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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS OF THE *NEVI'IM* PROPHETIC TRADITION: VIEWS FROM EXTENDED COMPARISONS *

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Abstract: The present study is interested in features of the *Nevi'im* Prophetic Literature that may be described as historiographical. Specific features are identified on the basis of the hypothesis that the histories cited in the Hebrew Bible refers mostly to extra-biblical sources concerning the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. These features are discussed in light of extended comparisons. Comparisons extending beyond the ancient Near Eastern milieu are utilized for an interpretative historiographical model to conceive in a new light some of the features identified in the Hebrew Bible's descriptions of chronicles associated with prophetic traditions as found in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Byzantine, Persian, Ottoman, and East Asian historians and their historiographical texts are discussed for comparison. The emerging model posits historian profiles and features of textual transmission. Historians could write palace chronicles even after the demise of a kingdom. Their works could be transmitted and various sources could be combined. The Book of Isaiah was considered as one of these texts, later incorporated into the *Nevi'im*. While the Book of Isaiah and books of similar structure are mostly regarded as works of prophetic literature from the viewpoint of current biblical scholarship, they can also be viewed as Hebrew historiographical texts transmitted after the demise of the kingdom of Judah among Jewish communities

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during the Exilic period and afterwards.

Keywords: Hebrew Prophetic Tradition, Historiography, Nevi'im, Comparative Method.

TARİHYAZIM VE NEVİ'İM PEYGAMBERLİK GELENEĞİNİN TARİHYAZIMI YÖNLERİ: GENİŞLETİLMİŞ KARŞILAŞTIRMALARDAN GÖRÜŞLER

Öz: Bu çalışma *Nevi'im* Peygamberlik geleneğinin tarihyazım olarak nitelenen özelliklerini konu alır. Bu özellikler, Tevrat'ta atıf yapılan ve Tevrat'tan ayrı olarak Yahuda ile İsrail krallıklarını anlatan yazılı kaynaklar olduğu hipotezine dayanarak tespit edilir. Bu özellikler, genişletilmiş karşılaştırmalarla ele alınır. Eski Yakındoğu kültür dünyasının dışına genişletilerek bir tarihyazım yorum modeli geliştirilir. Böylece Tevrat'taki Krallar ve Tarihler kitaplarında atıf yapılan ve tespit edilen özelliklere yeni bir değerlendirme getirilir. Karşılaştırmada Bizans, Fars, Osmanlı ve Doğu Asya tarihçilerinden ve tarihyazım eserlerinden yararlanılır. Oluşan modele göre tarihçi profilleri ve metin aktarımının özellikleri irdelenir. Buna göre bir krallığın yıkılışından sonra tarihçiler saray tarihi yazabilirdi. Eserleri aktarılabilir ve muhtelif kaynaklarla birleştirilebilirdi. Yeşaya Kitabı sonradan *Nevi'im* arasına dahil edilen bu metinlerden birisi olarak nitelenebilir. Yeşaya Kitabı ve benzeri yapıdaki eserler günümüz Tevrat çalışmalarında peygamberlik literatürü çerçevesinde ele alınırken aynı zamanda Sürgün dönemi ve sonrasında Yahudi toplumlar arasında Yahuda krallığının yıkılmasından sonra aktarılan İbrani tarihyazım metinleri olarak da görülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İbrani Peygamber Geleneği, Nevi'im, Karşılaştırmalı Metot, Tarihyazım.

*In memory of Noel Kenneth WEEKS (1943-2020),
My Supervisor at Sydney University, Australia.*

Introduction

Research comparing the textualization of ancient Hebrew prophecy assumes comparisons with prophetic texts from other periods and parts of the ancient Near East, mainly from Mari and the Neo-Assyrian Empire.¹ There are studies extending the comparison to the Eastern Mediterranean setting, in particular the Greek oracle tradition.² The comparison made with shorter prophetic material mostly comes from texts from the archives of Mari in the

¹ These texts are collected in Martti Nissinen, Choon-Leong Seow, Robert K. Ritner, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

² Martti Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy. Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

17th century BCE and the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 7th century BCE archives.³ One critical issue is that the Mari and Neo-Assyrian texts recording prophecy are limited in number. They do, however, indicate that prophecies were written down immediately or within several years (at most decades) after prophetic performance. Therefore the “assumptions—(a) that biblical prophets were in a completely oral world, and (b) that their words were only gradually written, (c) immediately interpreted, and (d) then continuously so in a long process of growing traditions until (e) they were finally compiled, leaving no traces (or almost none) of the historical prophets and prophecies—work only very partially with the extrabiblical (although limited) information we do have.”⁴ The limitations of comparison leave open the question as to how one may explain those aspects of the Hebrew prophetic tradition in the *Nevi'im* specifically and the Hebrew Bible in general that combine unique historical episode narratives with prophecies. Limitations of evidence concern not only the Hebrew texts but also their historical setting, example their pre-Exilic and/or Exilic period settings concerning the *Nevi'im* books.

It has commonly been assumed that short prophetic materials can be reworked into a larger text and yet this assumption, worked in different ways, have led to problems determining the precise development of the Hebrew prophetic literature and tradition.⁵ It is during these comparisons with texts that entire historical backgrounds with interrelations must be assumed. These assumed aspects have been discussed from a semiotic point of view by Antti Laato. Laato argues that the interpretation of the Hebrew prophetic literature is not limited to the interpretation of texts but has also assumed underlying models or “possible worlds”.⁶ This is because evidence and facts do not speak for themselves and the historical background built on their basis becomes the subject of assumptions. This raises a related issue. The comparisons can use texts from the Near Eastern milieu, such as the manuscripts and variants of various ancient Near Eastern texts such as Assyrian royal inscriptions and the Gilgamesh Epic.⁷ These can also be compared for interpreting the background. This clearly has great potential and constitutes what may be referred to as comparison within the ancient Near Eastern milieu. Such models

³ For example Matthijs J. De Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets. A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2007; Martti Nissinen, 2017.

⁴ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, “From Prophetic Words to Prophetic Literature: Challenging Paradigms That Control Our Academic Thought on Jeremiah and Ezekiel”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138, 2019, pp. 581–582.

⁵ Antti Laato, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament Prophetic Literature. A Semiotic Approach to the Reconstruction of the Proclamation of the Historical Prophets*. Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1996, pp. 3-17.

⁶ Laato 1996, p. 396.

⁷ Laato 1996, pp. 62-124.

can also help develop scholarly hypotheses concerning aspects of the *Nevi'im* literature. Comparisons cannot exclude, however, that the Hebrew tradition had unique aspects not attested in neighbouring contemporary cultures. There may also be aspects so far not identified according to the present state of the evidence unearthed via archaeological and/or investigated via historical research. In other words, assumptions and modelling, even when they are based upon cultures in the ancient Near East, still leave room for new comparisons. The present study seeks to propose an additional sphere extending beyond the milieu of the ancient Near East for comparison, to see models that may provide hypotheses for the transmission of political events and prophecy in historical narrative. This adds to a body of literature that has so far compared concepts of prophet, prophecy and ecstasy with various cross-cultural cases.⁸

Cultures in the Near East share similar features, and yet they are not identical. The human response is not uniform. One should also consider an anthropology, a study of human dynamics, for communities creating and transmitting their shared oral and written traditions, beliefs and memories. There may arise similar scribal practices for transmitted texts in cultures not related to each other in time and space. These similarities and differences beyond a single time and space can be compared. Historical works of pre-industrial and agricultural economic based societies with hand-written transmission of manuscripts among their members of a scribal class can also be considered as works of pre-modern historiography. Comparisons of pre-modern historiographical works from non-related cultures can help provide scenarios and models as to the development and transmission of written traditions extending beyond a specific region and its milieu. I will preliminarily refer to these as *extended* comparisons. The present study is interested in comparisons of historiographical features attributed mostly – but not entirely – to extra-biblical books/histories cited in the Hebrew Bible's Kings and Chronicles. Earlier research on the latter two books of the Hebrew Bible focused on posited redactions and how and what sources may have been used to this end. The more conventional approach has been to infer from formulae, expressions and stylistic differences on the basis of assumed sources and redactions both in Kings and Chronicles as well as

⁸ See the bibliographies in Charles Conroy, "Prophets in the Light of Human Sciences, II: Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Sociology" *Biblical Bibliographies and Related Material*. <https://www.cjconroy.net/bib/proph-anthrop.htm> [Last updated 2020-03-25] (accessed 15.3.2021); Charles Conroy, "Prophets in the Light of Human Sciences, I: Psychological Aspects (Prophetic "Ecstasy" and Related Matters" *Biblical Bibliographies and Related Material*. <https://www.cjconroy.net/bib/proph-psych.htm> [Last updated 2019-11-12] (accessed 15.3.2021).

Deuteronomy.⁹ A specific discussion of these postulations remains a desideratum for future research and no amount of discussion here will do it justice without extensive analysis. This however would take the discussion beyond the scope of the present enquiry interested in the methodological contribution of a newly proposed comparative approach for which focus is now to be specifically turned to books of history mentioned especially in Kings and Chronicles, often named after the names of the Iron Age kingdoms of Judah and Israel. These are described as “writings” (*ketûvîm*) on the “record” (*sēper*) of “the deeds” (*dibrî*) or “the deeds of the days” (*dibrê hayyāmîm*) of a given king. This recalls the third grouping of the Tanach, the “writing” *ketûvîm*, which can refer to several genres of books and writings, including books such as Kings and Chronicles. The “record” (*sēper*) of royal deeds, covering each reign, indicates this work was intended as a history to be recorded, preserved and transmitted via a written medium. The key term here representing the past, or history, then becomes *dibrê* “words; deeds”, corresponding to “history”, and by extension the term *dibrê hayyāmîm* “deeds of the days” can be translated as “chronicles”. These royal chronicles are dubbed *Ketûvîm 'al-sēper dibrê hayyāmîm ləmalkê Yəhūdāh* “Writings of the record for deeds/history of Judah’s kings” (e.g. 1 Kings 14:29), *Ketûvîm 'al-sēfer dibrê hayyāmîm ləmalkê Yīšārā'el* “Writings of the record for deeds/history of Israel’s kings” (E.g. 1 Kings 14:19) and the two kingdoms can also be named together as in “Writings of the record for deeds/history of Judah’s and Israel’s kings”

⁹ Shoshana R. Bin-Nun, “Formulas from Royal Records of Israel and of Judah”, *Vetus Testamentum* 18, 1968, pp. 414-432; John Van Seters, *In Search of History. Historiography of the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1983; A. Graeme Auld, “Prophets and Prophecy in Jeremiah and Kings”, *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 96, 1984, pp. 66-82; Menahem Haran, “The Books of the Chronicles ‘Of the Kings of Judah’ and ‘Of the Kings of Israel’: What Sort of Books Were They?” *Vetus Testamentum* 49, 1999, pp. 156-164; Nadav Na’aman, “The Sources Available for the Author of the Book of Kings”, (Ed. Mario Liverani) *Recenti tendenze nella ricostruzione della storia antica d’Israele*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2005, pp. 105-120; Lester L. Grabbe, “Mighty Oaks from (Genetically Manipulated?) Acorns Grow: The Chronicle of the Kings of Judah as a Source of the Deuteronomistic History”, (Ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, W. Brian Aucker) *Reflection and refraction: studies in biblical historiography in honour of A. Graeme Auld*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2007, pp. 155-173; Meindert Dijkstra, “‘As for the other events...’ Annals and Chronicles in Israel and the Ancient Near East”, (Ed. R. P. Gordon, J. C. de Moor) *The Old Testament and its World*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2005, pp. 14-44; John Van Seters, “The ‘Shared Text’ of Samuel–Kings and Chronicles Re-examined”, (Ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, W. Brian Aucker) *Reflection and refraction*, pp. 503-515; contributions by André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, Gershon Galil, Alan Millard and others in André Lemaire-Baruch Halpern (Ed.), *The books of Kings : sources, composition, historiography and reception*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2010; Christoph Levin, “Das synchronistische Exzerpt aus den Annalen der Könige von Israel und Juda” *Vetus Testamentum* 61, 2011, pp. 616-628; Ehud Ben Zvi, “Prophets, prophecy, and ancient Israelite historiography”, (Ed. Mark J. Boda, Lissa M. Wray Beal) *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography*, Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 167-188. I am grateful to Yigal Bloch for bibliographical support.

(e.g. 2 Chronicles 25:26) and “Writings of the record for deeds/history of Israel’s and Judah’s kings” (e.g. 2 Chronicles 35:27). The chronicles for the kings of Solomon and David’s united kingdom have been described as *Kētūvīm ‘al-sēfer dibrē Šelōmōh* (1 Kings 11:41) and *Dibrē hayyāmīm lammelek Dāvid* (1 Chronicles 27:24). The term *dibrē* also refers to the *dibrē* “words/deeds/history” of prophets such as the “history of Uzziah” written by prophet Isaiah son of Amoz (2 Chronicles 26:22),¹⁰ the “history” of Samuel the Seer, Nathan the Prophet, and Gad the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29), that of Nathan the prophet (2 Chronicles 9:29), that of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer (2 Chronicles 12:15), prophet Iddo (2 Chronicles 13:22), and that of Jehu son of Hanani (2 Chronicles 20:34). These historiographical features, summarized below, go beyond what one may initially expect from court chronicles, because, following Weeks’ analysis, they include:¹¹

- episodes such as the conspiracies of Zimri (1 Kings 16:20) and Shallum (2 Kings 15:15) and Manasseh’s sin (2 Kings 21:17).
- information about the water works of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:20).
- Asa’s successes, deeds, and the cities he founded (1 Kings 15:23).
- events, royal deeds and achievements of Baasha; the author then refers to the prophecy of Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house (1 Kings 16:5-7).
- Hezekiah’s encounter with Sennacherib, his prayer and correspondence with Isaiah in 2 Kings 18-19, which is also found in Isaiah 36-37 where Smelik (1986) argues that the narrative fits better. This may suggest that Kings derived material from Isaiah. The author of Chronicles states that events during Hezekiah and the king’s “acts of devotion” are detailed in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the historical records of the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chronicles 32:32). The “vision” and the accompanying narrative of Hezekiah are a part of the latter history/historical record. Furthermore, Uzziah’s deeds have been recorded by prophet Isaiah son of Amoz (2 Chronicles 26:22).
- events of the reign of David mentioned in the “history” of Samuel the Seer, Nathan the Prophet, and Gad the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29).
- Solomon’s deeds and episodes in the history of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat (2 Chronicles 9: 29).

¹⁰ Uzziah appears to represent a section of Isaiah’s writings.

¹¹ Noel K. Weeks, *Sources and Authors: Assumptions in the Study of Hebrew Bible Narrative*. River Road, Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011, pp. 216-219.

- Rehoboam's deeds and episodes in the history of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer that deal with genealogies (2 Chronicles 12:15)
- Abijah's deeds and episodes in the history of the prophet Iddo (2 Chronicles 13:22)
- Jehoshaphat's deeds and episodes in the history of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel (2 Chronicles 20:34). A prophet and a royal chronicle are mentioned together, the history for the former is a section of the latter source.
- titles that look "like variant forms of a basic formula" and could refer to the same type of work: "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chronicles 25:26; 28:26; 32:32) or "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chronicles 27:7; 35:27; 36:8) / "the book of the kings of Israel" (2 Chronicles 20:34) / "the midrash of the book of the kings" (2 Chronicles 24:27) / "the acts/words of the kings of Israel" (2 Chronicles 33:18).

Weeks observes that Kings and Chronicles refer to sources with information additional to what is provided in the Hebrew Bible, and that the "canonical" prophets are not mentioned with the exception of Isaiah.¹² This absence of these other prophets could indicate they were not regarded as court prophets as was Isaiah, also explaining how some of the Hebrew prophets distinguish themselves from other prophets, for example in Amos 7:14-15.¹³ These other prophets could include prophets serving the court. Among those prophets outside of the court, there could be those like Jeremiah, who prophesied and wrote (and/or his scribes wrote) against such prophets, also narrating events with prophecies incorporated.

These historical records are described as historiographical texts that incorporate prophets, sometimes as authors of historical records and sometimes with their prophecies in narrative as parts of history writing. The problem with the "historical records" and related sources cited in Kings and Chronicles is that they have not survived in transmission except for the Book of Isaiah and perhaps the Book of Samuel. Furthermore, there are references to these chronicles after the collapse of the kingdom of Judah (Nehemiah 12:23, Esther 2:23, 10:2). These sources are known only from quotations in the Hebrew Bible and there is an impasse; nothing further can be clearly deduced about their content and historical background. This is why they have not featured as strongly as they may have in trying to understand the

¹² Weeks 2011, p. 222.

¹³ Weeks 2011, p. 226.

historiographical aspects of the *Nevi'im's* reception in Jewish tradition. Information about these sources indicates several features that may be described as historiographical: prophetic and a range of other text-content segments are brought together in a uniquely-styled historical narrative, focusing on Davidic dynastic history, and connected with its royal palace.

Extended comparisons will help develop a model to interpret the historiographical features of the *Nevi'im* tradition of the Hebrew Bible presently discussed. Basic features of Byzantine, Persian, Ottoman, and East Asian historiography will be compared throughout the remainder of this study. For the purposes of extended comparisons as discussed above, these sources have no historical connection to the formation of the Hebrew Bible and yet focus on dynastic history, serve as royal chronicles, combine varying pre-existent text-content segments, and present a varying range of author profiles. They provide certain typological similarities with the histories/chronicles cited in Kings and Chronicles and some of its unique features. The ones of interest selected here are as follows:

- **Feature 1:** The association of a chronicle tradition with the name of (a) the state/polity (b) a monarch (c) the historian who writes court history but is also known for another occupation.
- **Feature 2:** A connection between the historian and the polity's seat of power, specifically a dynasty and an awareness of its enduring history. Varying profiles of the authors.
- **Feature 3:** Authors write histories in this chronicle tradition and it is transmitted by scribes within a given community after the demise of the aforementioned kingdoms.
- **Feature 4:** Use of earlier written and oral sources.

1. Feature 1-4

1.1. Feature 1a: The Use of State/Polity Name

Byzantine histories rarely refer to their polity. Often, if not always, they refer to their works with terms such as "history" and "chronicle". Rarely is there a title with the mention of their collective political body. A rare example is *Byzantine History* from among the works of Malchus of Philadelphia (c. 435-c.495).¹⁴

Persian historiography from the 10th century onwards tended use broad terminology for titles, such as "history" (*Ta'rikh*) or *nâmes* (a genre combining epic and history), such as *Shahname* or *Zafar-nâme*. Regional city histories

¹⁴ Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 383.

and dynastic histories could refer to the name of the city or the dynasty. A notable example is *Târikh-e Sîstân* from the 11th century.¹⁵ Another example is *Fârs-nâme* from the 12th century.¹⁶ The oldest extant dynastic history in Persian historiography is Zahir-al-Din Nîshâpuri's 12th century work known as *Saljuq-nâme*.¹⁷

Historiography among the Ottomans began in the 15th century, one and half centuries after the establishment of the Ottoman polity. The earliest known work, not extant today but mentioned by Âşıkpaşazâde (demise, c. 1484), author of *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân*,¹⁸ and several other Ottoman historians was Yahşi Fakih's *Menâkıb-ı Âl-ı Osman*, containing the name of the Osman dynasty. The first extant Ottoman work of history is Ahmedî of Germiyan's *Dâsîtân-ı Tevârih-i Mülûk-i Âl-i Osman* from the early-15th century, again with the dynasty name used in the title.¹⁹ Aside from the use of the dynasty name, one finds that Ottoman historiography, similar to Persian historiography and classical Arabic literature, both of which were of great interest to Ottoman writers, often used titles such as "history" (*Târîh*) or names with the added *nâme*.

The East Asian histories often used the dynasty name as part of their title, combined with the term "chronicle", which is most commonly Chinese *shu*, Japanese *shoki*, Korean *sagi*.²⁰ The dynasty name is also the state name of the state, commonly used in Chinese historiography: Han (in *Hanshu*), Wei (in *Weishu*), Ming (*Ming Shi*) are among the several examples. The history writing tradition sought to write the history of each dynasty. These histories were collected together by scribes who transmitted them. The earliest extant Chinese history was completed by Sima Qian in c. 86 BCE. This original name of work was *Taishigong shu* (the Book of the Master Grand Scribe) or *Taishiji* (Records of the Grand Scribe), eventually referred to as *Shiji* (Historical

¹⁵ Sîstân: the city of Zarang and its hinterland in the Gowd-e Zereh (Lake Hâmun) basin of what is today part of southeastern Iran and Afghanistan.

¹⁶ This work, however, mainly seeks to provide accounts of pre-Islamic Iranian kings, along with miscellaneous information about geography, revenues and the qadis of Fars.

¹⁷ Elton L. Daniel, "The Rise and Development of Persian Historiography" (Ed. Charles Melville) *Persian Historiography*, London-New York, I. B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 140, 144, 150. Earlier dynastic histories are known to exist, but as far as I know, they are yet not found despite their mentions.

¹⁸ Abdülkadir Özcan, "Âşıkpaşazâde" *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 4, 1991, 6-7.

¹⁹ Abdülkadir Özcan, *Osmanlı'da Tarih Yazımı ve Kaynak Türleri*, İstanbul, Kronik Kitap, 2020, p. 1.

²⁰ Detailed information about East Asian historiography can be found in the papers collected in William Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleybank (Ed.). *Historians of China and Japan*, Oxford University Press, 1961; Yöng-ho Ch'oe, "An Outline History of Korean Historiography", *Korean Studies* 4, 1980, 1-27; papers by Achim Mittag, Pamela Kyle Crossley, On-cho Ng, Masayuki Sato, Don Baker in José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, Edoardo Tortarolo, Daniel Woolf, Ian Hesketh (Ed.) *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 3: 1400–1800*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Records) and covered the time from the earliest legends to the time of Emperor Wu (156 BCE-88 BCE) of the Former Han Dynasty.²¹ Ban Gu sought to write a similar work of history but he focused on the beginning of the Han dynasty instead of the earlier legendary rulers as did Sima Qian. After Ban Gu passed away, the famous woman-scholar Ban Zhao completed the missing portions of this work; this work is known as *Hanshu*.²² Ban Gu and Ban Zhao had therefore developed a form of dynastic history. Sima Qian's and Ban Gu's works were not state sanctioned histories. Nevertheless, they left a lasting impact among Chinese literati. Their works served as models for later scholars who wrote and edited similarly formatted histories with titles of dynasty names. This continued until the final such work, which concerned the Ming dynasty. Titled *Ming shi*, it was compiled in the 17th century under the commission of the Qing dynasty. All these works were brought under the greater compilation have been dubbed *Ershisi shi* (Twenty-Four Histories).²³

Following the example of Chinese historiography, scholars in Korea and Japan referred to dynastic names in their titles. The *Samguksagi* combined the history of Korea's "Three Kingdoms", namely Silla (57 BCE-936 CE), Goguryeo (37 BCE-668 CE), and Baekje (18 BCE-660 CE), divided into chronicles titled after the kingdom's name: *Goguryeo Bongji* means the Basic Annals of the kingdom of Goguryeo whereas *Silla Bongji* and *Baekje Bongji* refer to the annals of the other two kingdoms named in the title.²⁴ The *Nihonshoki* narrated Japan's history starting with a creation account. It continued with emperors until the eighth century.²⁵ It treated Nihon as a socio-political and geographical continuity. The Chinese and Korean traditions similarly display an awareness of a continuing land and a unified culture despite the change of rulers and dynasties.

²¹ Ulrich Theobald, "Shiji 史記" *ChinaKnowledge.de. An Encyclopaedia on Chinese History, Literature and Art* [<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Historiography/shiji.html>], 2010a.

²² Yuen Ting Lee, "Ban Zhao: Scholar of Han Dynasty China" *World History Connected* 9/1. [<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/9.1/lee.html>], 2016.

²³ Ulrich Theobald, "The Twenty-Five Official Dynastic Histories (*ershiwushi* 二十五史)" *ChinaKnowledge.de. An Encyclopaedia on Chinese History, Literature and Art* [<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Historiography/ershiwushi.html>], 2010b.

²⁴ Edward J. Schultz and Hugh H. W. Kang (Ed.). *The Koguryo Annals of the Samguk Sagi. Kim Pusik*. (Translated by Kenneth H. J. Gardiner, Daniel C. Kane, Hugh H. W. Kang, and Edward J. Shultz. Seongnam). The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012.

²⁵ Mark Cartwright, "Nihon Shoki" *Ancient History Encyclopedia* [https://www.ancient.eu/Nihon_Shoki/], 2017; William George Aston, *Nihongi: chronicles of Japan from the earliest times to A.D. 697*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956; Kazumi Wilds, *Artists' book / the Kojiki or records of ancient matters, -the story of ancient Japan-*. MFA (Master of Fine Arts) thesis, University of Iowa. [<https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.0h35ecff>], 2018.

1.2. Feature 1b: The Use of a Royal Name

On relatively rare occasions, Byzantine histories will refer to the names of Byzantine rulers, especially Constantine. Eusebius of Caesarea's (c. 255-339) *Life of Constantine* and Praxagoras of Athens' (c.305-c.324) *History of Constantine* are examples. Malchus of Philadelphia (c.435-c.495) write *History from Constantine to Leo I*. Another example is *The Deeds of the Emperor Constantine* by Bearchius of Caesarea (c.300?-c.348).²⁶

Persian historiography sought a hierarchical organization based on events, rulers, dynasties, and eras. This followed the earlier Sassanid model of history as a succession of kings produced by scribes to promote Persian culture awareness and moral ideals.²⁷ The chapters could include names of rulers. For example, Abd-al-Hayy Gardizi's *Zeyn-al-akhbâr* comprises five *tabaqes* (groups, cycles) of ancient Iranian kings, referred to as *akhbâr-e ajam* by Gardizi, followed by fourteen *bâbs* (chapters) dealing with Islamic history, referring to the Umayyads and the Abbasids by name.²⁸

A 12th century work entitled *Mojmal-al-tavârikh va'l-qesas* comprises short lists of the duration of various eras and rulers, followed by chapters of varying length giving conflicting versions of the reign of Kayumarth, accounts of the Iranian kings, the times in which prophets and religious figures appeared, genealogies of the Turks, Hindu rulers, Greek kings, Roman kings, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the Arabs, the prophets, the Qoraysh tribe, Mohammad, and the caliphs, the Samanids, Buyids, Ghaznavids, and Saljuqs, the honorific titles of various rulers, the burial places of prophets, rulers, and members of Mohammad's family, the geography of the world, and Muslim cities. The final chapter, now lost, was an account of certain Saljuq rulers.²⁹

The period of Süleyman the Lawgiver (reigned 1520-1566) inspired a range of histories to describe events of his reign. Combining the monarch's name with the Persian literary and historical term *nâme*, these histories were known among Ottoman literati as *Süleymannâme* histories.³⁰ These works concerned the events of this Sultan's reign and numerous *Süleymannâme* histories were composed. Another interesting feature is from Behiştî's very early 16th century history. Behiştî treats each Ottoman ruler's period under the heading of a *Sıfır* and each *Sıfır* contains events relating to the pertinent ruler.³¹

²⁶ Treadgold 2007, p. 382.

²⁷ Daniel 2012, pp. 107-108.

²⁸ Daniel 2012, p. 121.

²⁹ Daniel 2012, p. 139.

³⁰ Özcan 2020, pp. 51-55.

³¹ Fatma Kaytaç, *Behiştî Ahmed Çelebi. Târîh-i Behiştî. Vâridât-ı Sübhânî ve Fütühât-ı Osmânî (791-907 / 1389-1502) II*. Ankara. Türk Tarih Kurumu. 2016, p. ix.

The East Asian historical works often used names of kings and emperors as well as other figures in titles of chapters dealing with their deeds. From Sima Qian one can provide example chapter titles such as “basic annals of Empress Lu” (a monarch), “biography of Liu P'i, the king of Wu (a prince, mentioned here as a revolt leader),³² and “biographies of Chang Shih-chih and Fang T'ang” (eminent officials).³³

1.3. Feature 1c: The Use of the Historian's Name

Byzantine historians and their communities of readers tended not to use the historians' names as titles for the entire work. The same holds for Persian and Ottoman historiography in many cases. There are cases when the author's name came to be associated with the title, especially by scribes and intellectuals who transmit and read these histories. For example, Abu'l-Fazl Beyhaqi's history of Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazna (1030-1041) was known as *Târikh-e Beyhaqi*.³⁴ Similarly, the Ottoman history text originally titled *Vâridât-ı Sübhânî ve Fütûhât-ı Osmânî* by Ahmed Sinan, known more so as Behiştî Çelebi, is commonly known as *Târih-i Behiştî* (written out *Târih-i Âl-i Osmân li-Behiştî*)³⁵ until a recently uncovered manuscript has revealed its original title.³⁶

The earliest canonical historical work in Chinese historiography referred to the position of Sima Qian as astrologer (*taishi*) when providing a title to his work as *Taishigong shu*. Later history works relied mainly on dynastic names as mentioned earlier (see **Feature 1a**).

2. Feature 2: Varying Author Profiles and Connections to the State/Polity

Early Byzantine historians, from the 4th to the early 7th century, were from the educated segment of society but were not of the highest social class except for Peter the Patrician who became a senior imperial officer. Many were decurions, members of city councils, or were bishops. Among them were Ammianus, Socrates, Theodoret, Procopius, and Evagrius. Writing a notable work could help them rise in popularity and rank. Their works would circulate among the literati of society. Among decurions were Procopius, Theophylact, whereas the bishops included Eusebius, Gelasius of Caesarea, Zacharias of Mytilene.³⁷ Middle Byzantine historians from the early 8th to the 13th century

³² This was the Rebellion of the Seven States (154 BC).

³³ Watson, Burton, *Records of the Grand Historian of China. Translated from the Shih chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien in two volumes* (Ed. Theodore de Bary), Columbia University Press, 1993, pp. ix-xi.

³⁴ Daniel 2012, p. 126.

³⁵ Fatma Kaytaz and Müjgân Çakır. *Behiştî Ahmed Çelebi. Târih-i Behiştî. Vâridât-ı Sübhânî ve Fütûhât-ı Osmânî (686-791 / 1288-1389) I*. Ankara. Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020, p. 2.

³⁶ Kaytaz 2016, p. 14; Özcan 2020, pp. 35-36.

³⁷ Treadgold 2007, pp. 354-355.

were mostly from the central bureaucracy and with much closer connections to the imperial family and the palace. Among these historians were imperial secretaries (e.g. Joseph Genesisus, John Cinnamus, the young Nicetas Choniates), patriarchs (e.g. Tarasius, Nicephorus, Photius), and members of the ruling imperial family (e.g. Anna Comnena, Caesar Nicephorus Bryennius, Constantine VII). Most of them were based in Constantinople. Several provinces were lost from the 7th century onwards, and the city councils diminished in intellectual interest.³⁸ The same trend continued well into the final days of the Empire.

By the end of the 6th century, a national history of Iran existed in the royal archive at Ctesiphon, from which the early Byzantine historian Agathias, who lived during the time of Justinian I, indirectly derived his account of the Sasanian history.³⁹ By the 10th century, when the Caliphate's power waned and local Iranian polities emerged. These polities sponsored Persian as the chancellery language with a renewed interest in a perceived Persian past. New genres of history writing emerged to try to bridge that gap between their pre-Islamic collective memory and the new environment of Muslim literati with a new range of historiographical works.⁴⁰ The emergence of these polities provided the impetus for this phase of Persian historiography. Those who wrote histories did so in dedication to or by the commission of these new rulers. In 963, Mansur bin Nuh (r. 961-976) commissioned a translation by his minister Abu-Ali Bal'ami, of the famous Arabic chronicle by Abu-Ja'far Mohammad b. Jarir Tabari (d. 923), the *Ta'rikh-al-rosol va'l-moluk* (History of the Prophets and Kings).

The earliest extant example of a history in Medieval Persian was Abd-al-Hayy Gardizi's *Zeyn-al-akhbâr*. Gardizi was an official under the command of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998-1030) and was still active under Sultan Abd-al-Rashid bin Mahmud (r. 1049-1052). Gardizi was an eye-witness to the events of these reigns. He dedicated the work to the latter Sultan during whose reign he compiled his history.⁴¹

Beyhaqi had initially obtained a position in the Ghaznavid secretariat (*divân-e resâlat*), perhaps starting during the time of Sultan Mahmud (reg.

³⁸ Warren Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 457-459.

³⁹ Alireza S. Shahbazi, "Historiography ii. Pre-Islamic Period" *Encyclopedia Iranica*. <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/historiography-ii> [accessed 27.10.2020], 2003 [Last updated, 2012]. The Persian historiography discussed for the present study's comparative perspective focuses on the Islamic period of Iran. Earlier traditions are not as well-known due to a scarcity of written documents.

⁴⁰ Daniel 2012, p. 103.

⁴¹ Daniel 2012, p. 125.

998–1030). He both reached the highest office and was afterwards dismissed and jailed during the reign of Sultan Abd-al-Rashid (1049–52) and was held captive during Toghrel's brief control of power in 1052. After 1052, the new ruler Farrokhzâd freed Beyhaqi.⁴²

Zahir-al-Din, who wrote *Saljuq-nâme*, was probably once in the service of Sultan Mas'ud bin Mohammad (r. 1133–52), perhaps was employed as tutor to Mas'ud's nephew Arslân b. Toghrel, and wrote his history after the accession of Toghrel b. Arslân (in 1176) and before the death of Atâbak Jahân-Pahlavân (in 1186).⁴³

As stated earlier, Ottoman historiography began in the 15th century, one and half centuries after the establishment of the Ottoman polity. Individuals with various connections to the Sultan and the Ottoman dynasty and palace wrote histories. The more formal office of court historian, the *vak'anûvis* was realized with the appointment of Naima as the official court historian only by the year 1702.⁴⁴ This profession's connections to the earlier 16th century commissioning of *şehnâme*-makers or earlier Ottoman history writers remains debated among experts of Ottoman historical traditions.⁴⁵ It is clear, however, that individuals gaining royal favour could write histories and their role as historian, while recognized at the palace, remained informal. Yahşi Fakih, mentioned earlier for the first known Ottoman history, was the son of Orhan Gazi's imam. Ahmedî of Germiyan was raised in the Germiyan palace and later received support from Emir Süleyman, a prince of Yıldırım Bayezid. A poet by the name Kadızâde Abdülvâsi Çelebi was supported by vizier Bayezid in the early 15th century. Ottoman historiography became more animated after Mehmed II's conquest of Istanbul, with Persian writers and poets composing texts in Persian tradition and historiography; this is also when the *şehname* tradition began with official sanction. A famous history writer of the 15th century was Âşıkpaşazâde. Trained in Islamic literature and well-travelled, he was the grandson of the Sufi poet Âşık Paşa. He had witnessed key events of Ottoman history; his motivation to write was triggered especially after he was asked "in a gathering" to write what he knows, reflecting social interest in his

⁴² Daniel 2012, p. 126.

⁴³ Daniel 2012, p. 150.

⁴⁴ The earlier form of this term was *vekâyi'nûvis*, combining Arabic *vak'a* (event) and Persian *nûvis* (scribe).

⁴⁵ Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman "Şehnames": Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century" *Studia Islamica* 104/105, 2007, 67-80; Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Vak'anûvis" (entry further edited by Abdülkadir Özcan) *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 42, 2012, pp. 57-61. On Ottoman historiography, see also Erhan Afyoncu, *Tanzimat Öncesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma Rehberi*, İstanbul, Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2016; Necdet Öztürk and Murat Yıldız, *İmparatorluk Tarihinin Kalemli Muhafızları. Osmanlı Tarihçileri. Ahmedî'den Ahmed Refik'e*, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2013.

work. He could at times criticize rulers and statesmen. The work was also recognized and read among members of the military and different sectors of society and was not limited to palace circles. Sultan Bayezid II invited Idris-i Bitlisî, who was a scholar, author of correspondence, and diplomat, after he fled from the Safavids. He was critiqued for his emphasis on a more elaborate style of writing history and his pro-Persian discourse, but he completed his *Heşt Bihîşt* by 1506 and later presented it to Selim I as a history of the Ottomans. His history has been highly regarded for its content. Ahmed Sinan, also known as Behiştî Çelebi, the author of *Târîh-i Behiştî*, was a recognized poet and was regarded as the son of one of the first soldiers who entered Istanbul; he served in Bayezid II's court and in provincial posts. A child of an iron-working family, the poet Hadîdî's prose *masnawi*-styled Ottoman history, titled *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, was used as a source by other historians from Sultan Süleyman I's time. There were also historians from the religious class, the *ilmiye*. One example is Cenâbî Mustafa Efendi, who served as a *madrasa* professor and *kadı* (judge) in various cities, passing away in Aleppo in 1590.⁴⁶

Sima Qian was recognized as the Han palace's scribe-astrologer. The precise title for scribe-astrologer was *taishi*.⁴⁷ He inherited his position from his father Sima Tan. He was modelled as a historian by subsequent scholars trained in Chinese scribal arts and classical texts, often also writing other works such as poetry and were members of noble families with formal and/or informal connections with the palace. To give one example: Ban Gu (32-92 CE) was a member of the Ban family in close relation with the royal Han family members. After his father passed away, Ban Gu saw his father's work and compiled the *Hanshu*, mostly finishing it by around 80 CE. He served in the palace and was in close connection with one of the dynasty's commanders, Dou Xian. When Dou Xian fell out of favour in court and was forced to commit suicide, Ban Gu was arrested and he passed away in captivity.⁴⁸ Because Ban Gu died before the book was completed, Emperor He (r. 88-105) ordered Gu's sister Ban Zhao (c. 45-c. 117 CE) to complete the missing part of the tables. The missing treatise on astronomy was written by Ma Xuzhong, a disciple of Ban Gu.⁴⁹ It is important to recognize that the History Office was established only by the Tang dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries), indicating an official

⁴⁶ Özcan 2020, pp. 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 30-33, 35, 49, 61.

⁴⁷ Theobald 2010b. Specifically of the Former Han Dynasty (206 BC- 8 AD).

⁴⁸ Ulrich Theobald, "Ban Gu 班固" *ChinaKnowledge.de. An Encyclopaedia on Chinese History, Literature and Art* [<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Han/personsbangu.html>], 2011.

⁴⁹ Theobald Ulrich. "Hanshu 漢書" *ChinaKnowledge.de. An Encyclopaedia on Chinese History, Literature and Art* [<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Historiography/hanshu.html>], 2010c.

position for history writing was recognized only centuries after the genesis of Chinese historiography itself.⁵⁰

It should be pointed out that neither Sima Qian's nor Ban Gu's histories were originally officially sanctioned. However, thereafter most histories became official publications sponsored by the ruling regime to compile the history of the preceding dynasty. The history writing tradition also continued until Qing times. The Qing compiled the *Ming Shi*. After this, official royal commission of histories ended but there were two additional histories following the same model after the end of monarchy in China (see further below under **Feature 3**)

Emperor Tenmu (r. 673-686) ordered the review of "the chronicles of the emperors and likewise the original words in the possession of the various families" to correct errors. The documents such as the *teiki* (imperial chronicles) and *honji* (fundamental dicta). He commissioned Hieda no Are to memorize these records and oral traditions. Hieda no Are was known to be the member of the *Sarume* family. Are's identity or gender is not known.⁵¹

Empress Genmei (r. 707-715) ordered Oho no Yasumaro, Japanese nobleman, bureaucrat, and chronicler, and a commission of high officials and princes to record to record these traditions and hence the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters) was prepared by 712.⁵² Oho no Yasumaro recorded Hieda no Are's memorized information. Antoni notes that it remains unclear whether Hieda no Are has simply learned and memorized these texts, which of course must have been written in Chinese characters too, or if he/she engaged oral tradition. To record Are's information, Yasumaro opted for a mixed form of phonetic and semantic usage of Chinese characters instead of classical Chinese.⁵³ The archaic Japanese words from Yasumaro's script was often believed to have reflected what Hieda no Are had dictated him in those four months of intensive joint work between November 711 and March 712.⁵⁴ Empress Genmei would also order the compilation of a national history in 714 but its connection to the later *Nihonshoki* is unclear.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Edwin G. Pulleybank and William G. Beasley, "Introduction", (Ed. William Beasley, Edwin G. Pulleybank) *Historians of China and Japan*. Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 6.

⁵¹ Aston 1956, p. xii; Klaus Antoni, "Creating a Sacred Narrative – Kojiki Studies and Shintō Nationalism" *Japanese Religions* 36, 2007, pp. 13-14; Fujii Sadakazu, "The Tradition and Modernity in the Study of Japanese Narratives - Narratives and Historical Narration" *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 2/1, 2002, 96.

⁵² Aston 1956, p. xi; Antoni 2007, pp. 12-14; Kazumi 2018, p. 9.

⁵³ Antoni 2007, p. 14.

⁵⁴ Antoni 2007, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Aston 1956, p. xi)

Prince Toneri later commissioned Oho no Yasumaro and a commission of court officials to work on the *Nihonshoki*, finished by 720 and dedicated to Empress Gensho (r. 715-724).⁵⁶ Thirty books from *Nihonshoki* are transmitted although the book of genealogies is no longer extant. Its source material included the written material used in *Kojiki*, *Kojiki* itself, the research and writing of the Buddhist scholar Shotoku Daishi, the *Norito* (rituals of the Shinto cult), earlier histories such as the *Kana Nihonshoki*, and oral traditions from reciters of the little-known hereditary *Katari Be* institution.⁵⁷

Commissioned by King Injong of Koryo (r. 1122-1146), the *Samguksagi* was compiled by the Koryo scholar-statesman, Kim Pusik, and his junior colleagues, by 1145.⁵⁸ Kim Pusik (1075-1151) was a member of a noble family with roots to the Silla royal family.⁵⁹ During Injong's reign, Kim Pusik became an executive in the Ministry of Rites (Yebu Sirang). Kim Pusik formally presented the *Samguksagi* to King Injong in 1145. Kim Pusik probably started working on the history in retirement (the year 1142). Kim Pusik's junior colleagues were from the Office of Historiography, which employed at least fourteen individuals. Their names appear at the end of the *Samguksagi* with Kim Pusik. Their identities are unclear mostly. Ch'oe Sanpo, Pak Tong ju, Chông Supmyông, Ch'oe Ubo, and Ho Hongjae are mentioned in other sources. Ch'oe Sanbo, Ch'oe Ubo, Ho Hongjae, and Pak Tong ju were relatively young men at this time. Chông Supmyông, Ch'oe Ubo, and Ho Hongjae later became prominent officials in the reign of King Uijong's reign (r. 1146-1170). Their exact roles and responsibilities in the compilation of the *Samguksagi* remains unclear.⁶⁰ It can be assumed they undertook much labour in the process.

3. Feature 3: Transmission after the Demise of the State/Polity

Byzantine historians maintained their sense of identity as Roman-Greeks after the demise of the Byzantine Empire and the new Ottoman rule. They mostly focused on the final siege of Constantinople and the comparative history of the Byzantines and the early Ottomans.⁶¹ In one case, Doukas states (36.2) that he was prompted to write the history of the Ottoman dynasty

⁵⁶ Mark Cartwright, 2017. "Nihon Shoki" *Ancient History Encyclopedia* [https://www.ancient.eu/Nihon_Shoki/]. For the text, see Aston 1956.

⁵⁷ Aston 1956, p. xi-xii.

⁵⁸ For the text, see Schultz and Kang 2012.

⁵⁹ Edward J. Schultz, "An Introduction to the "Samguk Sagi"" *Korean Studies* 28, 2004, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁰ Schultz 2004, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ Maja Nikolić, "The Greatest Misfortune in the *Oikoumene* Byzantine Historiography on the Fall of Constantinople in 1453" *Balkanica. Annual of the Institute for Balkan Studies* 47, 2016, 119-133.

only because of an oracle which claimed that the Ottoman dynasty would end soon after soon after the end of the Palaiologan dynasty.⁶²

The *Saljuq-nâme* portrays the moral qualities and physical appearance of the ruler, names his vizier and other officials, and relates certain stories about important events, almost invariably battles with enemies or rivals. Zahir-al-Din's simple and direct language had an appeal. Zahir-al-Din was writing when the dynasty that was his subject was fading, and he was looking back to the glory days of former rulers he had served. Several notable works of Persian historiography were similarly composed during the periods of decline of the concerned polity.⁶³ Following the collapse of Saljuk power and the advent of the Mongols under Chengis Khan (1219-1222) and his grandson Hulegu (1256-1258), the Persian writing scribal culture continued its transmission of traditional texts and composed new texts under the newly emerging political and cultural order. Scribal tradition drew from established literary texts such as *Shahname* were brought to the forefront. New identifications for the new conquerors and a re-assertion of Iranian self-awareness was for example achieved via literary figures.⁶⁴ The earliest historiographical reaction to the Mongols, in Atâ-Malek Joveyni's *Târikh-e jahân-goshâ* (1260), was very much an attempt to explain the conquests as God's will. Qâzi Beyzâvi's *Nezâm-âl-tavârikh* (ca. 1275) provided a survey of the dynasties that ruled the Iranian lands and included the Mongol rulers of Iran into the king lists, as the latest dynasty in an unbroken chain.⁶⁵

The historiographical and other Ottoman scribal traditions received relatively less support especially during the mid-to-late 19th century in the Ottoman Empire. The post of the court historian remained until 1922, when the institution of the Sultan was abolished. They mainly wrote about the history of contemporary events. A noted court historian was Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, serving as court historian between 1855 and 1865. He was commissioned to write Ottoman history in an updated and modern manner. His popular work about the history of Islam and the prophets was still read in the Republican era. The last court historian was Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi, who wrote about some of the episodes concerning Abdulhamid II and the aftermath.⁶⁶ He became a member of the Turkish parliament before passing away in 1925.

⁶² Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks* (An Annotated Translation of "Historia Turco-Byzantine" by Harry I Magoulias), Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1975, p. 29.

⁶³ Daniel 2012, p. 133.

⁶⁴ Charles Melville, "The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500" *Persian Historiography* (Ed. Charles Melville). London-New York, I. B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 163-165.

⁶⁵ Melville 2012, pp. 162-164.

⁶⁶ Özcan 2020, p. 220.

Authors outside the court in the 19th and early 20th centuries also produced numerous works, in the format of old traditions but also with interest especially in either the past of Islam's origins and the earlier phases of Ottoman history and/or foreign countries.

Chinese historiography was interested in the history of China's dynasties.⁶⁷ The dynasty that came to power was expected to write down the history of its predecessor. Chinese history writing tradition utilized pre-existing written records from the previous dynasty to produce a narrative which legitimized the new dynastic state. This started in earnest during the Han dynasty and continued well up to the time of the Qing dynasty. The *Ershisi Shi* (Twenty-Four Histories) brought together these historical works and therefore covered a history from the first assumed dynasty and the Yellow Emperor of the earliest conceived times until the Ming dynasty, as collected by the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), in separate chronicles committed to specific dynasties. These were written by historians commissioned by the new dynasty and their records were preserved by scribes throughout China as well as in Korea and Japan where Chinese tradition was maintained.

After *Ming Shi*, a twenty-fifth history was written during the early years of Republican China, named *Xin Yuanshi* (New History of the Yuan), compiled by Ke Shaomin (1850-1933). Another one was written after the end of imperial China in 1912; the *Qingshigao* (Draft to a history of the Qing dynasty). This was also added to the same corpus. The *Qingshigao* was not an official dynastic history because there was no emperor commissioning it. With that text, the dynastic histories in total count 26 books, dubbed *Ershiliu shi* (Twenty-six histories).⁶⁸

The *Samguksagi* treated the history of the three kingdoms exclusively and did not deal with the history of the Koryo dynasty per se, when it was compiled by 1145. This followed the model of Chinese historiography and perceived a continuity in a shared Korean culture, language community, and geography. In contrast, the *Nihonshoki* addressed the histories of emperors known until 720 and conceived the same dynastic line. Accordingly, the sun goddess Amaterasu, ancestral deity of the imperial house, entrusted rule over the country for all eternity to her descendants, the emperors, constituting one legitimate lineage; the same approach to lineage was not attested in the *Kojiki*.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Edwin G. Pulleybank and William G. Beasley, "Introduction", (Ed. William Beasley, Edwin G. Pulleybank) *Historians of China and Japan*, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 1-23.

⁶⁸ Theobald 2010b.

⁶⁹ Antoni 2007, p. 20.

4. Feature 4: Use of Earlier Written and Oral Sources

Early Byzantine historians were mainly concerned with contemporary events and therefore interviews were more important. They focused therefore more on officials, generals, bishops and less on emperors, kings and monks.⁷⁰ They as well as Middle Byzantine historians had access to earlier Greek and Roman histories as well as written documents from monasteries and collections. The Middle Byzantine historians had relatively more access to the palace archives and in addition to contemporary history, they expanded their interests into earlier history.⁷¹

When he retired, Beyhaqi edited the range of documents he had been copying and collecting to write a history ever since he was in active duty at the Ghaznavid secretariat which served the court, and copied Arabic and Persian court documents. He also had conversations with statesmen throughout his career and provided anecdotes (*hekâyat*).⁷² The *Saljuq-nâme* was later redacted by Qâshâni and Rashid al-Din. It was based mostly on memory, oral tradition, or popular tales and folklore, and rarely if ever on documents and written sources.

Ottoman historiography relied on interviews and the growing corpus of earlier histories and primary documents, as well as sources available in *madrasas* and in the collections of scribes transmitting texts primarily in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish. Some had access to palace archives, especially the official court historians and those with informal connections to the palace.

Sima Qian and his father were astrologers for the Han emperor. They had access to the early Han dynasty archives, edicts, and records. He also states that he interviewed individuals around China to collect information.⁷³ Similar methods were employed by succeeded authors and compilers of Chinese chronicles.

Kim Pusik's methodology while editing the *Samguksagi* was informed by Chinese history writing and especially Sima Qian.⁷⁴ The work made use of numerous Korean and Chinese written texts and oral traditions. The *Nihonshoki* claims awareness of written sources from the different clans in Japan's history. This work also included oral traditions as discussed above in reference to Hieda no Are.

⁷⁰ Treadgold 2007, pp. 350-352.

⁷¹ Treadgold 2013, pp. 478-481.

⁷² Daniel 2012, pp. 129-130.

⁷³ Theobald 2010a.

⁷⁴ Schultz 2004, p. 4.

5. An Extended Comparative Model

The information provided in the present study from Byzantine, Persian, Ottoman and East Asian historiographical texts is preliminary. For the purposes of the present undertaking, there is enough comparanda to discuss certain features of the histories cited in Kings and Chronicles.

The names of the historical works cited in Kings and Chronicles focus in particular on the names of Judah and Israel. These were dynastic kingdoms and in that sense, chronicles committed to their history and referring to the names of these polities compare with similar works with dynasty names (Chinese, Ottoman) and geographical entities (Japan, Korea),⁷⁵ discussed above. The dynastic histories also assume a shared culture and geography, as in the case of China with several dynasties in the same land recognized in its historiography. The Ottoman historiographical tradition focuses on one dynasty through the ages, and in that sense is also a suitable comparison to the Davidic and Solomonic dynasty assumed by the Iron Age kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The terminology in several historiographies discussed above mostly refers generically to a “history” or “chronicle” while they can also name the polity or geography. More specific topics or person names (except the author’s name) are usually named in sections within the book. This compares with the predominant title of the Hebrew chronicles assumed in Kings and Chronicles. Several works discussed above received varying titles throughout the life of their transmission. *Târikh-e Beyhaqi* and *Târîh-i Behiştî* are two examples. Readers develop naming practices and author names help distinguish works.

The names of monarchs and others often occur in the titles of chapters in historiographical works. They can appear as chapters summarizing a monarch’s or a highly influential prince or officer’s biography. Chapters can have entries referring to specific episodes. In that sense the references in Kings and Chronicles also have comparanda. Descriptions criticizing monarchs can be found in several historiographies at varying levels. While rare in court historiography, criticism is not always absent. It can also serve to present moral teachings, with idealized depictions of good and bad characters as in *Saljuq-nâme*, which by depicting the good moral character of earlier rulers also criticized contemporary rulers when the state was in decline.

Numerous forms of open and discrete criticism of the palace and rulers are known in Ottoman history; for example Naima, the first appointed official court historian (*vak’anüvis*) of the Ottoman Empire in 1702, was also known for criticizing the political influence of Safiye Sultan, wife of Murad III (r. 1574-

⁷⁵ These histories also recognize dynasties although the *Nihonshoki* treats them as one lineage.

1595).⁷⁶ Personal motivations could be among the factors for some historians writing critically in their annalistic accounts. Lütfi Paşa in his chronicle *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* wrote during the 1550s against Barbarossa who had replaced him as admiral of the Ottoman fleet.⁷⁷ A primary motivation in criticizing rulers could be violations of justice. The scribal addition to a manuscript of an anonymous *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* draws from the Qur'an (Nisa 135) and emphasizes the importance of administering justly regardless of circumstance and social pressure.⁷⁸

Criticism is also a feature of Chinese historiography with *shih-lun* ("historical discussion"), which includes comments on historical comments from a moral point of view whereas Chinese historians since Sima Qian also provide critical comments of their own and others' histories.⁷⁹ Criticism can also cover the performance of rulers. The tradition of critical history writing is vividly illustrated by the case of Qin Shi Huang, China's First Qin Emperor (r. 221-210 BC), who on the recommendation of his minister Li Si (d. 208 BC), ordered destruction of books in 213 BC, including "books in the bureau of history" except for "the records of Qin", and the purported execution of 460 literati in the following year: These were the outcome of the Emperor's concerns of his critics, especially those who "studied the past in order to criticize the present".⁸⁰ Sima Qian makes critical assessments of dynasties in general for example describing the Zhou and Qin dynasty periods witnessing an "exhaustion of culture" whereas he also openly criticized past rulers such as Xiangyu, king of Western Chu.⁸¹ Sima Qian also criticized his own emperor, Wudi, out of his own Confucian outlook as well as his own personal aversion

⁷⁶ For this and other criticisms of Ottoman rulers and administrators, see Alpay Bizbirlık, "Kroniklerde Osmanlı Devleti Yöneticilerine Yapılan Eleştiriler Üzerine (Başlangıçtan XVI. Yüzyılın Sonuna Kadar)", *Bilgi* 31, 2004, p. 58.

⁷⁷ Evrim Türkçelik, "The best-kept secret in the Mediterranean: Barbarossa's 1534 Tunis campaign" *Mediterranea Ricerche* 17, 2020, p. 384.

⁷⁸ Kenan Ziya Taş, *Anonim Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman – Der-beyân-ı Menâkıb Âl-i Osman*, İstanbul, Post Yayın Dağıtım, 2020, p. 24. Nisa 135: "O believers! Stand firm for justice as witnesses for Allah even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or close relatives. Be they rich or poor, Allah is best to ensure their interests. So do not let your desires cause you to deviate 'from justice'. If you distort the testimony or refuse to give it, then 'know that' Allah is certainly All-Aware of what you do."

⁷⁹ Edwin G. Pulleybank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-Chi and Ssu-ma Kuang", (Ed. William Beasley, Edwin G. Pulleybank) *Historians of China and Japan*, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 135-166; Stephen W. Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror. Tension and Conflict in the Writing of Sima Qian*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 129.

⁸⁰ Durrant 1995, p. xvi.

⁸¹ Durrant 1995, pp. 132, 140.

of the emperor owing to difficulties and punishments that befall him as a result of competition between palace factions.⁸²

Byzantine historians can write so openly about many details about the deeds of Byzantine rulers and palace members that they are disclosing the type of intrigue official history would want to censor. The popularity of especially early Byzantine historians and their relative freedom probably owed also to their separation from Constantinople, whereas the historians relied more on the capital as the Empire declined and shrank. Their histories were read not only among intellectuals with access to books but were also read in the palace. They were reading about negative depictions and critiques of earlier rulers and periods.

Overall, histories and annals from different pre-modern societies contain criticisms, as well as descriptions of events such as conspiracies and evil deeds alongside more honourable mentions such as building projects or military conquests. In each case the historian can have different motives and there will also be a legitimizing religious or political perspective, such as the Islamic view on justice/morality or the achievement of political or military success for Persian and/or Ottoman historians or the Confucianist approach among Chinese historians. Comparable examples of critical as well as more positive accounts from the Hebrew annals which assumed their own religious or political perspective while describing historical episodes can also be provided. Among such examples are the mention of the conspiracies of Zimri (1 Kings 16:20) and Shallum (2 Kings 15:15), Manasseh's sin (2 Kings 21:17), the water works of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:20), Asa's successes, deeds, and the cities he founded (1 Kings 15:23), and achievements of Baasha as well as Jehu the son of Hanani's prophecy against him and his house (1 Kings 16:5-7).

6. Historiographical Aspects of the *Nevi'im*

The "vision" of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz is mentioned in the history of the kings of Judah and Israel when discussing Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:32). This may or may not be different to prophet Isaiah son of Amoz as an author of Uzziah's deeds (in 2 Chronicles 26:22). Either way, these monarchs are mentioned in the Book of Isaiah. The mention of Isaiah's vision in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel appears to be the same vision described in Isaiah 36-37, also arguably the basis for 2 Kings 18-19 since the content fits Isaiah 36-37 better as discussed by Smelik.⁸³ This passage was therefore

⁸² Durrant 1995, pp. 145-146, 150; Michael Nylan, "Sima Qian: A True Historian?", *Early China* 23/24, 1998-1999, pp. 203-246.

⁸³ Klaas A. D. Smelik, "Distortion of Old Testament prophecy. The Purpose of Isaiah XXXVI and XXXVII" *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 24, 1986, pp. 70-93; Weeks 2011, p. 218.

considered as historical narrative, also including prophecy described as a “vision”. Given that the historical narrative can be considered historiographical, its mention together with prophecy indicates the latter was also considered a part of the same historiographical practice. The reference to prophet Isaiah son of Amoz as an author of Uzziah’s reign (2 Chronicles 26:22) indicates that Isaiah is ascribed a work with historiographical features alongside the Book of Isaiah from which both the “Historical Records of the Kings of Judah and Israel” as well as the Hebrew Bible’s Book of Kings have quoted. Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz’s work makes one look at Isaiah 6:1 in a new light, as it states: “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.” Isaiah 1-6 before that contained prophecies critical of Judah during Uzziah’s reign, and 2 Chronicles 26 is also critical of the same king along the same religious and prophetic lines, ending with the reference to Isaiah. One can conclude here that Kings and Chronicles assume that more than one work attributed to Isaiah was in circulation when these two books of the Hebrew Bible were composed. This raises the possibility of seeing more historiographical features in this exemplary Hebrew prophetic text. The original readership could read more about the historical background assumed in the prophecies in the Book of Isaiah and this was in part available in the royal chronicles and prophet’s histories discussed above. The “visions” in the Book of Isaiah reflect intertextual relations. It may imply that the chronicle quoted from the Book of Isaiah and the same passage in Isaiah 36-37. A similar case to Isaiah’s vision in the chronicles is when the same historical records of the kings of Israel contains, amongst other things, the “history” of Jehu son of Hanani which also refers to Jehoshaphat’s deeds and episodes (2 Chronicles 20:34). The chronicle therefore uses another source known as Jehu’s history, comparable to Isaiah’s history mentioned in Chronicles. A prophet’s “history” is a section of the chronicle.

The mention of kings and prophets is not a completely unparalleled theme in our comparanda but it is something more pronounced in Hebrew historiography. Abu-Ja’far Mohammad b. Jarir Tabari’s Arabic *Ta’rikh-al-rosol va’l-muluk* (History of the Prophets and Kings) conceived “prophets” and “kings” within the same continuum. It is interesting that Abu-Ali Bal’ami’s editing modified certain details to reflect Persian ideas of historiography with a focus on ancient Persian kings as discussed above. Different historiographies have different focuses and similarities. The choices in quoting from the royal chronicles in the cases of Isaiah and Jehu testify to the unique historiographical and prophetic features of Hebrew tradition. This becomes more marked when one reads of – as mentioned at the beginning of this study – events of the reign of David mentioned in the “history” of Samuel the Seer, Nathan the Prophet, and Gad the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29), Solomon’s deeds

and episodes in the “history” of Nathan the prophet, said also to be mentioned in the “prophecy” of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the “visions” of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat (2 Chronicles 9: 29), Rehoboam’s deeds and episodes in the “history” of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer that deal with genealogies (2 Chronicles 12:15), Abijah’s deeds and episodes in the “history” of the prophet Iddo (2 Chronicles 13:22).

Prophets as authors of history recalls several features from the historiographies compared. Sima Qian was the court astrologer, but his work was not the official history. Rather, it was recognized by the Han elite but official sanction of preparing history books came later. This is also the case with Ottoman historiography. The court historian as an official position came only by the very early 18th century and historians could be of varying backgrounds: provincial institutions, clergy, imams, poets. Their informal ties allowed them to receive the ruler or a senior statesman’s support to proceed with their history. Sometimes, they would receive support from the literati in communication with the palace, and recognition by the palace could also come later. Isaiah’s connection as court prophet is more explicit and can be a reflecting of this phenomenon *in which case it is possible to conceive that this position was not the equivalent of that of an official court historiographer/chronicler*. Rather, depending on the significance of YHWH worship among the populations in Judah and Israel, it is possible that during the earlier phases of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the prophets had informal connections with the palace, later also resulting in prophets serving as scribes just as the astrologers Sima Tan and Sima Qian served in the Han court as scribes and astrologers. We also saw how the profiles of authors can vary even when they are recognized as history writers in the different historiographies discussed (while there are no official historians until much later). Isaiah’s connection as court prophet is more explicit and can be a reflection of this phenomenon in which case it is possible to conceive that this position was not the equivalent of that of an official court historiographer/chronicler. Rather, depending on the significance of YHWH worship among the populations in Judah and Israel, it is possible that during the earlier phases of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the prophets had informal connections with the palace, later also resulting in prophets serving as scribes just as the astrologers Sima Tan and Sima Qian served in the Han court as scribes and astrologers. We also saw how the profiles of authors can vary even when they are recognized as history writers in the different historiographies discussed (while there are no official historians until much later). This also correlates with how prophets are named as authors for the earlier monarchs of Judah and Israel and only with later kings does one come across records of royal histories and chronicles.

The comparanda discussed in the present study can be used to construct different historical scenarios as to the historical development of prophetic authorship, which is understandably a very controversial topic in the study of Hebrew prophetic tradition. Readings from the *Nevi'im* can also imply that the prophets had scribes helping them from the same faith community, perhaps adding certain portions of texts, as it also happened for example in the cases of *Hanshu* by the hand of Ban Zhao. One notes also Oho no Yasumaro recording the verbal recitation of Hieda no Are, representing the other end of the historical scenario with an entire oral performance committed to writing by the hand of the scribe(s). It cannot be excluded that the palace tried to draw in the prophets because of their popularity and had their works recorded. Clashes of worldview between the palace and those prophets divided among themselves as to how they spoke in relation to this political authority are expected in a historical scenario. One may also understand that divide between different prophets mentioned in the *Nevi'im*, with some prophets supporting Judah while others criticizing Jerusalem and their religious policies. After the sack of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, it may be surmised that the prophets critical of the kingdom gained more momentum and support amongst the exiled members of Judean communities, paving the way for the collection of their books under the *Nevi'im* category of the Hebrew Bible tradition.

This existence of scribes transmitting a written tradition from the time of the dynastic-state to the period after its collapse points to a portion of society associating themselves with this dynasty as members of a community with shared memories of a cultural and political heritage. A perceived collective identity could be traced in several historiographies, such as China, Korea and Japan. Their literate culture continues after that dynasty's demise and utilized annals transmitted in earlier generations. Similarly it can be conceived that the Hebrew-speaking communities who continued their way of life also transmitted historiographical annals and records as part of their stream of scribal tradition. Scribes and literati engaging with this literature had access to circulating sources of history writing such as smaller works attributed to various prophets as well as the Judah-Israel chronicles, directly or via works collating these sources in wider histories. Such histories continued well into the generations of exile since the scribal tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic also continued among the diaspora who maintained their sense of collective cultural identity. The continuing traditions can be compared with the writing of Chinese dynastic histories after the collapse of monarchy in China, the Byzantine histories after the demise of the Byzantine Empire, and the study of earlier Korean kingdoms on the part of members of a later kingdom who believed in a continuing Korean culture connecting them to these earlier kingdoms. Comparable in another way is Persian historiography in the sense that while different kingdoms rose and fell throughout the centuries from the 10th to the early 19th

century, its genres remained in circulation. Considering the centuries-long transmission of the Hebrew Bible books, at least from the time of the Qumran manuscripts to the Masoretic text, but certainly assuming a longer period of some form of transmission, then the scribal tradition in the past probably had access to more written sources which in time dropped out of transmission as communities without kingdoms focused on a social life which preserved certain texts and not others. There are countless history books now lost in other communities which once had scribal transmission and history works refer often to work now unavailable. One can conjecture that the Judah-Israel chronicles also engaged multiple written sources, most of which were lost in time, and there are certainly many episodes in the fragile history of the ancient Jewish communities that would have created ruptures in the transmission of historical texts.

Conclusion: Applying the model in the Ancient Near Eastern Milieu

This data from the extended comparisons only provides interpretative models. How can it be applied? I think it can be applied to both the case of the Hebrew traditions but also their Near Eastern neighbours with whom comparisons are often made in scholarly literature. My attempt here will be brief and there is more to write in future research. Nonetheless, to start off, it can be surmised that Hebrew writing scribes copied and transmitted histories and chronicles written by individuals who brought together different records and genres. They did so at least going as far back as during the Iron Age kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Informal connections and an “invisible hierarchy”, quoting Postgate when he discussed the Neo-Assyrian palace community,⁸⁴ were features common to pre-industrial communities and this is reflected in the comparisons and can also be assumed for scribes and literate members of the political elite of Israel and Judah.

If we were to apply here the implications of the extended comparative model, we can try to see if they can be used to elucidate comparable aspects from neighbouring Near Eastern cultures. Scribes transmitting a body of texts in a given Near Eastern culture, such as Assyria, received support from palace or temples, but they were still not an organic part of these institutions but rather they operated on the basis of a master-apprentice relationship. The Assyrian palace in Nineveh, as well as the provincial temple in Ziyaret Tepe, also provided rations and lodging for prophets of Ishtar.⁸⁵ These prophets were

⁸⁴ J. Nicholas Postgate, “The Invisible Hierarchy: Assyrian Military and Civilian Administration in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.”, (Ed. J. Nicholas Postgate) *The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur: Studies in Assyria 1971-2005*, Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2007, pp. 331-360.

⁸⁵ Nissinen et al., *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 2003, pp. 97-177; Simo Parpola, “Cuneiform Texts from Ziyaret Tepe (Tuşhan), 2002-2003 (Plates I-XXV)” *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 17, 2008, pp. 98-99.

not the main actors in the practice of official cult. Scribes did record the Assyrian prophets' and prophetess' performances, but it is not clear how much they edited the wording. The polytheistic prophets of Assyria, for example, were not active at the scale assumed in the Hebrew Bible for prophets in Judah or Israel. Given that the histories with which the Hebrew prophets interacted with shared features which can be detected from a cross-cultural perspective as discussed in the present study, one can posit that prophets in Judah and Israel had a different status compared to their counterparts in Mari and the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This assumes different configurations in society and confirms that cultures may share underlying tendencies but evolve separately. In this case, Hebrew prophets had a relatively more active role in the history writing tradition and more court and palace connections.

The historical records discussed in the present study and other written sources were copied and transmitted by scribes in Judah until the 585 BCE Exile and beyond, though diminishing in time. The books were still transmitted among members of the Jewish communities in Babylon, Egypt and other parts of the Near East, by the times when the authors of Kings and Chronicles referred to them. One can compare here how the Babylonians continued to write annals, chronicles, as well as numerous other types of written sources after the demise of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom until the first century CE.⁸⁶

The authors and editors of the Hebrew chronicles remain unidentified. This means their networks are also unidentified and open to proposed scenarios. The extended comparative model can help conceive that these individuals need not strictly be palace officials while still writing palace chronicles. The background to these individuals can vary. They only need to have the favour of the "invisible hierarchy" and their work can be treated as an annalistic account should it gain favour amongst an audience associating themselves with the dynasty. Other individuals may pick up on these historiographical works and compose another work that incorporates in its entirety or partially the content of this selected work. Several generations can transmit any of these texts, including earlier source-material and later historiographical works that combined them. The Book of Isaiah was considered as one of these texts accompanying histories in the name of the same prophet along with works of other prophets, most of which were not included in the *Nevi'im*. This exclusion owed to the dynamics of transmission and the focus on selected texts in time and this needs to be further explored. While the Book of Isaiah and books of similar structure are works of prophetic literature from the viewpoint of current biblical scholarship, they are also Hebrew historiographical texts transmitted

⁸⁶ Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. Reprint from 1975. J. J. Augustin. Locust Valley, New York, and Glückstadt. Winona Lake, Indiana. Eisenbrauns, 2000.

after the demise of the kingdom of Judah among Jewish communities during the Exilic period.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Bu çalışma bazıları İbrani nebilere/peygamberlere atfedilen ve özellikle Tanak'ın *Nevi'im*/Peygamberler kısmında yer alan bazı Kutsal Kitap metinleriyle ilişkilendirilen tarihyazım bilincini tartışır. Nebiler ve onların öğrencilerinin/kâtiplerinin sözlü ve yazılı kaynaklar kullandığını iddia eden bir aktarım geleneği söz konusudur. Tanak'ın *Ketuvim*/Yazılar kısmında yer alan ve MÖ 6. yüzyıldaki Sürgün sırasında yazılmış olan Krallar Kitabı (*sefer malkim*) ve Tarihler Kitabı (*dibre hayyamim*) eserlerinde özellikle Yahuda ve İsrail hükümdarlarının "amellerini" (*dibri*) veya "(kralların) günlerinin/döneminin amellerini" (*dibre hayyamim*) aktaran "yazılardan" (*ketuvim*) ve "kayıtlardan" (*sefer*) söz edilir. Her krala ait bir kronik/yıllık kaynağı olduğu ifade edilir. Mevcut metin tenkit yöntemleriyle bu yazılı kaynakların sosyal bağlamı anlaşılmamıştır çünkü söz konusu eserlerin ne zaman, nasıl ve hangi kaynaklarla yazıldığı kesin olarak bilinmemektedir. Aynı sorun nebilere ilişkili metinlerin nasıl ortaya çıktığını açıklamaya çalışırken de ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Tanak'taki kitapları yazanların yararlandığı kroniklerin/yıllıkların sosyal ve saray kökenleri konusunda yeni bir bakış açısı elde etmek için bu çalışma farklı bir yöntemle konuya yaklaşmaktadır: kültürler arası karşılaştırma yöntemi. Buna göre Krallar ve Tarihler kitaplarında kroniklere yapılan atıflarda bu yazılı kaynaklarla anılan belirli ve açıkça metinde ifade edilmiş nitelikler vardır. Kroniklere yapılan atıflardaki nitelikler şunlardır ve çalışmada bunlar detayı ile aktarılır:

Nitelik 1: Kronik devletin, kralın ya da kronik yazarın adıyla anılır. Yazar resmi meslek olarak bir tarihçi değil başka bir statüye sahiptir. Tanak'ta bu yazarlar genelde nebi olarak nitelenir.

Nitelik 2: Konu edilen devlet/kral ile kroniği yazar arasında bir bağ vardır. Yazar, tarihte uzun süre varlığını sürdüren bir hanedanın bilincindedir. Yazarlar farklı sosyal kesimlerden gelebilir.

Nitelik 3: Yazılan bu kronikler gelecek kuşakların katipleri tarafından kopyalanır ve aktarılır. Aktarım, hanedan çöktükten sonra da devam eder çünkü aktaran toplum varlığını sürdürmektedir.

Nitelik 4: Kronikler, muhtelif yazılı ve sözlü kaynaklardan yararlanır.

Kültürler arası karşılaştırma yöntemi bu nitelikler üzerinden yapılır. Karşılaştırmada, mevcut tenkit metotların gerektirdiği tarihi hipotetik açıklamalar yerine genel karakteristikler ortaya çıkarmayı hedefleyen antropolojik bir boyut kazanması için Eski Yakındoğu'nun dışından kronikler seçilmiştir. Bu da kültürler arası karşılaştırmayı aynı zamanda genişletilmiş bir karşılaştırma yapmaktadır, çünkü analiz için düşünülen Yakındoğu coğrafyasının ötesine gidilmiştir. Söz konusu toplumlar birbiriyile ilişkisiz ya da çok az ilişkili toplumlardır: Bizans, Çin, Fars, Japon, Kore ve Osmanlı toplumları. Karşılaştırmada Bizans, Fars, Osmanlı ve Doğu Asya tarihçilerinden ve tarihyazım eserlerinden yararlanılır. Karşılaştırma için seçilen bütün sanayi devrimi öncesi tarım toplumlarında, Tanak'ı aktaran katip geleneğine benzer biçimde o toplumun dini ve kültürel metinlerini nüshalarla usta-çırak zinciriyle aktaran bir kâtip sınıfı vardır.

Makalede genişletilmiş karşılaştırma çerçevesinde yukarıda belirtilen dört nitelik söz konusu tarım toplumlarında ele alınır. Bu toplumların katiplerinin aktardığı kroniklerde Yahuda ve İsrail krallarıyla ilişkilendirilen ve atıf yaptığı iddia edilen kroniklerin

niteliklerine benzer nitelikler tespit edilir. Bu tespitler detaylı olarak anlatılır. Buna göre her bir topluma ait kronik; devlet, kral, veya yazarın adından yararlanabiliyor. Ayrıca bütün bu toplumlarda resmi saray tarihçiliği çok sonradan bir makam olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Önceden farklı sosyal kesimlerden bireyler, sarayla olan gayri-resmi bağları veya farklı resmi bağları (örneğin başka bir devlet görevi, askeri görev) sayesinde yazılı ve sözlü kaynaklara erişip kronik yazıyor. Saray tarihçiliği resmi meslek olduktan sonra bile sarayla bağlantılı bireyler yine yukarıda belirtilen niteliklerde kronik yazabiliyor. Devlet/hanedan yıkıldıktan sonra bile o devletle ilgili kronik yazılmasına bu toplumların bazılarında örnekler çalışmada belirtilmiştir (makalede bkz. Nitelik 3 [Feature 3]). Örneğin Çin'de son hanedan yıkıldıktan sonra da bu son hanedanla ilgili *Xin Yuanshi* (Yuan hanedanının yeni tarihi) adlı kroniğin hazırlanması.

Birbiriyle etkileşimleri ya çok az ya da bir hiç olan belirli tarım toplumlarının kronik ve tarihyazım geleneklerinin, yine bir tarım toplumu olan ve benzeri kâtip geleneklerini barındıran Yahuda ve İsrail krallıkları toplumlarına ait kronik ve tarihyazımıyla benzer nitelikler arz etmesi, karşılaştırmanın Eski Yakınođu kültür dünyasının dışına genişletilerek bir tarihyazım yorum modeli geliştirilmesini sağlamıştır. Bu modele göre Yahuda ve İsrail krallıkları bünyesinde nebil ve öğrencileri/kâtipleri kroniklerin yazılmasında etkiliydiler. Nebilere toplumun duyduğu saygı sayesinde de kâtipler toplumda onlara ait kronikleri aktarıyordu. Ama bu modele göre sadece nebil kronik yazmıyordu. Farklı sosyal kesimlerden olup sarayla bağlantısı olan bireyler de bu kronikleri yazabilirdi. Model olmasının önemi de tarihi verilerle sınanabilmesi ve bir hipotez olarak bilim dünyasına kazandırılmasıdır. Aynı model sayesinde Eski Yakınođu bünyesinde ileride yapılabilecek daha detaylı karşılaştırmalar için de bir ön değerlendirme yapılmaktadır. Buna göre Yahuda ve İsrail krallıklarında resmi bir tarihçilik makamı çıkmadan önce toplumda dini saygı gören ve yazılı gelenekte nebi olarak anılan kişilerin tarih yazıcıları olarak da anılmasının şaşırtıcı değildir. Aksine resmi tarihçi olmayıp farklı sosyal kesimlerden bireylerin farklı toplumlarda kronik yazdıklarını genişletilmiş karşılaştırmadan tespit edilmiştir. Böylece Tevrat'taki Krallar ve Tarihler kitaplarında atıf yapılan ve tespit edilen niteliklere yeni bir değerlendirme getirilir. Buna göre bir krallığın yıkılışından sonra tarihçiler hangi sosyal kesimden olurlarsa olsunlar saray/devlet tarihi yazabilir, eserleri aktarılabilir ve muhtelif kaynaklarla birleştirilebilirdi. Nebilere atfedilen eserler de bu şekilde aktarılmış olabilir. Yeşaya Kitabı sonradan *Nevi'im* arasına dâhil edilen bu metinlerden birisi olarak nitelenebilir. Yeşaya Kitabı ve benzeri yapıdaki eserler günümüz Tevrat çalışmalarında peygamberlik literatürü çerçevesinde ele alınırken aynı zamanda Sürgün dönemi ve sonrasında Yahudi toplumlar arasında Yahuda krallığının yıkılmasından sonra aktarılan İbrani tarihyazım metinleri olarak da görülebilir.