdom (cf. also 10: 27; 16: 20; 20: 22; 21: 30 f.; 28: 5, 25; 29: 25 f.).

A second tendency can be seen in the introduction of the contrast between the righteous and the godless. The starting-point is the many oppositions which are expressed in the proverbs of old Wisdom, particularly the contrast between rich and poor. Out of the social conflict there comes, in the later proverbs, a religious opposition, which relativizes in a theological way the ideal of old wisdom (cf. Prov. 10: 16 with 10: 15; 11: 18 f. with 11: 16 f.). At the end the 'poor' is the righteous person (cf. Ps. 37), and the rich person is the evil-doer (cf. Ps. 49). But this religious antagonism is connected also to other themes, such as the broader field of correct speech and silence (cf. Prov. 10: 11 with 10: 10; 10: 20 with 10: 19; 15: 28 with 15: 23) or the central connection of deed and consequence, which is expounded as an appropriately just reward (cf. 11: 23 with 13: 12; 11: 30 f.; 12: 7 with 11: 29).

Finally, comes the third tendency, the problematizing of the human capacity for knowledge. In the old Wisdom the possibility of knowledge in spite of unpleasant surprises (Prov. 14: 12) is assumed as self-evident (cf. Prov. 20: 5). In a series of proverbs a gap appears between the ways and plans of God in visible phenomena and the human capacity for knowledge (Prov. 16: 19; 19: 21; 20: 24). The proverbs seem to say more or less the same thing according to the motto: humankind thinks, God directs. On closer inspection, it is possible to see particular variations which prepared the way for the scepticism of later Wisdom. At the end there is just the divine leading, which humankind is not in a position to understand.

The three tendencies in the theological editing of Proverbs reveal problems which were broadly dealt with in the younger Wisdom writings from the Persian or Hellenistic periods. Thus the didactic speeches in Proverbs 1–9 set out from the fear of God as the beginning and basis of Wisdom (Prov. 1: 7; 2: 1 ff.). With the personalization of Wisdom in Proverbs 8, they make the first attempt to solve the problem of mediation (cf. also Job 28; Sir. 4). Creation as such and the visible phenomena within it are no longer adequate. It is not possible to speak of a self-revelation of the creation.

The keeping of the fear of God and the affliction of the just through the experience of personal suffering are reminiscent of various theological (and literary) levels and their expression in the story of Job in Job 1–2 and 42 as well as the dialogue of the book of Job. In the legend of Job the idea of the fear of God is presented by God himself in a pact with Satan in the context of a difficult test. In the dialogues the theological ideas of the scribal schools begin to become shaky. They are relativized

through the appearance of God and his answers to Job's complaints in the divine speeches of Job 38–41. Both Job, the righteous sufferer, and also his friends, the comforters and representatives of pure wisdom teaching, are put in their place.

In Ecclesiastes, finally, everything follows in the path of doubt: the fear of God, just retribution, and the possibility of knowledge. Qohelet's attempt to unite the biblical picture of God with the Hellenistic belief in fate takes him to the limits of Jewish piety and theology. As the result of his spiritual attempts to justify what happens under the sun, he commends the principle of *carpe diem* (Eccles. 9: 7 ff.), not because there is no God but because he removes himself from human understanding. Against this serene, not unpius but critical position of Qohelet, there is not only a loud protest in the book itself (Eccles. 12: 9–14). The book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) can be read as an anti-Qohelet book which failed to gain access to the Hebrew biblical canon only because the prologue of the Greek translation names the name of the author, and because he did not live between the time of Moses and Artaxerxes, but clearly lived and worked later. Here the ideals of older Wisdom come to life again shored up by a Jewish piety which has developed from the biblical tradition: Wisdom and Torah become united (Sir. 24) and are for Sirach revealed both in the creation and in scripture.

The latest book of the Hebrew canon, the book of Daniel, is not so straightforward. It has come from the old didactic wisdom stories of Daniel 1–6, which demonstrate in an exemplary way how Jewish wisdom and steadfast piety are preserved in the Diaspora. At the same time this concept did not entirely withstand the developing Hellenization and the threat to Judaism through the attacks of the Seleucid rulers, particularly during the religious crisis under Antiochus IV in the middle of the second century BCE. The visions in Daniel 7–12, which were added successively, transfer the solution of the problem to the end-times, in which what is promised in the scripture and which has long since been decided in heaven will be realized upon earth. Instead of being satisfied with resignation and the principle of *carpe diem*, or referring to the current teachings of the schools and scripture, the pious in the book of Daniel have a long path of suffering before them, and reach their goal only in the resurrection at the general judgement (Dan. 12: 1–3).

3. THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

3.1. The Law (Torah)

The growth of the Old Testament is a process which took centuries, from the end of the eighth century till the second century BCE or, more precisely, about 100 CE,

when the Hebrew canon in all its parts was almost completely fixed (4 Esdras 14; Josephus, *Ap.* 4. 1: 37–41; *b. Baba Bathra* 14b–15a). The choice and division of the three parts of the canon indicate the end of the history of the development of the literature which, as far as we know, extended well into the Hellenistic period and continued after that into the literature of Jewish and Christian tradition.

The earliest collection which received recognizable authoritative value was the part known as the Torah. It includes the five books of Moses, the so-called Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The ‘Torah of Moses’ or ‘the Torah of YHWH (God)’ is already introduced into the biblical books as a reference point, although it is not always certain whether one is to understand by it the whole Pentateuch. On the basis of external witnesses (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Sirach, the letter of Aristeeas, the Qumran writing 4QMMT, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha), it is possible to conclude that this was the case from the Hellenistic period and that the separation of the Pentateuch as Torah thus must have taken place in the late Persian period.

The division is artificial. As we have seen, the narrative threads of salvation history go from the creation of the world in Genesis 1 to the end of the kingdom of Judah in 2 Kings 25. This constitutes the so-called Enneateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings). It came into being through the combination of the two older literary works of the Hexateuch (the primal history and the patriarchal narrative in Genesis as well as the story of the exodus in Exodus–Joshua) and the Deuteronomistic History (1 Samuel–2 Kings), which were linked together by the book of Judges and expanded in Genesis–Numbers by the addition of the Priestly Writing. The genetic series is thus Hexateuch—Enneateuch—Pentateuch.

As opposed to the usual view of the growth of the Pentateuch, we have not so far mentioned the well-known documentary hypothesis, according to which the Pentateuch was put together from four sources: the three parallel narrative works of the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E), and the Priestly narrative (P) in Genesis–Numbers, and Deuteronomy (D). More recent research on the Pentateuch indicates that only for the Priestly Writing and Deuteronomy can one suggest a sure textual basis that is capable of gaining a consensus. Everything else, the non-Priestly text in Genesis–Numbers, which is usually designated as J, E, and JE, is open to further investigation. In them we find a composition that has been put together from a redactional narrative story (theme) and additions of all kinds, individual traditions as well as pre- and post-Deuteronomistic and pre- and post-Priestly additions.

As one can learn from the history of interpretation, it is not possible to apply the source hypothesis to the non-Priestly textual tradition, and to separate the two sources J and E and their redaction together (JE) cleanly. Neither are the arguments convincing which maintain that this textual remainder is a literary unity which can, as a whole, be ascribed to a late or post-Priestly ‘Yahwistic’ redactor. It is preferable,

in dealing with the non-Priestly text of Genesis–Numbers, to distinguish between old individual traditions, their first redactional shaping into one narrative theme, and later supplements. In addition, it seems doubtful that the redaction which is responsible for the composition of the primal history and the patriarchal history in Genesis is identical with the redaction of the story of the exodus. The exodus tradition is not confined to the books of Exodus and Numbers, as has often been supposed since the work of Martin Noth, but includes the occupation of the land in the book of Joshua, which is the natural end of the story, as was assumed before the work of Noth and also by Julius Wellhausen and others.

It is the most recent literary additions that comprehend the whole context from Genesis, Exodus–Joshua, Judges, and Samuel–Kings, that is, the Enneateuch. But they are also responsible for separating the books. As a rule, the books gained at the end of the productive phase of textual production a framework that marked the beginning and ending, yet also gave indications beyond the book to the larger narrative context (cf. Gen. 50/Exod. 1; Num. 36: 13/Deut. 1–3; Deut. 31–4/Josh. 1; Josh. 24/Judg. 1–2; Judg. 17–21, especially 21: 25/1 Sam. 1–3; 2 Sam. 21–4/Kings). From there on it was possible to transmit the individual books on separate scrolls without the connection being lost.

In this way the separation of the Pentateuch as Torah also occurred. Deut. 34: 10–12 takes the death of Moses as the reason to declare him and his story as unique. The reference to the promises to the Patriarchs (Deut. 34: 4) also indicates that the whole Pentateuch, with the inclusion of Genesis, is in view. It thus gains its own particular value, even when the appointment of Joshua (Deut. 31: 1 ff.; 34: 9) points to the continuation of the history of Israel beyond the Torah. Moses becomes the epitome of an epoch that stretches from the creation to the borders of the promised land. It is only logical that he should be regarded as the author of the primal history and the stories of the Patriarchs in the book of *Jubilees*, which is a rewriting of Genesis 1–Exodus 15. In this ‘Mosaic’ epoch everything which will be valid for the whole of the future is instituted by YHWH. This shows itself in the continuation of the history of Israel up to and with the destruction of Judah, in which Israel founders on the claims of the Torah. But at the same time it is meant for all times, by which the ‘Mosaic’ epoch in the Pentateuch becomes the basis of Judaism and the further history in Joshua–Kings, the Former as well as the Latter Prophets, and the other Writings.

3.2. The Prophets (Nebiim)

The separation of the Pentateuch as Torah consequently isolated the books of Joshua–Kings. In the Hebrew canon they appear as the Former Prophets, after which follow, as the so-called Latter Prophets, the prophetic books of Isaiah,

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve. This arrangement presupposes the theory of the Chronicler, which is also shared by Josephus (*Ap.* I. 37–41), that each epoch had its prophets, and that the prophets were the chroniclers of their time. Thus the history writers were declared to be prophets, and the prophets to be history writers. In the so-called Praise of the Fathers in Sirach (*Sir.* 44–51) which comes from the early second century BCE, there is evidence for the part of the canon known as the prophets as a history of saints. The prologue of the Greek translation of Sirach, the didactic writing 4QMMT, and the New Testament, name it explicitly.

Since the work of Martin Noth, the Former Prophets have been seen as part of the so-called Deuteronomistic History that is contained in the books Deuteronomy–2 Kings and which, according to more recent research, was subject to various stages of growth, consisting of the putting together of blocks of material or horizontal additions, or both at once. The hypothesis assumes that there were originally two accounts of the occupation of the land, with one of which the sources of the Tetrateuch (Genesis–Numbers) came to an end, and to the other of which the Deuteronomistic History in Deuteronomy–Joshua began, before the two literary wholes were brought together, whereby the story of the occupation of the land was lost to the Tetrateuch without a trace. The matter looks quite different if the dogma of the documentary hypothesis is disregarded, and the tradition as we have it is looked at more carefully. It will be possible to recognize the redactional connection of Num. 25: 1a and Josh. 2: 1 ff.; 31 ff., which is bridged by the simple notice of the death of Moses after the fashion of Deut. 34: 5 f.* and becomes the framework for the oldest account of the exodus. If one takes further into account that the oldest Deuteronomistic redaction, the one orientated on Deuteronomy and the standard of cult centralization, is apparent only in the books of Samuel–Kings, it becomes self-evident that it is necessary to distinguish between the traditions of the Hexateuch and the Deuteronomistic basic tradition in Samuel–Kings (which is dependent on Deuteronomy), which linked the book of Judges and the secondary Deuteronomistic editing into the Enneateuch.

After the artificial separation of the Torah, the books Joshua–Kings were united by the literary links in Josh. 1: 7 f. and Mal. 3: 22 with the prophetic books in that part of the canon called the Prophets, and under this new sign were again connected with the Torah of Moses. Former and Latter Prophets are considered no longer as prophetic, inspired writers of the sacred history, but are also understood as teachers of the law, who summoned the people of Israel to obedience to God and his commandments, the Torah of Moses, and warned about the consequences of disobedience.

Like the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets also had their own history before they became the second part of the Hebrew canon together with the historical books. The prophetic books were initially transmitted individually. However, literary cross-connections between the individual books enable us to conclude that they originated in proximity to each other, and that with time they were

brought into line with each other. Literary composition took place first in the book of Isaiah, which was put together from two books, that of the First Isaiah in chapters 1–39, and the Second Isaiah in chapters 40–66 and in the Book of the Twelve Prophets which, for its part, came together from partial collections, as for example the series Hosea, Amos, Micah or Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The prophetic books Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and the Book of the Twelve together build up the *corpus propheticum*.

The number of prophetic books is hardly an accident, and would not be higher than what is found today in the Old Testament. Not without reason the *corpus propheticum* consists of three large and twelve small Prophets which makes one think immediately of the three Patriarchs and the twelve tribes of Israel. In addition, the books of the *corpus propheticum* are connected to each other by means of a clearly devised system of headings. Twice, once in the three great and once in the twelve minor prophets, the time of King Uzziah in the eighth century BCE to the time of the Second Temple at the end of the sixth century BCE is referred to: Isa. 1: 1/Hos. 1: 1; Amos 1: 1, and Mic. 1: 1 (from Uzziah to Hezekiah; Jer. 1: 1–3// Zeph. 1: 1) (from Josiah to Zedekiah); Ezekiel//Haggai and Zechariah (Exile and Second Temple).

Read by itself, the *corpus propheticum* thus covers the most important epochs of the history of Israel, from the Assyrian period to the Persian period, with glances back to earlier epochs from the creation to the time of the prophets, and forward looks to the end of the world. In many parts the whole is always in view: the totality of Israel, the people of God, as well as the totality of the peoples of the world. Of both it is said what God has to do with them and what he desires from them. The unity of God guarantees the unity of his diverse and sometimes contradictory action both for the unity of the changeable history which he guides, and its completion of the aim which he purposes.

The system of headings and the prophetic view of history which is bound up with it makes the *corpus propheticum* a proper complement to the historical books of Joshua–Kings, while the epochs partly intersect, so that there are textual correspondences in the Former and Latter Prophets (2 Kgs. 18–20//Isa. 36–9; 2 Kgs. 24 f.//Jer. 52). Through the literary link of Josh. 1: 7 f./Mal. 3: 22 f. and references to the ‘Torah’ in the books of the prophets, the *corpus propheticum*, in the context of that part of the canon called the ‘Prophets’, is brought into the realm of the law.

3.3. The Writings (Ketubim)

The third part of the canon, the Writings, does not have any clear order, but is a collection of books which, in accordance with the Jewish theory of canon, were chosen from the mass of writings from the Hellenistic-Roman period. It consists of

books which, either according to their own claims or corresponding traditions, originated in the time between Moses and the Persian king Artaxerxes (Ezra/Nehemiah; Josephus, *Ap.* I. 40). The prologue of the Greek translation of Sirach speaks already at the end of the second century BCE of 'other books' alongside the Torah and the Prophets, and thus indicates a third group of 'canonical' books. However, it was not until the first century CE that there was any kind of unanimity about its content. The heart of the third part of the canon is the Psalter, which is ascribed in many titles to David, and in 4 QMMT and in the New Testament (Luke 24: 44) is mentioned along with the Law and the Prophets. Like the part of the canon 'the Prophets', the Psalter is connected to the Torah through Psalm 1 and the quotation from Josh. 1: 7 f. in Ps. 1: 2 f. After the prophets as the teachers of the law, there follows in the third part of the canon the teaching of the law for a life which is in accordance with Torah.

In this sense there were taken into the canon after the Psalter the Wisdom writings, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, as well as the books of Ruth, Esther, and Daniel. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes recommended themselves in addition through their Solomonic authorship, which was also responsible for the inclusion of the Song of Songs. The choice of Ruth was assisted by the genealogy of David in 4: 17–22. With the book of Lamentations, which the tradition attributes to the prophet Jeremiah, and the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the history of the first and second temples of Jerusalem were dealt with, which [i.e. the history] as in the second part of the canon, the 'prophets', followed the norms of the Torah. Between those books which teach the way of life (Psalms and the Wisdom writings, Job, and Proverbs) and the historical books (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles), the remaining books constitute the group of the so-called Megillot, five scrolls which are related to particular festivals on which they were ordered to be read: Ruth (eighth day of Passover), Song of Songs (third day of the Feast of Weeks), Ecclesiastes (third day of the Festival of Tabernacles), Lamentations (ninth day of Av in memory of the destruction of the temple), and Esther (Purim).

3.4. Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha

Up to now this chapter has confined itself to the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament and its origin. The Old Testament is, however, transmitted also in a Greek version, the so-called Septuagint (LXX). Its history began with the translation of the Torah, which, according to the legend of the Letter of Aristeas, was undertaken at the request of the king Ptolemy II Philadelphos (286–246 BCE), and through the mediation of the high official Aristeas, by a delegation of seventy-two priests from Jerusalem, six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, the translation being completed in seventy-two days for the library in Alexandria.

Whatever one may think about the historical value of the legend, it must contain an element of truth. The spread of Greek language and culture in Egypt as well as in Syria and Palestine made a translation of the Holy Scriptures of the Jews into Greek necessary. And by these Holy Scriptures one understood first and only the Torah. Its translation was, and remained, an example for the translation of the remaining books, which followed by and by in a long process which extended into the first century CE. The oldest manuscript witnesses, Greek fragments of the books of the Pentateuch and the roll of the Twelve Prophets, come from Qumran and its surroundings. In the second century CE the Septuagint became the Bible of Christians, and from that point is also known from Christian manuscripts.

The Septuagint is distinguished through a different order and enlarged content of the biblical books. The three parts of the Hebrew canon are reversed and the books are divided anew: in the first part, all the historical books consisting of the Torah and the Former Prophets and the Writings are put together (Genesis–Joshua, Ruth, Samuel–Kings = 1 to 4 Kingdoms, Chron = Paralipomena, Ezra–Nehemiah = 2 Esdras, and Esther). In second place stand the poetic Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Job); at the end come the prophetic books (the Latter Prophets, Lamentations, and Daniel). In addition there come in the first part the books of 1 Esdras (3 Ezra), Judith, Tobit, 1 and 2 Maccabees (and in some manuscripts also 3 and 4 Maccabees) as well as the prayers and other additions to the book of Esther. In the second part come the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), in some manuscripts also the Odes of Solomon and the Psalms of Solomon. In the third part comes the book of Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch 6), as well as the additions to the book of Daniel (Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and the two prayers in Daniel 3).

The additional writings and textual supplements either go back to an Aramaic or Hebrew original, or were originally written in Greek and dependent on the writings of the Hebrew canon. They are rewritings or imitations of biblical books or additions to them which accorded with the demands and the taste of the Hellenistic period. They indicate the variety of Jewish literature in the Hellenistic-Roman period, to which, in addition to those books that were included in the Septuagint and the many other apocryphal and pseudepigraphic books, are also to be reckoned the Jewish-Hellenistic authors as well as the writings from Qumran.

The Hebrew Bible also belongs in this broad stream of Jewish literature. If, originally, this stream of tradition was quite small and limited to a minority, it found in the Hellenistic period much greater circulation and inspired further literary production. As the many copies found at Qumran, and the literary references particularly to the Torah and the Prophets but also to the Psalms show, these established themselves very soon as the basic content for an authoritative Jewish tradition. Only in the case of the 'other Writings' was a selection made which could vary and which, in some cases were for a long time in dispute, both in rabbinic and Christian discussion. The third part of the Hebrew canon, the

writings, and the enlarged content of the Septuagint, represent two divergent ways in which the growth of the Hebrew Bible or of the Old Testament came to an end.

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