

CANONS ON THE RIGHT AND CANONS ON THE LEFT: FINDING A RESOLUTION IN THE CANON DEBATE¹

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About a decade ago Ian Provan wrote an insightful essay evaluating Brevard Childs's influence on biblical studies and OT theology.² The title of the essay—"Canons to the left of him"—alluded to Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," and suggested that the OT scholar had been involved in a battle for his views, particularly from the theological left. This metaphor of war is an apt description for describing the current controversy regarding the OT canon, and Tennyson's poem is particularly fitting to describe the difficulty ahead for anyone venturing into the area of determining the shape and content of the OT. There are canons both blazing on the right and left and a veritable minefield of difficulties in front and behind including those of terminology, theology, history, and text. Nevertheless, let us begin our charge.

The field of OT canonical studies can be confusing. A recent book on the Septuagint has a lengthy introduction by a renowned text critic who presents a fundamentally different account of canonization than that of the author, another noted scholar.³ There the two views lie in tension without explanation. In a recent book on the canon debate, it seems as if the debate recorded there is largely an internal one among members of one side.⁴ And in different articles and papers, one sometimes gets wrong impressions about which

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¹ This is a revision of a paper presented at a plenary session for the annual meeting of Institute of Biblical Research, San Diego, November 2007. I have profited from the criticisms and advice of many scholars who have either read or heard the paper, including Peter Gentry, Keith Bodner, Barry Smith, Richard Hess, R. Timothy McLay, Lee McDonald, and Edwin Yamauchi. Even though I have substantial disagreements with some of these scholars, I remain in considerable debt to their work.

² I. Provan, "Canons to the Left of Him: Brevard Childs, His Critics and the Future of Old Testament Theology," *SJT* 50 (1997) 1–38.

³ M. Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). See the Introduction written by Robert Hanhart (pp. 1–17).

⁴ Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 2002). There were strong efforts to make the debate representative (see p. 17), but the omissions noted read like a *Who's Who* for one perspective in the field of canonical studies: Bruce Metzger, Roger Beckwith, Earle Ellis, Brevard Childs, and the late Gerald Sheppard. Lee McDonald wrote to these scholars asking for a contribution, but for one reason or another his offer was not accepted (personal communication). One claims not to have received an invitation: R. Beckwith, "Review of McDonald and Sanders, *Canon Debate*," *Them* 29 (2004) 104.

perspective has become dominant in the field.⁵ Moreover, recent comparative studies in ancient literacy and education are leading to revisions of some scholars' views.⁶

It is clear that older conceptions of canon have become outmoded and new ones are vying for legitimacy. As of yet there is no consensus but there is largely a minority view—a small canon on the right, that of maximalism,⁷ and a majority view—a large canon on the left, that of minimalism.⁸ The maximalist position essentially argues that the Hebrew Bible/OT was a “done deal” by the time of the early church and the early church was born “with a canon in its hands.” This certainty became blurred as the church grew away from its roots in Judaism as evidenced in the lists of the Western church and

⁵ See, e.g., C. Seitz, “Two Testaments and the Failure of One Tradition History,” in Scott J. Hafemann, ed., *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002) 199–206, who seems to convey the impression that one side of the debate has won the day. See also H. G. L. Peels, who draws a similar conclusion (“The Blood from Abel to Zechariah [Matthew 23,35; Luke 11,50f.],” *ZAW* 113 [2001] 600–601). I am in sympathy with both conclusions but this does not necessarily coincide with reality. Stephen Chapman's assessment of the real state of affairs is more accurate: “With minimal adjustments and qualifications, this linear three-stage model of Old Testament canon formation remains the majority view today, continues to be upheld by leading scholars and appears in most of the current introductory handbooks and textbooks in the field.” See “Reclaiming Inspiration for the Bible and the Canon of the Old Testament,” in Craig Bartholomew *et al.*, *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 7; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) 168–69.

⁶ See, e.g., D. M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Such studies have resulted in some significant changes in Carr's views on canon. See also his rethinking of the practices of scribalism in tenth-century Israel: “The Tel Zayit Abecedary in (Social) Context,” in Ron E. Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter Jr., eds., *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 124–26. I am in debt to E. Yamauchi for referring me to this latter book.

⁷ S. Leimann, *The Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamden: Archon, 1976); R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); P. Davies, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998); A. Steinmann, *Oracles of God: The Old Testament Canon* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999). There are different nuances in this position but essentially the nascent church inherits an authoritative collection of sacred literature.

⁸ J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); P. Ackroyd, “The Open Canon,” in *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1987) 209–24; J. Sanders, “Canon. Hebrew Bible.” in *ABD* 1:837–52; L. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (2d ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995); idem, *The Biblical Canon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007); D. Carr, “Canon in the Context of Community: An Outline of the Formation of the Tanakh and the Christian Bible,” in R. D. Weis and D. M. Carr, eds., *A Gift of God in Due Season. Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders* (JSOTSS 225; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996) 22–65; James VanderKam, *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism* (Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement 62; Leiden: Brill, 2000); E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). It should be noted that these views do not necessarily correlate with conservative and liberal theological views. There are those who are maximalists who are far to the left theologically and there are minimalists who are evangelicals.

the great Greek codices.⁹ The attempt in the church to clarify its canon led to the classic debate between Augustine and Jerome and the latter's decision in favor of the Hebrew. One scholar has pointed out that if it were not for Augustine, many books would have been lost to the church; if it were not for Jerome, many books would not have been distinguished.¹⁰

The minimalist position would disagree with this assessment, arguing that the evidence would suggest otherwise; the completed canon was not a fact at least by the early second century AD. Uncertainty and vagueness gave way to increasing clarity and certainty, and the canon was not settled until probably the second or third century in Judaism and the fourth or fifth century in the church, and then gave rise to competing canons which differed in details.¹¹ In many ways, the OT canon of the church was a Christian creation and not a Jewish one.¹²

The left argues that the right is guilty of assuming a traditional view of the canon at the outset of the investigation and reading it into the evidence—a sort of over-reading of the evidence from a later point of view.¹³ The right argues that the left is guilty of under reading the early evidence and defining canon in such a way that only the explicit listing of a closed collection constitutes evidence for canon.¹⁴ And in many ways the minimalist, majority position essentially perpetuates the three-stage model popularized in the 19th century by H. E. Ryle, although with some minor adjustments.¹⁵

What I propose to do in this paper is threefold. To continue with the military metaphor I would like, first, to consider some flashpoint issues

⁹ See, e.g., the differences between the Eastern and Western Lists in A. C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) 58–59. The need for clarification is shown especially in Melito's need to go to the East for more clarification ("I learned accurately the books of the Old Testament"; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 4.26.41) and Athanasius's statement: "Inasmuch as some have taken in hand to draw up for themselves an arrangement of the so-called apocryphal books, and to intersperse them with divinely inspired scripture . . . it has seemed good to me also to set forth in order the books which are included in the *canon* and have been delivered to us with accreditation that they are divine"; *39th Festal Letter*).

¹⁰ D. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004) 27.

¹¹ See, e.g., J. M. Auwers and H. J. De Jonge, eds., *The Biblical Canons* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003); John Barton and Julia Bowden, *The Original Story: God, Israel and the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 1–8.

¹² A. C. Sundberg Jr., "The Old Testament: A Christian Canon," *CBQ* 30 (1968) 143–55.

¹³ J. Barton, "Review of R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*," *Theology* 90 (1987) 63–65; McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 108–9. This is one of the main points that Eugene Ulrich and Timothy McLay make: E. Ulrich, "The Notion and Definition of Canon," in McDonald and Sanders, *Canon Debate* 21–30; R. Timothy McLay, "The Use of the Septuagint in the New Testament," in McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 228–30.

¹⁴ Steinmann, *Oracles of God* 184ff. Cf. R. Beckwith, "A Modern Theory of the Old Testament Canon," *VT* 41(1991) 385–95.

¹⁵ Ryle's view essentially argued that the Torah was the first text canonized around the fifth century BC, followed by the Prophets in about 200 BC. The canon was closed with the addition of the Writings about AD 90 by a Jewish council in Jamnia. See further Herbert Edward Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament: An Essay on the Gradual Growth and Formation of the Hebrew Canon of Scripture* (2d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1904). Contemporary minimalist views extend the period of canonization until well into the second and third century AD.

relating to canon; second, to study some key flashpoint texts which are interpreted very differently by the two perspectives; and, finally, to suggest a possible resolution to the conflict.

I. FLASHPOINT ISSUES

1. *Semantic issues.* It is often pointed out that the term “canon” is late and was not applied to biblical books until the fourth century AD.¹⁶ In Athanasius’s thirty-ninth Festal Letter it is used to signify a closed list of books which were deemed authoritative for all time since they were considered divine revelation. Although the word “canon” was used here for the first time to denote a list of absolutely authoritative books, the concept was not completely new. The church simply used a word, which indicated a standard or model, to signify a collection of literature. But the concept of an authoritative collection of literature can be traced right back to the beginnings of Israelite history with the Ten Words, which were to be distinguished by being placed in a sacred receptacle located in a sacred chamber within a sacred tabernacle in ancient Israel. In fact, Lee McDonald makes this very point in one of his books.¹⁷

But is this like the later understanding of canon? The answer is both affirmative and negative. It is affirmative because it was the divine word to be obeyed in all circumstances and was put in a prominent place and it provided a restricted list defining the acceptable boundaries of Israelite behavior. There could be no eleventh command. But one could also answer negatively. Although this particular list could not be enlarged, it could be modified and further revelation could be added to it in a vast variety of genres.¹⁸ The late Gerald Sheppard makes a helpful distinction here describing canon as a final closed list as “Canon 2” and canon as a norm, an open-ended word of God as it were, “Canon 1.”¹⁹ A similar point is made by theologian William A. Graham, who has been followed by many others.²⁰ Graham calls Sheppard’s

¹⁶ Eusebius may have used the term “canon” first with reference to a collection of scriptures (*Ecclesiastical History*: 5.28.3; 6.25.3). But the first unequivocal use of the term is generally thought to be found in Athanasius’s Festal Letter (AD 367). See McDonald’s discussion, *Biblical Canon* 51. I am referring of course to the ‘formal’ connotation of the term, used to indicate a list of books. The ‘material’ sense of canon as a standard or model occurs much earlier. For a lucid discussion as to how the material sense which was often used to describe classic literary works, which were exemplary standards and models in their own field, was applied to a list of such theological works by the early church, see John Van Seters, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the “Editor” in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

¹⁷ L. M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon. Revised and Expanded Edition. With an Introduction by H. Koester* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 20.

¹⁸ In fact, Meredith Kline helpfully describes this phenomenon as a “nuclear canon.” “The Correlation of the Concepts of Canon and Covenant,” in J. B. Payne, ed., *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (Waco, TX: Word, 1970) 266.

¹⁹ “Canon,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion* 3:62–69.

²⁰ “Scripture,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion* 13:142. This distinction is already an important implication in A. C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). Sundberg speaks of sacred writings being later canonized. This terminology is also used by Sheppard.

Canon 1 “Scripture” and Canon 2 “Canon.” Recently, Eugene Ulrich has pleaded for clarification arguing that the word “canon” should only be used for canons in the sense of Canon 2 and not Canon 1. Canon only exists when there is a closed list.²¹ Thus Ulrich argues that this will clarify matters and scholars will not use the word anachronistically, speaking of canonical books when there are no such things at all until a much later period of time. Thus, for Ulrich, the idea of an “open canon” is by definition an oxymoron.²²

While appreciating the need for accuracy, I also think that reserving the terminology “canon” for only the final collection of books obscures the continuity that exists at earlier times. To accept such a limiting definition might suggest that the canon did not have a history, only to be created *ex nihilo*, the result of a council “granting the imprimatur of canonicity in a single shining moment of beatitude.”²³ One of the important conclusions of a recent study devoted to canonization in the ancient world is that this idea of a late conferral of canonicity on sacred documents is a myth not only for biblical canons but also for non-biblical ones.²⁴

Consequently, scholars are not guilty of historical anachronism when the term “canon” is being used for an earlier period. The final stage represents a culmination of a process rather than something radically new. An open canon is closed. There are earlier and later stages of the canon. Sheppard’s distinction has the advantage at least of showing the continuity that exists between a collection of *authoritative literature* and a later *authoritative collection*. I will return to this point later.

2. *Theological issues.* There are important theological issues that are raised with this term “canon.” Does it represent the product of an elite group within a society that is interested in social control by cloaking its

²¹ “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” in *Canon Debate* 21–30. Of course the distinction is the same as “a collection of authoritative literature” (canon 1) versus “an authoritative collection of literature” (canon 2).

²² Despite Ulrich’s concern for anachronism, it is interesting that his own definition of canon comes from no less than eight different modern works which favor the idea of list and he notes that it is encouraging that the recent Access Bible, an ecumenical collaboration of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews defines it in such a manner (ibid. 29). While there is a certain irony here, personally I wonder if he is a victim of a nominalistic fallacy which ties realities too closely to words. For example, the ancient Mesopotamians had no word for “empire” and no word for “religion,” but who would ever doubt that these were not realities within their history? See Mark Chavalas, “The Age of Empires, 3100–900 BCE,” in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East* (ed. Daniel C. Snell; Wiley-Blackwell, 2007) 35. I am also grateful for the opportunity to have read an unpublished paper by Lee McDonald on this subject which indicates the semantic problems with the terminology: “What do we mean by ‘Canon’? An Ancient and Modern Question.” McDonald isolates three possible meanings which cause confusion: when a text is first received authoritatively, when it becomes acknowledged as scripture as part of a flexible collection, when it is placed in a fixed collection of sacred books (p. 19). It seems to me that whatever term is used, one needs to acknowledge the continuity in these categories as well as the differences.

²³ Andrew Plaks, “Afterword. Canonization in the Ancient World: The View from Farther East,” in M. Finkelberg and G. G. Stroumsa, eds., *Homer, the Bible and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 270.

²⁴ Ibid.

power ambitions in religious garb?²⁵ Or does this term describe literature which communities have found useful for their needs and adaptable to myriads of circumstances, reminding them about their fundamental self-identity—a type of canon from below? Or does the expression convey a transcendent function, a word which stands above the community, representing at times the opposite of what the community feels it needs—a type of large inconvenient truth?²⁶ I think it is clear that in the nature of the case it is the latter and this is the *raison d'être* for canon—it is from above and it stands above the community. The words of Amos and the words of Moses are not in the canon because they are their words but ultimately because they are *not* their words—words from below; rather they are words from above, communicating an ultimate view of reality.²⁷ The community recognized in them transcendence. Having said that, it is necessary to say that the words are not dropped in some timeless form, but rather they are truly human words which really met (and meet) the community's ultimate needs. For example, the exilic community in Babylon realized that it had failed to pay attention to the speakers of truth a few generations before and as a result was now suffering. If only it had listened! And it was that same community that picked up the pieces and became involved in the process of collecting and editing final editions of these writings.²⁸

The latest book dealing with canon concludes with some final reflections that reveal what is at stake when dealing with some of these issues.²⁹ A few of those reflections are implications of the minimalist position it reaches after considering the evidence. First of all, Lee McDonald³⁰ wonders whether

²⁵ See among others the following studies: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977); Gerald L. Bruns, "Canon and Power in the Hebrew Scriptures," *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1984) 462–80; Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1988); Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1998).

²⁶ The classic contrast is particularly sharpened in the works of Brevard Childs (transcendence) and James Sanders (immanence).

²⁷ See, e.g., Num. 16:28: "By this you will know that Yahweh sent me to do these things and that they are not from my heart" (emphasis mine); Jer 23:16: "The [false] prophets speak a vision of their own heart and not the word from the mouth of Yahweh."

²⁸ John Van Seters criticizes such a stress on the believing community as a gross anachronism since the "Hebrew Bible itself presents the Israelite and Judean audience of the prophets as hostile and unbelieving and the long history of the people as disobedient and unfaithful to the Law." But according to Van Seters, when they are of course presented as attentive and obedient, the writers have presented an "ideological construct." But surely the first point does not imply that all the people could be categorized in the same way; otherwise there would be no record. As for the second, it seems that he wants to have his cake and eat it too: the history of Israel proves there was no such thing as a believing community and when it appears that there was, it was simply a construct. See Van Seters, *Edited Bible* 376.

²⁹ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 426–29.

³⁰ I would like to make it clear that although I have sharp criticisms of his book, I consider Lee McDonald a personal friend. I have learned much from him and have invited him into my classes to lecture on matters of canon. He extended the same invitation to me to speak at Acadia Divinity College when he was the president. My comments above should not in any way be understood as casting doubt on Lee's robust confession of Christian faith. They are offered in the spirit of one of

the notion of biblical canon is necessarily Christian since according to its assessment the church's collection of OT Scriptures had more flexible contours than the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish canons. Second, he wonders whether the canon has been a mistake given the oppressive practices it has legitimized such as slavery and the subjugation of women. Krister Stendahl is cited to the effect that "there has never been an evil cause in the world that has not become more evil if it had been possible to argue it on biblical grounds." Third, it is considered a valid question whether the move toward a closed canon of Scripture ultimately (and unconsciously) limits the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the church. This echoes Tertullian's concern that "the Spirit has been chased into a book." Moreover, there is a related apprehension about whether the same Spirit does not speak today in the church about matters which are more significant now than then, such as the use of contraceptives, abortion, liberation, ecological responsibility, global genocide, social justice, and so on. Finally, all of this uncertainty about canon implies that the real canon for the church is *Jesus Christ*. While it is true that the biblical canon is still the church's book, the uncertainty about the Bible will help the church break free from inappropriate loyalties such as the idea of the Bible and aid the believing community to focus on the true object and final authority of its faith, the Word made flesh.

It must be conceded that the canon does not deal with contemporary issues that our culture faces in an immediate way, and unless the canon was dropped from the sky yesterday, it could not. It is inextricably woven into and shaped by the culture to which it was first addressed. The canon certainly contains much about various oppressions but arguing that it legitimates these practices is a hermeneutical issue. Frequently the Bible appears to endorse oppressive practices because a concessive mode of discourse is confused with a normative one.³¹ But it is often because the entire range of Scripture—the whole counsel of God—is not considered that this confusion takes place. The answer is not a truncated canon, a canon within the canon, or decanonization but an acceptance of the totality of Scripture. The ghosts of Marcion in the first

his favorite proverbs: "Iron sharpens iron." Lee has been at the forefront of raising difficult questions about canon and as a result has rendered the church a real service.

³¹ "Throughout the Bible one can find an *overall* message of human dignity and equality before God. Though there be passages which admit the existence of the institutions of slavery and kingship, that acknowledge that in life there are distinctions between people on the basis of class, wealth, and sex, one senses that the texts speak of these matters in a mode of discourse which is *concessive*, that is, they are part of a world order that may someday be no more. For too long the institutional Church has allowed the concessive mode of discourse to become the normative mode of discourse for human society, and social realities which were to be changed by the people of God were ironically reinforced by the institutional churches" (emphasis added): Robert K. Gnuse, "An overlooked message: the critique of kings and affirmation of equality in the primeval history," *BTB* 36 (2006) 147. Gnuse's point shows that the canonical hermeneutic of reading the entirety of scripture for its overall message is absolutely crucial for not missing the forest for the trees. See also the recent work by John Thompson, *Reading the Bible With the Dead: What You Can Learn from the History of Exegesis That You Can't Learn from Exegesis Alone* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Thompson's study shows that the analogy of Scripture was an important canonical hermeneutic in the history of the church, in particular for dealing with "uncomfortable" parts of the canon.

century and von Harnack in the twentieth offer an ominous warning of what happens when one feels ill at ease with parts of the canon.³² The people of God need the entirety of Scripture in order to have all the resources necessary for them to accomplish their mission in the world and in order to keep them from inappropriate cultural and political loyalties, to which they can often succumb precisely when they ignore parts of the canon.³³ When the Bible is considered as a whole, there are more than enough resources for dealing with issues such as slavery and other oppressive practices, sexual equality, abortion, ethnic cleansing, and the natural environment.

When the canon is the comprehensive context for reading the individual parts of scripture in “a hermeneutic of charity,”³⁴ the various contours of the Bible will be observed, e.g. that the finding of the hot springs by Anah in Genesis 36 in search of pasture for his father’s donkeys³⁵ has a different value than Deut 6:4–9. There are core testimonies in the prophets that indicate that the Israelites have missed the revelational forest for the trees. They are condemned for not producing mercy and faith while being only concerned for ritual performance.³⁶ Jesus’ understanding of marriage and divorce works within a canonical context which places the law of Deuteronomy 24 against the backdrop of the first chapters of Genesis and connects the historical dots.³⁷ Paul’s own understanding of justification works with a similar hermeneutical sweep by noting that the Law came after the promise.³⁸ Thus the prophets, Jesus, and Paul work with an understanding of the text against a wider canonical context, with a narrative shape. Without this wider context it is possible to make the canon into a dead letter, in which everything becomes flattened out into one dimension, in which Scripture is “proverbialized.”³⁹

The answer to the repressive use of Scripture is not to decanonize it but to take it more seriously in its canonical intent. In the early church the issue was not the problem of eliminating or domesticating an outmoded or culturally unacceptable canon to make it conform to emerging Christian beliefs (the exception being Marcion). On the contrary, “the problem was not how to square faith with an Old Testament regarded as outmoded but the reverse. How, in the light of Scripture everywhere regarded as an authorita-

³² On the connection between Marcion and Adolf von Harnack see Stephen G. Dempster, “Adolf von Harnack,” in Craig A. Evans, *The Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 273–75.

³³ The classic case, of course, is Germany under the Third Reich. See Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

³⁴ M. Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning and Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) 27–32.

³⁵ Gen 36:24.

³⁶ Hos 6:1–3, Amos 5:21–24, Isa 5:1–7, Mic 6:1–8.

³⁷ Matt 19:1–10.

³⁸ Gal 3:13–29.

³⁹ See, e.g., the use of scripture in the Mishnah: A. Samely, *The Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture in the Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

tive and a privileged witness to God and His truth, could it be said that Jesus was in accordance and was one with the Father who sent him."⁴⁰

Some of the other reflections by McDonald seem to be a reaction to a fundamentalist bibliolatry. This, of course, is to be rejected since it violates the first commandment. But the opposite error is to be avoided as well, the rejection of the canon as authoritative, for it is in this text that is found the importance of the first commandment and by implication that bibliolatry is a sin. The right way is not to set up a false antithesis between the canon and God, but to see the former as authoritatively revealing the latter. It is important to note that the only Christ that is really known authoritatively is a canonical Christ, one who did not see an incompatibility between the Scriptures as an immutable word from God and the fresh fires of the Holy Spirit. After all, when he began his ministry after his baptism, his chief defense against his enemy was not his charismatic powers but the use of Scripture cited authoritatively, even though it was misused as a weapon against him.⁴¹ "The Spirit has not been chased into a book," but rather the Spirit who had descended upon Jesus and filled his mind brought the book to his mind to chase away the tempter. It is interesting that Jerome saw the twenty-four elders in the Apocalypse as representatives of the Hebrew Bible bowing before the exalted Christ.⁴² Here the canon witnesses to its ultimate goal without any tension.⁴³ This is seen clearly in the conclusion of Hans von Campenhausen's magisterial work on the canon:

It is true that—as in the early Church—faith never comes simply from reading the Holy Scriptures, and that Christ not the canon, is the true object of faith; but the Scripture read in faith and with the aid of reason, still remains the canon, the 'standard'. Without adherence to the Canon, which—in the widest sense—witnesses to the history of Christ, faith in Christ in any church would become an illusion.⁴⁴

3. *Historical Issues.* Many of the standard views of canon assume that the starting point of the "religion of the book" is the religious revolution that took place with Josiah when the book of the Torah was discovered.⁴⁵ A further development takes place when the Law is elevated to a position of

⁴⁰ Hans von Campenhausen, cited in D. B. Layhem, "The Narrative Shape of Scriptural Authority: Plotting Pentecost," *Ex Auditu* 19 (2003) 104.

⁴¹ Matt 4: 1–11. This text dramatically illustrates the point by Stendahl that there is no "evil cause in the world that has not become more evil" when Scripture is enlisted in its cause. Of course, the answer is not to decanonize the Scripture but to take it more seriously as canon.

⁴² "[W]e should thus have twenty-four books of the old law. And these the Apocalypse of John represents by the twenty-four elders, who adore the Lamb, and with downcast looks offer their crowns." Jerome, *Preface to the Books of Samuel and Kings*.

⁴³ Note von Campenhausen's cogent remarks: "In the Christian faith from the very first both elements, Jesus and the Scripture, were mutually and inseparably related." In *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 21.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 333.

⁴⁵ 2 Kgs 22:8–20. E.g. Bruns ("Canon and Power") writes about the canonization of the Torah taking place at this time.

prominence under Ezra and Nehemiah and read before all the people gathered in a public square.⁴⁶ The Prophets are canonized later at least by the second century BC, and then the Writings by the second century AD at the earliest.

There is no question that these biblical stories represent the unique quality of written texts. But it should be noted that the religious revolution under Josiah is largely based on a critical reconstruction for the production of Deuteronomy.⁴⁷ Perhaps this is the reason why Nathan does not remind David that he violated the commands, “You shall not kill” and “You shall not commit adultery,” since he would not have been aware of any such laws. This is why James Barr can authoritatively pronounce that “in the time of the prophet Isaiah there was as yet no such scripture and he never speaks of there being one.”⁴⁸ But what if this reconstruction is wrong? A casual reading of even the first chapter of Isaiah must assume some type of core testimony of sacred texts to make sense of the prophet: Why should heaven and earth be appalled at Israel’s behavior?⁴⁹ Why has Israel been so severely judged and become almost like Sodom and Gomorrah if there had not been some type of law code, which had been violated and evident to all?⁵⁰ Where did Israel learn about its sacrifices and new moons and Sabbaths whose meaning had been so perverted?⁵¹ Why did the prophet say it was important to seek justice, defend the orphan and the widow, and encourage the oppressed?⁵² The prophet predicts that God will restore judges as in ancient times to make Jerusalem a faithful city.⁵³ Who were these judges from ancient times? The prophet’s words assume shared knowledge of a sacred tradition otherwise he is speaking nonsense. The other eighth-century prophets cannot be understood without this shared knowledge either.⁵⁴ Condemnation assumes an authoritative code which has been violated.

Many times such a code is understood as the product of orality. But why should it be and why should textuality and orality have to clash?⁵⁵ The

⁴⁶ Nehemiah 8.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Provan, “Canons to the Left.”

⁴⁸ J. Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 1.

⁴⁹ Isa 1:2.

⁵⁰ Isa 1:4–10.

⁵¹ Isa 1:11–15.

⁵² Isa 1:16–20.

⁵³ Isa 1:26.

⁵⁴ Amos cannot be really understood unless one assumes a core testimony of the Torah to which Israel is being held accountable. For example, in the first few chapters there is the following reliance on material of the Torah: Israel as Edom’s brother (1:11); the Torah of Yahweh and its statutes (2:4); garments taken in pledge and not returned at night (2:8); the conquest (2:9); the exodus (2:10a); the wilderness wanderings (2:10b); the institutions of the Nazirites and prophets (2:11); and the significance of election (3:2). In Hosea, there is a virtual repetition of the commandments highlighting adultery (4:20); a long meditation in chapter 11 on what certainly is understood to be a sacred history from the Exodus unto future judgment; and even mentioning the Sodom and Gomorrah story (Genesis 18–19) to indicate the difference between Israel and the nations. This is followed by a meditation on Jacob’s struggle with his nocturnal opponent in chapter 12 (Genesis 32). There is a similar “canonical” history in Mic 6:1–8 with the mention of the Exodus, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Balak, Balaam, Shittim, Gilgal, and the importance of the qualities of justice and mercy.

⁵⁵ This is, I think, an under riding assumption of William Schniedewind’s important book *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). But these two concepts

roots of the concept of canon go back to Sinai, with the giving of the Ten Words *written* on two tablets, and then the original *oral* proclamation of the *book* of the Covenant.⁵⁶ In the current controversy over literacy in the ancient Near East and in particular Israel, I wonder whether two revolutions contributed to the importance of the written text in ancient Israel, which was often used in oral proclamations:⁵⁷ first of all, the social revolution which must have taken place with the invention of the alphabet, making it possible in principle for the democratization of literacy;⁵⁸ second, the religious revolution of a divine word transcribed for human beings, which motivates such literacy giving rise to the necessary infrastructure.⁵⁹

Also, in historical studies of canon the book of the Law is viewed very differently from books of prophecy. But in the biblical text alongside the discovery of the book of the Law in the Temple and the reaction of Josiah which seems to spare the nation,⁶⁰ there is the story of the destruction of a prophetic book by Josiah's son, which ensures the destruction of the nation.⁶¹ There is a sharp study in contrast between the two responses to the sacred books, which implies knowledge of each story by the authors.⁶² My point is essentially that there is a prophetic book which should have evoked the same response as the book of the Law around virtually the same time.⁶³ The editorial

can complement one another rather than compete with one another. Textuality can preserve important oral occasions and be used as a check against unfettered oral tradition. For a much more nuanced and positive appreciation of the complementarity of textuality and orality, see Carr, *Tablet of the Heart*.

⁵⁶ Exodus 20, 24.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., R. Hess, "Literacy in Iron Age Israel," in V. P. Long *et al*, *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument and the Crisis of 'Biblical Israel'* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 82–102; idem, "Writing about Writing: Abecedaries and the Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel," *VT* 56 (2006) 342–46; I. Young, "Israelite Literacy and Inscriptions: A Response to Richard Hess," *VT* 56 (2006) 565–68; Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Jdg 8:14. Note W. F. Albright's remarks: "The 22 letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest; hence it could spread with great rapidity. I do not doubt that there were many urchins . . . who could read and write as early as the time of judges although I do not believe that the script was used for formal literature until later" (cited in A. Millard, "The Practice of Writing in Ancient Israel," *BA* 35 (1972) 102. Like Millard, I think that Albright's conclusion about formal literature is not consistent with his first statement. Note also that there was widespread literacy in eighteenth-century Sweden, a largely oral society, because of the religious importance of being able to read the Bible. See M. C. A. Macdonald, "Literacy in an Oral Environment," in P. Bienkowski *et al.*, *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005) 49–118. For a more skeptical position regarding literacy in Israel, see Christopher Rollston, "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary and Putative Evidence for Israelite Literacy," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context* (ed. Ron E. Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter Jr.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 61–96.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Prov 25:1, which is just the kind of disinterested text that can reveal an immense amount about the infrastructure necessary for literacy. See Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, for this assessment.

⁶⁰ 2 Kings 22–23.

⁶¹ Jeremiah 36.

⁶² A. Dearman has noted the similarities and difference between 2 Kings 22 and Jeremiah 36. See "My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36," *JBL* 109 (1990) 403–21.

⁶³ Bruns, "Canon and Power," describes two "canonizations."

titles given to other prophetic books probably emanate from the same circles and display the same idea of “canonicity.”⁶⁴ A recent influential study on the OT canon by Stephen Chapman makes precisely this point, that core elements of the Law together with the Prophets constituted Israel’s first canon. They both had equal authority and grew together.⁶⁵ While I do think that there are levels of authority and hierarchy, this is a point that is worth pondering.

II. EVIDENCE AND INFERENCE

After raising some important issues in this study of canon I would like to consider some important external evidence for canon and the inferences which are drawn from the scholars in the various camps. The evidence for canon that I will be considering is not exhaustive but is a sampling in order to present an indication of how evidence is handled. It is an interesting exercise because it provides a rare insight into the interplay between assumptions and evidence. Often scholars argue that in order to see clearly “the tyranny of canonical assumptions must be abandoned”⁶⁶ and a religiously neutral framework should be used. But there may be such a thing as the tyranny of other “canonical” assumptions and surely the idea of there being a neutral framework is naïve in this postmodern age.⁶⁷ In the limited space I have I would like to consider five areas: Ben Sira, Qumran, Josephus, the NT, and then the issue of text and canon. I cannot deal with these areas in depth but I would at least like to show the points of debate.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ “The specific intentions of the prophetic superscriptions are reflected above all in the particular vocabulary used to classify the books. The basic concern behind this language is the theological problem of authority and revelation. Thus the fundamental intention of the superscriptions is to identify the prophetic books as the word of God.” G. Tucker, “Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of the Canon,” in G. W. Coates and B. O. Long, eds., *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 56–70, esp. 68.

⁶⁵ S. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets* (FAT 27; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2007).

⁶⁶ R. Kraft, “Para-mania: Beside, Before and Beyond Bible Studies,” *JBL* 126 (2007) 3–27.

⁶⁷ John Van Seters’s (*Edited Bible*, 371–76) recent monograph is one particularly strong example of the voice of late modernity crying in the wilderness of postmodernity. Anyone who believes there is a theological force at work in the Bible or a canonical intentionality, or the Holy Spirit, is immediately written off as “confessional.” But he fails to see that his complete confidence in the historical-critical method—a method which shuts out any theological force from working in an avowedly theological book—is equally “confessional.”

⁶⁸ The inferential nature of the evidence is admitted by both sides: “One searches in vain in all of classical Jewish literature for a connected account of the canonization of Hebrew Scripture. What little evidence exists tends to be ambiguous and late. It is precisely for these reasons that passages strewn throughout the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Jewish Hellenistic literature, and the Talmud have loomed so large—sometimes despite their lateness—in the reconstruction of the history of the formation and closing of the biblical canon” (Leimann, *Canonization* 10). “The diverse opinions about the scope of the biblical canon are no doubt rooted in the complexity of the traditions surrounding the origins of the Bible, and what makes matters even more challenging is that there are no ancient documents that explain when the process of canonization began, when it ended, or even what a biblical canon is. Most scholarly conclusions about this process depend on the inferential evidence stemming from a few well known ancient texts rather than on explicit statement or discussions in antiquity” (L. McDonald, “What Do We Mean by ‘Canon’? An Ancient and Modern Question” 3 (forthcoming)). I am indebted to Lee for a copy of his paper.

1. *Ben Sira*. The work of Ben Sira is steeped in books which are later found to be part of the divisions of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings and not many others. Maximalists point to the fact the book is essentially a catena of biblical quotations and allusions.⁶⁹ But in particular there is the eulogy of the fathers in chapters 44–49 which is one long meditation on the Scriptures from Enoch to Nehemiah before Simon the high priest is praised. In fact, the heroes are not really introduced formally, as Ben Sira assumes they are virtually household names to his audience. Noted in this text is a clear separation between the first five books of the Torah and the Prophets, with Joshua considered to be a prophet.⁷⁰ There is particular mention of the Minor Prophets as a booked entity—and not as individuals, so that one scholar can say, “The main thing that strikes one in these chapters is that Ben Sira while following the chronological order of these persons (down to Nehemiah, though with Adam to close the series) seems to rely on the Bible as an established canon. Thus the twelve prophets are mentioned in 49:10.”⁷¹ Moreover there seems to be a use of Scripture in Ben Sira which presupposes an intimate knowledge of written texts as shown in the use made of citations, inverted quotations and unique word combinations.⁷² Lester Grabbe, in an important recent study, shows the indispensable dependence on the Bible not just for the heroes mentioned in this list but for also the actual wording of their exploits.⁷³ Clearly, there was a biblical text that Ben Sira had before him that was similar to what was later viewed as canonical in Judaism.

As for the minimalists, most of these elements are downplayed if not even mentioned. It is observed that Ben Sira’s purpose in the praise of the fathers was not to celebrate the writings in which the fathers were mentioned but rather the lives of the fathers, and it was not obvious that the writings from which knowledge of these heroes was taken were identified as Scripture. At

⁶⁹ See, e.g., the work of S. Schechter, who probably errs too much in seeing the Bible everywhere in Ben Sira: S. Schechter and C. Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book of Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899) 25–35. These scholars observe that Ben Sira cites virtually every biblical book except Daniel. For a contemporary maximalist perspective see Steinmann (*Oracles* 40) and Alon Goshen-Gottstein (n. 71 below).

⁷⁰ Sir 46:1: “the successor in prophecies.” Note P. Bentjees’s comment: “The description of Joshua in Sir 46:1 is strong evidence that in Ben Sira’s time the later terminology of reckoning the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings to the ‘Former Prophets’ was already in the air” (“Canon and Scripture in the Book of Ben Sira,” in M. Saebo *et al.*, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament* V. 1, Pt. 2, *From the beginnings to the Middle Ages (until 1300)* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000] 594).

⁷¹ M. Gilbert, “Wisdom Literature,” in M. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 283–329, esp. 297. See also J. Koole, “Die Bibel des Ben Sira,” *OTS* 14 (1965) 374–96; Alon Goshen-Gottstein, “Ben Sira’s Praise of the Fathers: A Canon-Conscious Reading,” in *Ben Sira’s God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference, Durham—Ushaw College 2001* (ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 235–67. Goshen-Gottstein argues forcefully for a reading of the Torah and the Prophets, with the Prophets being clearly separated between 45:26 and 46:1.

⁷² Bentjees, “Canon and Scripture” 596ff.

⁷³ See “The Law, the Prophets and the Rest: The State of the Bible in Pre-Maccabean Times,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 13 (2006) 319–38, esp. 324–26. Grabbe believes the Bible is essentially the same as the later biblical canon in Judaism with the exception of Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah.

the same time, “Sirach’s knowledge of them is at least suggestive of their authoritative role in the Judaism of his day.”⁷⁴ Moreover, it is mentioned that the eulogy seems to point to the high priest Simeon as its goal, and he was not in the books traditionally regarded as part of the canon.⁷⁵ But these seem to be examples of special pleading. The biblical examples encompass the entire range of the Bible, from Genesis to Ezra-Nehemiah. There is a clear separation of the Torah from the Prophets, and Simon is separated from the biblical heroes. Moreover, one group of heroes is called by the name of a *book*: The Twelve.

Two generations later, Ben Sira’s grandson provided a prologue for his Greek translation of his grandfather’s work in which he provides the clearest early possible reference to a tripartite division of the Scriptures. The grandson eulogizes the work of his grandfather whose *raison d’être* was a treatment of an authoritative collection of literature called the Law, the Prophets, and the other books, in order to help believers follow the Law more closely. Such a reference is made to this material two more times. The standard interpretation of this material up to the collapse of the 19th-century consensus on canon was that this was a reference to the threefold nature of the canon, with the third section not completely defined by virtue of it being named variously three times.⁷⁶ The maximalist understanding modifies this by arguing that the third division is named differently but just as defined, given the use of the definite article for the third division as well as the previous two. One scholar observes the following:

The statement . . . mentions each of the three divisions with the same degree of preciseness and, to be meaningful to the reader, it must refer to definite, identifiable books. It could be interpreted otherwise only if one were already convinced that the tripartite canon could not have existed as a subsistent entity at this time.⁷⁷

It is also observed by the grandson that his grandfather’s work also assumed these three divisions as it provided a helpful commentary on them.

There are a number of minimalist understandings of this text, and I will simply cite two. One argues that this statement reflects a bipartite open collection of Scripture—“the holy books of Ben Sira’s people”—with the third section referring to “all other books” in general.⁷⁸ Similarly, another leading scholar feels that although the tripartite view is reasonable, and “the wording provides a reasonably strong foundation for the hypothesis” of a tripartite scripture, this would be the first evidence for a tripartite canon virtually 200 years before its time.⁷⁹ Thus it may be more reasonable to understand

⁷⁴ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 82–83.

⁷⁵ That is, there is no line of demarcation between traditional biblical history and subsequent history. See T. N. Swanson, “The Closing of the Collection of Holy Scriptures: A Study in the History of Canonization of the Old Testament” (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1970) 119.

⁷⁶ Ryle, *Canon of the Old Testament*.

⁷⁷ Ellis, *Old Testament* 39–40.

⁷⁸ J. Barton, *Oracles of God* 47.

⁷⁹ E. Ulrich, “Qumran and the Canon of the Old Testament,” in J. Auwers and H. de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003) 71, 77.

this reference to the way modern bookstores have two sections of books: Bible and Theology (the law and the prophets = Bible, and the remainder = books about the Bible = theology).⁸⁰

2. *Qumran*. The next flashpoint of interpretation is the Qumran community and its texts. There have been found representatives here from every book in the later Hebrew Bible except Esther as well as many other books, some of which claim divine inspiration. As well, there are titles for a certain class of literature designated by bipartite formulae and possibly one tripartite formula.⁸¹ For the minimalists, the fact of many books in the Qumran library is evidence of a wider canon, especially if these books claim divine inspiration.⁸² "Again we must underscore that at Qumran nonbiblical texts were discovered right beside the biblical books with no discernible way to distinguish them."⁸³ Similarly, the evidence of citations of authoritative Scripture seems to include a reference to the book of Jubilees.⁸⁴ The interpretation of the controversial reference to a tripartite canon in 4QMMT seems to have evolved as time has gone on. First, Eugene Ulrich mentioned that an original two-part canon's second division has been "stretched too far," "so the Book of Psalms . . . began to establish a new category which eventually would be called the Ketubim or the Hagiographa."⁸⁵ Others suggested a variation of this by the extension of the second division since David was regarded as a prophet.⁸⁶ But now Ulrich has given up his former conclusion based on looking at the epigraphical evidence for himself and now sharply criticizes those who have adopted his accommodating category of an incipient

⁸⁰ One cannot help but note the irony here. Ulrich loathes anachronism, but his example to explain ancient evidence comes from the modern world. In a recent monograph, Veltri argues that there is no reference to canon at all here: "In my opinion, to see a history of canon is an unprofitable and pointless undertaking. For the author attempts to announce the novelty of Ben Sira's wisdom and not to list all the canonical books preceding it. The canon is not the main concern of the Prologue, although its author mentions the ancient literature of Israel three times. An unambiguous, but indirect hint of his disinterest in this matter is the linguistic vagueness in defining the "third" group of the books. . . . The vagueness . . . is a deliberate device enabling the author to introduce his grandfather's wisdom and educational program." Thus the third group is a category which can subtly include the grandfather's book as a means to help educate the Egyptian diaspora. G. Veltri, *Libraries, Translations and 'Canonic' Texts. The Septuagint, Aquila and Ben Sira in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) 202. It seems like special pleading to understand the vagueness of the third title as a subtle device. The simplest explanation is to regard it as perfectly appropriate for a division of the Bible which has general content (Brent Hudson, personal communication). And although the Prologue is not about the canon, it is about a book which is preoccupied with interpreting it to such an extent that the authoritative books are mentioned three times!

⁸¹ Bipartite: 1QS 1:1ff; 8:15–16; CD 7:15–17; 4QMMT 16; tripartite: 4QMMT 10.

⁸² VanderKam, *Revelation to Canon* 25–27.

⁸³ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 132.

⁸⁴ CD 16:2–3.

⁸⁵ Ulrich, "The Bible in the Making," in E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam, *The Community of the Renewed Covenant* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press) 82.

⁸⁶ J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) 21.

third canonical division.⁸⁷ Such an interpretation says Ulrich is nothing but the reflex of “a Kantian category of a tripartite rabbinic canon fixed in our minds and familiar for the past fifteen hundred years,” so much so that our “interpretive categories . . . tend to see a tripartite canon in antiquity, whenever any small clue emerges.”⁸⁸

Maximalists come to different conclusions. The evidence of the presence of biblical texts in combination with the authoritative citation of virtually only these biblical texts is striking.⁸⁹ Moreover, all the commentaries are found to include only scriptural books. The fact that many extrabiblical books were found does not mean that there was no distinction, in the same way that a person’s library may include both canonical and non-canonical books.⁹⁰ Third, the designation “law and prophets” is found consistently, and it is possible to interpret a third category as “David,” based on the reading of the text, although the text is clearly fragmentary. This could refer to a third section of the canon initiated by the Psalms.⁹¹

3. *Josephus*. How is the evidence of Josephus understood, in particular his explicit statement of the scope and authority of the Jewish Scriptures in *Against Apion*?⁹² Here Josephus makes a number of points to his audiences. He matter-of-factly states that his people have a collection of authoritative writings which are divided into three categories: Law, Prophets, and the remainder containing hymns and precepts. Moreover, this entire collection is defined even though the third title is rather a catch-all term for the remainder as in the prologue to Ben Sira. It consists of twenty-two and only twenty-two volumes. This collection has been in existence for a long time and has as its basis the inspiration of the prophetic word, which has ceased.

Minimalists, of course, are forced to question the authenticity of this evidence, for after all Josephus seems to be “the thousand pound gorilla in

⁸⁷ E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4 V Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah* (DJD X; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 59 n. 10. But it should be noted that Qimron and Strugnell also are much more cautious than they are given credit for. See pp. 111–12.

⁸⁸ E. Ulrich, “The Non-attestation of a Tripartite Canon in 4QMMT,” *CBQ* 65 (2003) 202–14. Note also J. A. Sanders’s criticism of those who “try to superimpose the old view on the new evidence” ironically with the new evidence of 4 QMMT (“The Issue of Closure in the Canonical Process,” in McDonald and Sanders, *Canon Debate* 252–63, esp. 253). McDonald argues that this type of retrojection is “the basic problem with Roger Beckwith’s otherwise excellent work” (“The Integrity of the Biblical Canon in Light of its Historical Development,” *BBR* 6 [1996] 104 n. 22).

⁸⁹ See the list of VanderKam in Ulrich, “Qumran and Canon” 80. It is interesting that in the list of forty-three citations there is only possibly one from an extra-biblical book (Jubilees). VanderKam himself puts a question mark beside it. See also the study by J. Lust who takes the position that this is not a citation: “Quotation Formulae and Canon in Qumran,” in A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn, eds., *Canonization and Decanonization* (Studies in the History of Religions 82; Leiden, Brill, 1998) 67–77.

⁹⁰ The libraries of most Christian churches today would consist of far more non-biblical books than biblical ones. In fact, on the basis of the number of copies alone, *The Purpose-Driven Life* might be regarded as the most canonical of all!

⁹¹ E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4 V Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah* (DJD X; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 59, n. 10.

⁹² *Against Apion* 8.

the room.” A number of their questions clarify the nature of this problem for them, and one can just imagine them squirming in their seats as they ask them. Here is a sample: Does Josephus’s understanding of these matters reflect what was believed among most Jews at the end of the first century, or was it an emerging view that had not yet gained acceptance among the Jews?⁹³ Why should one individual, such as Josephus, be considered the spokesperson for all Jews?⁹⁴ Perhaps Josephus is projecting a religious wish list into the past and confusing it with historical reality.⁹⁵ Perhaps Josephus was well ahead of his time since there are no other clear parallels to this view.⁹⁶ And finally, the best is reserved for last: Maybe the Jewish historian is not implying that there is a limitation of the Jewish canon to the books just enumerated.⁹⁷

As for the maximalists, their problems are minor in comparison. It is clear that the language of Josephus “can scarcely signify anything other than a closed canon.”⁹⁸ But there are difficulties identifying the content of the canon, since most of the books are not explicitly listed and the arrangement is unique. Some assume that his canon has been divided differently than what is known later as the traditional division because of apologetic reasons. The historian is writing about history and presented all the books dealing with history into a second division after the law and left the remaining poetical books in a third division.⁹⁹ This gives it an extremely symmetrical cast. Many have tried to identify the books and to a large degree reasonable arguments are made but it has to be admitted that Josephus does not explicitly list most of them.¹⁰⁰ As for the troubling fact that Josephus seems to use a wider canon in his writings, and he exercises considerable freedom with respect to the biblical text, one response is that this may well reflect the inconsistency of human nature.¹⁰¹ Steve Mason, however, makes the point

⁹³ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 154.

⁹⁴ McLay, “The Use of the Septuagint,” in McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 232.

⁹⁵ M. Silver, cited in McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 155.

⁹⁶ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 157. McDonald then suggests a theory proposed by Cross for a Babylonian origin for Josephus’s view and is willing to accept at least in this place a completed canon for a small group of Pharisees, but not for Judaism in general.

⁹⁷ Barton, *Oracles* 59. Note Steve Mason’s understatement: “Barton strains Josephus’s words beyond tolerance.” S. Mason, “Josephus and his Twenty-Two Book Canon,” in Sanders and McDonald, *Canon Debate* 126. Note also Shaye Cohen who regards Josephus as either ill-informed or deliberately misleading: *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 189–90.

⁹⁸ F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1988) 23.

⁹⁹ Beckwith, *Old Testament* 124–25.

¹⁰⁰ Mason’s argument is largely based on the use of Scripture in the *Antiquities*: “Josephus” 123, n. 47. A very strong case can be made for such a list if one assumes a connection with the following evidence: The limitation of the canon to 24 books in 4 Ezra (AD 100), Melito’s (AD 170) listing of the books (the first explicit list), Origen’s (AD 230) notation of a Hebrew list in which 24 books are reduced to 22 by combining Lamentations with Jeremiah, and Ruth with Judges, and Jerome’s (AD 400) observation that the Hebrews had two traditions of canonical lists: 24 and 22. When this is considered with the first explicit Jewish list in the *baraita* in *Baba Bathra* 14b, there is a remarkable convergence of evidence on canon.

¹⁰¹ Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon* 96, n. 36.

that if Josephus had not made an explicit statement about canon, it would be easy to infer that his canon was much wider: "If we lacked the *Against Apion*, Josephus himself would offer a clear case for an open canon. But we do have the *Against Apion*, in which this same Josephus emphatically but also matter-of-factly, insists that Judean records have long since been completed in twenty-two volumes."¹⁰² At the very least, there is "a clear and coherent theological doctrine of the canon" expressed here.¹⁰³ Incidentally, it is important to note that virtually all pseudonymous works claiming authority date to the period described as Josephus as "the precise succession of the prophets."¹⁰⁴

Finally, David Carr has made a remarkable modification of his views on Josephus in his recent study on canonization which is informed by the study of educational practices in the ancient world. *Before* his recent study, he concluded that Josephus was arguing for only a pro-Pharisee position that was hardening its views on canon, and that his argument needed to be taken with more than a grain of salt.¹⁰⁵ But *now*,

Josephus appears to think he can make credible claims for the antiquity of this alphabetically defined body of scriptures, claims that would disqualify other points of view he makes in his arguments against Apion if they could be disproven easily. Therefore, we should not assume that this twenty-two or twenty-four book body of Scripture first emerged in the late first century, although it is most clearly attested then.¹⁰⁶

4. *New Testament.* In the NT, as one can imagine, there are very different perspectives on the evidence as well. Maximalists note that the titles for the Bible are found as follows: the Scriptures,¹⁰⁷ the Law,¹⁰⁸ the Law and

¹⁰² Mason, "Josephus" 126. Of course, the uncomfortable implication of this is noted as well: "This means that his [Josephus's] willingness to alter the biblical text in manifold ways proves nothing about his formal view of the canon. His example removes the force from appeals to circumstantial evidence as proof that the Dead Sea Scrolls's authors or Philo or Ben Sira had an open canon" (pp. 126–27).

¹⁰³ F. M. Cross, "The Text behind the Text of the Hebrew Bible" in H. Shanks, ed., *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Random House, 1992) 162. Cross believes that this view had to stem from Hillel and his school, but surely as Josephus states, the concern for the text present in Hillel had been an important concern much before his time.

¹⁰⁴ "[A]nyone who wanted to say anything new on religious subjects, and to be listened to, had to pretend to belong to a bygone age . . . pseudonymity was necessitated by the closing of the canon" (Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon* 359–60). Beckwith cites the work of R. H. Charles, *Religious Developments between the Old and the New Testaments* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1914) 36–46.

¹⁰⁵ Carr, *Canonization* 52.

¹⁰⁶ Carr, *Tablet of the Heart* 251. Note the similar comments by Bruce: "It is unlikely that Josephus's classification of the books was his own; he probably reproduces a tradition with which he had been familiar for a long time, having learned it in the priestly circle into which he was born or among the Pharisees with whose party he associated himself as a young man" (*Canon* 33–34).

¹⁰⁷ Luke 24:32; cf. 2 Tim 3:15.

¹⁰⁸ John 10:34; 1 Cor 14:21.

the Prophets,¹⁰⁹ Moses and the Prophets,¹¹⁰ and in one particular example, “the law of Moses, the Prophets and Psalms.”¹¹¹ This last text constitutes evidence for a third division, since in many divisions of the Hagiographa the Psalms are found at the beginning. This could be evidence for synecdoche, the first book standing for the whole division. Thus the resurrected Jesus uses the terms, “Law and Prophets” and “Moses, Prophets, and Psalms” as interchangeable terms for “all the Scriptures.” Roger Beckwith makes the point that to omit the rest of the Hagiographa by only referring to Psalms “would be surprising in view of Jesus’ regular use of the Book of Daniel and in view of the possibility that he saw himself in the Redeemer of Job, the Wisdom of the Proverbs, the Lover of the Song of Songs and the Priest with Urim and Thummim of Ezra and Nehemiah.”¹¹² Admittedly, Beckwith is being carried away here with almost sermon-like zeal. Moreover, he presents evidence from another source in which he describes the Jewish Bible as consisting of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, which are the 24 books. The only problem is that this source comes from the tenth century AD.

Minimalists understand this apparent tripartite reference differently, noting that it is the only reference in the NT to a tripartite canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, but also noting “the problem that it does not include all of the literature that eventually made up the third part of the HB, especially Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles and the rest of the Wisdom literature.”¹¹³ What was probably in mind in this reference is that “the third part of the Jewish biblical canon had not been clearly defined in the time of Jesus—or even later when Luke was writing his gospel.” “Since there is no clear evidence for the precise threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures before the middle of the second century C.E., one should be cautious about declaring its presence before we have solid evidence for its existence.”¹¹⁴ The problem with this understanding is that it is so dependent on the conclusions derived from a particular reading of other texts. For example, if the Prologue to Ben Sira does not count, nor 4QMMT, nor Josephus, then Luke 24 does become something of an anomaly.

What about the understanding of the content of possible books which the NT viewed as supremely authoritative? There is no question that the NT alludes to many books which from a later point of view are not in the canon. Minimalists make the point that such allusions indicate that the NT had a wider canon. Albert Sundberg, for example, lists 134 references to extra-canonical literature in the NT.¹¹⁵ An expanded list is found in an appendix to Lee McDonald’s book and includes 504 such references with the title: New Testament Citations and Allusions to Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical

¹⁰⁹ Matt 5:17; Luke 16:16.

¹¹⁰ Luke 16:29.

¹¹¹ Luke 24:44.

¹¹² Beckwith, *Old Testament* 111–12.

¹¹³ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 93.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Sundberg, *Old Testament* 54–55.

Writings.¹¹⁶ However, when it comes to examples which are cited with scriptural formulae, the number reduces to nine in McDonald's text with such qualified expressions as the author "appears to cite or make use of," etc.¹¹⁷ The only example of a clear citation is 1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14–15.

McDonald points out that these references do not necessarily reflect the NT writers' acknowledgement of non-canonical writings as Scripture or even their dependence upon them but "their cumulative effect shows the tenuous boundaries of sacred collections of Scriptures in the first century, even though the core of biblical literature—both then and later—was always the Law of Moses."¹¹⁸

For the Maximalists, allusions do not point to authority or a wider canon, but simply reflect the wider cultural perspective in which the NT writers participated. After all, it would be difficult *not* to cite "non-biblical" texts if one were seriously trying to communicate with an audience. But it is different for citations that are quoted as scriptural. Virtually every one of the approximately 300 hundred references in this category are from the traditional OT, except perhaps Jude 14–15, where Enoch's prophecy of coming judgment is mentioned, which is a citation of 1 Enoch 1:9. Some view this as not an endorsement of the book of Enoch as canonical but rather this particular prophecy of Enoch. Childs simply states that this reference is no exception to the general rule.¹¹⁹ It would seem that James VanderKam is more reasonable, when he views comments like these as examples of special pleading.¹²⁰

5. *Text and canon.*¹²¹ Finally, there is the question of text. It is clear that the question of canon implies a certain view of the text for if certain books were viewed as sacred, this would have implications for their textual transmission, in order to ensure accuracy and preservation—quality control. This was not really an important question before the discovery of the Qumran scrolls. For before that time the evidence basically suggested that there was one text—the MT, and one might assume that there were different *Vorlagen* for some of the translations. But with the discovery of the DSS there is clear evidence of textual diversity in the Hebrew and there are various theories which account for it.¹²² For example, Emanuel Tov describes the diversity as follows under five different categories: Qumran Practice 20%; Proto-Masoretic 35%; Pre-Samaritan 15%; Close to LXX 5%; Non-Aligned Texts

¹¹⁶ McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 452–64.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 195.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 196.

¹¹⁹ B. Childs, *Biblical Theology of Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 62.

¹²⁰ J. VanderKam, "Review of R. T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*," *JSP* 2 (1989) 121. Note also T. McLay's sober comments about this text: "Use of the Septuagint," in McDonald, *Biblical Canon* 231.

¹²¹ For a far more complete and incisive consideration of this matter I refer the reader to Peter Gentry's important essay in this volume.

¹²² F. M. Cross, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

35%.¹²³ This textual variety disappeared after the second half of the first century AD in favor of the one type, the Proto-Masoretic. There is also evidence that Greek translations were being revised towards this particular textual tradition.¹²⁴

How do the various sides deal with this evidence? Minimalists claim that such textual variety points to a pluriform text which therefore militates against any early canonization.¹²⁵ Ulrich claims that to class some texts as “vulgar,” “free translations or paraphrase” is to make the assumption of a prior privileged text.¹²⁶ As far as the dominance of one text type over the others in the first century, it is claimed that this is due not to any systematic attempt at textual uniformity but to historical accident, the only textual survivor of the destruction of Jerusalem.¹²⁷ Maximalists disagree, arguing that the MT had a privileged position as reflected in the number of proto-Masoretic manuscripts found at Qumran, which showed evidence of careful scribal work. These may have emanated from temple circles, meaning that there was “a basically uniform tradition beside a pluriform tradition in Palestine Judaism in the last centuries B.C.”¹²⁸ Tov himself says,

Since \aleph contains a carefully transmitted text, which is well documented in a large number of copies, and since it is reflected in the rabbinic literature as well as in the Targumim and many of the Greek versions of G, it may be surmised that it originated in the spiritual and authoritative center of Judaism (later to be known as that of the Pharisees), possibly in the temple circles. . . . The fact that all the texts left by the Zealots at Masada (dating until 73 C.E.) reflect \aleph is also important.¹²⁹

One of the important implications of such textual uniformity would have been a collection of authoritative texts. In particular, Childs, when addressing the issue of Greek recensions revising the LXX to the MT, remarks that

¹²³ E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 115. Tov has considerably reduced his number of the proto-Masoretic text manuscripts in the second edition of his book. In the first edition of his book (1992) they accounted for 60% of the manuscripts.

¹²⁴ For a lucid description of this process see J. Sanders, “The Issue of Closure in the Canonical Process,” in *Canon Debate* 254–56.

¹²⁵ “Therefore the variety of textual witnesses existed in the first century, which hardly supports the existence of a fixed canon.” See McLay, “Use of the Septuagint” 229.

¹²⁶ Ulrich, “Qumran and Canon” 63–64.

¹²⁷ B. Albrektson, “Reflections on the Emergence of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible,” *VTS* 29 (1978) 49–65.

¹²⁸ A. van der Woude, “Pluriformity and Uniformity: Reflections on the Transmission of the Text of the Old Testament,” in J. F. Bremmer and F. Garcia Martinez, *Sacred Texts and Sacred History* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992) 161.

¹²⁹ Tov, *Textual Criticism* 28. Al Wolters makes a similar argument using Tov to buttress his point: “The Text of the Old Testament,” in D. Baker and B. Arnold, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 28–31. It may seem that Tov has changed his mind when he later argues that “a unified tradition before the turn of the eras never existed” (“The Status of the Masoretic Text in Modern Text Editions of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Canon Debate* 239). But he qualifies this by stating that “while most groups did not insist upon a single textual tradition, temple circles and later the Pharisees, embraced a single textual tradition (proto-MT).” So he acknowledges that within this particular tradition there may have been considerable diversity before the third century BC.

“the text of a book would not have been corrected and stabilized if the book had not already received some sort of canonical status.”¹³⁰

One of the difficulties raised with the whole issue of textual diversity, though, is the establishment of an original text. Should the aim of textual criticism be the quest for the original text which was stabilized or the original text understood as an abstract ideal since there are clearly mistakes in the text that has been stabilized?¹³¹ And how does one negotiate between texts which seem so different, such as the LXX and the MT of Jeremiah?¹³²

III. TOWARD A SOLUTION

I have listed some of the evidence and the various inferences that have been made by the different sides in the debate in these “canon wars.” It is possible to make arguments for both sides from this evidence. At the least, this exercise shows the importance of assumptions when viewing the evidence. This is revealed explicitly in some of the various scholars’ statements: Ulrich writes about a tri-partite *a priori* read back into the evidence; Ellis about a bias against the tripartite canon distorting the evidence. But how the evidence is handled is often dictated by the assumptions. What is perfectly clear is that everyone has assumptions and that the idea of neutrality in this age of postmodernity is a pipe dream. *There is not only the “tyranny of canonical assumptions,” but also the tyranny of non-canonical assumptions.* But it is not as if this is a completely subjective exercise. Some interpretations are more cogent than others, particularly when evidence is interpreted unnaturally to fit into a preconceived theoretical mold. Josephus is a prime

¹³⁰ Childs, *Biblical Theology* 60.

¹³¹ See now E. Tov who has reversed his position on this. He had previously argued that the goal of textual criticism was to restore the text which had become authoritative for Judaism—MT; but now he argues that its aim is to restore all the texts of the Bible, concluding that one finds the “text of the Bible everywhere and nowhere. I say ‘everywhere’ because all the manuscripts, from the ancient Qumran scrolls to the medieval Masoretic manuscripts, attest to it. I say ‘nowhere’ because we cannot call a single source, extant or reconstructed, ‘the text of the Bible’” (“Status” 251).

¹³² This is a difficult question but much care needs to be done in the textual critical work. Before Peter Gentry’s work on Job it was assumed that the much shorter LXX reflected a different *Vorlage* than the Hebrew of MT. But his work has now proven that this was just one of those scholarly balloons which needed to be punctured. A detailed examination of the translation technique has shown that the translator has considerably reduced the long-winded speeches to make them more “user friendly” to a Greek audience. See his careful work: P. Gentry, *The Asterisked Materials in the Greek Job* (SCS 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). See further the important chapter by E. Tov on the large scale differences between the LXX and the MT in his chapter, “Textual Criticism and Literary Criticism” in *Textual Criticism* 313–50. But note as a counterbalance to his view some of the reflections of Gentry, “The Septuagint and the Text of the Old Testament,” *BBR* 16 (2004) 193–218. See also J. Cook’s study of the large-scale differences between the MT and LXX of Proverbs. The differences exist because the LXX translator wanted to emphasize Solomonic authorship. See his study cited by B. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 1–15* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2004) 4–5. See also Cook’s comments about the caution that is necessary when drawing conclusions in text-critical work regarding the *Vorlage* of a translation: J. Cook, “Textual Diversity and Canonical Uniformity,” in Auwers and de Jonge, *Biblical Canons* 135–52.

example. My own view is clear. I think that a strong case can be made for the idea of a canon in the sense of canon 2 within most circles in Judaism at least by the first century BC. There may well have been other canons or open canons among various groups.

But I would like to move toward what I believe is a way beyond this impasse, and it involves a sphere of biblical scholarship which has largely been ignored in the debate over the canons. This includes internal evidence within the biblical texts themselves which point to evidence of canon 2. In a recent study, Zipporah Talshir criticizes George Steins's monograph on Chronicles¹³³ which concludes that the biblical book was consciously written as a conclusion to the biblical canon. Nonetheless, Talshir argues strongly for a canonical consciousness on the part of the Chronicler.¹³⁴ She says that this may hold a key to resolving the canon debate. Her own study indicates that the Chronicler was aware of the Torah in its final shape, and the historical outline in broad lines from Genesis to the exile in 2 Kings. The prophets themselves were regarded as writers of the material in Samuel and Kings which the Chronicler takes up and interprets anew. A number of quotations and allusions from the Latter Prophets are also cited. For example in Azariah the son of Oded's speech in 2 Chronicles 15: the short text is virtually a catena of verbal allusions drawn from Jeremiah,¹³⁵ Isaiah,¹³⁶ Hosea,¹³⁷ and Zechariah.¹³⁸ A citation from the end of Ps 106:47 with its doxological conclusion indicates that the Chronicler was also aware of a final edition of the Psalter, since the doxology belongs to the final work of redaction on the Psalter.¹³⁹ Her own conclusion is that "the focus of discussion should no longer be on the history of the canon—a discussion that had run its course for lack of new evidence—but rather for search on the 'closing phenomena' in the texts themselves."¹⁴⁰

Similarly, in another canonical study H. Peels writes at the conclusion of his article in which he considers the use of Matthew 23 and Luke 11 irrelevant for the debate over the closure of the canon: "Does the canon of the Old Testament itself deliver signals of an intended closure? Was there a purposeful final redaction not only of the individual books but also of the books of the Old Testament as a whole? Is it possible to trace the redactional glue between the different sections of the canon?"¹⁴¹

¹³³ G. Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphnomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik*, by Georg Steins (BBB 93; Beltz: Athenaum, 1995).

¹³⁴ "Several canon-related concepts originating in Chronicles," ZAW 113 (2001) 386–403.

¹³⁵ 29:13–14, 31:16.

¹³⁶ Isa 40:10, 62:11.

¹³⁷ Hos 3:4f, 5:15.

¹³⁸ Zech 8:10.

¹³⁹ "The juxtaposition of these verses suggests that the Chronicler, as soon as the end of the fourth century B.C.E., knew the Psalms as a collection already organized into five books." Talshir, "Canon-related concepts" 398.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 402.

¹⁴¹ H. G. L. Peels, "The Blood from 'Abel to Zechariah' (Matthew 23:35, Luke 11:50f) and the Canon of the Old Testament," ZAW 113 (2001) 600–601.

There has been a significant group of scholars working in this area that have concluded that there is evidence of such editorial glue in the form of canon-conscious redactions.¹⁴² This is clear, of course, within certain books, such as the redactional stitch of Prov 25:1 which indicates that the next four chapters of Solomonic proverbs have been added to the previous text by Hezekiah's scribes. Similarly, the doxologies in the Psalter are evidence of a later editorial hand that has divided the Psalms into five books concluding with a five-part Hallelujah Chorus.¹⁴³

Probably the first pioneer in this work was Ludwig Blau, who suggested over a century ago that the appendices to Malachi about remembering the Torah of Moses and preparing for the coming of Elijah provided a fitting closing to the end of the Law and the Prophets: "The warning considering the Law of Moses and the unusually solemn words of comfort make it seem probable that herein is intended a peroration not only to the last prophets but to the twofold canon, the Law and the Prophets."¹⁴⁴ With the growing awareness of intertextuality in biblical studies, a growing number of scholars have followed up on these suggestions and presented strong arguments not only for the ending of Malachi but also the clear caesura noted at the end of Deuteronomy 34, which claims unique status not only for Moses but by implication his book (34:10–12).

After Joshua has been installed as the new leader (34:9), there is a final discourse on Moses as the incomparable prophet among the prophets: no prophet has ever arisen who equals him, with a face-to-face experience with the Lord. This is a text that alludes to the provision for a Mosaic prophet in the future in Deut 18:15, but essentially concludes that no such prophet has ever arisen: Never since has there arisen a prophet like Moses in Israel.¹⁴⁵ It assumes that many prophets have come and gone, but none has risen to the same Mosaic stature. While this statement concludes the Torah, it anticipates another division to which it has been spliced. At the end of the Prophets, there is a conclusion to the book of Malachi which seems alien to its present context in the book with its summary statements enjoining

¹⁴² J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1977); O. H. Steck, "Der Kanon des hebräischen Alten Testament," in *Vernunft und Glauben* (ed. J. Rohls; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988) 231–52; E. Zenger, *Das Erste Testament: Die Jüdische Bibel und die Christen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1991); J. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); Stephen G. Dempster, "An Extraordinary Fact: Torah and Temple and the Contours of the Hebrew Canon," *TB* 48 (1997) 23–53, 191–218; idem, "From Many Texts to One: The Formation of the Hebrew Bible," in *The World of the Arameans: Biblical, Historical and Cultural Studies in Honour of Paul-E. Dion* (ed. P. M. Michele Daviau and M. Weigl; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 19–56; Chapman, *Law and Prophets*.

¹⁴³ Ps 42:14; 72:18–20; 89:53; 106:48, 145:21; 146–50.

¹⁴⁴ L. Blau, "Bible Canon," *Jewish Encyclopedia* 3 (1901) 140–50.

¹⁴⁵ This is the only way this text can be interpreted as can be seen by considering all the clauses which contain a negated suffixed verbal form and the adverb עַד: Exod 2:3, Josh 2:11, 5:1, 12, Jdg 2:14, 1 Sam 1:18; 2 Sam 3:11; 14:10; 1 Kgs 10:5; 2 Kgs 2:12; Jer 44:22; Ezek 33:22; 1 Chr 13:20; 19:19; 2 Chr. 9:4. Both Blenkinsopp (*Prophecy and Canon* 86) and Sailhamer (*Old Testament Theology* 246–47) have shown the importance of this understanding.

the remembrance of the Torah of Moses and the anticipation of Elijah.¹⁴⁶ These two revelational giants representing the Torah and the Prophets just happen to coincide at the end of a second canonical division: Moses and his near equal—Elijah, who also appeared on Sinai but without the face-to-face experience with God.¹⁴⁷

Thus at the end of the prophetic books, there is a call to consider the Torah and Prophets together. The prophet like Moses is still expected, but he will be preceded by the prophet most like Moses. Study, obedience, and anticipation are the goals enjoined.

The significance of these redactions is that they show examples of Canon 1 and Canon 2 in operation, in which a collection of *authoritative literature* is spliced together to form part of a coherent unity in which it now becomes part of an *authoritative collection* in which the books are now read together.¹⁴⁸ Joseph Blenkinsopp was the first to make the case for these canonical conclusions to both the Law and the Prophets¹⁴⁹ with certain unnecessary theological implications, and other scholars have followed him.¹⁵⁰ Recently, Stephen Chapman's impressive study has confirmed this view, arguing that these conclusions are hermeneutical guides to understanding the two voices of Law and Prophets together.¹⁵¹ But the work of both of these scholars has not extended these canon-conscious redactions beyond the Law and the Prophets, although Chapman would argue that the oldest material in the Writings "would have possessed the same 'pre-canonical authority which has been shown for the emergent collections of Law and Prophet" and that the books of the Writings might have been included in the section Prophets as the former "continued to develop over time."¹⁵² But the canon-conscious redactions themselves do not exhibit "an awareness of a collection of Writings or its impact on other biblical books and subcollections."¹⁵³

But other scholars believe that there is an inconsistency in stopping here, an inconsistency which may be caused by the fact that in the Hebrew manuscript tradition there is a wider diversity in the arrangement of the third division of the Hebrew Bible,¹⁵⁴ and perhaps there is also an unconscious reluctance to give up the three-stage canon view in which the Writings are

¹⁴⁶ These two texts 3:22, 23–24 are sometimes called the appendices of Malachi but they differ in content and form from the rest of Malachi: See Chapman, *Law and Prophets* 134ff. for a summary of the arguments.

¹⁴⁷ An important point emphasized by T. Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetic Books* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 133–35.

¹⁴⁸ Sheppard, "Canon" 67–68.

¹⁴⁹ And I might add with certain unnecessary theological implications. Blenkinsopp views the endings of the Torah and the Prophets as contradictory. The ending of the Torah assumes that a priestly school has triumphed by "trumping" the Torah. Only later a prophetic school managed to append a Prophetic Division in an uneasy accommodation. I think that this view is unnecessary and assumes a basic incompatibility between Torah and prophecy.

¹⁵⁰ See n. 143 above.

¹⁵¹ Chapman, *Law and Prophets*.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 288–89.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 289.

¹⁵⁴ For the various arrangements see Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon* 451–64.

perceived as being canonized last in the first few centuries AD.¹⁵⁵ But the scholars who are unwilling to exclude the third division from consideration recognize that the diversity in the manuscript tradition is relatively late and not as diverse as it first may seem. More importantly, they note that there is a remarkable continuity of theme and language not only at the ending of Deuteronomy and Malachi but also at the beginning of Joshua. Here, there is the recapitulation of the death of Moses, the depiction of him as the servant of Yahweh, the succession of Joshua as the wise man *par excellence* and the encouragement to find success in his way only by meditating day and night in the Torah.¹⁵⁶ Significantly, the only other time Moses is called by Yahweh “my servant” is at the end of Malachi, where the post-exilic community is called upon also to remember his Torah.¹⁵⁷

What is the significance of this evidence? In some of the external references already considered and in many of the later Jewish manuscripts, the Writings begin with Psalms or Ruth, which is placed before Psalms because of David’s genealogy. These manuscripts invariably conclude with Chronicles. The main competitor to this arrangement is a group of manuscripts which begin with Chronicles and which usually end with Ezra-Nehemiah.¹⁵⁸ If Chronicles begins a third division, there is no literary linkage with the Law

¹⁵⁵ Despite the fact that the Jamnia/Jabneh theory has been put to rest by J. P. Lewis, it is surprising how the idea of a council in the first few centuries AD that decides which books are in and which are out still lingers. Both Sundberg and McDonald wonder what can be put in the theory’s place. See, e.g., A. Sundberg, “The Old Testament of the Early Church’ Revisited,” in T. K. Seinkewicz and J. E. Betts, eds., *Festschrift in Honor of Charles Speel* (Monmouth, IL: Monmouth College Press, 1996) 100.

¹⁵⁶ Josh 1:1–9.

¹⁵⁷ See, e.g., the work of W. Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 9–14, Maleachi* (KAT 13/4; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976) 291.

¹⁵⁸ See the lists in Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon* 452–64. For the category of “literary orders” which begin with Ruth and Psalms, fifteen orders end with Chronicles, one begins with Chronicles and ends with Ezra-Nehemiah, and one begins with Daniel. For the category “anomalous orders,” four begin with Ruth and Psalms and end with Chronicles, while two begin with Chronicles and end with Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. For the “liturgical orders,” seven begin with Chronicles and end with Ezra-Nehemiah while fifteen orders begin with Psalms and end with Chronicles. See also M. Dukan, *La Bible Hébraïque: Les codices copies en Orient et dans la zone sefarade avant 1280* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006). Peter Brandt conveniently tabulates these lists in terms of the following categories: Eastern Arrangements (Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles); Western Arrangements (Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah); Rabbinic Bible (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Songs, Ruth, Lamentation, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles). See P. Brandt, *Endgestalten in des Kanon. Das Arrangement der Schriften Israels in der jüdischen und christlichen Bibel* (BBB 131; Berlin: Philo, 2001) 132–71. I have noted these arrangements in a chart supplied by Brandt in an appendix to this essay. Although the earliest manuscript reflects a sequence which begins with Chronicles, it should not be forgotten there is evidence of an older manuscript whose sequence is preserved in a fragment in a Masoretic note. This sequence reflects that of the *baraita* in the Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b). See H. P. Rüger, “Ein Fragment der bisher ältesten hebräischen Bibelhandschrift mit babylonischen Punktuation,” *VT* 16 (1966) 65–73. From a later time it is claimed that there was a sequence derived from Babylon and one derived from Palestine (*Adath Deborim*).

and the Prophets, but if it begins with Psalms, there are extraordinarily significant formal connections.¹⁵⁹

The first two psalms function as introductions to the Psalter stressing the twin themes of Torah and Kingship. These have been bound together both linguistically and conceptually.¹⁶⁰ The first psalm begins with a beatitude (1:1 אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה־אִישׁ) and the second ends with one (2:12 אֲשֶׁר־יִכָּל־חַוִּטִּי בּוֹ); the first stresses the importance of rejecting the counsel of the wicked and meditating on the Torah (1:3 וּבִתְוִרַת וַיְהִיגָהּ), and the second not to meditate on vanity (2:1 יְהַגְוֶה־רִיק) but to pay attention to the decree of Yahweh (2:7). The first indicates that the wicked are on a way that will perish because they have rejected the Torah (1:6 וְדַרְךְךָ רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבְדֶּךָ), while the second says that those who do not trust in the Israelite king will perish in the way (2:12 וְתֵאבְדוּ דַרְךְךָ).¹⁶¹ Torah meditation leads to prophetic meditation.

When seen against the larger canvas of scripture, these psalms not only function as introductions to the Psalter but there is an extraordinary linkage to the previous collections. As the second canonical division in Joshua began with the importance of meditating on the book of the Torah day and night and “finding success in the way,” so does the third. Only here in the Psalms and in Joshua does the same terminology occur about meditating in the Torah and finding success. Now this experience of Torah meditation is for every Israelite, not just a leader. But it is also for the nations who need to stop meditating on emptiness and begin to meditate on a prophetic oracle, now called a statute: the promise of God about the throne of David never lacking a descendant, who will one day become a universal ruler. This text is a citation of 2 Sam 7:14 given by the prophet Nathan to David, promising him an eternal covenant, which was interpreted by the prophets to have worldwide significance.¹⁶² This is the “the only text in the Old Testament that speaks of God’s king, messiah and son in one place.”¹⁶³ *If the kings meditate on the Prophets, they will become wise, echoing Joshua’s description of becoming prosperous when he meditates on the Torah.*

At the beginning of the third division, then—and not just the Psalms—there is a glance back to the Torah and Prophets in order to prepare for the future. Read together with the ending of the Prophets, this beginning stresses that Elijah’s coming not only has relevance for Israelites but also for the world. There is a coming prophet of Mosaic proportions but also a coming

¹⁵⁹ It is true that beginning the third division with Chronicles has its own suitability: Chronicles focuses on temple and David introduces the Psalms (Gary Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [New York: Anchor Bible, 2003] 135–37). But these are more conceptual linkages rather than formal ones.

¹⁶⁰ As noted by a number of scholars.

¹⁶¹ It is clear that the LXX saw these terms as complements because it reads ἀπολείσθη ἐξ ὁδοῦ δικαίας, for “You will perish in the way” (2:12). This clearly shows the dependence of Psalm 2 on Psalm 1.

¹⁶² Cf. Ps 2:8; Mic 5:3; Zech 9:10; cf. 1 Sam 2:10.

¹⁶³ J. L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 44.

king of Davidic proportions. There is what Erich Zenger calls a systematic torah hermeneutic at work here but also a prophetic one.¹⁶⁴

But what shall we say about an ending to this canonical division and possible links with other divisions? Manuscripts which begin with Psalms end with Chronicles. There are no signs of canonical conclusion to Chronicles except perhaps the ending, a fragmentary part of a whole text which begins the book of Ezra-Nehemiah: the decree of Cyrus, specifying the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of exile for the land. In Chronicles, the text breaks off Cyrus's decree in mid-sentence, indicating that Yahweh has appointed (פָּקַד) Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, whereby he urges the one whose God is with him to go up (לָעָלוּ).¹⁶⁵ In Ezra, the text is continued to emphasize the rebuilding of the temple, and to procure help from the exiles who have remained behind.¹⁶⁶ This would suggest that the ending of Chronicles functions as a literary device to ensure that Chronicles is read as a prequel to Ezra-Nehemiah, since the chronological order has been displaced.¹⁶⁷

But more than this is happening since the question remains why there is a need to use Chronicles to signal closure. Sarna points out that the use of the two verbs in the ending of Chronicles echo the ending of the first book of the Torah, Genesis, where Joseph predicts that God will visit (יִפְקֹד) the Israelites in Egypt and bring them up (וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ) to the land of promise.¹⁶⁸ Thus the first and last books of the Hebrew Bible begin and end on the same note: Adam and the hope of an impending Exodus.

But why would it be important to urge the exiles to go up to Jerusalem? Read together with the other hermeneutical seams, this is a call to the Diaspora to engage in the task of return,¹⁶⁹ reconstruction, to build the temple, and to hear the words of the Torah and the Prophets, to meditate on them day and night in anticipation of coming eschatological figures.

This ending ensures that Chronicles is understood as a prequel to Ezra-Nehemiah but also a conclusion to the canon. Surely these last verses must raise the eschatological temperature, with the emphasis on return and rebuilding, as John Sailhamer has astutely noted, and the focus on the ending of a seventy-year period, and the beginning of a new day.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*.

¹⁶⁵ 2 Chr 36:22–23.

¹⁶⁶ Ezra 1:1–4.

¹⁶⁷ I would like to thank my colleague Keith Bodner for alerting me to the literary device of a prequel and suggesting its appropriateness for Chronicles.

¹⁶⁸ Gen 50:24. See N. Sarna, "The Bible: The Canon, Texts, and Editions," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 4 (1971) 816–36; W. Johnstone, "Chronicles, Canons and Contexts," *Aberdeen University Review* XLX 1 (1983) 10.

¹⁶⁹ I. Kalimi notes that the truncated ending reflects "a practical 'Zionistic' encouragement of immigration from the existing Jewish communities in Diaspora to Yehud Medinta" (*An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time and Place* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005] 156–57).

¹⁷⁰ See J. Sailhamer, "Biblical Theology and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible," in Hafemann, ed., *Biblical Theology* 25–37. Sailhamer notes that these last verses stress the seventy years of exile and this has implications for the seventy weeks of Daniel, which is a reinterpretation of these seventy years of exile.

But does the ending (2 Chr 36:22–23) simply serve that function? What if that function is provided by the entire book? The book of Chronicles itself is one long meditation on the Torah and the Prophets. Whether one stresses the Chronicler as a theologian, exegete, or historian,¹⁷¹ it is clear that he interacts with an unprecedented number of sources. There is material here from the Torah, the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the Psalms. Those who follow the Torah and the Prophets prosper, while those who do not experience disaster.¹⁷² In 2 Chr 20:20, Jehoshaphat says to his army, “Believe in Yahweh your God and you will be established; believe in his prophets and you will prosper.” Ackroyd says the following of this passage which clearly alludes to Isa 7:9:

This particular passage, set side by side with references to the Mosaic law and the Chronicler’s use of the Deuteronomistic History, comes very near to a statement of canonical authority for the whole range of writings now to be found in the two sections of the Hebrew canon, regarded as “wholes,” to be understood in the context of the conviction of the unity of their testimony. Is the Chronicler thus perhaps the first theologian of the canon?¹⁷³

A history is written of “unprecedented sweep” from creation to exile to return.¹⁷⁴ It is for this reason that Georg Steins has recently written that Chronicles functions to signal canonical closure.¹⁷⁵ It is clear that the Scriptures are being pondered anew in a unique way.¹⁷⁶ Jerome himself wrote that Chronicles was an attempt to recapitulate the entire canonical history.¹⁷⁷ Read in conjunction with the canonical seams it brings the Bible to an end, by noting that the Scriptures had a goal and that goal was not only to establish a people in the world to worship God properly but move history toward its divine goal, in which a Davidic descendant would play a part. Thus the genealogies, which start in Genesis with Adam and move the narrative forward to the people of Israel and a royal leader, are now resumed in the genealogies of Chronicles to lead to the people of Israel, but beyond them to David. David and his reign become virtually the center stage of Chronicles after nine chapters of genealogies, so that von Rad can remark about chapter 11 and what follows: “The Chronicler’s account starts with David.

¹⁷¹ For the Chronicler as theologian, see, e.g., P. Ackroyd, *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 8 (1973) 101–16; as exegete, see T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); as historian, see I. Kalimi, *Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

¹⁷² 1 Chr 22:11, 13; 2 Chr 13:12; 14:6; 20:20; 24:20; 31:21; 32:30. Note the pronounced use of citation formulae in Chronicles when compared to other books in the Hebrew Bible: K. L. Spawn, “As It Is Written” and Other Citation Formulae in the Old Testament: Their Use, Development, Syntax and Significance (BZAW 311; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002) 115 ff., 257ff.

¹⁷³ Ackroyd, “Theology” 112.

¹⁷⁴ J. Goldingay, “The Chronicler as a Theologian,” *BTB* 5 (1975) 99–100.

¹⁷⁵ P. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in his Age* (JSOTSS 101; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991); Steins, *Die Chronik*. Steins believes that this was done in the Maccabean period, but the use of Chronicles by Ben Sira and Eupolemus would militate against this time. See Sir 47:8–10; 1 Chr 6:32; and Eupolemus who cites the LXX of 2 Chr 2:11. See in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9:25–29.

¹⁷⁶ For example see Willi, *Chronik*.

¹⁷⁷ *Prologus Galeatus*.

This at the same time gives the keynote of the most important theme in the whole work, for what does it contain apart from David?¹⁷⁸ What is Chronicles but one long, loving, and lingering meditation on Scripture by recapitulating it again and bringing out many of its central points? As a final book in the canon, it is an appropriate, concrete demonstration of the consequence of meditating on the Scriptures. The first book in the NT of the Christian canon will recapitulate and reinforce this theme regarding David and his relevance to the entire world in its introductory genealogy.¹⁷⁹ His way has not only been prepared by the coming of an eschatological prophet,¹⁸⁰ but by the entire sweep of the Bible.

Thus Chronicles functions not only as a thermometer indicating the temperature of the biblical climate but also functions as a thermostat, jacking up the eschatological temperature of those same Scriptures. Why would there be such an emphasis on David if somehow he was not connected with God's central purposes for the universe as indicated at the beginning in Genesis in the call of Abram and also in Psalm 2?¹⁸¹ The genealogical line started so prominently in Genesis is resumed so prominently in Chronicles to show that David is the goal of the Tanak.

That there were other canons and various arrangements was no doubt true but it seems that this particular canon with a beginning in Genesis and a conclusion in Chronicles was part of a stream that was involved in the production of the Bible and thus part of a central stream of Judaism linked to the temple.¹⁸² This Hebrew Bible is pre-eminently the book of meditation on the past, inspiring hope for the future.¹⁸³

IV. CONCLUSION

I began by noting the article about Ian Provan's study of the late Brevard Childs's "contribution to biblical study entitled 'Canons to the Left of Him,'" indicating clearly where Childs stood on the spectrum I have sketched in this paper.¹⁸⁴ Childs believed that the formation of the canon was ultimately

¹⁷⁸ G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 350.

¹⁷⁹ Matt 1:1–18.

¹⁸⁰ Matt 3:1–17.

¹⁸¹ Note some of the important elements about David's reign in Chronicles besides the space and prominence given to him. In the prophecy of Nathan, missing is any idea of judgement on his sons if they disobey him. And instead there is the assurance that Yahweh will never remove his mercy (יְרַחֵם). This makes the promise more unconditional. See M. Saebo who makes the point that this is written in a time when the "eternal kingship" *no longer exists* (emphasis his: "Messianism in Chronicles? Some Remarks to the Old Testament Background of New Testament Christology, *HBT* 2 [1980] 99; see 2 Sam 7:12–16 and 1 Chr 17:11–14).

¹⁸² See Peter Gentry's essay in this volume for further development of this idea.

¹⁸³ The greater variation in order for the Writings probably derives from many of its books being used for liturgical reasons at later times. It is significant that even though the Rabbis preserved this early sequence (*Baba Bathra* 14b), the manuscript tradition did not feel constrained by it. The argument above assumes that Chronicles would have been written probably in the fourth century BC at a time which would correspond roughly with Josephus's views on the closure of the canon. But this, of course, assumes a different dating for the book of Daniel than that of the current scholarly consensus. This issue is beyond the immediate scope of the present study.

¹⁸⁴ Provan, "Canons to the Left of Him" 1–38.

the work of individuals who have obscured their tracks, thereby directing attention to the sacred writings themselves.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, “the formation of the canon was not a late extrinsic validation of a corpus of writings, but involved a series of decisions deeply affecting the shape of books. . . . Israel did not testify to its own self-understanding, but by means of a canon bore witness to the divine source of its life.”¹⁸⁶ While Childs would probably not agree with some of the tracks noted in this paper, I trust that the paper has lessened for some the obscuring of those tracks, which still direct attention to the sacred writings themselves, and show that the canon is not an arbitrary collection of books nor an anthology of national literature, but it has contours and shape, with theological significance.¹⁸⁷ Its intention was to take the great word of God which created the world (Genesis 1), get it into Israel’s leadership (Joshua 1), and finally get it into everyone’s heart (Psalms 1–2) and so inspire hope and expectation for the future. Childs may have had canons to the left of him, but in this matter I think he was still right.

V. APPENDIX

Main Orders for Writings: P. Brandt, *Endgestalten in des Kanon. Das Arrangement der Schriften Israels in der jüdischen und christlichen Bibel* (BBB 131; Berlin: Philo, 2001) 132–71.

<i>Eastern Arrangements*</i>	<i>Western Arrangements</i>	<i>Rabbinic Bibles*</i>
Ruth +	Chronicles	Psalms
Psalms	Psalms	Proverbs
Job	Job	Job
Proverbs	Proverbs	Songs +
Ecclesiastes +	Ruth +	Ruth +
Songs +	Songs +	Lamentations +
Lamentations +	Ecclesiastes +	Ecclesiastes +
Daniel	Lamentations +	Esther +
Esther +	Esther +	Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah	Daniel	Ezra-Nehemiah
Chronicles	Ezra-Nehemiah	Chronicles

+ Indicates a book which was later classified as one of the Megillot. Orders in which these books are combined together indicate liturgical influence, which indicates a later development.

* Indicates groups of manuscripts which essentially have the same beginning and ending. In the Rabbinic Bibles, Ruth has been shifted from its initial position as an introduction to the Psalter for liturgical reasons.

¹⁸⁵ Childs, *Introduction* 59: “The shape of the canon directs the reader’s attention to the sacred writings rather than to their editors.”

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ See Zenger’s point that the canon has a specific hermeneutical structure with biblical theological significance. “Der Psalter,” in Auwers and de Jonge, *Biblical Canons* 111.