

MICHAEL J. CHAN

# The Wealth of Nations

*Forschungen  
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe*

93

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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2. Reihe

Herausgegeben von

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (Princeton)

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93





Michael J. Chan

# The Wealth of Nations

A Tradition-Historical Study

Mohr Siebeck

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*For Katherine, Eden, Sargon, and Ludwig*



## Preface

The ideas presented in this book represent years of work, done with the support of family, colleagues, and mentors. While my name is on the cover, the book will always represent to me a communal undertaking, done with the help of family, friends, and colleagues.

First and foremost, none of this work would have been possible without my wife, Katherine Chan, who not only provided editorial feedback and support, but who also cheerfully endured a peripatetic existence, as we moved across continents and oceans in pursuit of degrees.

Throughout this process, I was fortunate enough to have two remarkable supervisors – Professors Brent Strawn and Martti Nissinen. In addition to being a remarkable human being and a productive scholar, Professor Strawn offered invaluable insight and support that shaped the project in fundamental ways. His course on iconographic interpretation was particularly formative in the early years of my Ph.D. program. Professor Nissinen was our generous host at the University of Helsinki, where the bulk of this dissertation was written. He provided constant and substantive feedback on the dissertation, and also created many meaningful opportunities for me to share my project and also receive input. The project was enriched in so many ways by the fact that Professors Strawn and Nissinen approach the task of biblical interpretation in very different ways, due in no small part to their respective educational backgrounds in North American and European universities respectively. I am deeply grateful for this cross-cultural, trans-Atlantic pair, and for how they shaped not only this project, but also my own scholarly identity.

I am also deeply grateful to the other members of my dissertation committee at Emory University, Professors Joel LeMon and Jacob Wright. Both advisors were generous with their time, expertise, and wisdom. The mentorship of Professor Wright, in particular, played a critical role in my young life as a scholar. Among my most meaningful achievements up to this point are two articles co-authored with Professor Wright.

Luther Seminary, where I currently serve as Assistant Professor of Old Testament, also has my gratitude for enabling the completion of this project in several ways. After I was hired in 2011, they graciously provided me with an additional year to complete my dissertation before formally taking up faculty duties. They furthermore provide financial support to hire two re-



search assistants, Michael Gold and Julia Olson, to help with manuscript preparation. Their assistance was critical and deeply appreciated.

Numerous other colleagues participated in the shaping of this project: Anneli Aejmelaesus, Ryan Bonfiglio, Philip Davies, Parker Diggory, Zev Farber, Jutta Jokiranta, Reinhard Kratz, Christoph Levin, Reinhard Müller, Jim Nogsalski, Urmas Nømmik, Juha Pakkala, Mark Smith, and Terje Stordalen. For their efforts, I am thankful.

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## List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D.N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. Princeton, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ARI	Assyrian Royal Inscriptions
ATD	Alte Testament Deutsch
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago, 1956–
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
DJD	<i>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert</i>
EA	El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of J. A. Knudtzon, <i>Die el-Amarna-Tafeln</i> . Leipzig, 1908–1915. Reprint, Aalen, 1964. Continued in A. F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets, 359–379</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> revised ed. Kevelaer, 1978
EBib	Études bibliques
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

GBS	Guides to Biblical scholarship
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford, 1910
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap (Genootschap) Ex oriente lux</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version
LÄ	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> . Edited by W. Helck, E. Otto, and W. Westendorf. Wiesbaden, 1972
LB	Late Bronze
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	<i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by J. D. Douglas and M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids, 1987
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische studiën
QD	Quaestiones disputatae
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RIMA	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study



SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>StudOr</i>	<i>Studia orientalia</i>
TB	Theologische Bücherei
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by M. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
<i>ThViat</i>	<i>Theologia viatorum</i>
TNK	Tanakh
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum/Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WNT	Wealth of Nations Tradition
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare

## Chapter 1

# Tradition History and Art History: Toward a Synthesis

### A. *Creatio ex Traditione*

*The prophets were never as original, or as individualistic, or in such direct communion with God and no one else, as they were then believed to be ... they were in greater or lesser degree conditioned by old traditions which they re-interpreted and applied to their own times.*<sup>1</sup>

Gerhard von Rad

*I jump 'em from other writers but I arrange 'em my own way.*<sup>2</sup>

Blind Willie McTell

*The kernel, the soul – let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances – is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources, and daily use by the garnerer with a pride and satisfaction born of the superstition that he originated them ... When a great orator makes a great speech you are listening to ten centuries and ten thousand men – but we call it his speech, and really some exceedingly small portion of it is his ... It takes a thousand men to invent a telegraph, or a steam engine, or a phonograph, or a telephone or any other important thing – and the last man gets the credit and we forget the others.*<sup>3</sup>

Mark Twain

In the contemporary Western world, creativity is often associated with originality, novelty, and individuality.<sup>4</sup> Truly creative individuals, we assume, create as God does: *ex nihilo*. Creativity, it is often assumed, is generated by isolated, idiosyncratic individuals, who transcend culture and embody radical

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 2:4.

<sup>2</sup> See Sean Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 194.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., *Mark Twain's Letters* (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1917), 2:731.

<sup>4</sup> Mark A. Runco and Robert S. Albert, for instance, argue that “originality” is “the critical contemporary marker of creativity ...” See their, “Creativity Research: A Historical View,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

other-ness. These assumptions about creativity are manifested in our intellectual property laws, which permit for a person to “own” ideas, as if the idea itself were the creation of a single individual.<sup>5</sup> But if the epigraphs above are correct, then the contemporary understanding of creativity is wrongheaded.<sup>6</sup> Human creativity is not the capacity to generate something new out of nothing; rather, it is the ability to assemble, arrange, and reconfigure in fresh ways what is inherited from the past – tradition – and available in the present. Human creativity, in other words, is not *creatio ex nihilo*, but rather *creatio ex traditione*. Under the sun there is nothing new (Qoh 1:9), only new arrangements of old compositions. Everything, as Kirby Ferguson puts it, is a “remix.”<sup>7</sup>

The texts of the Hebrew Bible are also remixes. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the Hebrew Bible’s authors and editors integrated concepts, commitments, and ideas from their environments into the texts they created. Sometimes these texts perpetuate the traditional material they inherit from the past, leaving it more or less untouched. At other times, traditional materials are refashioned into something novel. Whatever the case may be, every text in the Hebrew Bible, as Mark Twain would put it, is the work of “ten centuries and ten thousand men [*sic*].” The biblical texts were forged from preexistent matter. In this dissertation, the study of these inherited materials is called “tradition history” (*Traditionsgeschichte*).

Conventionally, studies done under the guise of tradition history have been mono-medial, focusing primarily on verbal phenomena – i.e., texts and their oral antecedents. But a fundamental claim made here is that, by assuming (either implicitly or explicitly) that tradition is primarily a verbal phenomenon, scholars exclude a rich source of tradition: *visual media*.<sup>8</sup> The icono-

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<sup>5</sup> On this matter, see again Kirby Ferguson, “Embrace the Remix,” n.p. [cited 10 May 2013]. Online: [http://www.ted.com/talks/kirby\\_ferguson\\_embrace\\_the\\_remix.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/kirby_ferguson_embrace_the_remix.html).

<sup>6</sup> Within creativity studies, the “ex nihilo” problem has been of particular interest, since divine creativity would seem to provide a model for contemporary interpretations of human creativity and innovation. For discussions of this issue, see, e.g., David N. Perkins, “The Possibility of Invention,” in *The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives* (ed. Robert J. Sternberg; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 362–385; Terry Dartnall, “Creativity, Thought and Representational Redescription,” in *Artificial Intelligence and Creativity: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (ed. Terry Dartnall; Studies in Cognitive Systems 17; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1994), 43–62.

<sup>7</sup> Kirby Ferguson, “Embrace the Remix,” n.p. [cited 10 May 2013]. Online: [http://www.ted.com/talks/kirby\\_ferguson\\_embrace\\_the\\_remix.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/kirby_ferguson_embrace_the_remix.html).

<sup>8</sup> Only rarely do tradition-historical analyses consider how visual media might contribute. One exception to this trend is Richard Clifford’s revised dissertation on the cosmic mountain tradition, which includes a very brief discussion of cosmic mountain iconography found on cylinder seals. See Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 93–

graphic stands alongside the verbal as a witness to tradition. When relevant visual materials are available, then, they should be utilized alongside verbal materials. In the words of Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger,

But when attempting to reconstruct the religious system (belief) ... we also reject emphatically the view that it is adequate to limit oneself to working with texts. Religious concepts are expressed not only in texts but can be given a pictorial form on items found in the material culture as well. Even those objects from a material culture that serve a purely functional role can be or at least might be an expression of certain religious concepts and elements of faith if they are found in contexts where they serve a specific religious function.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, the use of visual images in the study of the Hebrew Bible is nothing new and in fact has been on the rise in recent years.<sup>10</sup> Specific reflection on the role of iconography in tradition history, however, is largely unexplored territory.<sup>11</sup> In order to understand biblical traditions, however, it is the conten-

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97. He concludes that "The seals bring out graphically what the myth texts assume" (ibid., 97).

<sup>9</sup> See their, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>10</sup> There is no shortage of comparative research in biblical studies that utilizes iconography. See, e.g., Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1972), trans.: *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997); *Deine Blicke sind Tauben: Zur Metaphorik des Hohen Liedes* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984); idem and Christoph Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (QD 134; Freiburg: Herder, 1992), trans.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*; Brent A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (OBO 212; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005); Izaak J. de Hulster and Rüdiger Schmitt, eds., *Iconography and Biblical Studies: Proceedings of the Iconography Sessions at the Joint EABS/SBL Conference, 22–26 July 2007, Vienna, Austria* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009); Izaak J. de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah* (FAT 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Joel M. LeMon, *The Iconography of Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms* (OBO 242; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2010); idem, "Iconographic Approaches: The Iconic Structure of Psalm 17," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* (ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards; SBLRBS 56; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 143–68.

<sup>11</sup> The exegetical guides produced by Odil Hannes Steck and Uwe Becker gesture in this direction. See Odil Hannes Steck, *Exegese des Alten Testaments: Leitfaden der Methodik; Ein Arbeitsbuch für Proseminare und Vorlesungen* (rev. ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 130; *Exegese des Alten Testaments: Ein Methoden- und Arbeitsbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 128–29. For the English translation, see *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology* (trans. James D. Nogalski; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 123.

tion of this study that art history and tradition history must become closer, more regular conversation partners.

But in order to clear a methodological space in which art history and tradition history can interact, it is first necessary to discuss why tradition history has, in most cases, overlooked iconographic resources. At the center of this oversight is how tradition history has been historically defined, especially in terms of its object of inquiry and scope. Douglas Knight, in his dissertation on tradition history, catalogues no fewer than nine different ways of defining the tradition-historical approach:

1. A meta-method that includes the totality of all approaches to textual analysis (e.g., text criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, motif criticism, etc).
2. A branch of *Formgeschichte*.
3. Essentially *Formgeschichte*.
4. An alternative to and replacement for the literary-critical method.
5. An investigative step clearly delineated (in subject matter and criteria) from all the other methods of text criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, *Gattung* criticism, and redaction criticism.
6. Tradition criticism alone.
7. First an analytic, synchronic examination of a tradition, followed by a synthetic, diachronic step.
8. An examination of a tradition primarily according to its formal aspects, taking the contents into consideration at a later phase of the exegesis.
9. The type of investigative approach and presuppositions identified with the "Uppsala School," characterized by a "respect for tradition" and not just for documents, the assumption of a reliable and predominant oral tradition, and an antipathy toward the literary-critical method.<sup>12</sup>

Scholarly opinion is equally as divided over the primary scope of tradition history. According to these nine viewpoints, tradition history is concerned with:<sup>13</sup>

1. The history and nature of primarily oral materials, whereby the emphasis is put on this corpus in itself rather than on the oral materials as a prelude to further development of the written level.
2. Only the oral prehistory of a literary work.

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<sup>12</sup> This list was taken (sometimes word for word) and modified from Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Studies in Biblical Literature 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 20–21. The original publication is *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (SBLDS 9; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973).

<sup>13</sup> With some modification, this list was taken from Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 18–19.

3. The development of oral as well as written tradition units but not including the literary stages of composition and redaction.
4. The whole history of a literary piece – from its earliest beginnings as independent units of oral tradition, through its development, growth, and composition at the oral and written levels, and on to its redaction and finalization in its present form.
5. The compositional stage, virtually omitting its prehistory.<sup>14</sup>
6. The history of the occurrences of specific notions, motifs, themes, *Stoffe*.
7. The tradition streams – the milieu, background, heritage, or roots of the specific traditionists (especially with respect to the prophets).
8. The history of the people’s reflection and rumination on the basically reliable historical account of past events.
9. The entire religious “heritage” of ancient Israel, defined broadly.<sup>15</sup>

Although initially published in 1973, Knight’s accounting of tradition history and its scope generally holds true today, four decades later. A quick perusal of these two lists reveals that, with only a few exceptions, “tradition” is primarily defined in verbal terms. Knight himself concurs, noting that within biblical studies tradition history, “refers only to verbal traditions, that is, oral or written materials articulating in words that which is transmitted, such as stories, proverbs, laws, sayings, poetry, and teachings on the one hand and motifs, notions, themes, and ideas on the other.”<sup>16</sup> The latter half of Knight’s definition (“motifs, notions, themes, and ideas on the other”) actually has the potential to include visual materials, but as far as I can tell, Knight never understands tradition history in such expansive terms. As it stands, because tradition is primarily understood to be a verbal phenomenon, conventional approaches to tradition history give one very little reason to look outside oral media for relevant traditional material.

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<sup>14</sup> Knight’s own definition is closest to this one. In a recent essay, he writes, “The tradition under scrutiny for exegetes is the text, a specific portion of literature that may have come into being over a period of time but now exists in finished form as a written passage. The goal of the traditio-historical critic is to retrace this formation of the literary piece from its initial composition through its later stages of revision and to its final form in the text” (Douglas Knight, “Traditio-Historical Criticism: The Development of the Covenant Code,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* [ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009], 98). Later in the same essay, Knight contends that “The basic aim of any traditio-historical study should be to propose a plausible scenario whereby the given pericope came into existence, keyed to the traditionists and their ideologies and interests” (*ibid.*, 113).

<sup>15</sup> For this last definition of tradition, see Helmer Ringgren, “The Impact of the Ancient Near East on Israelite Tradition,” in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament* (ed. Douglas A. Knight; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 31–32.

<sup>16</sup> Knight, “Tradition History,” *ABD*, 6:634.

Odil Hannes Steck, however, is an exception among tradition-historians. He has developed a tradition-historical approach that begins with a more flexible definition of tradition, one that is open to the inclusion of visual materials.<sup>17</sup> For Steck, tradition history is concerned with reconstructing a text's *vorgegebene geistige Welt* ("antecedent intellectual world"):<sup>18</sup>

For each developmental state, the tradition historical approach inquires into the particular *impact on a text by its contents (intellectual, theological, or religio-historical)*. The tradition historical approach thereby determines the thought patterns, contents, concepts, or conceptual complexes which are presupposed by the text, incorporated into the text, or revised by the author. The tradition historical approach does not concentrate on the theme as it would appear today (such as the image of mother in the Old Testament). Rather, the tradition historical approach concentrates on very specific criteria found in the text. These criteria indicate the fixed contents of a statement and thereby indicate its involvement in an existing intellectual world. They register these contents from the perspective of the author, and thereby evoke how the addressee would have associated the contents. Parallel to the inquiry into a specific text, yet transcending that task, the tradition historical approach also concentrates upon the *context itself* (both the *intellectual* context and the context in the *history of theology*).<sup>19</sup>

Steck's understanding of tradition history helpfully acknowledges that, if one is interested in what a text has inherited from the past ("tradition"), one must begin with a broad methodological horizon that, while taking the text as its starting point, does not stop there. Steck's own dissertation, which deals with the concept of the violent death of prophets, is a paragon of his own method. He begins with Neh 9:26, which he argues is the earliest instantiation of the

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<sup>17</sup> Already in his dissertation, he began working out the methodological contours of tradition-history. See his *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967). Much later in his career, however, he acknowledged the contribution images might make to tradition history: "Wie die bahnbrechenden Untersuchungen von O. Keel gezeigt haben, bieten auch *Ensembles von Zügen altorientalischer Bildsymbolik* gegebenenfalls ganz wesentliche Hilfen zur Erhellung der geistigen Welt, die einen Text prägt." Steck, *Exegese des Alten Testaments*, 130. Note also that Uwe Becker discusses iconography under "Traditionsgeschichte" (*Exegese des Alten Testaments*, 128–29).

<sup>18</sup> O. H. Steck, "Theological Streams of Tradition," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament* (ed. Douglas A. Knight; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 183–214. Cf. James Scott's comments: "Tradition history asks the degree to which the contents of the author's statements are either determined by preexisting elements from the author's intellectual world or deviation from them" ("Tradition-Historical Interpretation," in *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* [ed. Stanley E. Porter; London: Routledge, 2007], 360).

<sup>19</sup> See Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 123. Cf. Steck, *Exegese des Alten Testaments*, 126–27.

tradition, and traces the concept all the way through the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the NT.<sup>20</sup>

Closely related to Steck's understanding of the antecedent intellectual world (*vorgegebene geistige Welt*) is the concept of "constellations." Developed and used by a wide range of European and American scholars of the ancient Near East such as Jan Assmann, Izaak de Hulster, Othmar Keel, and Joel LeMon, "constellations" are conceptual complexes that give structure and consistency to images, myths, narratives, works of art, etc.<sup>21</sup> Under the category of constellation, one could include, for instance, *Tierkampfszenen* – literary and visual type-scenes in which a hero combats wild creatures.<sup>22</sup> Presentation scenes, so common in the miniature art of Mesopotamia, also fit into the category of constellation.<sup>23</sup> Many other examples could be provided.<sup>24</sup> Making reference back to Steck's definition above, constellations are most similar to "conceptual complexes."

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<sup>20</sup> See his *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten*.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Jan Assmann, "Die Zeugung des Sohnes: Bild, Spiel, Erzählung und das Problem des ägyptischen Mythos," in *Funktionen und Leistungen des Mythos: Drei altorientalische Beispiele* (ed. J. Assmann, W. Burkert, and F. Stolz; OBO 48; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 13–61 (esp. 14 and 38); De Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, 61; LeMon, *The Iconography of Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms*.

<sup>22</sup> As Keel indicates, one finds the *Tierkampfszene* in ancient Near Eastern cylinder seals (e.g., the *Herr-der-Tiere* scene), the Gilgamesh Epic, Samson's killing of a lion, and in Heracles various monster-killing deeds. In fact, one can view an exceptionally elaborate expression of this constellation at the British Museum in the lion-hunt scenes from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh.

<sup>23</sup> The only book-length treatment of the presentation scene that I am aware of is, Martha Haussperger, *Die Einführungsszene: Entwicklung eines mesopotamischen Motivs von der altakkadischen bis zum Ende der altbabylonischen Zeit* (Münchener vorderasiatische Studien 11; München: Profil Verlag, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> For instance, Assmann describes the Re/Osiris dyad as an intermedial constellation that embodied two complementary aspects of time: "The Egyptians imagined the constellation in which Re and Osiris work together as embodiments of the two antinomic or complementary aspects of time, as a *ba* and a corpse, by analogy with the two aspects of the person in which the deceased led an eternal life, 'going in' and 'going out' as a *ba* in the *neheh*-time of the sun and 'enduring' as a corpse in the *djet*-time of Osiris. *Ba* and corpse would unite at night, the *ba* alighting on the mummy in bird form, thus ensuring the continuity of the person. In the constellation of Re and Osiris, this model was applied to cosmic totality as a sort of formula." See Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 79. Concerning the *djet* and *neheh* aspects of time, Assmann writes, "Osiris was the god of the *djet* aspect of time. He could even be called *djet*, just as he was sometimes referred to as *sf*, 'yesterday.' 'Yesterday': that which has taken on form, that which has been realized, that which endures, in contrast to 'tomorrow' and *neheh*, the names of the sun god as that which comes and is possible." Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, 78.



Constellations and conceptual complexes should be distinguished from motifs. Motifs are self-standing elements within a text or piece of art (e.g., a sword, a crown, a lion, a throne, a goddess), whereas constellations constitute *a coherent network of relationships among the elements of the constellation*. A motif alone (e.g., a sword) cannot be a constellation, but a motif may be an integral part of a constellation (e.g., an Assyrian king slaying a lion with his sword). In Steck's words, "The history of motifs [*Motivgeschichte*] strives for the history of the smallest thematic building block in the text."<sup>25</sup> Analysis of motifs is itself a valuable exercise, so long as one recognizes its limitations, and especially the dual dangers of minimizing the artistic or literary context and of "correlating adopted themes with diverse elements and with historically unrelated elements."<sup>26</sup>

Using Steck's method as a starting point, the term *tradition* in this dissertation refers to concepts, notions, and constellations that are inherited from the broader intellectual environment. Understood in this way, tradition is not limited to verbal media alone, but rather exists on the much broader plane of "culture,"<sup>27</sup> with texts and images constituting epiphenomenal expressions of tradition.<sup>28</sup>

As an interpretive approach, *tradition-history* is concerned with the identification, analysis and reconstruction of tradition in terms of its content and diachronic development in the Hebrew Bible. This approach has the potential to provide valuable information and analysis, especially for those interested in the development of Hebrew literature and the societies and cultures they reflect. In Steck's own words, tradition-historical analysis

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<sup>25</sup> Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 134.

<sup>26</sup> Although not under the guise of tradition history, a very similar point was made by Joel Lemon in a recent essay on iconographic methodology (see his "Iconographic Approaches," 143–68). This essay helpfully emphasizes the danger of "fragmentation," which corresponds here to *Motivgeschichte*. Lemon's views on fragmentation will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 A.

<sup>27</sup> Following the Edinburgh anthropologist, Alan Barnard, culture is understood here as a "shared set of ideas, skills, and objects." See Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10. Or, to use De Hulster's similar but fuller definition, "*culture comprises (1) means and measures of adaptation to/of one's environment, (2) the verbal, habitual and ritual actions of a community and (3) the ideas of a community*" (author's emphasis). See *Iconographic Exegesis*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> In a single isolated sentence, Steck himself takes note of the value of iconographic evidence for tradition-historical research, though, to my knowledge, he never employs such evidence in his own publications: "As the ground breaking investigations of O. Keel have demonstrated ensembles of strands from ancient oriental pictorial symbols sometimes offer absolutely essential aids for illuminating the intellectual world which shapes a text." Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 127.

will give the exegete reasons and scholarly evidence for perceiving the points at which the text creatively exceeds its own prior intellectual world and steps forth with a special, new assertion which at times may even reverse tradition or impose critical limitations. For tradition and innovation are the factors which mold most texts.<sup>29</sup>

Tradition history focuses its attention on how traditional elements from the larger culture are received in various kinds of media, in hopes of catching their creators in the act of transforming, maintaining, and even criticizing traditional material.

## B. Tradition and Society

A few comments are in order regarding the relationship between tradition and social context/location. In the past, some scholars have made social context an essential element of tradition. Knight, for instance, avers that “a tradition is the immediate property of a group or a community, i.e., it has a direct function for the people who transmit it.”<sup>30</sup> This claim makes sense in the context of his broader thesis that a tradition is a text, whose development should be traced as part of the tradition-historical task.<sup>31</sup> Given the technological and material constraints on writing in Iron Age Israel, texts would have been much more restricted socially than textual media are in the present day, making his observation all the more poignant. But when one defines tradition as this dissertation does – in terms of concepts and constellations that are inherited from the broader intellectual environment – it becomes problematic to make social location such an essential part of tradition’s definition. A much more flexible view of the relationship between tradition and social location is needed.

An example is illustrative. One well known biblical tradition claims that Zion is an inviolable city, whose welfare is ensured by Yhwh (see, e.g., Isa 10:27–34; 14:24–27; 30:27–33; 31:1–8; 33:20–24; 36–37//2 Kings 18–19; Zech 12:3–13:6; Psalms 2; 46; 48; 76). Although a number of prototypes have been suggested from the Late Bronze Age texts found at Ras Shamra/Ugarit<sup>32</sup> and Tell el-Amarna,<sup>33</sup> these are chronologically distant from the

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<sup>29</sup> Steck, “Theological Streams of Traditions,” 214. For an excellent, albeit dated, study of the prophetic rejection of its inherited traditions, see Walther Zimmerli, “Prophetic Proclamation and Reinterpretation,” in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament* (ed. Douglas A. Knight; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 69–100.

<sup>30</sup> Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> See idem, “Traditio-Historical Criticism: The Development of the Covenant Code,” 98.

<sup>32</sup> John H. Hayes, “The Tradition of Zion’s Inviolability,” *JBL* 82 (1963): 419–26.

<sup>33</sup> Other scholars propose that the inviolability of Zion has its roots in the Late Bronze Age when the Egyptian king had regarded Jerusalem as a special location. For instance, in

relevant biblical texts and represent only very loose similarities to biblical texts. A more convincing prototype is found in royal inscriptions from the Iron Age. For instance, the 9<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE Amman Citadel Inscription, found in an Iron Age level at Jebel ed-Dala‘ah, proclaims that Milcom (patron deity of the Ammonites) will ensure the inviolability of their city:

*m]lkm . bnh . lk . mb' t sbbt[*  
*] . kkl . msbb . 'lk . mt ymtn[*  
*] kḥd . 'kḥd [.] wkl . m' r [.] b[*  
*] wbk l . s[d]rt ylnn ṣdq[m*  
*d]l . tdl < > bdl t . bṭn kbh [tkbh*  
*] h . tšf' . bbn . 'lhm [*  
*]wšlwh . wn[*  
*š]lm . kl . wš[*

] Milcom: “Build entrances around about [  
 ] for all who besiege you shall surely die [  
 ] I will utterly annihilate, and anyone who agitates against [  
 ] but among all the columns, the legitimate ones will lodge [  
 ] you shall indeed hang on the innermost door. You shall indeed  
 ] extinguish  
 ] you shall be feared among the gods. [  
 ] and security and ...[  
 ] peace to you and ...[<sup>34</sup>

Similar statements about the inviolability of a city can also be found in the Aramaic Zakkur Stele. The inscription is found on three sides of a stele from Tell Afis. The stele honors Iluwer and celebrates the victory of Zakkur over his Aramean and Anatolian enemies. The relevant portion of the inscription reads as follows:

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EA 287 (a desperate message from Abdi-Ḥeba to Pharaoh) the former says: “As the king has placed his name [*ša-ka-an MU-šu*] in Jerusalem forever, he cannot abandon it – the land of Jerusalem.” For this translation, see William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 328. For a discussion of this position, along with citations, see Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Ort und Landschaften der Bibel; 2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 1:104, 120.

<sup>34</sup> After Martti Nissinen, with Contributions by Choon-Leong Seow and Robert K. Ritner, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (SBLWAW 12; Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2003), 202–203. Translation provided by Choon-Leong Seow.

kl [.] mlky' [.] 'l . mšr . 'l . ḥzr[k.]  
 whrmw . šr . mn [.] šr . ḥzr[k.] wh' mqw . ḥrš . mn . ḥr[šh .]  
 w's' . ydy . 'l [.] b'lš[my]n . wy'nny [.] b'lšmy[n . wym]  
 [ll] . b'lšmyn [.] 'ly . [b]yd . ḥzyn . wbyd . 'ddn [.] wy'm  
 [r .] b'lšmyn . 'l [.] t[z]ḥl . ky . 'nh . hml[ktk . w'nh . ']  
 [q]m . 'm[k] . w'nh [.] 'ḥšlk . mn [.] kl . [mlky' . 'l . zy .]  
 mh'w . 'lyk . mšr [.]

All these kings set up a siege against Hazr[ak].

They raised a wall higher than the wall of Hazr[ak]. They dug a moat deeper than [its] moa[t].

But I lifted my hands to Baalshamayn, and Baalshamay[n] answered me, [and]

Baalshamayn [spoke] to me [thr]ough seers and through visionaries, [and] Baalshamayn [said], “F[e]ar not, for I have made [you] king, [and I who will st]and with [you], and I will deliver you from all [these kings who] have forced a siege against you!<sup>35</sup>

These Iron Age royal inscriptions bear witness to a tradition that a deity protects the city over which the deity was a patron. That Zion (Yhwh’s chosen abode) is inviolable, then, is not unique to Jerusalem, and one need not look beyond the Iron Age for credible prototypes. Rather, the defense of a city was part of a patron deity’s obligation to its worshippers and was probably a belief held throughout much of the ancient Near East.<sup>36</sup>

Regarding social location, the aforementioned inscriptions were almost certainly produced under the auspices of royal courts. Both their content and the medium on which they were inscribed suggests as much. The importance of the inviolability tradition to ancient Near Eastern kings is illustrated in the promise of protection given by Isaiah to Hezekiah (see, e.g., 2 Kings 18–19; Isaiah 36–37). A number of biblical psalms reflecting this tradition, moreover, probably also have their origins in the official cult (see, e.g., Psalms 46, 48, 76). Jeremiah 7:1–15, however, is an excellent example of just how easily this tradition migrated into other social settings. In Jer 7:1–15, the prophet vigorously opposes his audience’s trust in Zion’s inviolability, represented by the threefold cry, *hykl yhwh hykl yhwh hykl yhwh* (“The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord,” Jer 7:4; see also vv. 5–7). The inviolability tradition, in this, was employed for polemical reasons. Jeremiah 7 demonstrates the highly mobile nature of the inviolability tradition. The tradition is (1) part of temple and royal ideology, (2) a component in the religious belief system of some Judahites, and, at the same time, (3) integral

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, 206.

<sup>36</sup> See also the very brief comments on the defeat of enemies at temples in Leslie J. Hoppe, *The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 32.

to the polemic of this Jeremianic text. The inviolability tradition in other words is socially nomadic, existing in multiple social spheres simultaneously.

Clearly, the tracking a tradition's social location plays an important role in tradition history, allowing one to see the degree to which a tradition is bound (or not) to particular social locations. Determining the social settings in which a tradition functioned, then, is fundamental to the tradition-historical task, insofar as mapping where a tradition has travelled can help illuminate why it has changed or even remained the same over time and where it was deemed significant.

### C. Tradition History (*Traditionsgeschichte*) and Transmission History (*Überlieferungsgeschichte*)

The discussion above assumes a distinction between *Überlieferungsgeschichte* ("transmission history") and *Traditionsgeschichte* ("tradition history"). Methodologically, this is an important distinction to make because the two terms are often used synonymously in secondary literature. *Überlieferungsgeschichte* is concerned with the literary and oral history of a text, whereas *Traditionsgeschichte*, as delineated above, is concerned with discerning inherited traditions from the text's antecedent intellectual world (*vorgegebene geistige Welt*).<sup>37</sup> Both approaches are distinct exegetical moves that are driven by fundamentally different questions. Let me provide two examples – one from the great American novel, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville (1819–1891), and one from the book of Jeremiah – of how these two distinct approaches play out in textual analysis.

A transmission-historical study of *Moby Dick* would retrace the history of the novel from Melville's earliest drafts to its full-blown publication as a book. But this would be no easy task, as Ishmael, one of the main characters in *Moby Dick*, suggests when he says, "God keep me from even completing any-

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<sup>37</sup> See Steck, "Theological Streams of Tradition," 190. Douglas Knight has also pointed out this tendency in the work of Steck: "We have seen above that Steck proposes to distinguish sharply between 'Überlieferungsgeschichte' and 'Traditionsgeschichte.' The former corresponds more or less to our definition of tradition history ... 'Traditionsgeschichte,' on the other hand, is the investigation of individual conceptions or notions ('Vorstellungen') as well as tradition streams ('theologische Strömungen')." Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 142–43. On a very general level, Knight has accurately described Steck's approach. Although, I do think that the scope of tradition-historical inquiry in Steck is somewhat broader. It is not only concerned with *Vorstellungen* and *Strömungen*; it is also concerned with the whole antecedent intellectual world of a text, and the way in which that world impresses itself on the text.