Project working title: *Source citations and other metatexts: Observations on biblical and Ancient Near Eastern historiography and historical thought*

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The context of the project is the scholarly discussion about historiography in the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern texts. The main question of interest is if and how narrative texts about the past can give hints towards a historical way thinking of people responsible for their production and transmission. Historical thinking is understood as conviction that there is a connection between the perceived accuracy of a report about the past and the interpretations that follow it. Hence, that historiography is the written organization of *knowledge* in the broadest sense, and that the question of historical accuracy is not an adiaphoron when it comes to deciding whether a text is "true" or not. This means entering the discussion, whether the biblical narratives can be called historiographic or not, and this will be mainly done on the level of rhetoric and pragmatics. This approach helps narrowing done the texts in question. The idea is to focus on verses or phrases which signal how the text is to be understood, i.e. to focus on the search for the metalayer(s) of the texts. This approach borrows ideas from cognitive and textual linguistics, specifically the concepts of the function of deixis and metatextual elements in literature.

To provide preliminary answers, the project starts with statistical observations: Which deictic text signals can be found where? The overall distribution may already give insight into the importance, role and limitations of deixis and metatextual elements within the corpora in question. Then the most important groups will be examined more closely. These more detailed examinations should shed light on the issue how rhetorical elements in the text try to tell the reader how the texts are to be understood, especially about the role of perceived historical accuracy and the importance for the same for the interpretation of the text.

To put the observations in the Old Testament into perspective, the project will also examine comparable textual signals in Assyrian and Hittite annals and the Babylonian chronicles. While the text corpora are very large, the actual texts and phrases that come into question are rather limited, as preliminary examinations of said corpora suggest. The comparison with literary texts is to be supplemented with thoughts about the use of legal vocabulary and the description of past events and the question of accuracy of accounts about the past in legal texts, such as case protocols.

The methodological premises, the text corpora and individual phrases in question should allow for a balanced account of the function of metatextual elements, constituted by deixis and other grammatical phenomena, in narratives about the past in different context. This in turn should shed light on the role of narrating the past, the accuracy of such accounts and the intended interpretation and reception of the text. The goal is to get a better understanding of the connection between historical narration and theological interpretation in the Old Testament, especially with regard to questions about theologies of history and the modern reception of the texts.