Preface

The essays published here were delivered in preliminary form in 2008 and 2009 in the section devoted to Israel and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the Persian and Hellenistic Period at the annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies. The announced themes to be addressed were what was authoritative for Chronicles and what “authoritative” might have meant for the Chronicler.

One of the best ways of advancing a research agenda is to bring together a number of scholars with different perspectives to share their insights and to further their knowledge through conversation. This volume represents a written “conversation” with multiple threads, viewpoints, and as usual, ever-shifting sets of converging and diverging lines. Its main goal is to further discussion on the topic by presenting a panorama of ways in which these questions are being approached. The volume is not meant to provide a single or “definitive” answer to the question but is a conversation meant to evoke further discussion of the research question.

Although the editors have consistently maintained the formal independence of the chapters so that each may be read on its own, the volume as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. To be sure, readers will sympathize more with certain approaches than others and be more interested in some test cases/examples discussed in some chapters than in others. However, they will easily recognize that the contributions of the participants link to each other, if implicitly rather than explicitly, and create an intricate web. Each single essay, along with its underlying arguments and explicit conclusions, relates to many others in this volume. This is a conversation.

We would like to thank all the presenters and participants in the sessions from which this volume has emerged, particularly the contributors who have refocused their contributions during revising and created a stronger final volume; as well as the European Association of Biblical Studies for providing a wonderful venue for these conversations. We express our thanks also to Jim Eisenbraun for accepting this volume for publication and for the contribution that his publishing company, Eisenbrauns, makes to our field. We are particularly grateful to Beverly McCoy, who edited the manuscript and dealt with all the authors’ comments and requests. Finally, we could not conclude this preface without a word of thanks to our students and colleagues who have encouraged and challenged us for
years during this journey into the world of Chronicles and of Yehud. Our gratitude to our respective families for their encouragement and support goes without saying.

—Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman

Note to the Reader

For technical matters, we have followed the documentation style and abbreviations in *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999) and allowed contributors to choose between social-science style and humanities style of documentation.