several traditions (Rendsburg 1990; Finkelstein 2013, 141–51; Stahl 2021, 63–74)—but with the destruction of the Israelite kingdom in 722 BCE, and the subsequent maturation of the Judahite kingdom under Assyrian hegemony, any such literature was appropriated by whatever scribal structures were in place among officials in Jerusalem.[13]

The traditions of early Israel thus come down to us through the scribal filters of various cult centers and the Judahite royal court (Schniedewind 2004; Carr 2005; van der Toorn 2007). Some of the earliest of these likely include the charter myths of the patriarchal and exodus narratives (Finkelstein and Römer 2014, 321–22; Schmid 2018, 491–92), traditions associated with the conquest narratives (Römer 2007, 81–90), portions of the book of Judges known as the "Book of Saviors" (Römer 2007, 90–91; Knauf 2010, 140–49; Finkelstein 2017, 431–49), some prophetic literature,[14] and traditions regarding the rise of Saul (Edelman 1991; Wright 2014, 35–50). Judah produced its own literature between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, which likely included early editions of prophetic texts and its own regnal histories (Aster 2017). An additional editorial filter for many of these texts is that of the so-called "Deuteronomic school," which refers to authors and editors who were responsible for the composition, compilation, and/or redaction of Deuteronomy (D) and the Deuteronomistic literature (Dtr), which runs from Deuteronomy through 2 Kings (Weinfeld 1972; Person 2012; Edelman 2014). The main outcome of this campaign is the book of Deuteronomy, the earliest edition of which I date to the late Neo-Assyrian period of the seventh century BCE.[15] Reconstructions propose this first edition began with Deut 6:4–5, included portions of Deut 12–13 and 21–25 as its core, and concluded with the curses of chapter 28 (Römer 2007, 78–81).

The Deuteronomistic school during the Neo-Assyrian period also produced portions of what would become the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. While all these books drew in part from earlier literary traditions, and were also later edited within Neo-Babylonian (626–539 BCE) and Achaemenid (539–330 BCE) phases of Deuteronomistic production, their compilation was likely initiated by royal scribes working in Jerusalem under the reign of Josiah. Several prophetic books were composed or expanded upon between the late seventh century and the Neo-Babylonian period, including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, Habakkuk, and others (Albertz 2003; Middlemas 2007; Becking and Human 2009).

---

[13] Note Pioske's observation that "when reading stories about the early Iron Age period we find that it is events and figures associated with the central hill country, from Shechem in the north to Hebron in the south, that are most often within the purview of the biblical writers. When we move outside of these bounds the picture presented becomes somewhat more murky" (Pioske 2018, 216).

[14] Portions of Hosea, for instance (Emmerson 1984; Blum 2009, 291–321).

[15] The reconstruction I adopt here is based on Römer 2007, 45–106.