

Aly Elrefaei  
**Wellhausen and Kaufmann**

# **Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft**



Edited by

John Barton, Reinhard G. Kratz and Markus Witte

## **Volume 490**

Aly Elrefaei

# **Wellhausen and Kaufmann**

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Ancient Israel and Its Religious History in the Works  
of Julius Wellhausen and Yehezkel Kaufmann

**DE GRUYTER**

ISBN 978-3-11-045212-9  
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-045433-8  
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-045330-0  
ISSN 0934-2575

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2016 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston  
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck  
♻️ Printed on acid-free paper  
Printed in Germany

[www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)

## Acknowledgments

This book is a slightly revised edition of a PhD thesis, entitled “The history of ancient Israel in the works of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) and Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963),” which was accepted by the University of Göttingen in February, 2015. The study was conducted with the financial support of a German-Egyptian Research Long-Term Scholarship. Without its kind sponsorship, this work could not have been completed.

Throughout the writing of this work, Professor Reinhard G. Kratz has been an able guide. He has provided the necessary encouragement and academic environment needed to accomplish my work. His scholarly insights have enlightened and opened new perspectives. I have learned vastly from his incisive comments. I also wish to express my gratitude to Professor Rudolf Smend, who gave so generously of his knowledge. In addition, I have learned and benefited from discussions with Professor Hermann Spieckermann. Grateful acknowledgment is due to Professor Sebastian Günther and Professor Andreas Grünschloß for fruitful conversations.

I would also like to thank my colleagues Dr Peter Porzig and Dr Harald Samuel for their friendliness and endless support. I owe so much to my wife Shaimaa, and my children Omar and Oday; they have been a truly inspiring family. I am profoundly indebted to the publishing house de Gruyter as well as to the editors of BZAW for accepting my work for publication in the series. This work is dedicated to my parents who missed my love and care during my studies abroad.

Aly Elrefaei,  
Göttingen 2015



## Preface

Aly Elrefaei's study on Julius Wellhausen and Yehezkel Kaufmann is in many ways something unique. This is by all means true of its author and the selection of the topic. Aly Elrefaei is a native of Egypt and a Muslim who studied Semitic languages—particularly the different stages of Hebrew—as well as biblical studies at the University of Cairo. Already at his home university he engaged with the important philosopher of religion Yehezkel Kaufmann and his works—which are largely published in Hebrew—before coming to Göttingen in 2010 on a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in order to write his dissertation. In Göttingen he learned German, not least in order to read the works of Julius Wellhausen, perhaps the most significant Christian biblical scholar and orientalist, in their original language. Alongside his dissertation research, Aly Elrefaei was involved as an associate member of the DFG-research training group (*Graduiertenkolleg*) entitled “Götterbilder – Gottesbilder – Weltbilder” up to its conclusion in December 2012 as well as in the international network “Old Testament Studies: Epistemologies and Methods” (OTSEM). The dissertation was completed in 2014 and was defended during the summer semester of 2015 in the field of Religious Studies at the Philosophical Faculty of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.

The topic of the dissertation itself is also unique. In current scholarship on the Hebrew Bible, neither Wellhausen nor Kaufmann—the two giants and antipodes of biblical studies during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century—play a major role, at least not explicitly. This is the case for several reasons. One reason is the language barrier, since today the discussion is largely conducted in English and few scholars in the field also have command of both German and Modern Hebrew. Another reason is that it is often thought that the questions and methodological approaches of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the period of historicism, have been outpaced and thus no longer need to be known. In fact, however, both Wellhausen and Kaufmann continue to exert a much stronger influence—even if in the background—than we are perhaps aware. These two figures represent two diametrically opposed perspectives for relating the biblical narrative to history, both of which have influenced the discussion up to the present. While some share the presupposition of the biblical narrative that Israel had a distinctive place in the world of the ancient Near East from the beginning and that everything happened—more or less—as the Bible recounts, others assume that Israel was a nation like any other and that the awareness of its distinctiveness only developed gradually under certain conditions and was a claim that

stands closer to the end rather than the beginning of ancient Israel's history and the history of biblical literature.

The great merit of Aly Elrefaei's study is to have retraced and analyzed in detail the works of Wellhausen and Kaufmann with focused attention to the question of ancient Israel's earliest history, thus making their views on this question accessible to scholars today. Elrefaei precisely works out their methodological principles, their biographical, historical, and intellectual backgrounds, the setting of course in their argumentation, as well as their commonalities and differences. His treatment of Kaufmann makes accessible a body of work that is practically unknown in German- and English-language scholarship, and his treatment of Wellhausen and the comparison of the two scholars (re-)opens to English-language scholarship a means of accessing German intellectual history and historical research during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The comparison of the two scholars reveals that the opposing positions of Wellhausen and Kaufmann are, of course, also influenced by personal factors and by their respective historical contexts. All the more striking is that both figures had more in common than they themselves perhaps were aware of or would have liked: source criticism, the figure of Moses as a starting point, the leading role of religion in Israel's early history, and a fixation with the question of the law. Their differences are not least based on their dating of "the law," namely, of the Priestly writing, which is debated once again today on linguistic grounds. In this respect, as Aly Elrefaei impressively demonstrates, the notion of "theocracy," its connection to prophecy, as well as the idea of monotheism play a decisive role. While Wellhausen saw a sort of "evolution" in the emergence of the law and of monotheism, Kaufmann—similarly, it should be mentioned, to Jan Assmann today—reckoned with a "revolution" that stood at the beginning of Israel's history.

It is with good reason that the author restricts himself to analysis and description and abstains from making a judgment for or against one of the two historical reconstructions. At the end of the study, he poses the question of which position stands up to criticism and answers this question in a balanced manner: "The question then arises as to which of the theories, Wellhausen's or Kaufmann's, stands up to criticism. I am afraid to say that answering this question in a direct way could do an injustice to the great contributions of Wellhausen and Kaufmann. It is true that the works of these two masters belong to their times and it would be unreasonable to see their thoughts only from today's perspective. Nevertheless, we should understand clearly that looking at the future we need to know where we are. With this borne in mind, the need to examine earlier and classic works is necessary. I am convinced that instead of a complete denial of Wellhausen and Kaufmann's reconstruction, we should look for what



can be learned from the works of these two gifted scholars. For some of the thoughts of Wellhausen and Kaufmann in the history of ancient Israel and its religion still surprise us” (p. 274). With this modest statement, Aly Elrefaei indicates that his dissertation has laid the groundwork for further investigations. Such future studies would above all need to explain how the reconstructions of Wellhausen and Kaufmann relate to the methodological approaches and recent theories in the fields of History, Religious Studies, and in the Humanities more generally, in which certain ideas have been discovered anew that were already considered by Wellhausen and Kaufmann and only formulated differently.

Reinhard G. Kratz,  
Göttingen, November 2015



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# Abbreviations

AJS	<i>Association for Jewish Studies</i>
AmSc	<i>American Scholar</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BiBe	<i>Biblische Beiträge</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BTZ	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BWANT	<i>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
HAT	<i>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
HeBAI	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAOT	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JISMOR	<i>Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions</i>
JJTP	<i>Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
MGWJ	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
OBO	<i>Orbis biblicus et orientalis</i>
PAAJR	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research</i>
PJB	<i>Palästina Jahrbuch</i>
ResQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
ThR	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>

TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina- Vereins</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZRGG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>



# Introduction

The subject matter of this study extends widely over time, moving from the events of thousands of years ago to the thinking on these events of two very learned scholars of quite different cultural, intellectual and religious backgrounds. What drew me to this topic? I have made Julius Wellhausen and Yehezkel Kaufmann the subject of my research for two reasons. The first was due to a chance encounter of personal significance and the second to knowledgeable advice from an expert on biblical studies. As for the first, when I was in Egypt in 2010, I had the good fortune to find the massive, eight-volume *Toledot* by Kaufmann written in Hebrew. Thus when I came to Germany, my hope was to study Jewish religious thought in the works of Kaufmann. However, on the advice of my supervisor, who recommended a comparison between Wellhausen and Kaufmann, I took courage and made my way through Wellhausen's works, finding indeed interesting grounds for comparison.

As becomes clear in a study of this field, there is no unanimity regarding the interpretation of Israel's history and its religion. In order to place the works of Julius Wellhausen and Yehezkel Kaufmann in the context of a broader scholarly debate, it is essential to mention the considerable size and scope of the key issue, that of "the history of ancient Israel". Questions regarding Israel's history and historical reconstruction are not new; they have been asked for a long time. Various attempts have been made to construct a picture of ancient Israelite history. Scholars widely differ in their approaches, ranging from source analysis to seeking insights through form and traditional criticism and the discoveries of archaeology. The result has been copious hypotheses, all of which has contributed considerably to understanding the history of ancient Israel and its religion.

Scholars of Israel's history not only vary in their methods of interpretation, but also diverge from each other in their point of departure. In this context, Herbert Donner refers to the two major sources for writing on the history of ancient Israel: the literary and the archaeological materials.<sup>1</sup> Donner asserts that both literary sources and archaeological data are important and should not be regarded as two contrasting approaches.<sup>2</sup> The respective works of Martin Noth and William Albright represent the main scholarly discussion in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the study of ancient Israelite traditions, Noth identified differ-

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen* I (ATD Ergänzungsreihe 4/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* I, 22.

ent themes in the Pentateuch.<sup>3</sup> In Noth's thinking, "History can only be described on the basis of literary tradition, which records events and specifies persons and places."<sup>4</sup> Noth proposed that an amphictyonic league of different groups of people combined together and formed what has become known as Israel. However, Noth asserted, "The history of Israel, in the strict sense of the history of a more or less definable entity, only begins on the soil of Palestine."<sup>5</sup> Pressing archaeology into service, William Foxwell Albright and his followers paid more attention to extra-biblical data.<sup>6</sup> The basic assumption of Albright is that archaeology would confirm the reliability of biblical traditions. As he puts it, "Archaeological and inscriptional data have established the historicity of innumerable passages and statements of the Old Testament."<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the Albright school assumed that early Israelite traditions, particularly those related to patriarchal stories, rest on some foundation.<sup>8</sup> Thus, for example, John Bright maintains, "The Bible's picture of the patriarchs is deeply rooted in history. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stand in the truest sense at the beginning of Israel's history and faith."<sup>9</sup>

If the question at the times of Martin Noth and William Albright was, "When does the history of Israel begin?" recent studies on the history of Israel tend to abandon much of the early Israelite tradition, arguing that they can no longer be regarded as a source for writing about ancient Israel's early history.<sup>10</sup> Alongside the non-consensus on reconstructing the history of Israel, there are some fallacies that have sharpened the divisions among scholars.<sup>11</sup> This gives us a strong

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**3** These themes are: Guidance out of Egypt, Guidance into the land of Canaan, Promise to the Patriarchs, Guidance in the Wilderness, and Revelation at Sinai. On this see Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948).

**4** Martin Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950). Quotation from English translation (The History of Israel, Rev. ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 42.

**5** Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, 53.

**6** W. F. Albright, "Archaeology Confronts Biblical Criticism," *AmSc* VII (1938): 176–88; idem, "The Ancient Near East and the Religion of Israel," *JBL* LIX (1940): 85–112. See further G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957).

**7** Albright, "Archaeology Confronts Biblical Criticism," 181.

**8** See, in particular, W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1949).

**9** John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981<sup>3</sup>), 103.

**10** For a discussion see, J. Maxwell Miller, "Is it Possible to Write a History of Israel without Relying on the Hebrew Bible?" In *The Fabric of History: Text, Artifact and Israel's Past* (ed. D.V. Edelman; JSOTSup 127; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 93–102. Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (Sheffield: Sheffield Acad. Press, 1992, repr., 1999). Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

**11** On these fallacies, see Walter C. Kaiser, *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 1998).

indication of how complicated and complex the beginnings of Israel were.<sup>12</sup> The debate continues and scholars have been asking such provoking questions as, “Can a ‘history of Israel’ be written?”<sup>13</sup> Or “On choosing different models of interpretation,”<sup>14</sup> “what directions should we take?”<sup>15</sup> More recently, new questions have been raised by Reinhard Kratz:

Die Geschichte Israels setzt die Existenz einer Größe mit Namen „Israel“ voraus. Je nachdem, seit wann und wie lange diese Größe existierte, reicht die Geschichte Israels. Hinter dieser simplen Feststellung steckt ein großes Problem: Die Frage nach Anfang und Ende der Geschichte des antiken Israel im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.<sup>16</sup>

It should be mentioned that the foregoing debate addresses only one side of the problem. The controversy extends also to include the question, “Who has determined the course of writing the history of ancient Israel?” Almost one century has elapsed since the German historian and Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig wrote, “Eine lebendige Einwirkung jüdischer Gelehrter auf die Anschauungen vom A.T. ist nicht mehr zu erwarten, weil die klassische Zeit der Konsolidierung dieser Ansichten abgeschlossen ist.”<sup>17</sup> In the justification of Rudolf Smend, this was not only because the Jewish scholars – not without reason – claimed to have a more direct relationship to the Old Testament than the Christians, but more because the problems of Bible criticism in general were still relatively foreign to them.<sup>18</sup> Smend goes further to maintain that there was, with

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Rofé, “Clan Sagas as a Source in Settlement Traditions,” in *“A Wise and Discerning Mind”: Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000), 191–203 (203).

<sup>13</sup> Lester L. Grabbe ed., *Can a ‘History of Israel’ Be Written?* (JSOTSup 245; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> J. M. Sasson, “On Choosing Models for Recreating Israelite Pre-Monarchic History: to Michael C. Astour on His 65th Birthday,” *JSOT* 21 (1981), 3–24.

<sup>15</sup> Hans M. Barstad, “The History of Ancient Israel: What Directions Should We Take?” in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (ed. Hugh Godfrey Maturin Williamson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25–48.

<sup>16</sup> Reinhard G. Kratz, *Historisches und biblisches Israel: Drei Überblicke zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Mensch und sein Werk: gesammelte Schriften*, Bd 1: *Briefe und Tagebücher* (ed. Rachel Rosenzweig and Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann; The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979), 264.

<sup>18</sup> Rudolf Smend, “Wellhausen und das Judentum,” *ZThK* 79 (1982): 249–282.

only few exceptions, no Jewish Bible scholarship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that would even halfway satisfy modern expectations.<sup>19</sup>

These controversial themes – the history of ancient Israel, historical reconstruction, Jewish and Christian scholarship – have prompted the subject of this study. It is mainly an analysis and a comparison of the works of two leading authorities on biblical studies: Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) and Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963). We know that Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* first appeared in 1878 with the title *Geschichte Israels I*, and that the first volume of Kaufmann's *Toledot* appeared in 1937. This is a very long time ago. One might rightly ask why I have made just these two scholars the subject of my research – and/or why it is necessary to study these rather outdated works in biblical interpretation?

To answer this question, I call to my aid the views of Albrecht Alt and Manfred Weippert. According to Alt, "Scholarship is made in periodicals. Books are already out of date when they finally appear. Today no one reads long books – a long book is a bad one."<sup>20</sup> If we concede Alt's claim, no one would read Kaufmann's *Toledot*, which comprises some 2700 pages. Thus I prefer to turn instead to Manfred Weippert who asserts that the history of ancient Israel is nothing more than (Gebäude von Hypothesen):

...jede zusammenfassende Darstellung einer Lokal- und Volksgeschichte wie die der Geschichte des alten Israel ist nichts anderes als ein Gebäude von Hypothesen, das vom methodischen Standard der Disziplin, der Quellenlage, dem Stand der Forschung, dem 'Zeitgeist' und nicht zuletzt von der in all das verstrickten und sich mit alledem auseinandersetzenen Individualität des jeweiligen Historikers determiniert ist. Da die Determinanten aber nicht eindeutig umschrieben sind, sondern Wahlmöglichkeiten und auch subjektive Faktoren enthalten, sind zwar nicht beliebig, aber doch unterschiedlich gestaltete Gebäude möglich.<sup>21</sup>

Several points should be considered. Although advances in knowledge in the field of biblical studies since Wellhausen and Kaufmann's day have challenged

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<sup>19</sup> Rudolf Smend, "Wellhausen und das Judentum," 275. In point of fact, there are some other reasons for the delay in acceptance of biblical criticism by Jews. For a discussion see Menahem Haran, *Biblical Research in Hebrew: A Discussion of its Character and Trends* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1970). See also Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). See further Edward Breuer and Chanan Gafni, "Jewish Biblical Scholarship between Tradition and Innovation," in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*, vol. III/I, *The Nineteenth Century* (ed. Magne Sæbø and Peter Machinist (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 262–302.

<sup>20</sup> On this see Rudolf Smend, "Albrecht Alt," in *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in three Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 132–156 (140).

<sup>21</sup> Manfred Weippert, "Geschichte Israels am Scheideweg," *ThR* 58 (1993): 71–103 (72).

much of their thinking, scholarship today still builds on the foundations laid by them. In fact, many scholars since Wellhausen and Kaufmann's time have concerned themselves with their works and thoughts.<sup>22</sup> The consequences of their work are still felt today. This, of course, does not mean that biblical research has not moved beyond the propositions of these two scholars. Today, so far as I am aware of, no one would accept Wellhausen's reconstruction, or Kaufmann's interpretation without modification. The Hebrew Bible is no longer the single source for writing about ancient Israel. It has become known that "the Israel of literary tradition is not the Israel of history."<sup>23</sup> New discoveries along with a diversity of new disciplines have opened a whole new perspective on the issue. However, we should consider the voices of Wellhausen and Kaufmann in the context of their times rather than dismiss them because they fail to meet modern standards. This study illustrates the great impact of these two significant figures and shows that they are not irrelevant to current concerns.

The second point to be considered is that Wellhausen's work represents a synthesis of the religious development of ancient Israel, while Kaufmann's work emphasizes the singularity of the Israelite religion.<sup>24</sup> Another point relates to their religious traditions. Wellhausen's work is considered to be the most important point of contact between Jewish and Christian Bible scholars.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Kaufmann's arguments presuppose certain polemics against Christi-

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**22** No survey of the discipline would be complete without reference to the works of Wellhausen and Kaufmann. One could also say that there is no serious study of the history of Israel and the composition of Pentateuch that could overlook Wellhausen's relevant thesis. Anyone who is interested in these subjects will be inevitably led to Wellhausen. Although there was no 'Wellhausen's school,' his works founded a school. On this see Reinhard G. Kratz, "Wellhausen, Julius," *TRE* 35 (2003):527–536 (534). As for Kaufmann, his study on the origin of monotheism has been often been discussed and criticized in relation to the history of the Israelite religion. Further, Kaufmann's works became the starting point for many Jewish bible scholars such as H. L. Ginsberg (1903–1990) Menahem Haran (1924–), Moshe Weinfeld (1925–2009), Jacob Milgrom (1923–2010), and Moshe Greenberg (1928–2010). These scholars and others have worked out Kaufmann's hypothesis, emphasizing the antiquity of the Priestly Code. For the influence of Kaufmann's writings on North American scholars, see S. David Sperling, *Students of the Covenant: A History of Jewish Biblical Scholarship in North America* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 77, 93, 104.

**23** Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 309. Translated by John Bowden from the German *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

**24** Recent study on the Israelite religion has classified Wellhausen and Kaufmann as representing two paradigms in biblical research. See Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001).

**25** Magne Sæbø, *On the Way to Canon: Creative Tradition History in the Old Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 145.

an Bible scholars.<sup>26</sup> Considering this, we should ask whether both Wellhausen's and Kaufmann's own religious traditions determined the direction and themes of their exegetical work. This and other related questions make it important to find out the nature of the real clash between these two prominent and influential scholars.

It is true that Wellhausen and Kaufmann represent two different traditions of thought and intellectual settings. Any direct comparison would likely do injustice to each of them in some way. However, since the strongest refutation of Wellhausen's theory came from Kaufmann, it is meaningful to study Kaufmann together with Wellhausen.<sup>27</sup> Kaufmann was the first who dared to exploit the historical critical method to counter Wellhausen's hypothesis on the history of the Israelite religion, using it to build his imposing structure. As this study will show, the dispute between Wellhausen and Kaufmann revolves around basic issues regarding ancient Israel and its religious history. Both Wellhausen and Kaufmann have some points in common, but differ in their approach to writing history. They accepted and applied the historical-critical method, but were divided as to its results. Both agree that the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible is the primary source on which to base writing about the history of ancient Israel, but differ concerning the authority of its text. In the thinking of Wellhausen and Kaufmann, biblical religion is the key to understanding biblical history, but they diverge as to the substance and beginning of that religion.

This raises a question: If their methods were more or less the same how did they manage to reach such different conclusions? It should be made clear that if we wish to evaluate Wellhausen and Kaufmann's histories, we must go back to their own periods and milieus. Both represented the methodologies, presuppositions and the ideologies of their times. In his understanding of the historian's task, Wellhausen sought to write the history of Israel as one would write the history of any other nation. Kaufmann, on the other hand, was a child of his cultural background in his attempt to defend the religion of Israel and the antiquity of its foundation.

To continue on this point, Wellhausen's work is that of a Christian scholar, while that of Kaufmann represents the Jewish understanding of Scripture. This prompts us to raise another question: Can a Jewish scholar and/or a Christian

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<sup>26</sup> See, in particular, Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Christianity and Judaism: Two Covenants* (trans. by C. W. Efroymson. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988). Kaufmann's polemic against Christian scholars was continued in Jon D. Levenson's works. See S. David Sperling, *Students of the Covenant: A History of Jewish Biblical Scholarship in North America*, 128–129.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen A. Geller, "Wellhausen and Kaufmann" *Midstream* 31, no. 10 (1985): 39–48 (39).

writer interpret the Bible without bias?<sup>28</sup> And, is it possible to get rid of preconceived notions? This is, of course, a long-standing issue and is really difficult to answer.<sup>29</sup> In my opinion, it is not advisable to limit the discussion to this narrow view. Here it is important to mention that although Wellhausen's and Kaufmann's interpretations represent an example of the divergence between Christian and Jewish Old Testament scholarship, their works are not entirely determined by personal belief and religious identity. The works of Wellhausen and Kaufmann show that they viewed Israel's history from the vantage point of its religious history. They shared the assumption that Israel's history could be apprehended in the context of its religion.

Going into more depth on the divide between Wellhausen and Kaufmann, we should mention their essential methodological differences. The central point of departure for Kaufmann's approach is the history of ideas. That is to say, Kaufmann articulates the essence of Israelite religion in terms of its concepts and ideas. He proposes that monotheism is Israel's religious idea and a new creation of the spirit of Israel generated by Moses. Kaufmann insists that monotheism developed with Israel's history from the very beginning. In Kaufmann's view, Israel's religion is non-mythological and therefore it becomes impossible to conceive of a gradual development from polytheism. By contrast, Wellhausen introduces the religion of Israel in the framework of its historical circumstances. He attempts to contextualize the religion of Israel. In Wellhausen's reading, the early beginning of Israel's faith is marked by its normal character, like other religions. In this way, Wellhausen's revolution theory becomes the antipode of Kaufmann's position.

The question then arises as to how I posit myself with regard to the theories of Wellhausen and Kaufmann? Coming from a perspective outside of the Jewish academic and the German Protestant frames of reference, it is my hope that this study of Wellhausen and Kaufmann may provide some basis for reaching a middle ground between these two poles. The study proceeds from analyzing their respective views on Israel's history and religion, to identifying and comparing the

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<sup>28</sup> Thus, for example, it has been claimed that "it is difficult to find a volume that would introduce biblical literature in an interesting way to readers who do not identify with Judaism or Christianity." On this see Martin J. Buss, "The Relevance of Hermann Gunkel's Broad Orientation," in Ute E. Eisen and Erhard S. Gerstenberger, eds., *Hermann Gunkel Revisited: Literatur- und Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Berlin: Lit, 2010), 71–80 (73).

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion see Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).



thoughts of these two giants. Attention will be given to the intellectual and historical settings of Wellhausen and Kaufmann.

My understanding of Wellhausen is based on the assumption that he moved from a criticism of the sources, mapping out different stages of religious development in Israel, to a historical synthesis on the history of Israel and Judah. The three phases of Wellhausen's structure reflect his three major works: 1) *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*<sup>30</sup>; 2) *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*<sup>31</sup>; 3) *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*.<sup>32</sup> With regard to Kaufmann, I move from his literary analysis of the relationship of the Torah and Prophets and his dating of the Priestly Code, to his phenomenological interpretation of the history of Israelite religion. My analysis of Kaufmann is based on three points: 1) his arguments about the antiquity of the Torah literature; 2) his interpretation of the Israelite religion, particularly his view on monotheism; 3) his historical reconstruction of early Israelite traditions in Canaan. The first two issues are discussed in his multi-volume *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisraelit*, especially the first volume (Books 1–3) from 1937–1938.<sup>33</sup> Kaufmann's thesis on the traditions of conquest and settlement is detailed in his two commentaries on Joshua (1959) and Judges (1962).

From what has thus far been said, it becomes evident why the works of Wellhausen and Kaufmann remain an impetus to further inquiry. In order to avoid putting Wellhausen or Kaufmann at a disadvantage, I have treated each of them separately and postponed a comparison to the end of my thesis. The structure of my work is thus divided into three parts. The first deals with Wellhausen's reconstruction of ancient Israel. In this section, I have chosen to proceed from literary criticism to religion to history. In other words, my investigation follows that of Wellhausen, who started with critical analyses of the sources, then moved on to examine the “place of law” with emphasis on the religious devel-

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**30** Third edition, Berlin 1899 (reprinted as 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Berlin, 1963); First appeared in *Jahrbuch für deutsche Theologie* 1876/77. Quotations in this study follow the 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Berlin, 1963.

**31** The original German edition entitled *Geschichte Israels I*, 1878; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1883 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1899, reprinted 1927, 1972, 1981, 2001. ET (of 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Edinburgh, 1885, reprinted 1957). Quotations are mainly from the English translation (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel: With a Reprint of the Article Israel from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

**32** Berlin 1894, 1895<sup>2</sup>, 1897<sup>3</sup>, 1901<sup>4</sup>, 1904<sup>5</sup>, 1907<sup>6</sup>, 1914<sup>7</sup>, 1921<sup>8</sup>, 1958<sup>9</sup>, 2004<sup>10</sup>. My analysis of Wellhausen's reconstruction of the history of Israel is based on his *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (10<sup>th</sup> edition, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

**33** Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot Ha-'emuna Ha-Isr'aelit Me-Yami K'edem 'ad Sof Bayit Sheni* (4 vols., Tel Aviv: Bialik Institute-Devir, 1937–1956). Quotations and translations in this study from the 10<sup>th</sup> ed., Jerusalem, 1975.



opment of ancient Israel. Wellhausen's work on the Old Testament was complemented by his writing of the historical synthesis *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*.

The second part of this study concentrates on Kaufmann. Generally, my analysis of Kaufmann moves from his literary criticism (where Kaufmann distinguishes the Torah from literary prophets) to phenomenology (basic character of Israelite religion, nature of popular religion, monotheism and polytheism as two different worldviews) and ends with sketching the early history of ancient Israel. At the end of this section, I have given a detailed description of Kaufmann's historical setting and an overview of the sources of his exegetical approach.

The third part of this work seeks to shed light on the fundamental disagreements between Wellhausen and Kaufmann, i.e. to clarify the real divide between them. In my understanding, there are three areas in which these differences can be distinguished: religious history, the authority of biblical texts, and in a constructed model of pre-monarchic Israel. The religious history which involves the basic problems of interpretation is, in my view, the most important point of disparity. At the heart of this comparison lie their two different models of pre-monarchic Israel. These will be elucidated in some detail, based particularly on how they interpreted the notion of theocracy. At the end of this study, I will highlight some of the basic assumptions that underlie both Wellhausen's and Kaufmann's reconstructions. This will be followed by my summary and evaluation of their respective views.

# Biographical aspects

## 1 Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918)

Much has been written on Julius Wellhausen.<sup>34</sup> In this context, Rudolf Smend pointed out, “Kein Alttestamentler ist mit so viel Bewunderung gelesen, keiner so erbittert bekämpft worden wie Wellhausen.”<sup>35</sup> It can be said that Wellhausen gained a wide reputation because the course of his labours “shows a remarkable consistency of aim and methodology.”<sup>36</sup> Judging from his pioneering works on the Old Testament, Islam, and the New Testament, it is fair to place Wellhausen among the great German historians.<sup>37</sup>

Wellhausen was born in Hameln in 1844. When he was eighteen, he went to Göttingen to study theology.<sup>38</sup> Having received his licentiate in 1870, Wellhausen acted for two years as a private tutor. His academic career started as professor of the Old Testament in Greifswald (1872–1882)<sup>39</sup>, where most of his most controversial books were composed.<sup>40</sup> He taught in Halle (1882–1885) and accepted an appointment as professor for Semitic languages in Marburg (1885–1892). As the successor of Paul Anton de Lagarde, Wellhausen was given a professorship in Göttingen in 1892, where he lived until his death on January 7, 1918.

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**34** See, for example, Lothar Perlitt, *Vatke und Wellhausen: Geschichtsphilosophische Voraussetzungen und historiographische Motive für die Darstellung der Religion und Geschichte Israels durch Wilhelm Vatke und Julius Wellhausen*. (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1965). Also Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Geschichte der Historisch-Kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982<sup>3</sup>). See further Douglas A. Knight, *Julius Wellhausen and his Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983). Rudolf Smend, *Julius Wellhausen: Ein Bahnbrecher in drei Disziplinen* ([erweiterte Fassung eines Vortrags, gehalten in der Carl-Friedrich-Von-Siemens-Stiftung Am 16. Dezember 2004]; München: Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens-Stiftung, 2006).

**35** Rudolf Smend, *Deutsche Alttestamentler in drei Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 99.

**36** R. E. Clements, “The Study of the Old Testament,” in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West III* (ed. Ninian Smart; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 129.

**37** On this see Reinhard G. Kratz, “Wellhausen, Julius,” *TRE* 35 (2003): 527–536.

**38** See Rudolf Smend, “Wellhausen in Göttingen,” in *Theologie in Göttingen* (ed. B. Moeller; Göttinger Universitätsschriften A 1, 1987), 306–324.

**39** Alfred Jepsen, “Wellhausen in Greifswald: Ein Beitrag zur Biographie Julius Wellhausens,” in *Der Herr ist Gott: Aufsätze zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1978), 254–270.

**40** Rudolf Smend, “Julius Wellhausen: 1844–1918,” in *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 91–102 (95).

As is well known, Wellhausen's work on the Old Testament marked a turning point in the history of biblical scholarship.<sup>41</sup> He gave classic expression to the efforts of his forerunners, including Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849) and Karl Heinrich Graf (1815–1869). Wellhausen prepared the ground for his later works by concerning himself with the historiographical tradition of ancient Israel. He approached this through philology and text criticism (*Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 1871), moving towards source and literary criticism (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs*, 1876/77). On the controversy over the sectarians of the Second Commonwealth, Wellhausen's book *Die Phariseer und die Sadducäer* (1874), against the thesis of Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), put forward the idea that the Pharisees were a religious party, while the Sadducees were more political. In his magnum opus *Geschichte Israels 1* 1878 (*Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israel* 1883), Wellhausen outlined a new view of the history of Israelite religion, showing how it moved from a simple, spontaneous and natural religion to one of law and rituals. He questioned the historical dating of the Priestly Code, proposing that it fitted the conditions of the Second Temple period. Moreover, Wellhausen drew attention to the dominance of the prophetic and historical narrative, maintaining that the Law was not the starting point of Israel's history but a product of historical and religious development. As a result of his critical investigation, Wellhausen brought into focus the antithesis of Israel and Judaism, regarding them as two different worldviews. In 1894, Wellhausen presented a historical synthesis of the history of Israel and Judah. "In order to better understand ancient, pre-exilic Israel he applied himself increasingly to the study of Old Arabian and early Islamic history."<sup>42</sup> Wellhausen himself says that he moved from the study of the Old Testament to Arabic studies with the aim of acquiring knowledge about "den Wildling kennen zu lernen, auf den von Priestern und Propheten das Reis der Thora Jahves gepropft ist."<sup>43</sup>

Wellhausen's work on the Old Testament was not the last phase of research. However, his brilliant presentation of the problem summed up more than a cen-

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<sup>41</sup> A full bibliography of Wellhausen's publications is found in *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 27 (Studien zur semitischen Philologie und Religionsgeschichte: Julius Wellhausen zum 70. Geburtstag am 17. Mai 1914 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern, ed. Karl Marti, 1914), 351–368. For the recently updated autobiography of Wellhausen, see Rudolf Smend, *Briefe: Julius Wellhausen* (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Kurt Rudolph, "Wellhausen, Julius," *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. Lindsay Jones, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 14 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9714–9715 (9714).

<sup>43</sup> Wellhausen, *Muhammed in Medina*, (Berlin: Reimer, 1882), 5.

tury of critical investigation,<sup>44</sup> and re-determined the course of the history of Israel.<sup>45</sup> Of the far-reaching contribution of Wellhausen's exegesis it has been said, "Die treffendste Charakterisierung jener Mitte, die zugleich ein Anfang gewesen sein könnte, verdankt die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft keinem geringeren als Julius Wellhausen."<sup>46</sup>

Wellhausen's interpretation of the history of ancient Israel caused agitation and many rejected his critical views.<sup>47</sup> My aim here is to show how an important scholar like Yehezkel Kaufmann, who came from a different tradition of thought, reacted and criticized Wellhausen's theories. While Wellhausen's work is considered to be the most important contribution to historical critical method, Yehezkel Kaufmann is the only Bible scholar to have combined in his research such a comprehensive interpretation of Israelite religion with a critique of Wellhausen. In his massive *Toledot*, Kaufmann sought to invalidate Wellhausen's position with regard to the order of the pentateuchal sources, and thereby to undermine his hypothesis on the emergence of monotheism in ancient Israel. Interestingly enough, although Kaufmann accepted the essentials of the historical-critical approach, his presentation is closer to tradition.<sup>48</sup> In what follows, I shall give a brief profile of Yehezkel Kaufmann's life and work.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> In describing the great impression that was made by Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*, Kuenen wrote, "Wellhausen's treatment of our theme, for which I must refer to his book itself, was so cogent, so original, and so brilliant, that its publication may be regarded as the 'crowning fight' in the long campaign." See A. Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch: Pentateuch and Book of Joshua* (London: Macmillan, 1886), xxxix. See further Herbert F. Hahn, *Old Testament in Modern Research* (London: SCM, 1956).

<sup>45</sup> Henning Graf Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung*, Bd. 4 (München: Beck, 2001), 302–316.

<sup>46</sup> Ernst A Knauf, *Data and Debates: Essays in the History and Culture of Israel and its Neighbors in Antiquity*, *Daten und Debatten: Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte des antiken Israel und seiner Nachbarn*. (ed. Hermann Michael Niemann; Konrad Schmid; Silvia Schroer; *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 407; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013), 445.

<sup>47</sup> For a survey see Raymond F. Surburg, "Wellhausen Evaluated after a Century of Influence," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1979): 78–95.

<sup>48</sup> Emanuel Green, S. David Sperling and Haim M. I. Gevaryahu, "Kaufmann, Yehezkel (1889–1963)," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 12 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 33–35 (34).

<sup>49</sup> A complete intellectual history of Kaufmann's life and work have been provided by Thomas M. Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990).

## 2 Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889 – 1963)

### 2.1 Life

Yehezkel Kaufmann was a distinguished Jewish historian, biblical scholar, and nationalist.<sup>50</sup> His research combined philosophy, sociology and religious studies.<sup>51</sup> Kaufmann was often described with such words as, “Never married, a small, ascetic, retiring man, his life was wholly given over to thought, writing, and research.”<sup>52</sup>

Kaufmann was born in 1889 in Dunajiwzi, in the province of Podolia, Ukraine. In 1907, he went to Odessa to study at the modern Yeshivah.<sup>53</sup> Following his stay in Odessa, Kaufmann continued his studies at the Academy of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. From 1914, Kaufmann pursued his studies at Bern University, earning his doctorate in Kantian philosophy in 1918.<sup>54</sup>

In 1920, Kaufmann moved to Berlin where he spent the eight years that preceded his emigration to Palestine in 1928. For about twenty years Kaufmann worked as a teacher in Beth Hasepher Hareali in Haifa. Moshe Greenberg mentions that Kaufmann’s personal characteristics, along with his unorthodoxy and uncompromising self-assurance, combined to keep him out of the Hebrew University during the best twenty years of his creative life.<sup>55</sup> Kaufmann was appointed a professor of the Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1949 until 1957. In recognition of his achievements and their impact on biblical studies

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50 For a more recent biography of Kaufmann, see Thomas Staubli, “Yehezkel Kaufmann: Die Berne Jahre eines Genies” in *Wie über Wolken: Jüdische Lebens- und Denkwelten in Stadt und Region Bern, 1200–2000* (ed. René Bloch and Jacques Picard; Chronos, 2014), 241–252.

51 See, in particular, Menahem Haran, “On the Border of Faith,” (in Hebrew) *Moznaim* 24 (1966), 53.

52 Moshe Greenberg, *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 175.

53 It has been said that “the Odessa of Kaufmann’s youth was the center of the East European Jewish enlightenment and home of many of the thinkers who would later become the central figures of cultural Zionism.” On this see Joseph Turner, “The Notion of Jewish Ethnicity in Yehezkel Kaufmann’s *Golah Venekhar*,” *Modern Judaism* 28, no. 3 (2008): 257–282 (257).

54 For the influence of philosophy on Kaufmann’s writings, see Peter Slyomovics, “Y. Kaufmann’s Critique of Wellhausen: A Philosophical-Historical Perspective,” (in Hebrew) *Zion* 49 (1984): 61–92. See further Eliezer Schweid, “Biblical Critic or Philosophical Exegete? The Influence of Herman Cohen’s *The Religion of Reason* on Yehezkel Kaufmann’s *History of Israelite Religion*,” (in Hebrew) in *Masuot: Mehkarim be-sifrut ha-Kabalah uve-mahashevet Yisrael mukdashim le-zikhro shel Prof. Efrayim Gottlieb* (ed. Efraim Gottlieb, Michal Kushnir-Oron, and Amos Goldreich; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1994), 414–428.

55 Greenberg, *Studies in the Bible*, 176.

and Jewish life, Kaufmann was awarded the Bialik Prize in 1956, the Israel Prize in 1958, and the Bublik Prize in 1961. After a long illness, Kaufmann died in Jerusalem on October 9, 1963.

## 2.2 Main interest

Though Kaufmann studied and received his doctoral degree in philosophy<sup>56</sup>, it is said that he made few contributions to philosophy.<sup>57</sup> Kaufmann's main interest was the riddle of Jewish existence. His early writings were devoted to inquiry into the problem of the Jewish Diaspora through the ages. Kaufmann's thoughts were shaped and sharpened quite early in his life. Ideologies such as socialism, Zionism, the Bund, Yiddish culture, assimilation and traditional Jewish religion formed his thinking. This appears in his first article in 1914, "The Judaism of Ahad ha-Am", in which Kaufmann takes issue with Ahad ha-Am's assumption that Judaism is a product of a collective will to survive. In breaking with the prevailing nationalist interpretations of his time, Kaufmann's view was that it was religion that ensured Jewish survival in exile. It is probably fair to say that Kaufmann was moved by the situation of the Jewish people in diaspora and that this led him to search for solutions to the problem of the Jewish fate. In other words, Kaufmann looked at the past with eyes open to the present. Joseph Turner explicates Kaufmann's position as follows:

The immediate historical background of his discussions concerning the nature of Jewish existence includes the precarious status of Jewish society in central Europe following World War I, the disintegration of the East European Jewish community, mass emigration to the United States and the building of Zionist settlements in the Land of Israel. There are those in the literature on Kaufmann's thought who have pointed out its pedagogical character. That is to say, Kaufmann investigated Jewish history not only in order to understand and make sense of it, but also in order to formulate a program in regard to the type of activity necessary in order to deal with the problems of the present.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Jesekiel Kaufmann, *Eine Abhandlung über den zureichenden Grund: Teil 1. Der logische Grund* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1920). See further Thomas Staubli, "Yehezkel Kaufmann: Die Berne Jahre eines Genies," 246–248.

<sup>57</sup> Greenberg, *Studies in the Bible*, 175. See further Job Y. Jindo, "Revisiting Kaufmann: Fundamental Problems in Modern Biblical Scholarship. From Yehezkel Kaufmann's Criticism of Wellhausen," *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions* 3 (2007): 41–77(44).

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Turner, "The Notion of Jewish Ethnicity in Yehezkel Kaufmann's *Golah Venekhar*," *Modern Judaism* 28, no. 3 (2008): 257–282 (257–258).

## 2.3 Major works

Kaufmann is considered to be the most influential Jewish Bible scholar of modern times. He is called the towering Jewish personality in biblical scholarship.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps this was due to Kaufmann's scholarly erudition and abundant production.<sup>60</sup> It is true that Kaufmann touched upon all issues of biblical study and Jewish history. The results of his investigations were massive volumes written in Modern Hebrew.<sup>61</sup> When he was asked for his curriculum vitae, it is said that he replied, "I have no biography, only a bibliography."<sup>62</sup>

Kaufmann's first important work (*Golah ve-Nekhar*, "Exile and Alienhood" (4 vols. 1929 – 30) is a socio-historical study on the fate of the Jewish people from ancient times to the modern period. The book deals mainly with the post-biblical and diaspora ages. It is a systematic empirical interpretation in which Kaufmann examines the factors that have shaped Jewish history through the ages. Reading Kaufmann, one must conclude that the monotheistic idea was the decisive factor ensuring the nation's survival in exile.<sup>63</sup> In point of fact, Kaufmann's *Golah* is an attempt to discover the historical process that formed the experience of the Jewish people.<sup>64</sup> Highly important, Kaufmann's *Golah ve-Nekhar* made a profound impression within Jewish intellectual circles. On March 9, 1930, the Hebrew poet Haim Nahman Bialik wrote to Dr. J. L. Magnes, Chancellor of the Hebrew

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<sup>59</sup> Nahum Sarna, "From Wellhausen to Kaufmann," *Midstream* 7, no. 3 (1961): 64–74 (64).

<sup>60</sup> For a complete bibliography of Kaufmann's writings, see the Hebrew section in *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume: Studies in Bible and Jewish Religion* (ed. Menahem Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960), 1–8.

<sup>61</sup> Menahem Haran points out that Kaufmann used a literary style that gives his writing clarity and makes him a great writer in his time. He further notes that Kaufmann, like Wellhausen, used a literary form that makes his arguments more convincing. On this see Menahem Haran, "On the Border of Faith," (in Hebrew) *Moznaim* 24 (1966), 53. Another observation was made by Joseph Turner who remarked, "Kaufmann wrote in Hebrew and as much as possible chose his terminology according to the usage prevalent in Hebrew sources – especially in the Bible. Nonetheless, he could not ignore the usage of terms prevalent in contemporary European discourse." See Joseph Turner, "The Notion of Jewish Ethnicity in Yehezkel Kaufmann's *Golah Venekhar*," 260.

<sup>62</sup> According to Thomas Krapf, although Kaufmann's saying is shrouded in legend, it credibly conveys both an idiosyncrasy of Kaufmann and the existential tragedy of his life. On this see Thomas M. Krapf, "Some Observations on Yehezkel Kaufmann's Attitude to Wissenschaft des Judentums," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994), 69–76 (70).

<sup>63</sup> Laurence J. Silberstein, "Kaufmann, Yehezkel," in vol. 8 of *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. Lindsay Jones. 2nd ed., 15 vol. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005): 5108–5109.

<sup>64</sup> See, in particular, David Shahar, "The Historical – Cultural Heritage and its Educational Significance in Yehezkel Kaufmann's Outlook (in Hebrew) ומעוף ומעשה, no.5 (1999):135–156.

University, “Mark well the name of the author: Yehezkel Kaufmann. I have a feeling that Jewish thought has found a redeemer.”<sup>65</sup>

It should be mentioned that the subject of Kaufmann’s *Golah ve-Nekhar* was not new. A number of Jewish thinkers (Pinsker, Ahad ha-Am, Dubnow) have also inquired into Jewish history and the fate of the Jewish people, suggesting different answers as to the causes of Jewish exile. What distinguishes Kaufmann from the others is that “he placed the fundamental character of Jewish existence as an object of systematic historical thought.”<sup>66</sup> It was Kaufmann’s *Golah* that provided a comprehensive exposition to Jewish history. For these reasons, it has been rightly observed that:

Anyone seeking to understand the relationship of religion and nationalism in Jewish life must read it for its brilliant delineation of the role of these forces in Jewish history. Anyone seeking to understand the history of Zionism must consider the treatment of nationalist thought and Kaufmann’s own nationalist position as presented in *Golah ve-Nekhar*. And, finally, anyone seeking to understand the problems of alienation and exile which exist in our own time will find in these volumes insights as applicable to the present situation of Jews in the Diaspora as they were to that of European Jewry in the 1920 s.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, Kaufmann was convinced that an understanding of the perpetual Jewish exile may be attained only after getting to the root of the character of Jewish history. Hence, Kaufmann turned to the Bible, which he thought to be the foundation of Jewish history. Having found the centrality of religion in Jewish history, Kaufmann studied the Bible and biblical religion with the aim of discovering the originality of Israelite ideas.

The second major study of Kaufmann is *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisraelit: Mi-yeme Qedem ‘ad Sof Bayit Sheni*, “The History of Israelite Religion”. The book provides a comprehensive history of the biblical period. Its subject is the history of

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<sup>65</sup> H. L. Ginsberg, “Yehezkel Kaufmann,” *Reconstructionist* 29, no. 14 (1963): 27–29 (28). Laurence Silberstein pointed out, “It would be a mistake, therefore, to regard *Golah v’Nekhar* as essentially an academic undertaking. Like all of Kaufmann’s previous writing it, too, was permeated by a profound concern for the pressing issues confronting the Jewish people.” On this see Laurence J. Silberstein, “Exile and Alienation: Yehezkel Kaufmann on the Jewish Nation,” in *Texts and Responses. Studies Presented to Nahum N. Glatzer on the Occasion of his seventieth Birthday by his Students* (ed. Michael A. Fishbane, Nahum Norbert Glatzer; Leiden: Brill, 1957), 239–256 (251).

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Turner, “The Notion of Jewish Ethnicity,” 258.

<sup>67</sup> Janet Koffler O’Dea, “Israel With and Without Religion: An Appreciation of Kaufmann’s *Golah Ve-Nekhar*,” *Judaism* (Winter 1976): 85–97 (85).