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Presidential Address

by

Jonathan Z. Smith

President of the Society of Biblical Literature 2008
Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature
November 22, 2008
Boston, Massachusetts

Introduction given by David J. A. Clines
Vice President, Society of Biblical Literature

Jonathan Z. Smith

A fable: Once upon a time there were two tribes, seeking their separate but parallel destinies. Every year they would meet together for a gigantic pow-wow, until Tribe A decided their fair name was being besmirched by association with Tribe B, and canceled the pow-wows. Tribe B was hurt, but decided to heap coals of fire on the heads of Tribe A by inviting one of their most distinguished elders to become the leader of Tribe B for a year. So shamed was Tribe A by this selfless act that before too long they repented of their unfriendly action, and desired of Tribe B that they should once again meet together for their pow-wows in the same place and at the same time.

That is not entirely the true background of the election of Jonathan Z. Smith, the distinguished historian of religion, as president of the Society of Biblical Literature, though it may well be how future generations remember the events of our own times. From the SBL's point of view, Jonathan Smith is a brilliant choice for president, whether or not he has anything to do with the AAR.

Jonathan Z. Smith's title is Robert O. Anderson Distinguished Service Professor of the Humanities at the University of Chicago. His scholarly reputation rests on the corpus of his unique contributions to the study of religion in general and religions in particular, and not everyone knows that he is also by training and by seasoning a regular New Testament scholar, albeit with the fisheye lens of a scholar of religion rather than, shall we say, the microscope of a student of the Synoptic Problem. One New Testament–oriented study was *Drudgery Divine* (1990), in which he subversively compared early forms of Christianity with the mystery religions, proving himself, as one canny reviewer said, "the greatest pathologist in the history of religions."

He almost didn't do his Ph.D. at Yale because there was no one to mentor a bright and no doubt wayward young student who wanted to challenge the parallelomania of the *Golden Bough* of J. G. Frazer; Smith had to develop his own tools for the comparison of one religion, or one religious practice, with another—tools that would prevent easy conflation of one set of data with another, and that would always respect the individuality of the particular case. Proper methods of comparison were to remain a running theme through almost all his work from that time, through *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (1978), *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (1982), *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (1987), and *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (2004).

Not long after Yale, in 1968, he was appointed to the University of Chicago, where he has spent the last forty years. These days, he takes a special pride in teaching only at "the College," the undergraduate component of the University of Chicago. There he shapes the minds of the more or less impressionable youth of today with his RLST 10100 Introduction to Religious Studies, the most important and most formative class in religion they will take. "Introducing," he says, "is an old person's game; it's not a young person's game. A young person has just spent years becoming the world's expert on some itty-bitty little thing. And that's the last person in the world you suddenly give the overview [to]."

Unlike those religion scholars who apparently believe that religion is a good thing and the more of it you can get the better, Jonathan Z. Smith gives off an air of detachment from his subject matter, as if, forsooth, in a day of advocacy scholarship and self-serving critical thinking, he were a disinterested, academic historian of religion. Religion in all its manifestations fascinates him—but it does not seduce him. It is enough for him to bring disparate sets of data together, the Qurʾan with the Book of Mormon, nineteenth-century Maori cults with religiously inspired mass suicide in Jonestown—"dropping one in the other's pond to see what happens," as he puts it.

Jonathan Smith celebrated his seventieth birthday yesterday [November 21, 2008]. Like myself, born on the same day, he finds that his birthday always falls during the SBL annual meeting. I give you the president for 2008, not so much *homo religiosus* as *anima naturaliter SBLiensis*.

JBL 128, no. 1 (2009): 5–27

Religion and Bible

JONATHAN Z. SMITH
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When we last convened our annual meeting in Boston, nine years ago, I was invited to present a plenary lecture to the Society. I chose, then, as my topic, "Bible and Religion."[1] Among other matters, I chided, in a fairly gentle manner, biblical scholars, especially students of the literatures of early Christianities, for resisting the social category 'religion' in their work, and for markedly preferring the personal and experiential term 'faith.' In so doing, I was mindful of the compound composition of my audience, and so began by acknowledging the significant number of scholars then gathered in Boston who "held joint membership in the Society of Biblical Literature [SBL] and the American Academy of Religion [AAR]." I went on to recognize a smaller, but no less significant segment of my audience, by

I should like to acknowledge the assistance of Professor Ron Cameron, Wesleyan University, in preparing this address for print.

I have given the names of the various canonical texts as they appear in print in works intended for the 'common reader,' and in general lexica, unless badly dated: thus Qur'an not Koran, but also not Qur'ān or Qur'ân. That is to say, I have omitted all diacritical and other specialist markings (most frequently, Rig Veda not Ṛg Veda). As with Bible, the titles of these books or collections are capitalized but not italicized. In the case of Chinese titles, I follow the now dominant Pinyan system of romanization, officially adopted by the government of the People's Republic of China (1979) and followed by most contemporary Sinologists, rather than the older, more familiar Wade-Giles system, thus: the Daodejing of Laozi, not the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu; when citing Sinological titles in the notes, I have reproduced whichever system they follow. In the case of Tibetan titles, the common English form of a collection, when used by the cited author, is given along with the preferred Anglo-American romanization in brackets at its first occurrence: Kanjur [Bka'-'gyur]; I use the latter in my own formulations, rather than the preferred European, bKa-'gyur. When citing or quoting other scholars, I follow whatever forms they employ; in a few nineteenth-century instances, I have added a parenthetical clarification when the usage is now obsolete (e.g., "Zend [Avestan]").

[1] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Bible and Religion," *Bulletin: Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 29 (2000): 87–93; repr. in idem, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 197–214.

reminding those present that "in the past decade, the North American Association for the Study of Religion [NAASR]," an organization that regularly met concurrently with the SBL/AAR, had "devoted four full sessions" at its annual meetings "to theoretical questions" in the study of religion "raised by New Testament research." These sorts of affinal relations, I suggested, constitute "a massive syncretism, uncommon outside of North America, which holds out hope for the development of different practices, and for experiments in reconceptualizations of both religious and biblical studies." Rehearsing these remarks before you, nine years later, gives rise to no little sense of irony. (A prophet, I clearly am not!) Since then we have experienced our own version of the Millerite 'Great Disappointment,' a rupture more recently eased, although surely not healed, by signs and portents of a 'New' [post-2011] 'Dispensation.'

Indeed, had we met together with the AAR in Chicago this year, I would have begun by referring not to one of my own past appearances before this Society but rather to the 1936 publication, in the *Journal of Biblical Literature,* of a brief article, "The Interpretation of Sacred Books," by the intellectual founder of the History of Religions field at the University of Chicago, Joachim Wach, in order to stress the deep interrelations of the two enterprises, the study of religion and biblical studies.[2]

It is, no doubt, a reflection of our recent 'time of troubles' that I find it, now, necessary to state at the outset that nothing in that lecture—or in this one, for that matter—was (or is) intended to imply that the sorts of biblical scholarship represented by the SBL were alien to the sorts of study of religion represented by the AAR. Taken together, the separate and shared scholarly interests of both associations reflect and inform elements of our 'normal science' of religion.

This is no new synergy. To pick only one strand out of a complex weave of intellectual, academic histories: in pre-Ugarit days, Arabic was the chief cognate language of Biblical Hebrew and therefore was a competence of many OT scholars. Towering figures such as Julius Wellhausen and Johannes Pedersen used their skills in comparative Semitic philology to make important contributions *both* to biblical studies *and* to the study of Islam, thereby becoming immediately involved in the wider Continental discussions and debates characteristic of the formative period of Comparative Religions as an academic field. By way of an aside, I would call attention, as well, to Pedersen's remarkable 1914 comparisons of the Book of Mormon to the Qur'an, a project that remains the focus of a series of learned conferences sponsored by Brigham Young University. Other scholars—William Robertson Smith is, perhaps, the most familiar example—used the same philological learning to write classic theoretical works that are still influential on contemporary students of religion.

While other European scholars readily come to mind, the same pattern was equally characteristic of North America. Here, the most influential example

[2] Joachim Wach, "The Interpretation of Sacred Books," *JBL* 55 (1936): 59–63.

remains Morris Jastrow, Jr., son of a prominent rabbi and talmudic scholar, Morris Jastrow (Sr.), himself an early member of the SBL, joining in 1886. As was characteristic of the time, Morris Jastrow, Jr., went to Germany for his graduate studies in comparative Semitic philology, receiving his doctorate in 1884 from the University of Leipzig with a dissertation on the Arabic text of a treatise on Hebrew verbal forms by the tenth-century Cordoban Jewish grammarian Judah ben David Hayyuj. After printing his inaugural dissertation, Jastrow edited Hayyuj's text both in its original Arabic and in its later Hebrew translation, providing English translations of both. Influenced by the emergent, rapidly growing field of Akkadian studies, Jastrow shifted his area of research to Babylonian and Assyrian materials, which led to his career-long position as professor of Semitics and of Assyriology at the University of Pennsylvania, editing cuneiform texts; authoring major handbooks on the religions of Babylonia and Assyria; writing technical treatments of particular phenomena such as liver omens; producing comparative studies of Babylonian and Israelitic traditions; as well as editing the Bible section of the classic 1916 *Jewish Encyclopedia* and writing commentaries on Job, Qoheleth, and Song of Songs. His contributions to these areas of specialized research were equaled, if not surpassed, by those to the general field of the study of religion—a discipline, in North America, of which he was a founding figure. (Not at all accidentally, in my judgment, his chief rival, in this respect, would be George Foot Moore, the first to hold a North American chair in the history of religions [Harvard, 1891]. While best known for his work on rabbinic Judaism, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* [3 vols.; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1927–30], he also authored the widely used text *History of Religions* [2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913–18] and *The Birth and Growth of Religion* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923]. Among many other offices, Moore was the ninth president of the SBL).

In 1863, Morris Jastrow, Jr., wrote the first important survey of comparative religion programs in North American colleges, universities, and seminaries (his preferred term was 'the historical study of religions'); in 1891, he organized the distinguished, and still continuing, American Lectures in the History of Religions (administered, since 1995, by the AAR); he founded and edited an early learned series, *Handbooks on the History of Religions* (1895–1914); and, of greatest importance, he published, in 1901, what is widely recognized as the first North American comprehensive work on the general study of religion, simply titled *The Study of Religion.* This book surveyed the history, theories, and methods of the emergent Euro-American academic discipline, along with its allied fields, and provided a census of programs in the study of religion in North American institutions of higher learning and museums. In 1981, Jastrow's *The Study of Religion* was reprinted as the inaugural volume in the AAR's series "Classics in Religious Studies." Morris Jastrow, Jr., joined the SBL in 1891 and became its twenty-sixth pres-

ident in 1916, having just completed a term as president of the American Oriental Society.[3]

The question of the recognition of biblical studies, as both a past ancestor of and a present partner within, religious studies, is *not* an issue that has its primary locus in scholarly discourse, methodological disputation, or the history of scholarship—rather it has been, to a considerable degree, an artifact of popular speech, generated by and reflected in linguistic ambiguities within common, lexical usage in Anglo-American speech. Thus, 'Bible class,' 'Bible reading,' 'Bible study' may signal either a private or ecclesiastical devotional practice or a public academic pur-

[3] See the bibliography of Wellhausen's publications by Alfred Rahlfs, "Verzeichnis der Schriften Julius Wellhausens" in the Festschrift edited by Karl Marti, *Studien zur semitischen Philologie und Religionsgeschichte Julius Wellhausen zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 17. Mai 1914 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern* (BZAW 27; Giessen, Töpelmann, 1914), 351–68.

See Johannes P. E. Pedersen, review of Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, 1912), *Der Islam* 5 (1914): 110–15. W. D. Davies remains a rare example of a prominent biblical scholar venturing an interpretation of the Latter-day Saints' canonical texts; see Davies, "Reflections on the Mormon Canon," *HTR* 79 (1986): 44–66. I have often referred graduate students in the History of Religions at the University of Chicago to Pedersen's massive work, in its English translation, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926–40; repr., University of South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), as being one of the better examples I know of that elusive term, a 'phenomenological' study of religious data. Pedersen was an important contributor to the classic *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed. M. T. Housma et al.; 1st ed., Leiden: Brill, 1913–36), including his still unsurpassed synthesis "masdjid," in vol. 3 (1930): 316–80. See among Pedersen's other Islamist publications his comparative study *Der Eid bei den Semiten in seinem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen sowie die Stellung des Eides im Islam* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients 8; Strassburg: Trübner, 1914).

See the bibliography of the writings of Smith in John S. Black and George Chrystal, *The Life of William Robertson Smith* (London: Black, 1912), 617–28.

Another Hebrew Bible scholar who was an Arabist and a key figure in the development of European comparative religion was Abraham Kuenen; see my discussion in "Bible and Religion" (*Relating Religion,* 203–4; see n. 1).

See the bibliography of Jastrow by Albert T. Clay and James M. Montgomery, *A Bibliography of Morris Jastrow, Jr., 1885–1910* (Philadelphia: private printing, 1910); updated in the collective "In Memoriam: Morris Jastrow, Jr.," *JAOS* 41 (1921): 322–44. For Jastrow's role in the formation of American academic studies in religion, see William A. Clebsch, "Introduction" to the AAR Classics reprint of Jastrow's *Study of Religion* (Classics in the Study of Religion 1; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 1–14; see also Harold S. Wechsler, "Pulpit or Professoriate: The Case of Morris Jastrow, Jr.," *American Jewish History* 74 (1985): 338–55; and Robert S. Shepard, *God's People in the Ivory Tower: Religion in the Early University* (New York: Carlson, 1991), 33–39.

For Moore's publications, see Morton Smith, "The Work of George Foot Moore," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 15 (1967): 169–79.

The information on Cornelius Tiele (see p. 12 below), Jastrow, and Moore's relations to SBL is from Ernest W. Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures: A History of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1880–1989* (SBLCP; SBLBSNA 8; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

suit (more commonly, the former); a 'Bible society' is usually an organization for the printing and dissemination of Bibles as part of a missions program; positive sectarian terms, such as 'Bible Christian' in the Wesleyan tradition, join with pejorative vernacular ones such as 'biblically,' 'biblicality,' 'biblicism,' 'biblicist,' 'biblist' that signal an uncritical acceptance of biblical authority, to continue the confusion. It is important, here, to recall that academic specialized usage is often designed to correct or replace common lexical usage, nowhere more so than in the field of the study of religion, with its continual revisionist efforts ranging from the word 'religion' itself, to central terms such as 'myth' and 'ritual.'

As I have come to know the practices of the SBL over the past forty-five years I've been a member, for this Society, biblical studies are *not* 'biblist' studies, in striking contrast, for example, to the 'biblicism' of the National Association of Biblical Instructors, the ancestor of the AAR (a fact that may provide a partial explanation for the AAR's recent suspicions). At the same time, I would insist with equal vigor that phenomena such as devotional practices of Bible study have a proper place within histories of biblical interpretation as well as in ethnographies of practices within Jewish and Christian religious communities—topics of appropriate study for both the SBL and the AAR.

This evening, I shall take a different tack than nine years ago, signaled by the reversal of the terms in my title. I want to focus on what might be termed *matters of 'style,'* an apparent set of differences within our common enterprise that has led some students of religion largely to ignore biblical studies.

I know of no principled dissent from the proposition that biblical studies are religious studies by virtue of their subject matter, a focus on an authoritative collection of texts that elicit and determine both beliefs and actions that are properly characterized as 'religious,' however that controverted term be understood. Both the study of religion (or, religions) and the study of biblical literatures, taken as wholes, exhibit a similar fundamental ambivalence toward their subject matters that is typical of the human sciences in general—to employ a distinction first developed within the Freudian tradition, a tension between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" approaches and goals.[4] Both academic endeavors profit from

[4] I prefer this distinction to the more common, somewhat parallel dualities insider/outsider, emic/etic, and so forth. On these latter terms, see the important anthology edited by Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader* (Controversies in the Study of Religion; London/New York: Cassell, 1999). The distinction 'experience-near'/'experience-distant' was developed by the psychoanalytic theorist Heinz Kohut (see, e.g., his "The Future of Psychoanalysis," *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 3 [1975]: 325–40; repr. in *The Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut, 1950–1978* [ed. Paul H. Ornstein; New York: International Universities Press, 1978], esp. 2:670). Clifford Geertz ("From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 28 [1974]; repr. in idem, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* [New York: Basic Books, 1983], 57) famously highlighted Kohut's distinction and translated it into

a perceived need for, and a widespread appropriation of, extraterritorial theories and methods from the wider human sciences. As a complement to this latter process, there has been a reciprocal exchange of categories and, at times, of roles between religious and biblical studies—on occasion with insufficient reflection on the intellectual costs and implications of such transfers. As an example of the latter, the analogical use of the term 'bible' to denote scriptures (at times, even sacred oral traditions) of other religions, as in the often-reprinted *The Bible of the World* or *The World Bible*—where the singular is even more inappropriate than when it is applied to this Society's primary object of study. With more recognition of plurality, general introductions to the religions of the world are frequently taught to college students under titles such as "Introduction to Sacred Texts" or "Scriptures," often by either biblical or religious studies faculty, generating a growing number of textbooks and anthologies.[5] In a parallel movement, biblical scholars have taken up structural categories initially formulated within generic studies of religion, such as sacred space or place, testing, applying, modifying, and, thereby, enriching them in relation to their particular data.

In service of this agendum, I propose, this evening, first, to *reinsert* biblical and other canonical scriptures into the general history of the study of religion. Then I shall make a beginning at a *redescription* of biblical studies with the aim of reduc-

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anthropological terms. See further the subtle discussion of Geertz's usage in relation to emic/etic by George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 30–31 and 180–81 n. 6. They usefully revise the second term as "experience-far."

[5] Robert Oleson Ballou, ed., *The Bible of the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1940, frequently reprinted); idem, ed., *The Pocket World Bible* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948, frequently reprinted); Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, *The Bible of Mankind* (New York: Universal Press, 1939). For 'bible' as a generic term divorced from Jewish and Christian scriptures, see, among others, G. M. Ram, *The Bible of Hinduism* (Bombay: Allied India-South Asian Books, 1985); cf., as a parallel formulation, R. E. Sanjana, *The Parsi Book of Books: The Zend Avesta* (Bombay: privately published, 1924); for the stunningly inappropriate use of 'bible' for oral texts (particularly in the case of African traditions), see, among others, Prince Birinda de Boudieguy, *La Bible secrète des noirs* (Paris: Omnium Littéraire, 1952); Dika Akwa, *La Bible de la sagesse Bantoue: Choix d'aphorismes, divinettes et mots d'esprits de Cameroon et du Gabon* (New York: Kraus Reprints, 1955); and, for 'scripture(s),' Christian Gaba, *Scriptures of an African People: Ritual Utterances of the Anlo* (New York: NOK, 1973).

Perhaps the most sophisticated anthology designed for use in introductory college courses remains that edited by Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht, *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); the most widely used textbook, Harold Coward, *Sacred Word and Sacred Text: Scripture in World Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

I should note that such 'scriptural' introductory courses are most often located in Roman Catholic colleges. A recent AAR survey reports a "steep decline" in the number of such courses offered, a 27.3 percent decline between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005; see David V. Brewington, "AAR Undergraduate Departments Survey, Comparative Analysis of Wave I and Wave II," *Religious Studies News* 23, no. 3 (May 2008): 14–15.

ing the tensions as to style by emphasizing that more attention needs be paid to matters of *comparison* as well as to what Jonathan Boyarin usefully terms the "*ethnography* of reading."[6] This latter suggests that between the characteristic preoccupation of biblical scholars with an archaeology of origins and formations and the already mentioned ethnography of contemporary usage of sacred texts in var-

[6] Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *The Ethnography of Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); though scarcely ethnographic in any sense, there is much of interest as to reading, text, and commentary in Paul J. Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Taking ethnography in its more traditional sense in relation to the reading of biblical texts, I call attention to the highly influential work by the anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff, most especially, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1997). The Comaroffs' focus, among other topics, is on South African native strategic readings of the Bible in a rich theoretical framework that has inspired a number of parallel investigations by other scholars. With less interest in the political dimension, there has been a recent spate of publications by younger scholars on local Bible readers in a variety of settings. For an outstanding example, see the works by Eva Keller, including, "Towards Complete Clarity: Bible Study among Seventh-Day Adventists in Madagascar," *Ethnos* 69 (2004): 89–112; eadem, *The Road to Clarity: Seventh-Day Adventism in Madagascar* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); eadem, "Scripture Study as Normal Science: Seventh-Day Adventist Practice on the East Coast of Madagascar," in *The Anthropology of Christianity* (ed. Fenella Cannell; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 273–94.

The anthropologist James Fernandez has long analyzed sermons from various African 'revivalistic'/'reformative' movements, especially the Fang Bwiti movement (Gabon) and The Church of God in Christ (Durham, South Africa); see his general typology of such movements, "African Religious Movements: Types and Dynamics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 2 (1964): 531–49. His model rhetorical analyses of these sermons include idem, "Revitalized Words from the Parrot's Egg, and the Bull Who Crashes in the Kraal: African Cult Sermons," in *Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Association: Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts* (ed. June Helm; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 45–63; idem, "Unbelievably Subtle Words: Representation and Integration in the Sermons of an African Reformative Cult," *HR* 6 (1966): 53–64; idem, "Edification by Puzzlement," in *Explorations in African Systems of Thought* (ed. Ivan Karp and Edward Bruner; Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 44-59; repr. in idem, *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 172–87; and his culminating work as an Africanist, *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 494–564.

Within biblical studies, there have been treatments of Bible reading in early Christianity, ranging from Adolf von Harnack (*Über den privaten Gebrauch der Heiligen Schriften in der alten Kirche* [Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neuen Testament 5; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912]; idem, *Bible Reading in the Early Church: New Testament Studies 5* [trans. J. H. Wilkinson; Crown Theological Library 36; London: Williams & Norgate, 1901]) and Ernst von Dobschütz ("Bible in the Church," *ERE* 2:601–15) to Harry Y. Gamble (*Books and Readers in the Early Church* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995]), which mine textual sources for references to practice. While these remain important works, they are not intended to be "history in the ethnographic vein" (Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* [New York: Basic Books, 1984], 3).

ious religious contexts centered on the Bible, an endeavor becoming prominent in religious and anthropological scholarship while still scanted in biblical studies, there lies the middle-range expanse of *applications* and *traditions* in which the majority of students of religion comfortably dwell and which forms the focus of much of their research and teaching. For many biblical scholars, perhaps owing in part to the field's inheritance of early Reformation polemics, this middle range remains a zone of discomfort, typically assigning its study to allied fields of institutional and intellectual history, such as church history or historical theology. For myself, one of the more exciting recent developments, within the space of our annual meetings, has been the expansion of sessions that explore aspects of this middle range, bearing titles such as "Rethinking the Concept and Categories of 'Bible' in Antiquity," "History of Interpretation," along with particular foci, African, African American, Asian, Asian American, Latino/Latina and Latin American "Hermeneutics," the "Bible in Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Traditions," as well as sessions on the "Bible and Visual Art," the "Use, Influence, and Impact of the Bible," and "The Bible and Popular American Culture." The implications of studying such middle-range categories have been explored, quite differently, in our last two presidential addresses. The area has been, further, strongly marked by the nomination of Vincent Wimbush as our next vice-president. In one sense, I intend my remarks, tonight, to be a paracommentary on Robert Kraft's 2006 presidential address, especially the adverbs that dominate his subtitle: "Beside, Before, and Beyond Biblical Studies."[7]

I

Allow me to begin the body of my address with a snapshot, intended to record an originary moment in the modern enterprise of the study of religion. The German scholar Friedrich Max Müller, a resident of England for the bulk of his productive life, is one of three figures often labeled with the Herodotean-style epithet 'Father of the Study of Religion,' along with the Dutch scholar Cornelius P. Tiele, who, in addition to biblical languages, read Akkadian, Egyptian, and Avestan, and would be my choice for the accolade, if such a notion of paternity is even plausible. (He might well be your choice too, inasmuch as he was elected an honorary member of the SBL in 1892).[8] Müller's priority was acknowledged in 1887 by the third

[7] Robert A. Kraft, "Para-mania: Beside, Before, and Beyond Biblical Studies," *JBL* 126 (2007): 5–27.

[8] Tiele's degree, after biblical and theological studies at the University of Amsterdam and the Remonstrant Seminary, Amsterdam, was conferred on the basis of his dissertation, "Het Evangelie van Joannes beschouwd als bron voor het leven van Jezus" (1855). He was self-taught in the ancient nonbiblical languages noted above. With respect to his interests as reflected in the latter, see especially his 1877 inaugural address on assuming the chair of History of Religions, Philosophy of Religions in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Leiden, "De vrucht der Assyri-

figure on whom the title is occasionally pressed, Pierre D. Chantepie de la Saussaye.[9] Müller himself persisted in naming as "the first who ventured on a comparative study of the religions of the world," the sixteenth-century, third Timurid, Mughal emperor of northern India, Akbar, a figure best known to the English speaking world through Tennyson's poem, "Akbar's Dream."[10]

In the foreground of this evening's snapshot stands Müller's pioneering *Introduction to the Science of Religion,* initially delivered as four lectures to a lay audience at the Royal Institution in February and March 1870, particularly his untitled second lecture of February 26th. Consonant with his audience, Müller's addresses were first printed serially in the popular journal *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country,* before being collected together (with supplements) and published in book form in 1873.[11]

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ologie voor de vergelijkende geschiedenis der godsdiensten" (non vidi), published in a German translation by K. F. [i.e., Carl Friederici], *Die Assyriologie und ihre Ergebnisse für die vergleichende Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1877). Tiele's claim to 'paternity' largely rests on his 1896 and 1898 Gifford Lectures, *Elements of the Science of Religion,* part 1, *Morphological;* part 2, *Ontological* (2 vols.; Edinburgh/London: Blackwood & Sons; New York: Scribner's, 1897, 1899). Given the focus, in this essay, on F. Max Müller's lectures on the science of religion (see n. 10 below), see Tiele's careful and critical review of them in idem, "Een problem der godsdienstwetenschap," *De Gids* 35 (1871): 98–128. I have not seen the revised and enlarged German version in idem, *Max Müller und Fritz Schultze über ein Problem der Religionswissenschaft* (Leipzig, 1871).

On comparing Müller and Tiele, I accept the reasoned judgment of that pioneering American student of religion Morris Jastrow, Jr., *The Study of Religion* (Contemporary Science Series; London: Scott, 1901; New York: Scribner's, 1902; repr., Classics in Religious Studies; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 47–48: "While Max Müller betrayed in all that he wrote the scholar who views religious thought from the point of view of the student of language, Tiele's frame of mind is essentially that of the philosopher. Max Müller and Tiele thus complement each other." Jastrow's book was dedicated to Tiele.

[9] Pierre D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, ed., *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (2 vols.; Sammlung Theologischer Lehrbücher; Freiburg i. Br: Mohr Siebeck, 1887, 1889); I cite the abridged English translation by Beatrice S. Colyer-Fergusson (Max Müller's daughter), *Manual of the Science of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1891), 6: "Nobody has a greater claim to be called the founder of that science [of religion] than F. Max Müller. . . ."

[10] Friedrich Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institution; With Two Essays, On False Analogies and The Philosophy of Mythology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1873), 68. In an "Appendix" to the first lecture (pp. 68–100), Müller offers documentary support for his claim as to Akbar's priority.

Unlike other works cited in these notes, Müller's *Introduction* remains a 'canonical text' for students of religion. For that reason I cite 'chapter and verse' in parentheses in the body of the text.

Although we read him for somewhat different reasons, Tomoko Masuzawa has written an exceedingly important study of Müller's *Introduction;* see Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. 206–44; see also her earlier survey in eadem, "Our Master's Voice: F. Max Müller After a Hundred Years," *MTSR* 15 (2003): 305–28.

[11] See preceding note.

Müller's exceptional confidence in the enterprise of what he terms, here, the 'science of religion' (pp. 34–35; his usual, preferred term was 'comparative theology' [pp. 23, 39, 219], more occasionally, 'the comparative study of religions' [pp. 11, 33])[12] grew out of the successes of comparative philology, the topic of his previous series of lectures to the Royal Institution on the science of language.[13] Müller's chief intellectual project was the transfer of the methods of the one field, comparative philology, into those of the other, the science of religion, most especially, genealogical classification as the legitimation for comparison. Such genealogical comparisons (that is to say, homologies) were the foundation of the nineteenth-century discernment of the Indo-European language family and were widely considered, through the mid-twentieth century, to be a model of scientific method.

Beginning with Müller's second lecture, and continuing for the remainder of his work, *the comparative study of canonical scriptures is privileged as the first concern of the nascent science of religion.*

Müller's initial strategic move is the introduction of a new taxon to the study of religion, a subset of the category "book-religions," which, itself, would appear to be an extension, for comparative purposes, of the Islamic category, 'people(s) of the book.' Müller's coinage, "religions of canonical books" (p. 102), is more limited and suffers from Müller's failure to provide, here, a proper definition of 'canon.'[14]

It may, at first hearing, seem unsurprising that a comparative philologist

[12] See Müller's most explicit discussion of nomenclature in his contribution "Principles of the Science of Religion, or Comparative Theology," in *Universal Religion: A Course of Lessons, Historical and Scientific on the Various Faiths of the World* (ed. Edmund Buckley; Chicago: University Association, 1897), 17–29, esp. 21n. Müller's argument here is based on common usage. "The name of comparative religion should be avoided. We do not speak of comparative language but of comparative philology. No one would use comparative bones in the sense of comparative anatomy. If theology is the science of religion, comparative theology is the natural name for a comparative study of religions. If other names were wanted, [comparative] hierology . . . or pistology would answer our purpose." Compare the survey of nomenclature in Louis H. Jordan, *Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth* (New York: Scribner's, 1905; repr., Classics in Religious Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 24–28.

For some, today as in the past, 'comparative religion' suggests, at one extreme, a syncretism and at the other, the making of invidious comparisons. For a striking polemic asserting the former, see the article by the biblical scholar, Owen Charles Waterhouse, "A Protest against that Chaotic Monstrosity 'Comparative Religion,'" *ExpTim* 23 (1913): 36–38, Waterhouse, when he accepts in place of the term 'comparative religion' the term 'comparative study of religion,' echoes an aspect of Müller's critique.

[13] F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language, Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May, and June, 1861* (London: Longmans, Green, 1861). In subsequent editions, a subtitle is added, "First Series," as Müller delivered a second series of lectures on the science of language at the Royal Institution in 1864.

[14] The history and development of the term 'book religion' has been sketched by Bernhard Lang, "Buch-religion," in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe* (ed. Hubert Cancik et al.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1988–), 2 (1990), 143–65.

whose life's work was the production of the first critical edition of the Rig Veda (1849–74, in six volumes), an enterprise that transformed a previously oral text "for the first time into a book, both in fact and theory,"[15] should focus on religion's linguistic artifacts, on written texts. What distinguishes Müller's inquiries from those of his contemporaries, and remains exemplary for our discussion, is that, for the purpose of disciplined comparative studies, he added the qualification that the sacred books must be collected into a "sacred canon." In that imperial style of language we have learned, over time, to find exceedingly discomforting, Müller distinguishes between the "vulgar and nondescript crowd of bookless or illiterate religions," and the "aristocracy of real book-religions," before exclaiming over his third category: "how few are the religions which possess a sacred canon" (pp. 102–3). Deploying the then commonplace linguistic dualism of Aryan (i.e., Indo-European) and Semitic, Müller goes on to identify one ancestral canon for each religio-linguistic family, playing the same cognitive originary role as proto-Indo-European and proto-Semitic roots in comparative philological researches, with the advantage that the respective canonical ancestral books, the Rig Veda and the Hebrew Bible, are extant entities (although surely not now in their initial forms), while the linguistic roots remain hypothetical, although no less significant, scholarly reconstructions.

In Müller's genealogical classification, within the Indo-European family, the Iranian Avesta stands as an independent member; the Buddhist Tipitaka as a dependent member, formed in reaction to and rejection of the older Indic religion. Within the Semitic family, the two additional members, the NT and the Qur'an, stand in dependent relation to the Hebrew Bible analogous to that already described for the Buddhist. At a second level of comparison, the Tipitaka and the NT are comparable in that both relatively rapidly transferred their respective religious tra-

[15] F. Max Müller, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans, Together with the Commentary of Sayana* (6 vols.; London: Allen, 1849–74; 2nd ed., 4 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1890–92; repr., Varanasi: Chowkhambha Sanskrit Office, 1966). I have taken the descriptive quotation from Wilfred C. Smith, *What Is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 139. Smith and other scholars working on the influence of Müller's edition in India and on Hindu tradition note that his publication "in large measure" is responsible for "the great significance ascribed to the Rg Veda in modern India" (Thomas E. Coburn, "Scripture in India: Towards a Typology of the Word in Hindu Life," *JAAR* 52 [1984]: 435–59; repr. in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective* [ed. Miriam Levering; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989], 122) and rely on the groundbreaking article by Ludo Rocher, "Max Müller and the Veda," in *Mélanges d'Islamologie: Volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis* (3 vols.; ed. Pierre Salmon and A. Destrée; Leiden: Brill, 1974–78), 3:221–35; see also Ronald W. Neufeldt, *F. Max Müller and the Rg-Veda: A Study of Its Role in His Work and Thought* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1980).

The most important ethnography of memorized Veda recitation, the traditional mode of transmission prior to Müller's printed edition, remains J. Frits Staal, *Nambudiri Veda Recitation* (Disputationes Rheno-Trajectinae 5; The Hague: Mouton, 1961).

ditions to another language family: the NT, while Semitic in origin (Hebrew, Aramaic), became a document in Indo-European Greek; the Tipitaka, while originally formulated in India in Pali, flourished largely only when transferred and translated into a member of a third Asiatic linguistic family, into Chinese. Prompted by this latter, Müller adds to his dual classification of Indo-European/Semitic a third, independent Asiatic family—what we would now term the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family—with two important book-religions, each with a canonical collection serving as their "sacred code": the nine Confucian classics (i.e., the Five Classics [Wujing] and the Four Books [Shishu]), and Laozi's Daodejing. Müller concludes:

> With these eight religions the library of the Sacred Books of the whole human race is complete . . . [texts] written in Sanskrit, Pali, and Zend [Avestan], in Hebrew, Greek and Arabic, lastly in Chinese. (p. 106)

As these three families of Asiatic religions of canonical books correspond to the three major Asiatic language families, Müller notes, with no little satisfaction, "we really have clear evidence of three independent settlements of religion . . . concomitantly with the three great settlements of language" (p. 155). Müller goes on to complicate usefully this discussion of original canonical "settlements" and secondary canons by introducing a tertiary level, later texts, dependent on the primary canonical books and most often, themselves, subsequently treated as canonical, for example, the three other Vedas and the Brahmanas, the enormous expansion of the Mahayana Buddhist canon, noting especially its two Tibetan forms, the Kanjur (in modern transliteration, the Bka'-'gyur) and Tenjur (Bstan-'gyur [pp. 108-14]).

In 1987, Carsten Colpe published a paper on textual sacralization and the filiation of canons that may be taken, in part, as a continuation and refinement of Müller's taxonomic interests.[16] Posing his questions in a quite different manner, Colpe explores the formation of canons on the basis of an already existing paradigmatic text. He focuses on two such filiations, one whose archetype was the Hebrew Scriptures; the other, the Buddhist Tipitaka (excluding, thereby, Müller's beloved and exemplary Rig Veda). In the first family, that of the Hebrew Scriptures, Colpe lists the NT, the Mishnah and its Talmuds, the Qur'an, and the Book of Mormon; in the second family, that of the Tipitaka, he lists the Mahayana canon, the Jain canon (the Agama, 'tradition'), the Bka'-'gyur, the Bstan-'gyur, and the Daozang. As an important complication, he proposes that the Sikh canon, the Adi Granth, depends, in varying degrees, on both paradigms.

[16] Carsten Colpe, "Sakralisierung von Texten und Filiationen von Kanons," in *Kanon und Zensur* (ed. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann; Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation 2; Munich: Fink, 1987), 80–92. See also, from the same year, Colpe's more general comparative article, "Heilige Schriften," *RAC* 14 (1987), cols. 184–223.

As an aside, I would note that, following Colpe's lead, I taught for some years a year-long introductory course entitled "Bibles in Western Civilizations," with one friendly amendment—consonant, I believe, with Colpe's intent—reading and discussing as separate Bibles the Jewish scriptures (Tanak) and the Christian OT, before going on to the Mishnah, the NT, the Qur'an, and the Book of Mormon (adding other biblical texts from Joseph Smith's *The Pearl of Great Price*).

Given Müller's map of generative relationships, and its modification by Colpe, as well as its taxonomic implications (the latter, the subject of Müller's third lecture), the comparison of book-religions, Müller argued, was methodologically grounded, inasmuch as it was based on "the only scientific and truly genetic classification of religions," that which is "the same as the classification of languages" (p. 143). Even if we set this last claim aside, a biblical scholar can and ought to make *homological* comparisons *within* one or the other of Müller's or Colpe's two families, as well as *analogical* comparisons *between* the families.[17] For example, one of the striking differences between the Hebrew Scriptures' canonical family, and the other family or families, is the relative economy of the library (the *bibliotheca*) of the former. One thinks, by way of contrast, of the Ming Daoist canon together with its 1607 supplement, which contains 1,487 separate texts,[18] or the already noted Chinese Buddhist Canon (84,000 texts), and the distinctive Tibetan collections totaling 4,681 titles.[19] A scholar interested in comparison might well ask: What are

[17] For a discussion of homological and analogical comparisons within the context of biblical scholarship on the relations between and within early Christianities and religions of late antiquity, as well as the insistence on comparison requiring difference, see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparision of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 14; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990; Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 36–53.

[18] See, now, Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang [= Dao zang tong kao]* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), especially Schipper's brief introductory essay (1:1–52).

[19] The estimation of the Chinese Buddhist canon as containing eighty-four thousand separate texts is already cited as a "tradition" in Müller, *Introduction,* 114 (see n. 10); it is given as fact in the brochure *English Translation Project of the Buddhist Canon in Chinese* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1985), 2. See further the comprehensive 480-page catalogue edited by Bunyin Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tipitaka . . . Compiled by Order of the Secretary of State for India* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1883). Bunyin Nanjio was a close collaborator with Müller; they co-edited two volumes of Sanskrit texts. On the processes of canon formation for the Chinese collection, see the important summary study by Jens Braarvig, "Den tidligste Systematiseringen av Mahayanabuddhismens Kanon," in *Kanon: Norsk-Dansk Symposium, Oslo 1992* (Dansk-Norsk Tidsskrift Religionshistoriske Studier 18; Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1992), 33–43.

For the two Tibetan collections, the Bka'-'gyur and the Bstan-'gyur, see Sandor Csoma de Körös, *Analyse de Kandjour, receuil de livres sacré au Tibet* (Annales du Musée Guimet 2; Paris/

the comparative advantages and disadvantages of size for interpretative endeavors? In ritual contexts, is there a 'canon within the canon'? What are the implications of a canon so large that it may not be readily possessed, in its entirety? With respect to the latter question, a recent ethnographic report on Lao religious culture finds no reason to challenge a predecessor's 1917 notice that there was no extant "complete edition" of the "Pali canonical texts in [all of] Laos."[20]

Lyons: Musée Guimet, 1881), which contains, as well, an appendix by Léon Feer, "Abregé des matières du Tandjour."

Lewis Lancaster, along with editing *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), has authored three important general articles on Buddhist canons: idem, "Editing Buddhist Texts," in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization: Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott; Emeryville, CA: Dharma, 1977), 141–51; idem, "Buddhist Literature: Its Canons, Scribes and Editors," in *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts* (ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty; Berkeley Religious Studies Series 2; Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1978), 215–29; idem, "Buddhist Literature: Canonization," *ER* 2:504–9.

[20] John C. Holt, "The Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and the Religious Culture of Laos," *Criterion: A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School* 46, no. 2 (2008): 22–32. The passage quoted reads, in part: "He [Finot] was unable to locate a complete edition of the complete Tipitaka at any one monastic library in the country. . . . [In a subsequent study Finot reports] he could not account for the presence of a complete Tipitaka throughout the entirety of the country" (ibid., 28). The scholar to whom Holt refers is Louis Finot, but Holt does not cite the source. I know only some of Finot's epigraphic work and cannot supply a further reference. Holt refers as well to a "recent work" by Steven Collins as providing further confirmation. I take it, here, that the reference is to Collins's important article "On the Very Idea of a Pali Canon," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 89–126. Collins observes that the majority of Lao monastic libraries possess copies of only a fraction of the total Pali canon; that some of the canonical texts in their libraries are, in fact, 'apocryphal,' although regularly recited and used in rituals; and that an overwhelming majority of monks and laypersons have never seen a complete Pali canon and lack the means to do so.

While the specifically Christian coinage 'apocrypha/apocryphal' is widely used in Buddhist scholarship (e.g., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* [ed. Robert E. Busswell, Jr.; Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990]), there has been an increasing sentiment among Buddhist scholars for replacing the term with "allegedly noncanonical," recognizing both the negative connotations of the term 'apocryphal' and the fluidity of the boundaries of the Buddhist canon (see the citations and brief discussion in W. C. Smith, *What Is Scripture,* 315 n. 35), a move, to some degree, paralleled in contemporary biblical studies with the increasing use of the replacement term 'deuterocanonical.' See, among others, Morton Smith, "Terminological Boobytraps and Real Problems in Second-Temple Judaeo-Christian Studies," in *Traditions in Contact and Change: Selected Proceedings of the XIVth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions* (ed. Peter Slater and Donald Wiebe; Corporation Canadienne des Sciences Religieuses Editions SR3; Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 295–306, esp. 295–96, " 'apocryphal' . . . is a term of abuse implying that the user disbelieves, or at least dislikes and wants to discredit, the document referred to. This common usage conceals the fact that there is no such thing as: '*the* Bible' " (emphasis original).

For a classic treatment of one aspect of this issue within the Buddhist context, see the con-

In undertaking either homological or analogical comparisons of canons, collaborative research may be required for reasons of linguistic competence and specialized knowledge; *but the comparative enterprise itself may not be avoided.* The study of religion has been conceived from the outset as one that entails comparison, and biblical scholars ought not avoid that requirement, even if their sense of professional prerequisites confines their comparisons to Müller's and Colpe's first family. Müller, himself, calls attention, as a sort of preparation for his gospel, to the "position which Christianity from the very beginning took up with regard to Judaism, [that] serve[s] as the first lesson in comparative theology" (p. 39), along with the familiar contemporary practices of "some of our most learned divines" in employing a "limited . . . comparison of Judaism and Christianity with the religions of Greece and Rome" (pp. 40-41). In this account, academic irresponsibility would be a scholar's refusal of comparison in violation of Müller's oft-cited dictum, from the opening pages of the *Introduction:* "he who knows one [religion], knows none" (p. 16).

I should like neither Müller, nor myself, nor the assembly of students of religion to be misunderstood at this point. What Müller proposed, and I affirm, is *not* some division of labor between biblical scholars critically studying their chosen texts and making what Müller termed "limited comparisons" to antecedent and environing traditions, and students of religion undertaking more global interreligious comparisons. For Müller, the biblical scholar is a practitioner of what he termed the science of religion to the degree she sees her work as comparative. I would argue the same.

There is more. I have already had occasion to cite Müller's remark that, with his enumeration of the sacred textual traditions of the eight canonical book-religions "the library of the Sacred Books of the whole human race is complete" (p. 106); at a later point in the same lecture, he extends the collection's contents to include a "library of the sacred books of the world, with their indispensable commentaries" (p. 116). These two mentions of "library" appear to forecast what will shortly become one of the major undertakings of Müller's scholarly career, the proposal for, and the editing of, the fifty-volume series of translations into English, *The Sacred Books of the East* (1879–94), a collection that, to his deep frustration, failed to include the Old or New Testaments because of intense lobbying on behalf of Christian exceptionalism before the delegates of the University Press at Oxford,

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tribution to the Instituut Kern (Leiden) celebratory volume by Etienne Lamotte, "La critique d'authenticité dans le bouddhisme," in *India Antiqua: A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented by His Friends and Pupils to Jean Philippe Vogel, C.I.E., on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Doctorate* (Leiden: Brill, 1947), 213–22; see also idem, "La critique d'interpretation dans le bouddhisme," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves* 9 (1949): 341–61; and, further, R. M. Davidson, "An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha,* ed. Busswell, 291–325.

by one of the delegates, the Reverend E. B. Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Canon of Christ Church, and one of the most influential High Church Anglican divines at the time. To Pusey's assertions of incomparability, Müller answered with the creed of a student of comparative religion: "these two, the most important Sacred Books of the East . . . could never have a better setting than in the frame formed by the other Sacred Books."[21]

In 1884, five years into the project, Müller reflected on the endeavor, offering, along the way, what he had not provided in the *Science of Religion,* some indication of what constitutes a 'sacred book.' He reports on editorial discussions:

> It was suggested that those books only should be considered sacred which profess to be revealed, or to be directly communicated by the Deity to the great teachers of mankind. But it was soon found that very few, if any, of the books themselves put forth that claim. Such a claim was generally advanced and formulated by a later generation. . . . So we agreed to treat as Sacred Books all those which had been formally recognized by religious communities as constituting the highest authority in matters of religion . . . and might therefore be appealed to for deciding any disputed points of faith, morality, or ceremony.[22]

Here, Müller adopts a functional, rather than a substantive, definition. It is based on comparison and proposes an extrinsic rather than an intrinsic criterion for classification. *It is the posterior usage of the book, not some anterior revelation, that marks it as sacred.*

This consequential shift raises the second issue with respect to 'style' that we may draw from this foundational work in the history of the study of religion.

[21] F. Max Müller, *Auld Lang Syne, Second Series: My Indian Friends* (London: Longmans, Green, 1899), 85–88 (the passage quoted is from p. 87). (The third prominent member of Müller's Semitic canonical set, the Qur'an, was printed in a two-volume translation by Edward H. Parker, early on in the series *Sacred Books of the East* [vols. 6, 9; 1880]). Compare idem, *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. 1, *Essays on the Science of Religion* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1873), xx: "In the Science of Religion, we can decline no comparisons, nor claim any immunity for Christianity."

[22] F. Max Müller, "Forgotten Bibles" (1884), reprinted in idem, *Last Essays, Second Series: Essays on the Science of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), 1–35; I have taken the quotation from Miriam Levering, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Scripture,* 16 n. 4 (see n. 15 above). I may add that, in accord with Müller's formulation, the editorial board of *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion* (ed. Jonathan Z. Smith; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), sponsored by the American Academy of Religion, chose the rubric 'authoritative books and their interpretation' in the articles on major religious traditions rather than the more common term 'canonical literature.' A similar formulation, defining 'sacred text,' is offered by Jon L. Berquist: "we may speak of the sociology of a text's *use*—i.e., what came *after* the text rather than what comes before it in the sacred text's own production" (review of *The Sociology of Sacred Texts,* ed. Jon Davies and Isabel Woollaston [1993], *MTSR* 7 (1995): 212–16, quotation from 214 (emphases in original).

II

If, for Müller, the biblical scholar is a practitioner of the science of religion to the degree that she sees her work as comparative, what Müller proposes in his definition of sacred books—and I affirm—is that the object of study, in the case of sacred, canonical books, is not so much the text itself as it is its tradition, its trajectories. For Müller, you will recall, the data of a student of book-religions include not only the canonical texts, and their secondary and tertiary formations, but also what he terms the "indispensable" commentary literature these have generated. The *Nachleben,* the 'afterlife,' of a canonical text is as significant as the origins of the text—after all, the notion of 'the Bible' is, itself, a postbiblical phenomenon.

The implications of such an extension, for research and for teaching, were raised with particular force by the late Canadian student of religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a specialist on Islam and an influential theorist on questions of the definition and study of religion. He was, as well, an informed scholar of what he terms, characteristically with innumerable qualifications, 'scripture.' His last major work, *What Is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (1993),[23] is, as its subtitle signals, a massive pioneering effort at comparison. While I differ with many of his premises and conclusions, his book remains the best demonstration I know that such a large-scale comparative undertaking is possible.

This evening, however, I want to direct your attention to an earlier, far shorter piece, Smith's 1971 publication in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* "The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible."[24] Smith begins by setting the educational context: the 1960s' "emergence and flourishing of liberal arts departments of religion," the "transition from the seminary to the liberal arts department as the locus of activity." To describe the consequences of such a shift, Smith employs "the field of Bible as illustration," challenging, in so doing, both biblical studies and its educational practices. He critiques what he perceives to be the antiquarianism of much biblical study, which focuses on the prehistory and early history of components of the Bible but rarely on its subsequent history. He imagines a course that

[23] See n. 15 above.

[24] Wilfred C. Smith, "The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible," *JAAR* 39 (1971): 131–40; repr., with minor alterations, in idem, *Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith* (ed. Willard G. Oxtoby; New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 41–56, which I quote above. I have written previously about this article on several occasions; see, especially, Jonathan Z. Smith, "Scriptures and Histories," *MTSR* 4 (1992): 97–105 (a special issue devoted to "A Critical Appreciation of the Contribution of Wilfred Cantwell Smith"); idem, "Teaching the Bible in the Context of General Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 1 (1998): 73–78. I would note that, in some of his remarks, W. C. Smith parallels Dale B. Martin, *Pedagogy of the Bible: An Analysis and Proposal* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), without sharing the latter's interests or presuppositions. Martin does not cite W. C. Smith.

would begin with "some consideration of scripture as a generic phenomenon,"[25] where the "basic issue would be: scripture as a religious form," before turning to the "bulk of the course," described in his often repeated phrase, "the history of the Bible over the past 20 centuries." For Smith, the Bible is not best taught as a set of ancient documents, nor even as a formation of the early centuries, but rather through the exploration of trajectories through the full range of its history, to read it, in his terms, "forwards" as well as "backwards." He concludes his essay with the haunting question, Where could one find an individual "with doctoral training equipping him in this field?"

If we accept Müller's implicit and Smith's explicit agenda for the study of biblical literature and comparable texts as an intrinsic part of the science of religion, as biblical scholars we are called not only to comparisons between canons, comparative processes of canon formation and supplementation, but *also* to undertake comparative investigations of strategies for the interpretation of canonical collections, as well as comparative inquiries into their several ritual settings and employments.[26] These latter are not appendices to the former. For, as I argued in a 1978 comparative study of oral and written canons, the distinctive characteristic of canon, in contradistinction to its generic partners, the list and the catalogue, is its closure, that it is held to be complete, and that, therefore, a canon requires an interpreter, a practitioner of "exegetical ingenuity" to manipulate it in such a way that it 'covers' novel situations without adding new matter to the canon.[27]

[25] There is a large bibliography on this topic from a comparative perspective. The first item, deservedly, is usually Johannes Leipoldt and Siegfried Morenz, *Heilige Schriften: Betrachtungen zur Religionsgeschichte der antiken Mittelmeerwelt* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1953). My general impression is that these works have been more influential for religious studies than for biblical studies, more central to Continental than to North American scholars. The generic category 'scripture' or 'holy books' is a regular component in European 'phenomenological' handbooks on the study of religion, for example, Geo Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), 546–93; Friedrich Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion* (ed. Christel Matthias Schröder; 2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1979), 1:266–364.

[26] For interreligious comparisons of interpretative strategies, see the important, although perhaps overambitious, study by John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). For intrareligious comparisons, see, most especially, Brian Stock's instant classic, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Languages and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Laurie L. Patton's massive *Myth as Argument: The Brhaddevata as Canonical Commentary* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 41; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); Brannon M. Wheeler's *Applying the Canon in Islam: The Authorization and Maintenance of Interpretive Reasoning in Ḥanafi Scholarship* (SUNY Series, Toward a Comparative Philosophy of Religions; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) ; and John Makeham's, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects* (Harvard East Asian Monographs; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) remain exemplary.

[27] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon," in *Approaches*

In recent years, spurred in part by new documentary recoveries—Qumran and Nag Hammadi, but also the Quranic manuscript finds in the Great Mosque of Sanaa, in Yemen (1972),[28] the Daoist tomb finds in southern China from Chang-

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to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice (ed. William Scott Green; BJS 1; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), 11–28; repr. in idem, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 36–52, 141–43. For a reconsideration of elements in this article and a further treatment of aspects of canon, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), Held at Leiden 9–10 January 1997* (ed. Arie van der Kooij and Karel van der Toorn; SHR 82; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 295–311; and idem, *Relating Religion,* 25–26, 55–56 nn. 92–95 (see n. 1 above). See further the studies of "Sacred Persistence," by Burton Mack ("Sacred Persistence?") and Tomoko Masuzawa ("Reader as Producer: Jonathan Z. Smith on Exegesis, Ingenuity and Elaboration") in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London: Equinox, 2008), 296–310, 326–39, respectively.

Attention to the *Nachleben* of biblical traditions has been reinforced by the announcement of a major new reference work, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception (EBR)* (ed. Hans-Josef Klauck, Bernard McGinn, Choon-Leong Seow, Eric Ziolokowski, et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–), vols. 1–30, as presently projected; and by a new series, announced by the University of Chicago Press, Afterlives of the Bible, edited by Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt: "Books in the series will not simply read the Bible 'backward' toward its hypothetical origins but read it 'forward' invigorating the study of biblical literature by opening it towards issues, approaches, and literatures lying outside the current disciplinary confines of biblical scholarship" ("Announcing a New Series from The University of Chicago Press: *Afterlives of the Bible*" [Promotional Prospectus, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006]).

As 'afterlife' carries a spectral tone, I appreciate the paraphrastic translation of *Nachleben* by Karen Lang in *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 99 and 249 n. 9, as "continuing life," the "survival . . . and potency" of classic works.

[28] Gerd-Rüdiger Puin, "Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in San'a," in *The Qur'an as Text* (ed. Stefan Wild; Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science 27; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 107–11; Hans Caspar Graf von Bothmer, Karl-Heinz Ohlig, and Gerd-Rüdiger Puin, "Neue Wege der Koranforschung," *Magazin Forschung* 1 (1999): 33–46; Alfred-Louis de Prémare, *Aux Origines du Coran: Questions d'hier, approches d'aujourd'hui* (L'Islam en débats; Paris: Téraèdre, 2004), esp. 58–60. See also *The Hidden Origins of Islam: New Research into Its Early History* (ed. Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-Rüdiger Puin; Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2008).

Compare, as well, the earlier publications of variants in Quranic manuscripts as well as treatises listing and evaluating both textual variants (*masahif*) and variant readings (*qira'at*), largely recovered from Islamic libraries; especially Arthur Jeffery, ed., *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an: The Old Codices* (De Goeje Fonds 11, 11a; Leiden: Brill, 1937, 1951), text volume and index volume, which prints variants from twenty-eight named tradents, a collection of variants of unnamed tradents, and the *Kitab al-masahif* by the tenth-century Hanbali scholar Ibn Abi Dawud. See further the now-standard additional volume 3 of Theodore Nöldeke and Friedrich Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorans* (vols. 1–2; Leipzig: Weicher, 1909, 1919), by Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qorans,* vol. 3, *Die Geschichte des Korantexts* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1938; the three-volume work, with revisions of vols. 1–2, is now available in a reprint, Hildesheim:

sha (1973),[29] and, more recently, Guodian (1993)[30]—there has been increased interest in questions concerning the formation, limits, and stability of the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Daoist canons, but rather little in the way of a renewal of comparative efforts. It still remains the case that scholars concerned with one or the other of the two chief canonical families, as delineated by Müller and Colpe, occasionally compare within their own lineage, but such discourse has rarely been extended to contemplate cross-lineage comparisons.

A striking exception is found in the writings of the tragically short-lived scholar of Jain religious tradition Kendall W. Folkert. He proposed a comparative classification of all known written canonical collections into two *ideal types,* naming them with deliberate neutrality, Canon I and Canon II traditions, with the prime variable being the texts' relationships, "the means or mode by which [the canon's authority] is carried," what he terms its "vector." Texts of the Canon I type are "carried by some other form of religious activity," most frequently ritual; texts of the Canon II variety are treated by their communities as self-authorizing—they are carried by a "vector of religious authority." In the Canon I type, Folkert focuses attention on ritual as well as on scholastic interpretative activity; it is the canon's employment, rather than its boundaries, that is definitive. Indeed, from a functional viewpoint, specific texts prove interchangeable. Texts of the Canon II type are "viewed as independently valid and powerful and, as such, as being absolutely closed and complete." As Folkert's dual classification was formulated in terms of

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Olms, 1964); cf. Pretzl, "Die Wissenschaft der Koranlesung (ʿIlm al-Qira'a): Ihre literarischen Quellen und ihre Aussprachegrundlagen (Usul)," *Islamica* 6 (1933–34): 1–47, 230–46, 290–331; Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Veröffentlichungen der de Goeje-Stiftung 6; Leiden: Brill, 1920); and the recent instant classic, John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (London Oriental Series 31; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), esp. 202–7. For Wansbrough's influence on students both of Islam and of religion, see the special issue, "Islamic Origins Reconsidered: John Wansbrough and the Study of Early Islam," ed. Herbert Berg, *MTSR* 9 (1997): v–90.

For an important Muslim response to aspects of Western critical scholarship on the Qur'an, see Labib al-Sa'id, *ʾal-Jam ʿal-sawti al-awwal li-l-Qurʾan al-Karim . . .* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1967), in English translation, Labib al-Said, *The Recited Koran: A History of the First Recorded Version* (trans. Bernard Weiss, M. A. Rauf, and Morroe Berger; Princeton: Darwin, 1975).

[29] Among accounts in the English language, see esp. Jan Yun-hua, "The Silk Manuscripts on Taoism," *Toung-Pao* 63 (1977): 65–84.

[30] See the conference volume *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998* (ed. Sarah Allen and Crispin Williams; Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000); of special interest to biblical scholars is the article by Harold D. Roth, "Some Methodological Issues in the Study of the Guodian *Laozi* Parallels," 71–88; see also idem, "Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism," *Early China* 19 (1994): 1–46; and further E. L. Shaughnessy, "The Guodian Manuscripts and Their Place in Twentieth Century Historiography on the Laozi," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 65 (2005): 417–58.

ideal types, he observes that "each form can and does occur within a single religious tradition, the two even existing simultaneously at times"—an example would be his assertion that "the Protestant Bible is a Canon II phenomenon, . . . [but] through most of Christian religious history, and even still at present, the Bible also functions . . . as a Canon I text." This possibility of "simultaneity," he cautions, forbids the presumption of "a causal and/or developmental relationship between Canons I and II."[31] John E. Cort, a scholar of South Asian religions, has usefully restated the difference between the two types in Folkert, without resorting to the latter's term, "vectoring." Canon I, Cort writes, "changes with time and place . . . authority flows from the accumulated tradition *into* the texts"; Canon II "is (more or less) fixed and closed, and authority is conveyed . . . *via* the texts."[32]

Folkert drew his most detailed comparisons from usages of the Jain and the Christian canons, attentive, most particularly, to providing ethnographic descriptions of the placement of the text within ritual space and the relations of ritual specialists to the texts. For example, within Christian usage, among other elements, he distinguished between those Christian groups which employ the Bible in a strict lectionary fashion (that is to say, the canon is vectored by ritual and the liturgical year), as would be characteristic for Canon I, and those Christian groups which use the Bible in a more random fashion, choosing texts for their relevance, a Canon II type of practice.

These observations parallel the sort of distinction elaborated by Miles Richardson in a 1993 work subtitled *An Anthropologist's Account of Christian Performance in Spanish America and in the American South.*[33] Richardson compares

[31] Kendall W. Folkert, "The 'Canons' of 'Scripture,'" in *Rethinking Scripture,* ed. Levering, 170–79 (see n. 15 above). In my description of Folkert, I have incorporated elements from my previous discussion of his work in Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," esp. 301–3 (see n. 27 above).

The Jain canon has been understood as a model of complexity in the history of scholarship. It has usually been taken as divided into two 'rival' canons, collected in the sixth to eighth centuries. Both Folkert and John E. Cort ("Svetambar Murtipujak: Jain Scripture in a Performative Context," in *Texts in Contexts: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia* [ed. Jeffrey R. Timm; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], 171–94) have sharply challenged the adequacy of this conventional account in the works here cited. Cort's formulation is the most suggestive. "The Jains themselves have multiple, often times loosely defined, canons. Which canon is operative in any given context will depend upon such factors as the precise form of ritual or other activity and the status (mendicant, lay) of the participants" (p. 186).

[32] Cort, "Svetambar Murtipujak," 175–76 (emphasis in original).

[33] Miles Richardson, *Being-in-Christ and Putting Death in Its Place: An Anthropologist's Account of Christian Performance in Spanish America and the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). Given Richardson's distinction between visual and verbal, it should be noted that in Islamic studies, as well as in the generic study of religion, the Qur'an remains the model of a sacred text primarily transmitted in the oral-aural mode rather than in a written-visual mode. See the extraordinary comparative volume by William A. Graham, *Beyond*

the present-day ritual use of the Bible in two contexts, Spanish American Catholic and North American Southern Baptist. He characterizes the Spanish American Catholic as "sacramental," with an emphasis on the "visual," and the North American Baptist, less felicitously, given other associations of his term, as "literal" with an emphasis on the "verbal." These rubrics, whatever their adequacy, allow him to compare and contrast, as paradigmatic examples, the (largely, pre-Vatican II) Catholic hieratic display of the large, highly decorated Gospel book to the congregation by the priest through an act of elevation (analogous to the raising of the eucharistic elements); the priest as the sole lector of the text; the congregants, by and large, lacking missals with their lectionary for the Mass, thereby being wholly dependent on the priest's reading and subsequent homily, received in silence except for responsorial formulae, with the Baptist preacher's holding close to his body an open Bible (which does not differ in appearance from his congregants' copies), inviting the congregation to "read along in your Bibles with me," the texts being woven into the preacher's performative speech, with constant interjections from the congregation.

I have taken your time with Folkert and Richardson, not merely for their comparative and ethnographic endeavors as a necessary feature of biblical scholarship as part of the study of religion, but also to note a further issue that must be part of any redescription of biblical studies—that alongside a focus on ritual, on performance, equal to that given to myth, to sacred text, there be an equivalent concern for sacred texts as embodied material objects commensurate with interests in those texts as documents of faith and history. After all, canonization, in the case of the Bible, is inseparable from modes of production, being as much an affair of technology as theology. The perceived singularity of *the* Bible would have been impossible without the adoption of the codex form; the perceived uniformity of the Bible, impossible without the invention of print.[34]

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the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and, further, Frederick M. Denny, "Exegesis and Recitation: Their Development as Classical Forms of Qur'anic Piety," in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions: Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa* (ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Theodore M. Ludwig; SHR 39; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 91–123; Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an* (Modern Middle East Series 1; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985).

[34] Without supplying either specific examples or supporting bibliography, the enterprise of studying sacred (canonical) texts as embodied material objects may be conceived in terms of five foci: (1) The study of the effects of modes of production should include not only technological processes but also economic factors (e.g., patronage) and entrepreneurial decisions that affect format, design, and the inclusion of supplementary matter. (2) One must consider the status of the material text as an icon, an element in what has come to be termed, by some scholars, "visible religion." Here the text is not limited in its sacrality to its origin or referent, but is, itself, a 'holy thing.' (3) Closely related is the employment of the text as a ritual object. This is a different usage from (4) the lectionary use of a sacred text in a ritual context, or (5) the use of the text as a ritual handbook.

If the approaches I have emphasized this evening, the trajectories of traditions, comparisons, ethnographies, placed alongside more familiar aspects of biblical studies, appear at all imperative to you, as part of an enlarged redescription of biblical studies as religious studies, Wilfred Cantwell Smith's haunting question remains: Where would training in such endeavors lie? How would capacities in such approaches be evaluated as a part of our professional competencies? I can think of no association that I would trust more as being able to address both the plausibility of such proposals and their implications for the field with respect to both scholarship and education than this Society.[35]

[35] Since delivering this presentation at the annual meeting, I received a communication from Professor James W. Watts, calling my attention to the "Iconic Book Project" he directs at Syracuse University (http://iconicbooks.syr.edu).

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Whatever Happened in the Valley of Shinar? A Response to Theodore Hiebert

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Theodore Hiebert has written a provocative article in this journal ("The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *JBL* 126, no. 1 [2007]: 29–58). Its aim—as the article's title indicates—is to refute the customary reading, "since rabbinic and patristic exegesis," of Gen 11:1–9 as a story of human arrogance and its punishment (p. 53). Hiebert's thesis is that Genesis 11 does not belong to the series of stories brought about by J to describe the worsening of humanity's sinfulness in the primal age. Rather, Genesis 11 is a "simple" account of "the origin of the world's cultures" (p. 53).

The author's close reading of the biblical text is thorough and detailed. His scholarship is impressive—but his conclusions are unwarranted. In what follows, I shall take exception to them on three levels: hermeneutical, source-critical, and philological. *Hermeneutically*, I shall argue that Hiebert's deliberate ignorance of the foreground of the text is detrimental to his thesis. The biblical texts' reception history is determinative. *Source-critically*, although acknowledging here that the scholarly dating of the Yahwist source may not be decisive for the present debate, it remains that if J wrote in the sixth century B.C.E. rather than in the tenth, it becomes still more improbable that the "Berchtesgaden" of the evil empire would be described as the original cradle of the world's cultures. *Philologically*, I shall show that J chose with extreme care the vocabulary describing the construction of the mythical-historical city and tower of Babel as unambiguously disastrous.

I. Hermeneutics

The first thing that strikes the reader is that Hiebert appears to disregard one of the most interesting developments in biblical studies, namely, the *Wirkungs-*

geschichte of the sacred texts. Such an aspect of hermeneutics is, however, important, as it takes seriously the *history* of the text—its lifeline, so to speak. Gregory the Great said, "Scripture grows with its readers." The foreground or trajectory of the text is a two-way street: the historical community of readers puts its stamp in return upon the text it reads.

This emphasis on the living community is essential: it respects the prime dimension of the biblical scripture as *textus receptus*. By contrast, when Hiebert reads Genesis 11 as promoting Babylon to the status of cradle of human civilization, he runs the risk of minimizing the historical relationship of the text with the living people of Israel. True, Hiebert could object that he is precisely making a case for honoring the gap between the "original" meaning of the text and its foreground. But an "original" intent of the text is, to say the least, elusive. By contrast, the concrete *Wirkungsgeschichte* unveils the teleological "movement towards and beyond Pentecost," that is, as George Steiner says, "an undoing of Babel," or even, in the words of Franz Rosenzweig, "a messianic act, which brings redemption nearer."[1] As to the scholarly reconstructed "original," it may anyway have antedated J's reworking in Genesis 11.[2] One must then distinguish between an alleged meaning in the original life setting and the one acquired in the intent of J.

In short, it is worth our while to take into account the consensus of negative interpretation of Genesis 11 found in the late biblical and postbiblical traditions, whether in the LXX of Genesis 11, the NT, the Pseudepigrapha, or the rabbinic and the patristic literatures. Texts abound. See, in the LXX text, Gen 11:7 (συγχέωμεν, "to confound") and 11:9 (διέσπειρεν, "to scatter"); in the NT, Acts 2:4–13; in the Pseudepigrapha, *Jub.* 10:19; *Sib. Or.* 3:99–107; *3 Bar.* 2:7; 3:7–8; see also Philo (*QG* 2.82); Josephus (*Ant.* 1.113–14); several Targums; *Pirqe R. El.* 24; *b. Sanh.* 109a; Jerome (*Qu. hebr. Gen.* 10.8); Augustine (*Civ.* 16; note the term "arrogance" there); Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 4:7; 6:13–14). A Jewish tradition has Nimrod the wicked leading the builders (on the basis of Gen 10:10).[3]

II. Source Criticism

The consistency of the text's reception does not standardize its meaning. Rather, it emphasizes the "polyglossic" quality of the text, for the communities of interpretation do indeed interpret themselves in interpreting the text. A case in

[1] See George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 244; Franz Rosenzweig, "Scripture and Luther," in Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation* (trans. Lawrence Rosenwald with Everett Fox; Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 53.

[2] I shall mention this point again in my conclusion.

[3] The link between "Babel" and the flood is provided by the motif of the dispersion common to both (see Gen 9:18–19 and 11:8).

point is particularly set in relief if we assign a (post)exilic date to J.[4] For then Genesis 11 may be seen as in reaction to the Judean exile to "Babel," the city of confusion. Ever since this historical catastrophe, of course, other persecuting empires have arisen that the reading communities identified with Babel and its hubris, as Augustine says—for whom, incidentally, it is the basic sin that caused the fall and from which other sins derive.[5]

In Genesis 11, the concentration of all humanity occurs at one site, Babylon. Hiebert is right to emphasize the redundancy of the adverb שם (there) in vv. 2, 7, 8, 9 [twice]. The focus appears to be on Babylon as *the* place where every human achievement was possible and where everything went wrong in the world. For the narrative encompasses the nations in general, and Babel is the microcosmic powerhouse of all the peoples that exist. The story is told against the obvious background of a sprawling cosmopolitan city with a towering ziggurat. The text identifies it with Babylon, where deportees of many nations are or will be gathered in the sixth century B.C.E. Hence the duality of motifs in the story, concentrating as it does on a huge tower and an enormous city. Eventually, however, the tower will reach only a ridiculously low height when compared with the initial purpose of the builders. As for the magnetism of the city, the site will become the epicenter of an explosive dispersion of the nations—bitter irony of an eschatological projection after the forced ingathering of peoples in Babylon.

It would be hard to ignore this setting in a metropolis that is never considered favorably in the biblical and postbiblical traditions. That is why Hiebert's argument that sees the narrative rationale in Babylon's role "as cradle of civilization" (p. 35) stretches credibility to the breaking point. Along the same line, Hiebert asserts that the tower is a secondary motif in the narrative. I fail to see the grounds for this assertion in the fact that the building's suspension seemingly affects the city only, without mention of the tower (v. 8). If the tower is part of the city—as Hiebert himself stresses following E. A. Speiser[6]—it is evident that the interruption of one is also the interruption of the other.[7] The end of the narrative comes with a wordplay on Babel/Babylon (not on the tower) because only the city receives a name here, in contrast to the tower, which remains anonymous. But was there any option offered to J for naming it? We today know that its actual name was *etemenanki,* meaning "foundation of heaven and earth." Such a scientific precision (in the Babylonian language) has no place in a biblical fiction. Besides, its mention (with its meaning) by Hiebert is damaging to his thesis—the tower was a pagan temple!

[4] See my discussion of this point in *The Trial of Innocence: Adam, Eve, and the Yahwist* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 17–21 and passim.

[5] See G. Bertram, *TDNT* 8:295–307 on *hybris*.

[6] See E. A. Speiser, "Word Plays on the Creation Epic's Version of the Founding of Babylon," *Or* 25 (1956): 322 (cited by Hiebert, 37 n. 21). He sees a hendiadys here.

[7] See LXX; Samaritan Pentateuch; *Jub.* 10:24: "they stopped building the city and the tower." To recall, Genesis 3 at no point says that woman also is dust and shall return to dust!

III. Philology

The Valley of Shinar

The action occurs in a valley (of Shinar [v. 2]) in contrast to the erection of a huge tower that will compensate for the absence of mountains in Mesopotamia.[8] In ancient Israel, the valleys were viewed with suspicion (see, e.g., the plains of Moab in Numbers 22; Num 14:25 says that the Amalekites and Canaanites dwell in the valley; it is the setting of Ezekiel 37; Sheol, evidently, is underground; etc.).[9] On the contrary, God's locales of predilection for his epiphanies are mountains (Sinai; Horeb; Nebo [in opposition to the plains of Moab, says Deut 34:1]; Zion). Nothing good is expected to happen in a valley, which makes one think of the Ge Hinnom in Jerusalem; of the valley in need of being lifted up in Isa 49:11; of the valley of people's flight in Zech 14:4–5; or of the valley of death. Ibn Ezra—rightly praised by Hiebert[10]—comes with the correct etymology and refers to the root בקע, "to split" (an ominous sign of things to come; Franz Kafka spoke of the "pit of Babel").[11]

The valley is called Shinar, a name found also in Gen 10:10, in association with the sinister Nimrod; in Gen 14:1, 9, where the "king of Shinar is one of Abraham's foes; in Josh 7:21, where a coat of Shinar is an item in Achan's booty; and in Isa 11:11, about Israel's remnants in Shinar. More striking, "the land of Shinar" in Zech 5:11 is the place where "the woman in the basket of Wickedness" is set to dwell. Perhaps still more significant is the text of Dan 1:2, where "Shinar" is used in a clearly disparaging way. The context speaks of "the treasury house of his [Nebuchadnezzar's] gods" and again associates Babylon with an idolatrous shrine. In fact, "Shinar" is here set in apposition to "home of his gods" before, through an elliptic redundancy, the focus is set on the pagan temple. The parallel with our text is impressive. Furthermore, the contrast between Gen 11:3 and 1 Kgs 6:7 is striking (the temple of Jerusalem is built with rough stones and without iron tools).

The people in the story are coming מקדם, "from the east" or "eastward" (see KBL, 823). Redaq (Rabbi David Qimchi [twelfth–thirteenth century]) saw here an

[8] Herodotus (1.178, 193) describes Babylon as a "great plain."

[9] Deuteronomy 8:7 and 11:11 do not apply here. Isaiah 40:4 and 41:18 are eschatological promises to be tallied with Isa 19:18–25, for example.

[10] But Ibn Ezra is not as positive about Genesis 11's pericope as Hiebert says. Although Ibn Ezra indeed notes that there is no specification in the text of human sinfulness, he understands the verb ונבלה in v. 7 as indicating a confusion of languages (punishment): different languages, like different religions, create jealousy and hatred, he says (see *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Genesis (Bereshit)* [trans. H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver; New York: Menorah, 1988], 137–45). We must take into consideration that for Ibn Ezra's far-fetched chronology, Shem, Noah, and Abraham did take part in the construction! Hence, he adopts a cautious assessment of the crowd of builders (see *ad* v. 1).

[11] Franz Kafka, "The Great Wall of China" (1917): ". . . we are digging the pit of Babel."

allusion to the use of the term in the story of Adam and Eve. He says that these people came from the place where Adam was created. He therefore understands the phrase as "eastward," that is, toward Mesopotamia coming from Palestine (where Eden is most probably located in Genesis 2–3).[12] To recall, the primal couple is expelled "east of Eden" in Gen 3:24. In contrast, Abraham of Ur will migrate westward (12:4).

The Scheme

The people of the east come with a common desire for homogeneity. In fact, they immediately express their fear of being scattered. Hence, this consolidated social body has forebodings and realizes the fragility of its organization (Gen 11:4).[13] But, speaking one language (שפה אחת), the group is able to concoct a double feature: a city where "all the earth" (v. 1) will dwell, and a tower reaching to heaven (v. 4). The rationale for the latter is to shore up a common feeling of *power*.

Their strength resides in the oneness of their language, which finds a parallel in Gen 10:5, 20, 31 (P; the term here is לשון). Concerning the eventual plurality of languages, Hiebert judiciously refers to Deut 28:49 and Isa 66:18 (but note here the very reversal of Gen 11:7, making of the text a precursor to Acts 2 in the NT); see also, to the same effect, Zech 8:23.[14] Genesis 11:1 adds a further precision regarding the original language, using an expression that is, however, rather problematic. The people are said to speak דברים אחדים ("the same words" [NRSV], a sort of oxymoron insisting simultaneously on the plurality of expressions and the singularity of meaning). According to the Yahwist, there was originally just a unique *śāpâ,* and the natural pluralities of human dictions were put at the service of unanimously accomplishing one single purpose. Rashi (after *Tg. Ps.-J.*) interprets דברים אחדים as meaning that the people had a common design, a common counsel. In other words, they had only one goal, which in itself is not necessarily bad. All depends of course on the goal's worth and how it is pursued; its merit will depend on the nature of this common end.

On the face of it, it looks as if we could keep the same openness of interpretation about the following precision in the text: "let us make a name for ourselves" (v. 4). Backing up his benign reading, Hiebert brings to bear a host of texts. Yet

[12] See my *Trial of Innocence*, 64–66.

[13] In reality, the fear of dispersion is fear of death, a central theme in Genesis 2–11. The city is the technological center of immortality. It is the concentrated space where all are speaking the same language; that is, all are sharing the same unique referent: the denial of death. The tower is meant to be their survival forever, a pyramid defeating time, defeating motion, defeating finitude. For death is perceived as the upshot of movement. Hence, the monument will be as static as death itself and, therefore, will transcend death by deriding it, so to speak.

[14] I shall return to the bearing of these texts and add some others shortly (see under "The Big Scrambling of Data" below).

Abraham is *not* making a name for himself in Gen 12:2. Neither does Abishai in 2 Sam 23:18, or Benaiah in 2 Sam 23:22, or again Uzziah in 2 Chr 26:8, 15. God can of course make a name for himself (Josh 7:9; 2 Sam 7:23 = 1 Chr 17:21), but we are then in a totally different realm. The contrast with the humans making a name for themselves shows that the latter borders on blasphemy. In Zeph 3:19–20, *God* is the agent of the "good name" and Israel is the beneficiary. The same is true of Isa 63:12; Jer 32:20; Ezek 16:14; 34:29; 39:13. 2 Samuel 18:18 and Isa 48:19 clearly belong to another idiom.[15]

In sum, the texts say nothing of an alleged positive or even neutral use of the expression in Gen 11:4. On the contrary, the very anomalous and disturbing reflexive form of "let us make . . . for ourselves" arguably is indicative of a misplaced pride on the part of the builders. They want to be the agents of their own eminence and create for themselves a good conscience.[16]

One text, however, among those listed by Hiebert bears notice as possibly providing a counterexample to the negativity displayed in other contexts. 2 Samuel 8:13 (ויעש דוד שם) includes the verb "to make" and the object "name," as in Gen 11:4. But the parallel is more in the English translation ("David made a name [for himself]") than in the Hebrew text. The latter does not say that David wanted to make a name for himself (intention), but rather that his fame spread abroad (result). The difference is substantive. See also Neh 9:10, whose wording is very close to that of Gen 11:4, but God is the one drawing a conclusion as to the result of his own punishment imposed on the pharaoh of the exodus.

Furthermore, if we follow Hiebert's lead and read Gen 11:1–4 as describing a simple and healthy human attempt at homogeneity, why does God muddle up the crowd in part 2 of the story (vv. 5–9)? The reason, says the text of v. 6, lies in what the humans are "planning." This translation of the verb זמם is Hiebert's mild rendition. But now, although זמם is used in both positive and negative contexts, in Pss 37:12; 140:9; and Prov 30:32, the agent of the action is the wicked. The same is true in Deut 19:19 and Ps 31:14. Psalm 17:3 is more difficult. It should be rendered by "I plan [things]," says the psalmist, "but my mouth does not sin." In Jer 4:28 and 51:12; in Lam 2:17 and Zech 1:6, God is the agent of a negative action. In Zech 8:14–15, God again is the agent, and his plans are alternately for weal or woe. But there is clearly a play on words here, making of זמם an ambivalent concept.

[15] Hiebert refers to Isa 56:5 by mistake.

[16] In *b. Sanh.* 109a, the phrase refers to idolatry. Ibn Ezra says, "to ensure their own fame and glory" (*Ibn Ezra's Commentary,* 139). Samson R. Hirsch (1808–1888) raises the logical question for whom or, rather, against whom they want to have fame (*The Pentateuch Translated and Explained by Samson Raphael Hirsch* [trans. Isaac Levy; 5 vols. in 6; 2nd ed.; New York: Bloch, 1962–67), 1:207). Hirsch says, against God above them and against the individual beneath them. They make of themselves "an end" instead of a means. "That glory," he adds, "which is content to march triumphantly on over millions of dead bodies" (1:208).

In summary, זמם is uniformly used in negative contexts (with the possible exception of Zech 8:15, where *God* is the agent). Finally, only one text might qualify as a "proof" in Hiebert's favor: Prov 31:16 speaks of "the virtuous woman" considering buying a field. Here the agent is "virtuous" and her aim is laudable. But the use of the term זמם in Prov 31:16 is poetic license, as the verse belongs to an alphabetically set pericope (31:10–31) under the letter *zayin*. In Gen 11:6, I therefore maintain, the verb is to be read with the sense of plotting, scheming. J sets the scheme in parallel with the hubristic ambition of the primal couple: Gen 11:6c closely recalls 3:22.

The people are contriving for fear of being scattered. Now, that is exactly what will happen to them in the future, so that their state of funk appears to be prophetic. Hence, Rav Shimon ben Chalafta (ca. 210 C.E.) invoked Prov 18:7, "a fool's mouth is his ruin!"[17] Of this Gen 11:8 provides an illustration, as it describes a divine action reversing the terms of v. 4. The verb פוץ is present in both places, as well as the phrase על־פני כל־הארץ ("over the face of all the earth" [NRSV]), to be once more repeated at the end of the story (v. 9). Now, פוץ may at times mean "scatter," and at times "disperse." Hiebert, of course, argues for the latter sense in Gen 11:8, 9. KBL, however, gives as the basic meaning of the root "*zerbrechen*, break asunder" (p. 755). The word can be used in military parlance for the sorry fate of the enemy (Num 10:35; 1 Sam 11:11; Ps 68:2). The derived noun תפוצה has a very negative meaning (see Jer 25:34 and Zeph 3:10). Further, let us note that the verb נפץ in Gen 9:19—a cognate of פוץ in 11:4, 8, and 9—is at least as negative. Its basic meaning is "shatter," and it may describe an action of dashing to pieces (KBL refers to Jer 13:14; 48:12; Pss 2:9; 137:9; etc.). With the sense of "pulverize," see Isa 27:98 and Jer 51:20–23.

Of Bricks and Men

In Genesis 11, the accent is on construction and, more pointedly, on the artificiality of the enterprise. Such artificiality finds its fine expression in the means chosen for building: bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar (11:3). In these materials, one will recognize the sham mountain that the ziggurat imitated. Note the stress of the text on the purely *human* production; it falls in parallel with Exod 1:14 (where also the words "bricks" and "mortar" are found).[18] Thus, even the term

[17] See Meir Zlotowitz and Nossom Scherman, *Bereishis = Genesis: Introductions, Translations, and Concise Commentary with Haftarahs* (ArtScroll Tanach Series 1; New York: Mesorah, 1977), 337.

[18] True, Genesis 11 may recall Exodus only if we adopt a late date for the J composition. A synchronistic reading of the tradition is recognizable in *3 Bar.* 3:5: a group among the builders force others to build the tower after "they plotted"—says the text—its construction. The parallel with the Egyptian slavery here is evident. "The store cities (fortified cities in LXX) of Exod 1:11 may have been interpreted as a tower," says H. E. Gaylord, Jr., translator of *3 Baruch* in *OTP* (1:659).

"brick" in Genesis 11 is loaded with bad memories. To recall, the Babylonian king was molding the first brick, called the "cornerstone," for the upcoming temple.

As to the end they have in mind, it is a tower reaching to God's abode. And as to the means they garner, first there is a crowd of people that looks like the depersonalized antlike armies of a dictatorship; second, the mob is armed with an *Ersatz* of material. The rabbis of old derided that crowd, saying that no one among them deplored the accidental death of a worker at the tower, but all would grieve for the loss of a brick.[19]

As I said above, there is no reason to belittle the importance of the tower in Genesis 11. The people want to build a city and a tower "whose top is in heaven" (v. 4). Apart from the ludicrous paradox of building such a column in a valley, let us note that the existence of a Near Eastern cliché with the words "its top in the sky" does not prove Hiebert's theory about its alleged neutral sense.[20] The shift of semantic field in most cases entails a shift of meaning. The phrase in the eyes of the Babylonians may present no problem, as reaching up to the divine was always the rationale for constructing a ziggurat. Translated into Israel, however, the same expression becomes offensive and blasphemous, and the context of its utilization shows that it reveals "an arrogant revolt against divine authority" (to quote Hiebert, who rejects this possibility [p. 37]). In Babylon, one ascends to the divine; in Israel, God descends from his abode to meet the humans where they are (see Gen 11:5, 7; also Exod 19:11, 18, 20; 33:9; 34:5; cf. Mark 1:10; etc.).

In sum, the textual references advanced by the author are judicious, but when we review them, we come to a different conclusion from his. Texts such as Gen 28:12; Deut 1:28; 9:1, and the Babylonian use of the same cliché *for the ziggurat* indicate the right direction to be followed by the exegete. In Deut 1:28, we indeed again find the expression "up to heaven" (said of the fortified cities of the Canaanites). This description belongs to the fearful report of the spies after their foray into Canaan. The expression in Deut 1:28 is thus neither positive nor neutral. It is set in contrast to Caleb's mien (cf. Num 14:24) and does stir up God's wrath (Deut 1:34–40). As to Deut 9:1, it is a quotation of the spies' report in 1:28. Furthermore, if any doubt remained as to the negativity of the image, it is brushed aside by texts such as Dan 4:17, 19 (said ironically of the sham greatness of Nebuchadnezzar): the "tree" will be felled! Along the same line, Dan 8:10–12 says that the goat's horn (that is,

[19] See *Pirqe R. El.* [*PRE*] 24 (Rabbi Pinhas [fourth century C.E.]).

[20] Besides, it may well be no cliché at all. The theme, says Theodore Gaster, was common among many ancient cultures to describe human hubris. The fitting punishment was the confusion of languages (see Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament* [New York: Harper & Row, 1969], 135). To recall, the Greek mythological Titans did pile Mount Pelion and Mount Ossa on top of Mount Olympus in a futile attempt to reach and attack the gods in heaven. Furthermore, Hiebert's reading short-circuits the divine descent as countering the people's ascent "to heaven" (see also Jer 51:53).

Antiochus IV Epiphanes) grew as high as the host of heaven—but the horn will be broken (vv. 22, 25).[21]

הבה נרדה, says God, "Come, let us go down." As indicated above, God's descent is not necessarily for punishment, but this point will be made explicit in the verb that follows (ונבלה), as we shall now see. Meanwhile, we note that the volitive form is typical of J's style and is already present elsewhere in the primeval stories. The plural form ("let us") "mimics the people's call to one another" in vv. 3–4.

The Big Scrambling of Data

נבלה שם שפתם ("let us mix up their language there"), says God (v. 7). נבלה echoes נלבנה ("let us make bricks") in v. 3 and נבנה ("let us build") in v. 4. Similarly, איש . . . רעהו ("one another") reverses the intent expressed by the same terms in v. 3. Already such structural opposites would shed grave doubt on Hiebert's laudatory thesis.

The root בלל ("to mix") makes a pun on "Babel," of which it provides a sham and polemical etymology. The message is clear: the great Babylon, "gate of the divine,"[22] is, in fact, the epicenter of universal confusion, a gate to human breakup. From its pretension to verticality (the very sense of the word "religion") as *axis mundi*, J brings it down to a flat horizontality, a *stagnum mundi*; and from a magnet to "all the earth" (see vv. 4, 8, 9 [twice] = four times, the cipher of the universe) to the great repellent of humanity.

As in some of the previously explored terms used by the Yahwist, the verb בלל is not invariably negative. It may indicate, for instance, the mixing of ingredients (as in Exod 29:40; Lev 14:10; Num 6:14; see KBL, 130). It means also "to moisten," even "to anoint" someone with oil (see Ps 92:11). But when used metaphorically, as in Gen 11:7, the sense is definitely different. Hosea 7:8 says that Ephraim is confusedly mixed with nations (cf. Hos 9:1). Isaiah 64:5 presents a confession in the first person plural in which the term means to be rotten or, at least, to be withered. There is no surprise, therefore, in finding the LXX translation of the verb in Gen 11:7 as συγχέω ("to confuse"). Truly, after that, people will not be able to understand one another.

Let us note the surprising vocalization of the verb ונבלה in v. 7. Yoseph ben Yisḥaq (twelfth century), in *Bechor Shor*, reads here a feminine *niphal* form: "their language will become withered."[23] In wisdom literature, the same verb is rendered

[21] At this point, let me emphasize that the term "etiology"—which Hiebert uses as a key concept to understand Gen 11:1–9—does *not* exhaust the meaning of any text. Etiology is always an added dimension, adjunct to a more substantial textual purpose. See my *Trial of Innocence*, 132 and elsewhere (see index).

[22] Perhaps itself a forced etymology.

[23] See Isa 24:4; (19:3 *BHS*); cf. *3 Bar.* 3:8; and *Zohar* 1:75 and 84a *ad* Gen 11:2, commenting

as "becoming senseless, foolish" (see Prov 30:22; Job 14:18). J's choice of this term is deliberate. In Gen 10:5 and 32, P uses another verb, פרד ("to divide, to separate [from each other]"), as in Prov 18:18 or Ruth 1:17, with a somewhat more mitigated effect. The Yahwist's aim is both to deride the pretensions of Babylon and to insist on the serendipitous advent of Abraham, which will be a blessing for all (scattered and disoriented) nations (Gen 12:2). All of J's stories gathered between Genesis 2 and 11 have the same ultimate purpose. They display a sliding scale of human sinfulness.[24] Far from being an exception, Genesis 11 comes as the apex of human depravity. So, Abraham's response to his call does occur in a world in disarray. In other words, according to J, the great divide between the primal age and the *Heilsgeschichte* is not Babel but Abraham.[25]

True, Abraham and several ancestors of Israel originally came from Mesopotamia. Hiebert draws from this datum an argument in favor of his interpretation. But Mesopotamia is a country *from which* the forebears of Israel depart, *westward*. When the movement is reversed and Babylon becomes the place *to which* the Israelites go *eastward,* it is a land of exile, not a return to the "native land" (Gen 11:28; 24:7). Such a dialectical conception of the country of Mesopotamia falls in parallel with the view of the land of Egypt in the Joseph tradition.[26] Israel, squeezed between the tremendous powers of the one and the other, claimed to get a footing in both. Typically, Genesis 10 mentions Shinar and Egypt in succession (vv. 8–12, 13). In P, however, the perspective is entirely different, displaying a partly taxonomic, nonparadigmatic composition.

Thus, the dispersion of the humans and their languages is to be seen first and foremost as a punishment. Before we are able to speak of a potential silver lining, namely, the multiplicity and diversity of cultures, the text emphasizes the lack of mutual understanding. We find the same conclusion under the pen of P in Gene-

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on מקדם: "[They were] journeying from the land of Israel and descending to Babel [site of the demonic] . . . . It is 'a decay-idolatry'" (*The Zohar = [Sefer ha-Zohar]* [trans. and commentary by Daniel C. Matt; 4 vols.; Pritzker ed.; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004], 1:444; 2:37).

[24] *Genesis Rabbah* 38.6 judges "the generation of the dispersion" as more wicked than the generation of the flood. See Jack M. Sasson, "The 'Tower of Babel' as a Clue to the Redactional Structuring of the Primal History [Gen 1–11:9]," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus Gordon* (ed. Gary Rendsburg et al.; New York: Ktav, 1980), 211–19. Sasson also states emphatically that Genesis 1–11 is preparing the way for the advent of Abraham in ch. 12. Contrary to what happens in the preceding J stories, there is here no concluding divine relenting.

[25] For J, humanity in the primal era was monotheistic, even Yhwh-istic. The scattering of the builders in Genesis 11 is thus not just geographical and linguistic but also religious. Its redemption starts with Abraham in the next chapter; the story of Babel is a setup for Abraham's story. The structure of chs. 2–11 as A B C B A (evil is hubris / violence / confusion of categories / violence / hubris) is another pointer to J's intent in ch. 11.

[26] There is nothing to redeem Egypt in the fact that Joseph married an Egyptian daughter of a priest of On and sired through her Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 41:45, 50–52). But Isaiah prophesies that there will be a highway joining Assyria and Egypt (19:23).

sis 10 (see vv. 5, 20, 31). In other words, the initial common language did not denote a unity transcending diversity, but a unity without diversity.[27] What will be hoped for in the *Heilsgeschichte* is a unity that goes beyond diversity (see, e.g., Zeph 3:9–11).[28] Acts 2:4–12 shows how *Endzeit* is no mere duplication of *Urzeit*: Jews "coming from all nations under heaven . . . each one heard [the Apostles] speaking in the native language of each."

In what precedes, we have repeatedly dealt with terms that are not univocally negative, such as זמם, ירד, בלל. J is too fine a psychologist not to leave open a free margin of interpretation in his choice of words and concepts. Starting with Genesis 3, the divine chastisement is clear, but it would be difficult not to conceive of high hopes after the human choice of autonomy. In ch. 4, again a margin is provided by the unexpected shield of protection around the murderer. In chs. 6–9, humanity and cosmos are wiped out, but for a remnant, seed of a new world. In ch. 11, humanity is scattered and thus debilitated in its will to power, but this is the very condition for a new humanity with a diversified culture. J's work is dialectical throughout.[29] As Ibn Ezra concludes, "God scattered the people for their own benefit."[30] Abravanel (fifteenth century), however, added that this comment by Ibn Ezra must be understood as showing that a *punishment* may concomitantly be a blessing. Besides, about the name Babel (Gen 11:9), Ibn Ezra himself says that it means "confusion has come."[31]

The monoglossic humanity of the beginning has truly become "the generation of the dispersion" (a traditional rabbinic designation). The concentration valley of Shinar has exploded into an archipelago. The primal cohesion is over, and it is to be expected that wars will erupt between ethnic and phonic entities.[32]

At this point, an inquiry into the biblical view of the diversity of human languages does, once again, demonstrate that there is no such thing as "a simple description of a multilingual world" (Hiebert, 49). Deuteronomy 28:49, for example, speaks of a foreign nation whose threatening stance toward Israel is compounded by the very fact that it speaks an incomprehensible language. Isaiah 33:19 mentions the arrogant nation (of Assyria) as speaking an "impenetrable language;

[27] Mikhail Bakhtin speaks of the "system of unitary language," which is "an expression of the centripetal forces of language" and "opposed to the realities of heteroglossia" (*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* [ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981], 269–70).

[28] Hiebert's contentment with the dispersion as creative of cultures and civilizations must be tempered with the fact that such had already started with Cain's fratricide and errantry. Cain and the Cainites build cities and develop industries—but they are not exonerated by them!

[29] See my *Trial of Innocence,* passim.

[30] *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch*, ad loc.

[31] Ibid. (the syllable *bel* means "confusion," and *ba* is the verb "come"); see Zlotowitz and Scherman, *Bereishis*, 341.

[32] So in *Pirqe R. El.* 24 (*in fine*), Rabbi Shimon's statement (they will fight each other in frustration). See also Hiebert, 48 n. 50.

they have a stammering tongue that you cannot understand." Isaiah uses here the verb לעג ("stammering, stuttering"; cf. 37:22 in mockery). Other texts stress the same point: see especially Isa 28:9–13 and Ezek 3:5–6. If we turn to the NT, we find a comparable situation. Acts 2:6, as we saw, hails the return to mutual understanding that had been destroyed in Genesis 11. 1 Corinthians 14 is entirely on language(s), see vv. 4, 5, 14, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 39; and so on.

It is thus an anachronistic interpretation that sees in the language breakdown a felicitous occurrence. We never find any biblical text sharing such an optimistic comprehension of the phenomenon. In fact, the division of languages is universally seen as "making life more difficult or as punishment."[33]

IV. Conclusion

The deployment of scholarship by Theodore Hiebert is indeed impressive. His demonstration, nonetheless, misses the target. There is no way to consider the building of the tower/temple as a secondary motif in the story. There is also no way to read Gen 11:1–9 as a social-cultural objective report on "the origin of world's cultures." A paean about wicked Babylon has no place whatsoever in Israel's tradition (especially, I should add, if J was writing during or after the sixth-century exile).[34]

In fact, with Genesis 11, J pursues his exploration of the prehistoric times. He comes with a series of myths that include the story of the humans in Eden and their expulsion from the garden, the paradigmatic murder of a brother, the impure mixture of species that confuses the angelic beings, on the one hand, and the human females as mere sexual beings, on the other,[35] and the uncontrolled violence that brought about the devastating flood. Now he concludes his review of that era—before history really starts with Abram in Genesis 12—by evoking a collective outburst of hubris and its outcome in universal dispersion and mutual alienation in Genesis 11. The story of the city and tower of Babel not only concludes but caps the

[33] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion, S.J.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 1, 543 (also 537–39).

[34] Were Hiebert's thesis correct, we would hail the presence of a biblical text corresponding to Aeschylus's *The Persians,* which gives a voice to the (defeated it is true) enemy. On Babylon as the archenemy of Israel, see, e.g., Isaiah 13.

[35] Note the striking reversal of direction in the violation of the boundaries between the divine and the human realms. Here, the *bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm* envy the humans and invade their world. Incidentally, Sasson interprets Gen 6:8–11:9 as showing humanity's renewed attempt "to blur the distinction between the human and the divine. . . . This episode [the 'tower of Babel'] ends the sequence of narratives which began with the Flood. We note that man's motives and goals are still those which were furthered by *hubris* . . . a desire to blur the lines that separate God from man" ("'Tower of Babel' as a Clue," 216–17).

mythic series. A new humanity was born after the flood but, says J, nothing really changed in the human heart. Apart from Noah and some in his family, no one learned the lesson of the deluge (see Gen 9:6, 15–16, 25, and, of course, 11:6). Human arrogance still plagues their character, and what earlier they could not achieve sporadically, they now try to build up systematically by enlisting their crowds in the construction of a unique edifice erected to their own glory. Their strength resides in their speaking the same language, says the Yahwist, with words having the same "monoglossic" (Bakhtin) meaning for all.[36] In short, their adoption of a standardizing ideology transforms them into an ant colony, a far cry indeed from a voluntary association of free minds.

The very construction of a city with a tower at its center is arguably an acceptable human activity in the sight of God. What alters its nature is the aim in view and the kind of buildings envisaged. The builders want a concentration of power, a project rendered feasible thanks to their sheer number, their concentrated location, and their universal language. With this formidable arsenal, they strive to make a name for themselves (a name or a good conscience?). Their tower/temple is to reach heaven, and the material they use is technological. The city they have in mind is none other than Babylon, a den of wickedness rather than a "gate of the divine." As could be expected, God confuses their language and thwarts their project. The city and the tower are forever in shambles. This Yahwistic narrative, like those that preceded it, is paradigmatic. On the one hand, the human languages taken together have become cacophonic. Israel lives in the hope of their eschatological reunification. Yet God sets a limit to the Babylonian arrogance, on the other. In spite of Hiebert's arguments to the contrary, there is indeed a polemic against the empire in Genesis 11.

My reading of J's story is evidently very different from Hiebert's. We are, however, in his debt, as he gives us much food for thought. As I stated at the outset, his argumentation is provocative. On its basis, we could concede that a preexisting document did perhaps exist celebrating the glory of Babylon as the original place "of the world's cultures." The biblical author then used this text while twisting polemically its original meaning.[37]

[36] Mikhail Bakhtin was writing in the context of a "one-party" system, which tolerated only one discourse while compulsorily striving toward one single goal for all.

[37] Could such a hypothetical preexisting document (Sumerian? see Samuel N. Kramer, " 'The Babel of Tongues': A Sumerian Version," *JAOS* 88 [1968]: 108–11; see also *ANET,* 68–69, Enuma Elish VI.60–62) explain by deliberate polemical accretions the complexity of Genesis 11, with its motifs of tower and city/ confusion of languages and dispersion?

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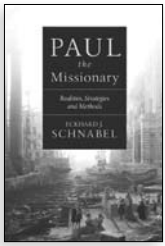

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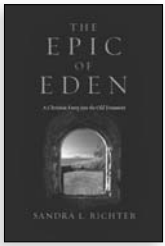

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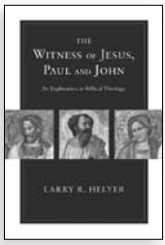

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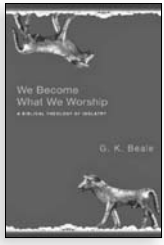

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Ideology and Social Context of the Deuteronomic Women's Sex Laws (Deuteronomy 22:13–29)

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The Deuteronomic family laws in Deut 22:13–29 have received extensive treatment in previous studies, many of which have dealt with the literary and redaction history of the laws, their application in the legal practice of ancient Israel, and their relation to parallel laws in ancient Near Eastern law collections.[1] Yet debate continues regarding the purpose, ideology, and compositional history of this section as a whole and its constituent parts.[2] The conflicting views arise in part from prem-

[1] E.g., Rosario Pius Merendino, *Das Deuteronomische Gesetz* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1969), 257–74; Anthony Phillips, "Some Aspects of Family Law in Pre-Exilic Israel," *VT* 23 (1973): 349–61; Raymond Westbrook, "Adultery in Ancient Near Eastern Law," *RB* 97 (1990): 542–80; Louis Stulman, "Sex and Familial Crimes in the D Code: A Witness to Mores in Transition," *JSOT* 53 (1992): 47–63. Studies on specific laws or aspects include Clemens Locher, *Die Ehre einer Frau in Israel: Exegetische und rechtsvergleichende Studien zu Deuteronomium 22,12–21* (OBO 70; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Bruce Wells, "Sex, Lies, and Virgin Rape: The Slandered Bride and False Accusation in Deuteronomy," *JBL* 124 (2005): 41–72; Timothy M. Willis, *The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-Laws in Deuteronomy* (SBLMS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

[2] For example, Alexander Rofé finds that the laws in Deut 22:13–29 are utopian in intent and Deuteronomic in origin, while Carolyn Pressler and Eckart Otto view them as judicial rulings representative of Iron II society. Regarding purpose, Rofé and Pressler hold that the laws were intended to reinforce the authority of the paterfamilias, while Otto argues, in contrast, that they were concerned with restricting male authority. See Alexander Rofé, "Family and Sex Laws in Deuteronomy and the Book of Covenant," *Henoch* 9 (1987): 131–59 (cf. in Hebrew in *Beit Miqra* 22 [1977]: 19–36); Carolyn Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (BZAW 216; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 42, 96; Eckart Otto, "False Weights in the Scales of Biblical Justice? Different Views of Women from Patriarchal Hierarchy to Religious Equality in the

ises regarding the redaction and literary prehistory of the laws in this section.[3] But however the prior history of the material in this section may be construed, its ultimate significance is intrinsically bound to its structure and context. Examination of the structure of the section will demonstrate that Deut 22:13–29 is a carefully drafted, self-contained collection of laws, unlike the haphazard assortment of rulings in its immediate setting (Deut 21:22–25:12). I shall argue that this careful design is the result of editorial intent directed toward presenting an authoritative treatment of sexual offenses involving all categories of free women. Comparison with similar legislation from the ancient Near East will show that Deut 22:13–29 is the product of deliberate selection from a wide array of legal traditions. The choices the scribe made in constructing the specific cases and exigencies to be included in Deut 22:13–29 result in a one-sided view of women's responsibility and culpability for safeguarding sexual exclusivity vis-à-vis an actual or future husband. Finally, I shall attempt to uncover the concerns that shaped this attitude toward women's responsibility.

I. Structure in Deuteronomy 22:13–29

Deuteronomy 22:13–29 is a tightly knit literary unit dealing with the regulation of women's sexuality. The section is composed of four paragraphs, each opening with the conditional כי (vv. 13–21, 22, 23–27, 28–29). The first paragraph treats the case of a married woman who is charged with sexual misconduct *prior* to marriage. The second paragraph takes up the case of sexual relations between a woman and a man other than her husband *after* consummation of her marriage (v. 22). The third paragraph deals with the rape of a betrothed virgin (vv. 23–27). The final paragraph deals with the rape of an unbetrothed virgin (vv. 28–29). Hence, the cases have been arranged in descending order according to the marital status of the women, starting with cases dealing with women whose marriages have been

Book of Deuteronomy," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Victor H. Matthews et al.; JSOTSup 262; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 140.

[3] See, e.g., Rofé, "Family," 131–57; idem, "The Arrangement of the Laws in Deuteronomy," *ETL* 64 (1988): 273, 286–87; Clemens Locher, "Deuteronomium 22, 12–21: Vom Prozeßprotokoll zum kasuistischen Gesetz," in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt, und Botschaft* (ed. Norbert Lohfink; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 301–3; idem, *Die Ehre einer Frau*, 83–109; Eckart Otto, "Soziale Verantwortung und Reinheit des Landes: Zur Redaktion der kasuistischen Rechtssätze in Deuteronomium 19–25," in idem, *Kontinuum und Proprium: Studien zur Sozial- und Rechtsgeschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments* (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 8; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 125–38; repr. from *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel: Festschrift für Siegfried Herrmann* (ed. Rüdiger Liwak and Siegfried Wagner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), 290–306.

consummated (vv. 13–22), and then progressing to betrothed virgins (vv. 23–27) and culminating with unbetrothed virgins (vv. 28–29).

In addition, the initial and closing paragraphs (vv. 13–21, 28–29) appear to have been designed to frame the section and to mark it as a discrete and integral unit.[4] Both paragraphs deal with loss of virginity prior to betrothal,[5] and both the primary case in vv. 13–19 and the case in vv. 28–29 are resolved by financial arrangements and by guaranteeing the marital status of the young women. Moreover, only in the first and final cases does the collocation אבי נערה ("the father of the young woman") occur (vv. 15–16, 19, 29), and both conclude with similar wording (v. 29: ונתן האיש כסף לאבי הנערה חמשים כסף ולו תהיה לאשה [. . .] לא יוכל לשלחה כל ימיו, "the man shall pay the girl's father fifty [shekels] of silver, and she shall become his wife [. . .] he shall not divorce her as long as he lives" [cf. v. 19]).

Only the first and third paragraphs include secondary cases introduced by the conditional אם (vv. 20–21, 25–27). This casts the section into two balanced parts, vv. 13–22 and vv. 23–29, each opening with an amplified paragraph containing both main (כי) and secondary (אם) cases, and followed by a simple paragraph comprising only a main (כי) case.[6] Similar structuring is evident also in the second and fourth paragraphs in vv. 22, 28, both of which open with expressions including כי ימצא איש . . . שכב עם . . ., "If a man is found lying with . . ." Here it appears that v. 28 has been patterned on v. 22; although both employ the *niphal* of מצא to convey discovery of the act, in v. 28 the verb is awkwardly tacked onto the end of the sentence. In addition, the occurrence of the *qal* of מצא at the beginning of v. 28 appears superfluous, since the case could have been drafted along the lines of the

[4] See Merendino, *Gesetz*, 258, 264.

[5] In v. 17 the husband accuses the bride's father of fraudulently giving the girl in marriage as a virgin. According to Wells ("Sex," 48–49, 55), the element of fraud places the loss of virginity on the same footing as adultery, whether it occurred before or after betrothal. This is unlikely, however, since the counter case drops all interest in the charge of fraud. Others assume that the accusation was directed against the girl's behavior *following* betrothal; see Otto, "False Weights," 137; and Ralf Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze in Deuteronomium 22,13-29 im Kontext der altorientalischen Rechtsgeschichte," in *Das Deuteronomium* (ed. Georg Braulik; Österreichische biblische Studien 23; Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2003), 189–203. This, however, is neither explicitly stated nor implied by the text of Deut 22:13–21.

[6] For a different treatment of the structure, see Eckart Otto, "Das Eherecht im Mittelassyrischen Kodex und im Deuteronomium," in *Mesopotamica – Ugaritica – Biblica* (ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz; AOAT 232; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1993), 275–79. Otto identifies a concentric structure in vv. 22–29, but his analysis depends on excluding vv. 13–21, which he thinks developed separately. However, the identification of concentric structures is rife with subjective criteria, particularly when it excludes material. See Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 161 n. 17; and David Pearson Wright, "The Fallacies of Chiasmus: A Critique of Structures Proposed for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:23–23:19)," *ZABR* 10 (2004): 165–68.

related law in Exod 22:15 (Eng. 22:16) (e.g., כי יתפש איש נער בתולה אשר לא ארשה ושכב עמה, "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and lies with her . . ."). [7] Thus, the author of the section evidently endeavored to enhance the balanced two-part structure by means of the similar formulation in vv. 22, 28.

Furthermore, I discern a corresponding order in both parts of Deut 22:13–29 in relation to the role that evidence plays in the rulings. The first pair of cases purport to base their rulings on evidence (vv. 13–19, 23–24). The role of evidence is straightforward in vv. 13–19, where the husband is found guilty of false accusation if his bride can produce evidence of her premarital virginity.[8] The ruling in the case of assault in the city (vv. 23–24) is also concerned with evidence. The man's initiative is implied by the verb sequence "he found her . . . and lay with her" (v. 23, ומצאה . . . ושכב עמה),[9] and the second motive clause specifies that he raped her (v.24aδ, על דבר אשר ענה את אשת רעהו, "because he violated his neighbor's wife").[10] But according to the first motive clause (v. 24aγ), she is held responsible for the rape since she did not call out, the assumption being that a rapist cannot complete

[7] Alternatively, the scribe could have drafted v. 28 according to the model in v. 22: כי ימצא איש שכב עם נער בתולה אשר לא ארשה ("If a man is found lying with a virgin who is not engaged . . ."); however, this formulation lacks the implication of coercion inherent in the verb sequence "happen upon" (מצא) "and seized" (ותפשה; cf. Deut 9:17; 21:19). That this case deals with coercion is made explicit in v. 29, "since he raped her" (תחת אשר ענה). Rape is the plain meaning of ענה throughout Deut 22:13–29, as well as in Gen 34:2; Deut 21:14; Judg 19:24; 20:5; 2 Sam 13:12, 14, 22, 32; Ezek 22:10–11; Lam 5:11; see Sandra Lynne Gravett, "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language," *JSOT* 28 (2004): 280–89; against the view advanced by Westbrook, "Adultery," 570; Lyn M. Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped? (Genesis 34)," *JSOT* 62 (1994): 19–36; Ellen J. van Wolde, "Does 'innâ' Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word," *VT* 52 (2002): 528–44. Joseph Fleishman recently argued that, despite the coercion, the case is not rape, since the sexual relations "intended to create a legal bond between the man and the woman" ("Shechem and Dinah—in the Light of Non-Biblical and Biblical Sources," *ZAW* 116 [2004]: 12–32). However, the law in Deut 22:28–29 presumes an assailant whose intentions are not honorable and who must be coerced to marry the young woman and provide for her all her life.

[8] In Deuteronomy 22, בתולה designates the young woman as a virgin. בתולים is the evidence of her virginity at marriage (vv. 14–15). The inability of the girl to show proof of בתולים indicates premarital promiscuity (v. 21); see, e.g., Rofé, "Family," 136 n. 11; Locher, *Die Ehre einer Frau*, 176–92; Pressler, *View of Women,* 25–28; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox: 2002), 265; Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 163 n. 22; contra Gordon J. Wenham, "B^{e}tûlāh: 'A Girl of Marriageable Age,'" *VT* 22 (1972): 326–48; Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible," in *Gender and Law*, ed. Matthews et al., 79–96.

[9] Nelson, *Deuteronomy,* 272.

[10] The alternate readings that eliminate rape from the semantic field of ענה take vv. 23–24 to represent a case of consent, in contrast to the case of rape in vv. 25–27; see, e.g., Rofé, "Family," 137; Wells, "Sex," 68; Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 160 n. 14. However, all these alternative readings overlook the element of coercion implied by the term ענה.

the assault in a populated place if the victim cries out for help.[11] Thus, the very fact that she was violated in the town is held as evidence of her tacit consent. Rabbinic legal tradition carried this view a step further and reinterpreted the motive clause, presuming that the purpose of the girl's crying out was to ensure that witnesses could attest that she resisted her assailant even if the rape was not prevented.[12] The second pair of cases establish rulings in the *absence* of evidence (vv. 20–21, 25–27). The absence of evidence in the case of the unchaste bride is plainly stated by the phrase לא נמצאו בתולים, "virginity was not found" (v. 20), and is expressed in the case of assault outside the town by the solitude of the field, where none can witness the act, hear the girl's cry, and save her (v. 27). Finally, the third pair of cases in each part (vv. 22, 28–29) deal with discovery *in flagrante delicto* (v. 22: "if a man is found lying with a married woman," כי ימצא איש שכב עם־אשה בעלת־בעל; v. 28: "he seized her and lay with her and they are found," ותפשה ושכב עמה ונמצאו).

Otherwise, associative principles seem to have directed the placement of the cases.[13] The three capital cases are adjacent to each other (vv. 20–24), and each is punctuated by the formula "expunge the evil" (vv. 21, 22, 24).[14] Additionally, the apodoses of the first and third capital cases are formulated in a similar fashion; both the promiscuous girl and the betrothed girl assaulted in the town are to be taken out to the entrance of their dwelling place and there be stoned to death (v. 21: הוציאו את הנער אל [. . .] וסקלוה אנשי עירה אבנים ומתה, "they shall bring the young woman out to [. . .] and the men of her city shall stone her to death" [cf. v. 24]).[15] Furthermore, the adjacent cases in the second and third paragraphs rule that the man and the woman equally share the penalty, as emphasized by the recurrence of the term "both of them" (שניהם) in the apodoses (vv. 22, 24).

Key phrases are repeated in the motive clauses, enhancing structural unity and highlighting the correlation between case and ruling. Thus, the case of the slandered bride (vv. 13–19) is framed by the recurrence of the phrase הוציא עליה שם רע in both the protasis (v. 14) and the motive clause (v. 19). In the counter-case, the

[11] The converse of this assumption is explicitly spelled out in the final motive clause in v. 27; see Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (rev. ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 218.

[12] See *Sipre Deut.* 242 and Nachmanides.

[13] On the editorial use of associative principles, see Rofé, "Arrangement," 265–87.

[14] On the formula "expunge the evil," see, e.g., Jean L'Hour, "Une Législation Criminelle dans le Deutéronome," *Bib* 44 (1963): 3–26; Merendino, *Gezetz*, 336–45; Paul-Eugène Dion, "'Tu Feras Disparaitre le Mal du Milieu de Toi,'" *RB* 87 (1980): 321–49; Locher, *Die Ehre einer Frau*, 47–64.

[15] In both cases, the judgment is carried out at the entrance of the place that, according to the motive clause, is implicated by the young woman's act. For the promiscuous girl, see Pressler, *View of Women*, 97; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 271; cf. Willis, *Elders*, 226. The rape of the betrothed girl in the town ostensibly impugns the town's honor. Had she called out, the townsmen could have saved her and the town's reputation.

term בית אביה is repeated in both the ruling and its motive clause (v. 21), reflecting an attempt to formulate the ruling according to the principle of talion. Repetition also unites the laws of the second part of the section (vv. 23–29), where the similar motive clauses על דבר אשר ענה / תחת אשר ענה occur at the end of the opening and closing cases (vv. 24, 28). Finally, the entire section is united by recurring use of the stem מצא (vv. 14, 17, 20, 22–23, 25, 27–28), which has the force of "finding" or "producing" evidence in vv. 13–22, 27–28.[16]

The tightly knit structure of Deut 22:13–29 indicates, in my opinion, that this section of laws was conceived and composed as a whole. The laws included may have derived from a variety of sources, but they were carefully selected and compiled for their present context. The unified structure of the section reflects both the integrity of the section and the literary aesthetics of its author, but it also implies that the section as a whole was designed to convey signification beyond that of its constituent parts. In order to appreciate the full significance of the legal collection in Deut 22:13-29 it is necessary to understand the legal options that the scribe excluded from the collection, as well as the rationale that dictated the selection, and the manner in which the author shaped the materials that were adopted.

II. Deuteronomy 22:13–29 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Laws

The marked similarity between biblical and ancient Near Eastern casuistic laws has been subject to many in-depth studies, resulting in a consensus that biblical casuistic law stems from legal traditions common throughout the ancient Near East.[17] Moreover, there is good reason to assume that biblical scribes, as part of their scribal training, gained familiarity with ancient Near Eastern law collections, such as the laws of Hammurabi.[18] Thus, it is appropriate to compare the laws in Deut 22:13–29 with those in cuneiform collections to see if the latter shed light on the options that were available to the scribe who drafted this section of laws regulating women's sexuality and marital relations. The specific cases and contingencies that the scribe selected from those belonging to the common legal tradition pre-

[16] See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 218.

[17] For a recent and succinct overview, see Pamela Barmash, *Homicide in the Biblical World* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2–3.

[18] See, e.g., Raymond Westbrook, "Biblical and Cuneiform Law Codes," *RB* 92 (1985): 257; David Pearson Wright, "The Laws of Hammurabi as a Source for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 21:23–23:19)," *Maarav* 10 (2003): 11–87; see also Eckart Otto, "Town and Rural Countryside in Ancient Israelite Law: Reception and Redaction in Cuneiform and Israelite Law," *JSOT* 57 (1993): 19–22; Barmash, *Homicide*, 204.

served in the cuneiform law collections—along with the alternatives that the scribe chose to disregard—may help indicate the purpose behind the composition of Deut 22:13–29.[19]

The Case of the Slandered Bride and False Accusation of Sexual Impropriety

None of the ancient Near Eastern laws dealing with false accusation of sexual impropriety parallels the case of the slandered bride presented in Deut 22:13–19. The majority of the cuneiform laws deal with false allegations made by a third party, and only in LH §131 and Deut 22:13–19 does the husband instigate the accusation impugning his wife. However, LH §131 significantly differs from Deut 22:13–19 in ruling that, in the absence of evidence, the charges may be dismissed by means of the woman's oath of innocence (cf. Num 5:19–23). An accusation of premarital sex is shared only by LL §33 and Deut 22:13–19, but the girl in LL §33 is neither married nor betrothed, and the slander mainly affects the girl's future marriage prospects. The fact that the girl in Deut 22:13–19 was already married when the libelous accusation was made, adds a component that is missing from all the other cases, namely, the claim of fraud that the girl's husband brought against her father.

More basically, Deut 22:13–21 differs from the comparable ancient Near Eastern laws by including a separate counter-case dealing with the failure to refute the charges of sexual impropriety. In the cuneiform law collections, I have found only two instances in which counter-cases have been added to laws dealing with false accusation, and both are fully governed by the principle of talion (LH §§2, 9–11). If the principle of talion governed both the case and counter-case in Deut 22:13–21, we would expect that the slandering husband should be subject to the death penalty, which would have been imposed on the girl had the accusation been proved true, or alternately, that the girl's father should be liable to pay punitive damages for fraud according to the pecuniary penalty imposed on the husband for false accusation.[20] Instead, the counter-case dealing with the promiscuous daugh-

[19] The following abbreviations are used for the ancient Near Eastern law collections: HL = Hittite Laws; LE = Laws of Eshnunna; LH = Laws of Hammurabi; LL = Laws of Lipit-Ishtar; LU = Laws of Ur-Nammu; MAL = Middle Assyrian Laws; YOS = Yale Oriental Series. For all laws, see Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2nd ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

[20] Rofé, "Family," 136–37; Locher, *Die Ehre einer Frau*, 315–23; Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 192 n. 130. According to Pressler (*View of Women*, 24–25), the husband is not condemned to death since he did not formally accuse his wife before the elders but only spread malicious rumors. Wells ("Sex," 63–72), argues that both the case and counter-case are governed by the talionic principle, but his arguments depend on viewing the girl's death as a financial loss

ter (vv. 20–21) neglects the charges of fraud leveled against her father (vv. 13–19), and places the full weight of the consequences on the young woman. As a result, the ruling in the counter-case has moved away from the premises governing the primary case in vv. 13–19. The counter-case is solely interested in the girl's full responsibility for maintaining her virginity and gives no consideration to the possible collusion of the father who married her off as a supposed virgin. The inconsistency here in premises between the case of false accusation and its counter-case has led some to conclude that the Deuteronomist artificially attached vv. 20–21 to the paragraph.[21]

Why, then, did the Deuteronomist add the ruling against the promiscuous girl to the case of false accusation? His motivation may lie in a change in perspective regarding evidence and the burden of proof. Many of the ancient Near Eastern laws dealing with false accusation stress the importance of evidence to substantiate the accusation (LL §33; LH §§1, 3, 9–11, 127, 131–32; MAL A §§17–19), and, according to LH §127 and MAL A §§18–19, the burden of proof lies on the accuser.[22] Other laws rule that the accused must swear a judicial oath or submit to trial by ordeal when evidence is lacking (e.g., LU §14; LH §§2, 131–32; MAL A §17).[23] However, the Deuteronomic program for cult centralization precluded settling cases by judicial oath or ordeal at a local sanctuary.[24] This may explain why the compiler of Deut 22:13–29 avoided recourse to judicial oath or ordeal in the fam-

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incurred by the father and on taking v. 21 as the maximal, but not mandatory, penalty. If financial considerations were at the core of the ruling, as Wells thinks, they surely would have been better furthered by stipulating restoration of the bride-price along with punitive damages. Wells's interpretation attempts to harmonize the language of the law with legal practice, even though discretion in extracting the maximum penalty is not implied by the actual wording of vv. 20–21. However, Deut 22:13–21 is a *literary* artifact and does not necessarily represent actual legal practice. If 22:13–21 is based on the principle of talion, it is surprising that the scribe who drafted the law did not expound the principle in a clearer fashion, as in the cases in LH §§2, 9–11.

[21] See, e.g., Anthony Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law* (Oxford: Blackwell 1970), 115–16; Rofé, "Family," 142–43; Otto, "False Weights," 136. Indeed, the case of the promiscuous young woman might have been formulated as an independent ruling in the Deuteronomist's sources, (e.g., כי יקח איש נער ובא אליה ולא נמצאו לה בתולים, "If a man marries a girl and has sex with her but does not find her a virgin . . ."). In ancient Near Eastern law, however, the premises of the primary case do not always govern the secondary case; see Locher, *Die Ehre einer Frau*, 61, 110–16. Merendino (*Gesetz*, 259) and Wells ("Sex," 56–72) maintain the unity of vv. 13-21. Either way, the compiler of the collection in Deut 22:13–29 conceived of the case of the promiscuous girl (vv. 20–21) as part of the complete document.

[22] See Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 176–77, 192 n. 130.

[23] It is possible that LH §3 and MAL A §18 represent attempts to revise the previous laws (LH §2; MAL A §17) by ruling that accusations must be substantiated by material evidence or witnesses, rather than by ordeal.

[24] Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 114–17, 127–30.

ily law cases and instead built the collection around cases in which evidence played a crucial role. In combining the case of the promiscuous girl with that of the slandered bride, he established the importance of material evidence when impartial witnesses are lacking. But in this case, the burden of proof falls on the accused, and failure to refute the accusation is taken as "proof" of guilt.[25] By placing the complex scenario of the slandered bride and the promiscuous girl in the opening position of Deut 22:13–29, the Deuteronomist implies that women in general are held responsible for establishing their innocence in charges of sexual misconduct.

Extramarital Intercourse of a Married Woman

Three cuneiform collections share a common law that stipulates, like Deut 22:22, that if another man is caught in the act of lying with a married woman, both man and woman will be subject to the same consequences (LH §129; HL §§197–98; MAL A §15). But, unlike Deut 22:22, they extend the rule of equal penalty to the situation in which the husband wishes to pardon his wife or is satisfied with a reduced sentence. This law, shared by LH, HL, and MAL A is concerned primarily with establishing the principle that partners in a criminal act bear equal responsibility and thus equally share the penalty. LH reflects the law's oldest version, and the editor of the collection might have refrained from adding counter-cases dealing with mitigating circumstances (such as rape) since the variable ruling would detract from the effect of the new legal principle. However, the editors of the Hittite and Assyrian collections felt the need to revise the law by appending additional cases in HL §§197 and MAL A §§12–14,[26] which distinguish between consensual inter-

[25] Contrary to Otto, "False Weights," 137: "in the case of suspected adultery during an inchoate marriage, the man had to prove the alleged offence in court." See also *Sipre Deut.* 239: "(they produced) no witnesses to controvert the husband's witnesses"; so also Rashi and Rashbam. Bruce Wells suggested to me in a private communication that the law might reflect a legal principle according to which the litigants with the best access to evidence are required to produce it in order to prove their case. However, I doubt that this principle governs the present case, since in comparable instances in ancient Near Eastern law the accuser is required to produce witnesses proving his case, e.g., LH §127; MAL A §18 (cf. also LH §1). Thus, in the matter of the slandered bride, the legislator could have required the accuser to produce witnesses to the woman's premarital promiscuity, rather than requiring the accused to produce material evidence of innocence.

[26] MAL A §§15–16 addresses the same matters as §§12–14, but the two sections do not correspond in their rulings, and it is likely that §§12–14 represents a revision of the earlier rulings in §§15–16. Thus, §12 revises §16B by releasing the woman from liability in the case of forced violation; §13 revises the law in §16A that releases the man from liability if the woman initiated the liaison; and §14 revises the ruling in §15 by limiting the man's responsibility for adultery in consensual relations if he had no knowledge of the woman's marital status. For a different view of the concentric structure and revision in §§12–16, see Otto, "Das Eherecht," 265–73; idem, "Die Einschränkung des Privatstrafrechts durch öffentliches Strafrecht in der Redaktion der Para-

course, for which the woman is held liable, and rape, for which she is not subject to punishment. The guiding principle in these additional cases is based on where the intercourse took place: rape is restricted to acts that occur in the open (the mountains in HL §197a, or the street in MAL A §12), while adultery includes any intercourse that transpires in the privacy of an inn or one of the partners' houses (HL §197b; MAL A §§13–14), the assumption being that the woman has demonstrated complicity in being secreted with the man in a private place.[27]

Deuteronomy 22:22, however, was drafted along the lines of the ruling shared by LH §129; HL §§197c–98; and MAL A §15, which does not consider mitigating circumstances nor make any distinction between consensual intercourse and forced violation.[28] Deuteronomy 22:22 further shares with these laws the stipulation that the death penalty applies equally to both partners (גם שניהם) when the man and the woman are caught in the act. The fact that they were found *in flagrante delicto* constitutes evidence of their joint guilt. It is significant that the Deuteronomist chose to base 22:22 on the model of LH §129; HL §§197c–198; and MAL A §15, although the revisions in HL §197a–b and MAL A §§12–14 indicate that alternative models were available, whether they were known through the transmission of an oral "common law" tradition or were studied as part of the scribal curriculum. Moreover, although the Deuteronomist adopted the model provided by LH §129, he dropped the dispensation that allowed the husband to determine the extent of the penalty according to his discretion.[29] As a result, Deut 22:22, as formulated, singles out the married woman who has been possessed by her husband, demanding of her an uncompromising sexual exclusivity that admits no exception or extenuating cir-

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graphen 1–24, 50–59 des Mittelassyrischen Kodex der Tafel A (KAV 1)," in *Biblische Welten: Festschrift für Martin Metzger* (ed. Wolfgang Zwickel; OBO 123; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1993), 141–42; idem, "Aspects of Legal Reforms and Reformulations in Ancient Cuneiform and Israelite Law," in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development* (ed. Bernard M. Levinson; JSOTSup 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 167–68.

[27] See J. J. Finkelstein, "Sex Offenses in Sumerian Laws," *JAOS* 86 (1966): 362.

[28] So also Otto, "Aspects of Legal Reforms," 190; idem, "False Weights," 134. Some of the recent readings assume that Deut 22:22 addresses only consensual intercourse, and that the rape of a married woman would have been judged according to the rulings applying to the betrothed girl; see Westbrook, "Adultery," 549; Pressler, *View of Women*, 32. These readings employ gap-filling in an attempt to resolve the disparity inherent in the law and to reconcile it with conditions in which married women can fall victim to unprovoked sexual assault.

[29] Rofé, "Family," 147–49; Otto, "Aspects of Legal Reforms," 191–92. Rofé thinks that the mandatory penalty had practical application and authority. Westbrook ("Adultery," 545–46) and Willis (*Elders*, 211–12) take this as a maximum penalty to be applied at the husband's discretion. Although spousal discretion was undoubtedly respected in legal practice, it is not implied by the language or intent of Deut 22:22; see Stulman, "Sex and Familial Crimes," 59; Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 180. If the scribe intended to take spousal discretion into account, he easily could have adopted a model similar to HL §198.

cumstances. Thus, any intercourse between a married woman and a man other than her husband was taken to constitute adultery, whether the woman was a consenting partner or not.

Violation of a Betrothed Virgin

The infraction taken up by Deut 22:23–27, namely, the violation of a virgin for whom the bride-price has been paid but who has not yet been possessed by her husband, is addressed by three ancient Near Eastern laws (LU §6; LE §26; LH §130). Although forcible violation is indicated only in LE §26 and in LH §130, all three laws rule that the man alone is liable, and LH §130 further specifies that the girl is to be released and not held responsible. Unlike Deut 22:23–27, none of these cuneiform laws makes any distinction on the basis of where the act occurred, nor do they hold the girl accountable in any circumstance for her deflowering. On the whole, the paragraph dealing with the betrothed virgin in Deut 22:23–27 bears little similarity to these laws in either form or ruling. Nevertheless, there is an apparent parallel between 22:25–26a and LH §130; both mention the force used by the man in seizing or pinning down the girl, and both emphasize that the man alone shall pay the penalty, while the girl is free of culpability.[30]

Surprisingly, the distinction made in Deut 22:23–27 between the degree of culpability according to the place of occurrence—town or open country—is paralleled by HL §§197–98 and MAL A §55.[31] However, the status of the women in these cuneiform laws differs from that of the betrothed virgin in Deut 22:23–27, since the Hittite law deals with the culpability of *married* women, while the Assyrian law deals with the rape of an *unbetrothed* virgin. If the Deuteronomist was familiar with

[30] Verse 25: והחזיק [. . .] ימצא ("he found [. . .] and seized"); cf. LH §130: *ukabbilšima* ("he pins her down"); v. 26: ולנערה לא תעשה דבר אין לנערה חטא מות ("Do not do anything to the young woman. She is not guilty of a capital crime"); cf. LH §130: *sinništum šî ūtaššar* ("that woman shall go free"). The literary parallels raise the question whether the Deuteronomistic scribe might have been familiar with LH as part of the curriculum of the scribal school and might have drawn on LH §§129–30 as a source for vv. 22, 25–26a. This possibility is further supported by the fact that LH §§127–30 vaguely parallel the order of cases in Deut 22:13–27: (a) false accusation (LH §127; Deut 22:13–19); (b) adultery (LH §129; Deut 22:22); (c) rape of betrothed girl (LH §130; Deut 22:23–27).

[31] MAL A §55 lists a variety of places where the girl might be assaulted, opening with "whether within the city or in the countryside" (*lu ina libbi āle lu ina ṣēre*), which is echoed in Deut 22:23–27 in the opposition between "in the town" (בעיר) and "in the countryside" (בשדה). In light of the various literary affinities between Deut 22:13–29 and MAL A, it is tempting to surmise that the Assyrian collection was copied (perhaps in Aramaic translation?) in West Semitic scribal schools. Despite its earlier origin, there is evidence that MAL A was copied in Neo-Assyrian times; see Otto, "Das Eherecht," 259–62; Roth, *Law Collections*, 153–54.

the legal tradition behind the Hittite law, then he chose to transfer the distinction between assault and complicity *on the basis of place* from the case of the married woman and applied the criterion of place to the case of the betrothed virgin instead. In contrast to Deut 22:23–27, the Assyrian law specifies different places and circumstances in order to affirm the principle that the same ruling holds *regardless* of the place or the time of the assault.[32] The ruling itself penalizes only the man, who must provide for the girl and compensate her father for the loss of the virgin's bride-price. Thus, MAL A §55 holds that the unbetrothed virgin is blameless if she is raped, *regardless of circumstances*, even if she was seized in the city.

If the Deuteronomist was familiar with the legal tradition behind MAL A §55**,** then he chose to evoke the opposition between town and countryside in vv. 23–27 for an opposite end—to distinguish between circumstances in which the betrothed girl is held responsible and those in which she is not liable. In this case, the Deuteronomist is interacting with the legal tradition reflected in MAL A §55 in order to establish varying degrees of liability corresponding to the change in the virgin girl's status, from unbetrothed to betrothed. Thus, the Deuteronomic law establishes an unparalleled distinction in the liability of betrothed and unbetrothed virgins and subjects the betrothed girl to conditional liability for maintaining her virginity even in the face of rape. The Deuteronomist was undoubtedly familiar with the body of legal literature and traditions that were part of the scribal curriculum, which mainly viewed the rape of a betrothed virgin as a violation of the husband's rights to his wife's virginity, and therefore limited the penalty to the girl's assailant. The Deuteronomist's departure from legal tradition in the case of the betrothed virgin indicates a unique outlook in which she bears unconditional responsibility for protecting her virginity from the time her husband pays her bride-price to the time he takes full possession of her.

The tendencies reflected in the selection of materials from the legal tradition and the way they are applied to the betrothed girl are further borne out by the formulation of the laws. Verses 23–24 subject the girl assaulted in the town to the same sentence that is meted out to the promiscuous girl, execution by stoning (vv. 21, 23: סקל באבנים). The similar form of the ruling creates an analogy between the girls and implies that the betrothed girl who wanders about the town on her own and who does not resist her assailant by crying out is guilty of promiscuity.[33] However, the assumption that the crime would have been averted had she only cried out does not necessarily hold (cf. Judg 19:23–26). The schematic formulation of the case

[32] Finkelstein, "Sex Offenses," 362.

[33] Cf. *Sipre Deut*. 242: "Had she not gone out about the town, he would not have assaulted her. But *he happened upon her in the town and lay with her*, just as a breach tempts a thief. *And he lay with her*: any intercourse (whether consensual or rape)," and so also Rashi. The formulation of the law furthers this view of the girl's complicity, since both the protasis and the apodosis of vv. 23–24 are vague about the coercive nature of the act, which is made explicit only in the second motive clause (v. 24aδ).

leads to a vicious catch, for even if she did cry out or resist in any other fashion, the fact that the rapist succeeded in subduing her within the precincts of the town is taken as evidence of the girl's complicity.[34] Moreover, if it is presumed that the girl is held responsible for her rape in the town because she displayed free and easy behavior by roaming the city streets on her own, then why should she not be held accountable for the impropriety of being out alone in the country? On the other hand, if she is cleared of suspicion in the country, since she—like a murder victim—is helpless to withstand her assailant (v. 26b), then why should she be held accountable for being raped in the town?[35]

Violation of an Unbetrothed Virgin

Deuteronomy 22:28–29 is closely related to the similarly drafted law in the Covenant Code (Exod 22:15–16), which has led some to suppose that the Deuteronomic law was intended to revise the law of the unbetrothed virgin in the Covenant Code. It seems more likely, however, that the two laws were conceived at the outset as complementary cases, one dealing with rape (Deut 22:28–29) and the other with seduction (Exod 22:15–16).[36] Taken together, Deut 22:28–29 and Exod 22:15–16 nicely parallel MAL A §§55–56. Both the biblical and the Assyrian laws distinguish between seduction and rape of the unbetrothed virgin; both stipulate that the man compensate the father for loss of the virgin's bride-price; both assert the father's right to marry the seduced virgin to whomever he wishes; and both provide a more severe ruling in the case of rape. However, the provisions of both the bibli-

[34] Compare Gersonides' attempt to reconcile this problem in his comments on v. 24: "*she did not cry out in the city*—indicating that she was not raped; for had she not given her consent, she could have cried out and people would intervene to rescue her. . . . For '*in the town*' represents a case of seduction, while '*in the countryside*' is an example of rape. But we should infer from this (these two cases) that wherever (the rape occurred, if) it was established that she (resisted, i.e.) cried out—even if none came to her rescue—she is exempt (from the penalty), since she committed no sin. (Conversely,) wherever she may be, if she willingly takes part in the act, then she shall be subject to stoning." A similar approach is recently taken by Rothenbusch, "Die eherechtlichen Rechtssätze," 158 n. 10, 160.

[35] Fishbane (*Biblical Interpretation*, 217–20) argues that the motive clause comparing rape and murder victims is an interpretative gloss based on Deut 19:11, which was added to justify exonerating the girl in the absence of supporting evidence. See also Gottfried Seitz, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Deuteronomium* (BWANT 5/3; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), 139. However, this overlooks the fact that the lack of exonerating evidence provided the basis for condemning the girl in the main case (vv. 23–24).

[36] For the view that Deut 22:28–29 revises Exod 22:15–16, see, e.g., Stulman, "Sex and Familial Crime," 60–61; Pressler, *View of Women*, 36–40; Willis, *Elders*, 214. For the view that Deut 22:28–29 and Exod 22:15–16 are complementary laws, see already Ibn Ezra, and also Rofé, "Family," 134; Otto, "False Weights," 131–32.

cal laws seem to exceed those of MAL A §§55–56. In the case of seduction, Exod 22:15-16 stipulates that the man must not only pay the girl's bride-price but must also marry her unless the father refuses the match, while MAL A §56 limits the man's liability to payment of the bride-price. In the case of rape, Deut 22:27–28 imposes marriage upon the rapist, who loses all rights to future divorce; no mention is made of the father's prerogatives apart from the monetary compensation due him, contrary to MAL A §55, which affirms the father's right to marry the girl to whomever he pleases.

Here the principles behind the Deuteronomist's selection of materials come into question. There is no doubt that the Deuteronomist was familiar with the law in the Covenant Code regarding seduction (Exod 22:15–16), but, unlike the twin laws in MAL A §§55–56 dealing with both rape and seduction, he chose not to include the case of seduction in the collection he drafted in Deuteronomy 22. Did he neglect the law because he had no intention of revising it? Or, did he deliberately omit it since it allows the father to determine his daughter's future according to his interests and considerations?[37] I think the second possibility more likely, since he also rejected the similar stipulation found in the law regarding the rape of the unbetrothed virgin in MAL A §55. Thus, the Deuteronomist's selection appears to be motivated by an interest in limiting parental discretion in resolving matters of sexual violation.

III. Implications and Conclusions

The comparison carried out here demonstrates that the author of Deut 22:13–29 selected his material from a variety of options available in the common legal tradition. His outlook is evident not only in the selections he made but also in the way he combined his selections, producing new syntheses, as in the case of the betrothed virgin. The material he adopted was worked into a complex, unified literary structure, and he added motive clauses in order to expound the rationale for his rulings. One of his sources was the Covenant Code, but he chose to omit the single law there dealing with sexual violation (Exod 22:15–16) and placed in its stead the complementary case of the raped unbetrothed virgin. In addition, he probably had access to an unofficial collection of actual rulings, similar in purpose to MAL A.[38] Like the Assyrian laws, such a collection undoubtedly reflected contingencies arising in daily life and might have circulated for a considerable time as part of the scribal curriculum.

The selective nature of the collection in Deut 22:13–29 implies that the author did not compose this assortment of laws in order to document rulings or to for-

[37] See Otto, "False Weights," 133.

[38] On the purpose and source of MAL A, see Otto, "Die Einschränkung des Privatstrafrechts," 132, 165–66; idem, "Aspects of Legal Reforms," 163–68.

malize them as authoritative and binding legislation to be followed in dispensing justice. Instead, I propose that this selection of women's sex laws was drafted in order to expound ideology, that is, a specific value system stemming from a mindset that seeks to establish its views as normative for society. It is significant in this regard that the formula "expunge the evil" occurs three times in Deut 22:13–29 (vv. 21, 22, 24). Elsewhere, the formula occurs in the context of both social (17:12; 19:13, 19; 21:9, 21; 24:7; cf. 19:20) and religious (13:6; 17:7; cf. 13:12) violations. By stamping these laws with the injunction to "eradicate the evil from your midst," the author implies that their purpose is to ensure the integrity of the social fabric, which may be blemished and undermined by the presence of wrongdoing. The threefold recurrence in Deut 22:13–29 of the formula, in its different variations in Deut 22:13–29, is nearly matched by the double recurrence in separate contexts dealing with apostasy (13:6; 17:7; cf. 13:12, "cease to do this evil thing in your midst"), as well as with homicide (19:13; 21:9). The concentration of the formula in the women's sex laws implies that maintaining the proper relations between the sexes—particularly with regard to the uncompromising fidelity incumbent upon women to maintain toward their patron, be he father, present husband, or future spouse—is as critical to preserving the proper social order as maintaining exclusive fidelity to YHWH. Leniency was conceivable only when the girl had not yet been promised in marriage (22:28–29) or when she had not yet been possessed by her husband, and no evidence—either of guilt or innocence—could be produced, owing to the lack of witnesses (vv. 25–27).

Indeed, in concept and execution, the collection of women's sex laws bears affinities to the laws against apostasy in Deut 13:2–18; 17:2–7.[39] Like the collection of sex laws in Deut 22:13–29, the apostasy laws in ch. 13 are arranged in a graduated structure according to severity of case. Verses 2–6 deal with open incitement by one claiming to receive divine revelation, who is sentenced to death by unspecified means, as is the married woman discovered *in flagrante delicto* with another man in 22:22. Deutonomy 13:7–12 presents the case of covert incitement to apostasy by a member of the immediate family, who is to be stoned by the entire community, as is the promiscuous girl who presumably kept her loss of virginity secret (22:21); in both cases, the actions of the guilty party are liable to implicate the entire family. Finally, an entire community is implicated in the crime of submitting to incitement in the case stated in 13:13–18, which can only be amended by eradication of the offending community. Likewise, the law dealing with assault in the city (22:23–24) implies that, were rape to transpire in the town, the entire community

[39] Rofé, "Family," 142–43; see also Merendino, *Gesetz*, 259. In addition to the formula "expunge the evil," both sex and apostasy laws share expressions that occur nowhere else in Deuteronomy: סקל באבנים (Deut 13:11; 17:5; 22:21, 24; cf. 21:21: רגם באבנים); הנה אמת נכון הדבר הוציא אל שער (העיר) / פתח בית אביה (13:15; 17:4; 22:21); ואם אמת היה הדבר הזה / (17:5; 22:21, 24; cf. 21:19: הוציא אל שער מקומו).

would be implicated in the crime; therefore, the failure of the woman to resist her assailant is considered tantamount to submission. In light of these similarities in outlook and language, it is likely that both the apostasy laws and the compilation of family laws in Deut 22:13–29 stem from the same source—whether a single author or a group of scribes sharing the same ideology and means of expression.[40]

The careful formulation of the family laws in Deuteronomy 22 is designed to demonstrate the idea that the integrity of the social structure is dependent on women's exclusive fidelity to their patrons, just as the people as a whole are committed to exclusive fidelity to YHWH. Thus, the scribe responsible for the collection of sex laws broke the tradition of talionic retribution in the ruling for the case countering that of false accusation (22:20–21), since his interest was to condemn premarital promiscuity and to affirm the principle of exclusive sexual fidelity, even toward a yet unknown, future husband. So also, the laws in 22:20–21, 23–24 rule that judgment is to be executed at the entrance to the place implicated by the girl's act. Only thus is exoneration obtained for the group implicated by her misconduct. Furthermore, in drafting the law in 22:23–24, the scribe played down the element of rape implicit in the case, retaining it only in the clause explicating the man's sentence, and all this in order to justify the severity of the sentence pronounced upon the young woman.

Undoubtedly, the laws in Deut 22:13–29 contain elements of judicial reform. The Deuteronomistic scribe envisions the abolition of private law in favor of the authority of the local governing body (the town elders),[41] and these laws do override the legal tradition that accorded the father or husband the right to determine the sentence in cases of family law. The scribe also avoids applying judicial oath or ordeal to family law cases that lack clear evidence, since cultic adjudication would necessitate referral to the central sanctuary. To this end, he elevates the role of evidence in determining rulings, but circumvents the problems arising from lack of evidence by placing the burden of proof upon the accused. Thus, in the family laws in Deut 22:13-29, lack of exonerating evidence is tantamount to evidence of guilt.

These judicial reforms probably originated with the program of centralization carried out during the rule of Josiah as reflected in the Deuteronomistic narrative in Deut 1:13–17, in which Moses—Josiah's alter-ego—acts the part of king in designating state-appointed judges.[42] However, the uncompromising nature of the

[40] See Rofé, "Family," 142–43.

[41] See ibid., 144–45; Stulman, "Sex and Familial Crimes," 53–62; Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (trans. Allan W. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 252–59; Otto, "Aspects of Legal Reforms," 191. Rofé ("Family," 132, 143) and Levinson (*Deuteronomy*, 125–26) hold that the elders were replaced by the state-appointed judiciary in the Deuteronomic edition (Deut 16:10–20), while others hold that the elders retained their authority over family law; see, e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 234; also Willis, *Elders*, 35–86.

[42] See Levinson, *Deuteronomy*, 110–43.

laws in Deut 22:13–29 mark them as part of a utopian program in which the demand for absolute fidelity replaces consideration of exigent circumstances and contingencies.[43] This suggests that the laws presume an ideal and zealous lawgiver rather than a real political figure.

In my view, the vacuum in leadership following the fall of Judah provides the most likely sociopolitical situation in which this ideal developed. Throughout the period of the monarchy, the idea of divine kingship provided the ideological basis for political authority, since the earthly king was viewed as the chosen regent of the divine king (2 Sam 7:6–16).[44] With the collapse of the political structures and the loss of autonomy, the ideal of divine kingship emerged from the cover of cosmic myth to fill the place left vacant by the demise of political leadership. This ideal developed alongside a reevaluation of Israel and Judah's political history, which now held that YHWH was not merely the source of the earthly king's authority but had actually been the true king of Israel all along (Judg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; 2 Kgs 17:15–18).[45] The Deuteronomic scribes had already begun to depict YHWH's kingship along the lines of an Assyrian sovereign whose demands of total allegiance by his subjects are expressed by the concepts of love and fidelity (e.g., 4:4; 10:20; 11:13, 22; 13:4–5; 30:20).[46] Following the conquest of Judah, Deuteronomistic scribes reinterpreted the political history of Israel and Judah and explained the loss of independence as the result of infidelity to YHWH, which the Deuteronomists depicted in both political and marital terms.[47]

[43] Contrary to Rofé, "Family," 151, who limits the utopian legislation to 21:18–21; 22:20–21.

[44] See Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 238–65.

[45] See Steven L. McKenzie, "The Trouble with Kingship," in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert de Pury et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 286–314 = *Israël construit son histoire* [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996]); idem, "The Divided Kingdom in the Deuteronomistic History and in Scholarship on It," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Thomas Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 135–45; Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005),139–64.

[46] See William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77–87; Moshe Weinfeld, "Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and Its Influence on the West," *JAOS* 93 (1973): 190–99; idem, "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East," *UF* 8 (1976): 379–414.

[47] Timo Veijola, "Wahrheit und Intoleranz nach Deuteronomium 13," *ZTK* 92 (1995): 287–314; see also Paul-Eugène Dion, "Deuteronomy 13: The Suppression of Alien Religious Propaganda in Israel during the Late Monarchical Era," in *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (ed. Baruch Halpern et al.; JSOTSup 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 147–216; Eckart Otto, "Treueid und Gesetz: Die Ursprünge des deuteronomiums in Horizont neuassyrischen Vertragsrects," *ZABR* 2 (1996): 1–52. Deuteronomy 13:2–18 is variously viewed as an exilic composition (Veijola), a Josianic composition (Dion), or a Josianic composition (13:2–12) further expanded in the Babylonian period (Otto).

While Deut 17:2–3 employs political metaphors to express deliberate transference of allegiance, for example, לעבור ברית (violate a treaty), עבד (serve another sovereign), השתחו ל- (make obeisance to),[48] 13:2–19 envisions infidelity resulting from incitement or enticement to stray, in a fashion similar to seduction (v. 7: הסית [incite]; vv. 6, 14: הדיח [entice to stray]). The Deuteronomist appears to draw a two-way analogy between marital fidelity and the fidelity due the sovereign, and he applies both to the nature of the relations YHWH demanded of the people.[49] The demand of total allegiance is shared by both marital and political metaphors, and infidelity can be conceived of as resulting only from deliberation (as in adultery) or from enticement (as in seduction). YHWH himself is depicted as a "jealous god" (אל קנא [Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; cf. Josh 24:19]); he is likened to a husband who entertains suspicions regarding his wife's fidelity (see Num 5:14, 30). This outlook cannot admit the possibility that the subservient partner in an alliance may be coerced by a third party to breach the terms of the pact. In any event, even if he was subject to coercion, he alone is held responsible for violating the pact and must therefore bear the full consequences.

Similarly, the consummation of marriage by means of sexual relations created bonds of exclusive intimacy. The Deuteronomist appears to have concluded that the subservient partner in the marriage pact was responsible for maintaining a total fidelity that admitted no exception, even in the face of coercion.[50] I suggest that this stand on the part of the Deuteronomist stems from the analogy between the marital bond and the political alliance as applied to YHWH's relations with his people. Thus, the Deuteronomist held that the degree of fidelity a woman owed to her present or future husband was no less than that which the people owed to YHWH; in neither case would coercion be considered a mitigating factor.[51]

[48] For political contexts of עבד, see, e.g., 1 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 12:4; 2 Kgs 17:3; 24:1; and for השתחו ל-, see, e.g., 1 Sam 24:8; 2 Sam 8:24; 1 Kgs 1:23.

[49] See Ehud Ben-Zvi, "Observations on the Marital Metaphor of YHWH and Israel in Its Ancient Israelite Context: General Considerations and Particular Images in Hosea 1.2," *JSOT* 28 (2004): 370–71; Crüsemann, *Torah*, 258.

[50] Westbrook, "Adultery," 557; Otto, "False Weights," 134; for a similar outlook in Assyrian law, see Martha T. Roth, "Gender and Law: A Case Study from Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Gender and Law*, ed Matthews et al., 183.

[51] See Rofé, "Family," 149 n. 46; Otto, "False Weights," 141.

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Samson's Last Laugh: The *Ś/ŠḤQ* Pun in Judges 16:25–27

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Scholars are well aware of the frequent use of puns in the Bible as well as the abundance of rhetorical features in the book of Judges.[1] However, a pun embedded within the Samson story remains underappreciated. In Judges 16, Samson goes to Gaza, where he meets a promiscuous woman, Delilah. The locals plot against Samson and convince Delilah to discover and reveal the source of his strength. After quite a bit of nagging, Delilah finally learns Samson's secret, disables his power, and hands him over to the Philistines. While what happens next is frightfully shocking to a modern audience, Samson's treatment at the hand of his captors was all too common in the ancient world.[2] The Philistines gouge out his eyes, and he is forced to grind grain while in captivity. An indeterminate amount of time passes (enough for Samson's hair to begin sprouting back), and then the Philistine leaders decide to bring Samson to a grand feast at which the participants are drunk (טוב לבם).

At this point, almost all translations, both ancient and modern, render the next section with a variation of the following (Judg 16:25–27):

I would like to thank Professor Stephen A. Kaufman, Blane Conklin, Angela Roskop Erisman, and Carl Pace for their insights at various stages during the composition of this essay.

[1] See, e.g., *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (ed. Scott B. Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000); and Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Biblical Interpretation Series 38; Leiden: Brill, 1999; Hebrew original, Biblical Encyclopaedia Library 6; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992). More recently, see Gregory T. K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup 111; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[2] Karel van der Toorn, "Judges xvi 21 in the Light of the Akkadian Sources," *VT* 36 (1986): 248–53.

> The celebrants said, "Summon Samson so that he might entertain us" [וישחק] . . . then he performed for them [ויצחק] . . . the temple was filled with men and women and all the leaders of the Philistines were there and upon the roof were around 3,000 men and women, all watching while Samson was performing [בשחוק].

This translation is perfectly warranted, as it follows the masoretic tradition of pointing the first radical of שחק as a *sin* yielding שׂחק. However, if the first consonant of this word is read as a *shin* a radically different translation results.

The grapheme שחק represents two distinct roots in Northwest Semitic languages. The root שׂחק has the basic meaning "to crush."[3] On the other hand, שׂחק means "to laugh." Although these meanings are easily distinguishable in theory, there is occasional difficulty delineating between שׂחק and שׂחק in the interpretation of inscriptional material.[4] This modern phenomenon might illustrate the potential for ancient authors to exploit an apparent ambiguity as the two roots share a common grapheme. An inscription from Hatra (no. 232:2) that includes the grapheme *sḥqth* may attest one of these roots.[5] A similar construction appears also two other times in Hatran inscriptions (23:3 and 125:3) and the orthographic readings of these texts are much more certain than the previous instance. There is much debate, however, on whether these instances should be translated as "he smiled at him kindly"[6] from שׂחק, or "he hurt him" from שׂחק.[7]

[3] For instance, *šḥq* appears in Syriac in the G, Gt, and D stems with the basic meaning "to grind or crush" (Stephen A. Kaufman, "Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon," online: http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/). In Ugaritic *šḥq* appears only in connection with a toponym (Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* [HdO 67; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 812). For the various alphabetic and syllabic spellings, see Wilfred van Soldt, "Studies in the Topography of Ugarit (1): The Spelling of the Ugaritic Toponyms," *UF* 28 (1996): 686. For treatments of the location of the *Šaḥaqu,* see Wilfred van Soldt, "Studies in the Topography of Ugarit (3): Groups of Towns and Their Locations," *UF* 30 (1998): 725–26.

[4] See *HALOT,* 1465; and *DNWSI,* s.v. *šḥq*$_2$, 1121–22.

[5] André Caquot translates *šḥqth* as "*l'endommagerait*" ("Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes de Hatra [V]," *Syria* 40 [1963]: 15; idem, "Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes de Hatra [VI]," *Syria* 41 [1964]: 256). The editor of the *editio princeps*, Fuad Safar, indicates that the reading of *ḥ* is uncertain ("Hatra Inscriptions" [in Arabic], *Sumer* 24 [1968]: 10 n. 9). Furthermore, some scholars translate this word as "smiled," e.g., Rainer Degen, "New Inscriptions from Hatra (NOS. 231–280)," *JEOL* 23 (1973–74): 405. For an introduction to the study of these inscriptions, see Basile Aggoula, *Inventaire des inscriptions Hatréennes* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1991).

[6] Harald Ingholt, "IV. Palmyrene-Hatran-Nabatean," in *An Aramaic Handbook, with Contributions by Z. Ben-Hayyim [and others]* (ed. Franz Rosenthal; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), 50.

[7] Caquot, "Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes de Hatra (V)," 15; idem, "Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes de Hatra (VI)," 256.

In Biblical Hebrew, שׂחק and its allomorph צחק[8] are quite common and have the meanings "to laugh" (G) and "to joke, entertain" (D).[9] However, שׂחק, "to crush," occurs only four times in the Hebrew Bible. Exodus 30:36 states: "Crush [וְשָׁחַקְתָּ] some of it [incense] to powder [הָדַק] and place some of it before the tent of meeting." Job 14:19 uses this root to portray water eroding stones.[10] The text most relevant to Judg 16:25–27 is 2 Sam 22:43 (note the parallel text Ps 18:43): "I shall crush them [וְאֶשְׁחָקֵם] as fine as dust of the earth, as mud of the street I shall pulverize them [אֲדַקֵּם], I shall flatten them [אֲרִקְעֵם]." In this line, שׂחק is used as a synonym for two other words, דקק and רקע. Biblical authors used דקק to depict the violent destruction of cultic sites by burning sacred objects and crushing the ashes (Exod 32:20; Deut 9:21; 2 Kgs 23:6, 15). רקע is used to describe an artisan flattening metal (Exod 9:3; Num 16:38, 39). Like its synonyms, שׂחק can indicate a violent crushing or flattening. Admittedly, apart from the passage in Judges, שׂחק is not used in connection with human beings; however, this is exactly one of the ways puns are used: applying lexemes with similar sounds to new and unexpected contexts in order to produce irony.

The author of the pericope in Judges forms a pun by providing an ironic situation in which both of the meanings of *šḥq* and *śḥq* perfectly fit the context of 16:25–27. There is no orthographic difference between these two roots in an unvocalized text, and this leads to graphical ambiguity, which facilitates this pun. In addition to graphical ambiguity, these two roots also share a close phonetic similarity. The consonants *š* and *ś* are often undifferentiated in certain Semitic writing systems, and at times these sounds interchange between analogues in different languages. In Ugaritic both *š* and *ś* coalesced into *š,* as seen in Ugaritic *bšr,* "flesh" (Hebrew *bśr*).[11] In Biblical Hebrew *s*, *š,* and *ś* were no doubt different sounds at the time the Phoenician alphabet was borrowed, but apparently the difference in pronunciation between the sounds did not warrant the addition of a distinct symbol.[12] Furthermore, there are instances in which sibilants overlap, such as שׂבכה, "net, lattice-work," and סבך, "to entangle, entwine." The "shibboleth incident" in Judg

[8] See Athalya Brenner's study of these two roots: "On the Semantic Field of Humour, Laughter and the Comic in the Old Testament," in *On Humour and Comic in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Yehuda A. Radday and Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 46–52.

[9] *HALOT,* 1315–16 and 1019, respectively. In Ugaritic *ṣḥq* shares this same meaning (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language,* 782).

[10] This usage is similar to that of its Akkadian analogue, *šêqu*, which means "to polish or make smooth (by rubbing or crushing)"; see *AHw,* 1215b.

[11] Josef Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik* (AOAT 273; Münster: Ugarit, 2000), §§32.122 and 32.143.5. This phenomenon occurs also in Amurrite; see Sabatino Moscati, Anton Spitaler, Edward Ullendorff, and Wolfram von Soden, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969), §§8.29 and 8.33.

[12] Joüon-Muraoka, §5m.

12:6 is the most famous example of sibilant interchange in the Bible.[13] To be sure, the book of Judges contains examples of the skillful use of linguistic humor.[14] These phenomena demonstrate both that the sounds of the Hebrew sibilants were similar enough to facilitate the pun in Judg 16:25, 27 and that linguistic humor is a prominent aspect in certain accounts in the book of Judges.

The author of this pericope used the ambiguity of the verb in Judg 16:25, 27 to articulate two points of view. The masoretic tradents follow the perspective of the festive Philistines as they vocalized שחק to convey the notion that Samson's captors brought him into the temple in order to entertain them. The second point of view is that of the narrator. The narrator injects an element of dark comedy into this account stating that the Philistines summoned Samson in order to crush themselves. Like other figures in the Bible, Samson destroyed a pagan sanctuary and crushed the cultic idols to bits. This time, however, the crushed cultic objects were the Philistine men and women.

The biblical writers often enjoyed humor at the expense of the Philistines, as seen in the account of the mice and *membra virile* offerings in 1 Samuel 5.[15] Furthermore, the pun in Judg 16:25–27 is made all the more apparent by the fact that the author purposely picked the unambiguous allomorph *ṣḥq* instead of *śḥq* in Judg 16:26 when Samson is performing for the crowd.[16] The use of *ṣḥq* between the two occurrences *ś/šḥq* is a cue to the reader/hearer, pointing out the presence of the pun and concomitantly the narrator's point of view. While the Philistines thought they were summoning Samson for their entertainment, they were ushering in their brutal death as he crushed them under the collapsing temple. Through a subtle use of puns, the author of this pericope indicates that it was Samson who had the last laugh.

[13] E. A. Speiser, "The Shibboleth Incident (Judges 12:6)," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies: Collected Writings of E. A. Speiser* (ed. J. J. Finkelstein and Moshe Greenberg; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 143–50.

[14] For example, the book of Judges contains puns relating to names including Eglon, "Big Calf" (3:17), and Cushan-Rishathaim, "Superblack Double-villain" (3:18); for a treatment of the humorous aspect of these names, see Yehuda T. Radday, "Humour in Names" in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible,* ed. Radday and Brenner, 63.

[15] Aren Maeir, "A New Interpretation of the Term ʿOpalim (עפלים) in Light of Recent Archaeological Finds from Philistia," *JSOT* 32 (2007): 23–40.

[16] For a detailed discussion of these two allomorphs, see Rudiger Bartelmus, "śāḥaq/ṣāḥaq," *TWAT* 7:730–46.

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Topographical Considerations and Redaction Criticism in 2 Kings 3

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The story in 2 Kings 3 displays several problems in its content and syntax that cannot be solved on a synchronic level alone. However, the narrative displays a certain consistency so that a diachronic approach is tentative at best and cannot really rest upon separate redactional strata established on the basis of syntactical or lexical features alone.

Thus, together with a discussion of content-related problems (section I) and of the syntactical structure (section III), a fresh analysis of the topographical data (section II) may provide additional insight into the development of this narrative. Redaction criticism, therefore, should not dismiss a topographical approach. At least two levels of composition are to be found in 2 Kings 3. The more original story recounts a northern attack on Moab by Israel alone. The topographical setting is shifted to the south only in a secondary expansion. Thus, a careful topographical examination corroborates the existence of certain redactional strata in 2 Kings 3. Content-related problems, however, should not be neglected and will therefore be discussed first (section I).

I. Content-Related Problems with 2 Kings 3

Concerning the content of this narrative, there are many implausibilities that can hardly be explained on a synchronic level alone and thus betray some well-done redactional reworking:[1]

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[1] See Herbert C. Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 204–8; Joe M. Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3: History or Historical Fic-

a. The use of the southern route to attack northern Moab was impractical and a ridiculous detour.[2] It can be explained only by the involvement of the king of Edom or by the alliance with Judah.

b. The mustering of such a great army consisting of allies from three kingdoms was unnecessary against a rather irrelevant opponent like Moab. Thus, the enlargement of the army must be secondary.

c. The lack of water can be explained by inadequate planning and failure to consult a prophet. However, one wonders why a nomadic people like the Edomites did not know of sufficient water holes in their own territory. This inconsistency might be due to the insertion of Elisha's oracle into an already existing context. However, the original tradition cannot be separated from the current version of the narrative, as there are many connections between oracle and surrounding context. The double thrust of the oracle also seems to indicate some reworking that cannot be defined exactly.

d. In v. 11 Jehoshaphat asks for a prophet of the Lord, in hopes of receiving a favorable oracle.[3] It is striking that the king of Judah, and not the Israelite commander, is seeking a prophet in this disastrous situation. Even the answer is given only by a servant of the king of Israel and not by the king himself. Thus, it seems that the king of Israel is, to some extent, dispensable.[4]

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tion?" *BBR* 9 (1999): 247–70; Jesus M. Asurmendi, "Elisée et la Guerre: 2 R 3:4–27," *BibInt* 13 (2005): 1–12, here 8.

[2] See Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, "Der Feldzug der drei Könige," in *Schalom: Studien zu Glaube und Geschichte Israels* (ed. Karl-Heinz Bernhardt; AzTh 1/46; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1971), 11–22, here 12–13; Wesley J. Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism* (JSOTSup 286; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 73. Harald Schweizer (*Elischa in den Kriegen: Literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung von 2 Kön 3, 6,8–23; 6,24–7,20* [SANT 37; Munich: Kösel, 1974], 105 n.175) regards this route as important for the coalition of Israel, Judah, and Edom: "Durch diesen Weg könnte die—historisch gesehen—nahezu unwahrscheinliche Koalition Israel/Juda/Edom plausibel gemacht werden." Contra Gary Rendsburg, "A Reconstruction of Moabite-Israelite History," *JANESCU* 13 (1981): 67–73, here 71, for whom this detour serves three purposes: to involve the Edomites, to circumnavigate the highly fortified northern border and also avoid a possible struggle with the Ammonites, and finally to pursue the Moabite and Ammonite army, which, according to 2 Chronicles 20, had raided Judah. For further reasons, see John G. Butler, *Elisha: The Miracle Prophet* (Bible Biography Series 4; Clinton, IA: LBC, 1994), 90.

[3] Nadav Naʾaman thinks that in the original account Jehoram insisted on consulting Elisha ("Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides," *Bib* 78 [1997]: 161).

[4] Burke O. Long points out that this detail of the narrative aims further to diminish Jehoram (*2 Kings* [FOTL 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 41). According to Iain W. Provan, the use of a politically powerless servant is a significant feature of the Elisha stories (*1 and 2 Kings* [NIBC 7: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995], 185).

e. How is it that Elisha was around just when the allied kings were looking for a prophet of YHWH? He simply appears in the story without any clear-cut motivation. Furthermore, his actions are only subsidiary to the main plot.[5] Clearly, the account with Elisha is secondary. The abrupt appearance and departure of Elisha are similar to those of Elijah. This feature could be a peculiarity of the Elijah-Elisha narratives, suggesting redactional reworking.

f. The origin of the water supply is given different explanations.[6] On the one hand, the soldiers are supposed to dig trenches for water;[7] on the other hand, the valley is filled unexpectedly with water, although there are no signs of wind or rain. Furthermore, the infinitive absolute in v. 16 is not a forecast and need not be given by a prophet; it is an ordinary instruction of a commander to his soldiers in need of water. Redactional reworking of these sayings is possible but hardly verifiable. As a whole, Elisha's oracle comprises three things: the digging of ditches, the flooding of the valley, and the handing over of Moab.[8] The first two sayings promise a remedy for the immediate misery of the army and animals, whereas the last one is a promise of divine help against Moab.[9] However, the provision of the allies with water will also decoy the Moabites, which will be made plain as the story continues.

[5] T. Raymond Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco: Word Books, 1985), 31.

[6] However, Jürgen Werlitz thinks that the ditches dug by the soldiers were to be filled with water, but this is not stated by the text (*Die Bücher der Könige* [Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament 8; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002], 212).

[7] These trenches are supposed to capture the *sēl,* a flash flood resulting from rain falling unseen in the Moabite hills; see Donald John Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (TynOTC; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1993), 201; Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC 8; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 263–64. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor think that the prophet did not intend the soldiers to dig trenches, which would diminish the miracle (*II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988], 45).

[8] Hobbs (*2 Kings*, 31) considers the oracle to have a double thrust: "It satisfies the thirst of the army and also signals the defeat of the Moabites." Similarly Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Elisa: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur vorklassischen nordisraelitischen Prophetie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1972), 32; Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25* (ATD 11/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 281; Long, *2 Kings*, 40. The double function of Elisha's oracle might be an indication of secondary reworking; see Hermann Josef Stipp, "Traditionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu den Kriegserzählungen der Königsbücher," *RB* 104 (1997): 481–511, here 498.

[9] According to Jesse C. Long and Mark Sneed (" 'Yahweh Has Given These Three Kings into the Hand of Moab': A Socio-Literary Reading of 2 Kings 3," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Huffmon* [ed. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman; JSOTSup 378; London: T&T Clark, 2004], 259–60), this word of the Lord is a word of deception by which Elisha lures the kings into an unsuccessful campaign. Similarly Provan, *Kings*, 184; Philip E. Satterthwaite, "The Elisha Narratives and the Coherence of 2 Kings 2–8," *TynBul* 49 (1998): 1–28, here 11.

g. In the first part of the narrative the focus is on individuals and dialogues, whereas with v. 21 attention shifts to groups without dramatic dialogues.[10] However, this corresponds to a change in agency within the story. Beginning in v. 21, the battle between the armies is the main concern of the narrator. Thus, this observation is not sufficient for separating the narrative into discrete parts.

h. According to vv. 24–25, Israel totally defeated the Moabite army,[11] whereas in v. 26 the king of Moab selected seven hundred trained soldiers for a breakout through the lines of the Edomite king,[12] who, in a synchronic reading, was on the side of the allied army. According to a diachronic reading—that is, without the Israel/Judah/Edom alliance—reaching the king of Edom could have been the goal of the Moabite king. This would fit even better the syntactical and lexical form of v. 26, since the preposition אל is usually directive, not adversative like על. The Edomite army could have come to the relief of their Transjordanian neighbor, helping them against the Israelite invaders.

i. The prophecy of handing Moab over to Israel in v. 18 is not fulfilled in v. 27, since the allied army withdrew.[13] Nevertheless, the prophecy of v. 19 has been literally fulfilled. However, most predictions in v. 19 are standard tactics in warfare used to force the enemy to retreat to fortified cities. These should, of course, be

[10] See Burke O. Long, "2 Kings iii and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," *VT* 23 (1973): 337–48, here 339.

[11] According to Wesley J. Bergen, the battle was already over after v. 25, whereas it is still in progress in v. 26 and was ultimately lost ("The Prophetic Alternative: Elisha and the Israelite Monarchy," in *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective* [ed. Robert B. Coote; SBLSS 22; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 127–37, here 130).

[12] See Asurmendi, "Elisée," 8.

[13] See Hermann Josef Stipp, *Elischa – Propheten – Gottesmänner: Die Kompositionsgeschichte des Elischazyklus und verwandter Texte, rekonstruiert auf der Basis von Text- und Literarkritik zu 1 Kön 20.22 und 2 Kön 2–7* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 24; St. Ottilien: Eos, 1987), 132–34. Volkmar Fritz solves the problem diachronically by seeing vv. 18–19 as a later Dtr expansion (*Das zweite Buch der Könige* [ZB 10/2; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1998], 21). Walter Brueggemann thinks that Elisha was caught up in the fever of war when uttering his oracle of victory (*1 & 2 Kings* [Smith & Helwys Bible Commentary 8; Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 317). In that respect he could have missed YHWH's point. Paul J. Kissling considers vv. 18–19 to be Elisha's directive but not a quotation of YHWH's words (*Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha* [JSOTSup 224; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 175).

Joe M. Sprinkle, however, maintains that this was no failure of prophecy since, as predicted, the Israelite army was successful in all battles against Moab and was thwarted only by an act of God ("Deuteronomic 'Just War' (Deut 20,10–20) and 2 Kings 3,27," *ZABR* 6 [2000]: 285–301, here 300). Bergen also considers Elisha a true prophet (*Elisha,* 82–83). According to him, the reversal of the battle is due to the actions of the kings and reduces the reader's estimation of monarchic power ("Prophetic Alternative," 130–31). Philip D. Stern maintains that Elisha stressed only YHWH's saving power but not the forthcoming victory over Moab because it would have been an

carried out prior to attacking the cities, not following as described in v. 19.[14] This complicates an exact execution of Elisha's oracle by the allied army. Therefore, this arrangement might be a hint that the end of the campaign would be other than expected, particularly as the chronological order of the execution is reversed. Thus, Elisha's prophecy could be a deceptively worded prediction to lure the unwary.[15]

In view of these inconsistencies and implausibilities, it is obvious that the account cannot be explained on a synchronic level alone. Furthermore, in addition to the problems within 2 Kings 3, there are tensions with the broader context. The reference to a king of Edom in 2 Kgs 3:9, 12, 26 stands in sharp contrast to 1 Kgs 22:48 and 2 Kgs 8:20.[16] Thus, on the synchronic level, there was only a governor (נצב) in Edom at the time of Mesha. Only later did Edom throw off the domination of Judah and establish its own king. Therefore, the title מלך must either be anachronistic or refer to a ruler with limited local power. At most, there was a royal commissioner ruling in Edom as a vassal of Judah.[17] The mention of Jehoshaphat in vv. 7, 11, 12, 14[18] is also conspicuous since, according to 1 Kgs 22:51, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had already passed away. His subsequent appearance in 2 Kings 3 might be due to the same redactional reworking that was responsible for the other parallels between 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3.

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easy thing for YHWH to subdue Moab ("Of Kings and Moabites: History and Theology in 2 Kings 3 and the Mesha Inscription," *HUCA* 64 [1993]: 1–14, here 7).

[14] See Raymond Westbrook, "Elisha's True Prophecy in 2 Kings 3," *JBL* 124 (2005): 530–32, here 531. Stipp, however, claims that the lack of an exact parallel between prediction and outcome might be an indication of inconsistency (*Elischa,* 138).

[15] Westbrook, "Prophecy," 532.

[16] Nadav Naʾaman considers 1 Kgs 22:48 not a historical source but a harmonizing statement combining the different sources in 2 Kings 3 and 2 Kings 8 ("Sources and Composition in the Biblical History of Edom," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* [ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 313–20, here 313–15).

[17] The problem of the Edomite king is solved with different proposals: Werlitz (*Könige*, 211) considers a king of Edom possible, at least on a literary level. Cogan and Tadmor (*II Kings*, 44) think that the alternation of titles (king, governor) was an ordinary custom and need not be taken literally. Sprinkle ("2 Kings 3," 257) refers to the inferior status of the king of Edom in the story, as he has neither dialogue nor actions nor even a name. Bernhardt ("Feldzug," 14) suggests a later date for the allied campaign to solve the problem of the Edomite king. Würthwein (*Könige*, 279) considers the king of Edom to be secondary.

[18] According to Anson F. Rainey, the attempted Moabite invasion recounted in 2 Chronicles 20 motivated Jehoshaphat to take part in the allied campaign ("Mesha's Attempt to Invade Judah [2 Chron 20]," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zechariah Kallai* [ed. Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld; VTSup 81; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2000], 174–76, here 176). Similarly Rendsburg, "Reconstruction," 70; Butler, *Elisha*, 88. However, the historicity of 2 Chronicles 20 is far from certain; see Stefan Timm, *Die Dynastie Omri: Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Israels im 9. Jahrhundert vor Christus* (FRLANT 124; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 176.

II. The Topographical Data in 2 Kings 3

As will be shown in the final synthesis (section IV), the topographical data in 2 Kings 3 could yield insights into the redactional history of the text. The topographical data point to two distinct layers in 2 Kings 3: the original tradition of an Israelite war against Moab from the north and a later expansion describing an attack on Moab from the south.

Moab, the Target of the Campaign

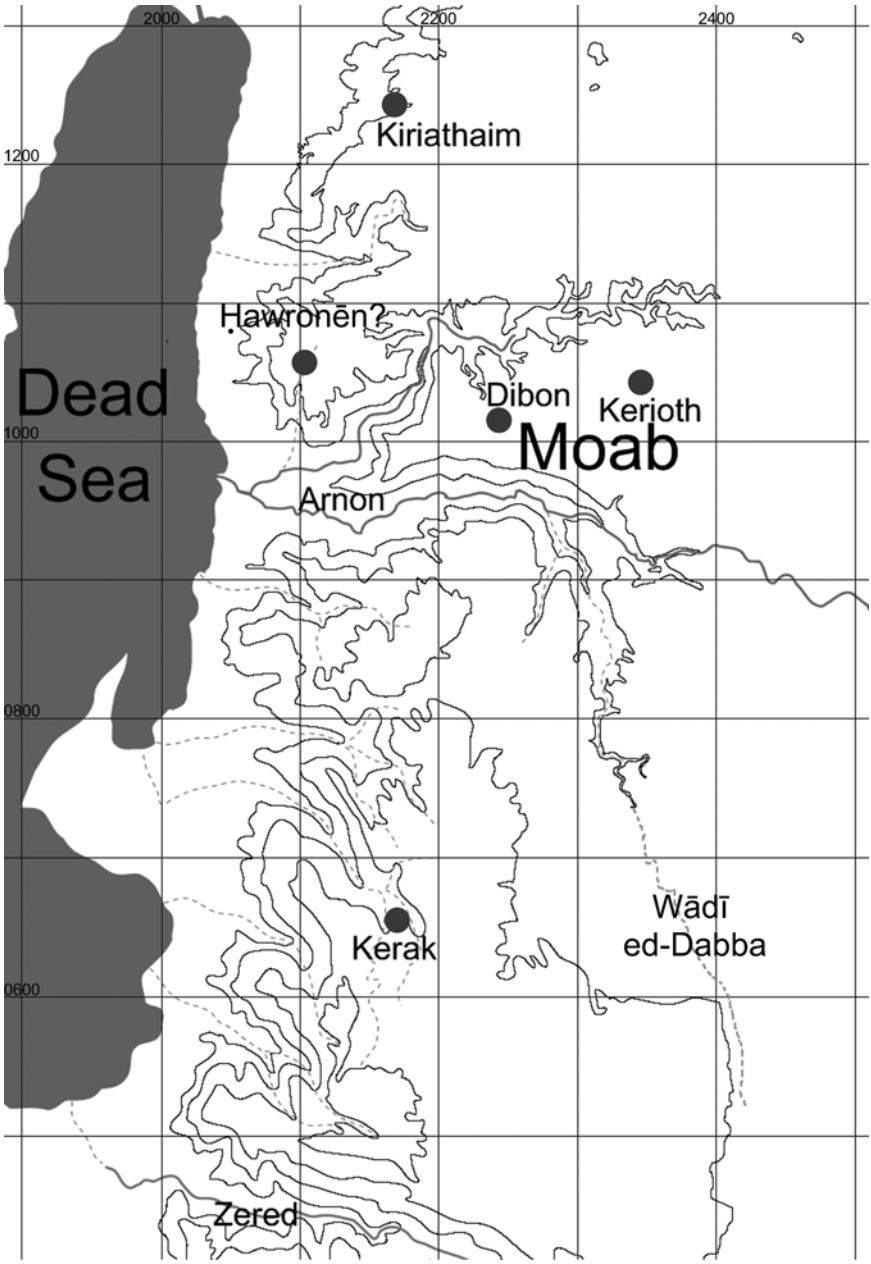
According to 2 Kings 3, the Israelite king Jehoram assembled the kings of Judah and Edom after the rebellion of the renegade Moabite king Mesha in order to fight him. The topographical description in the biblical account is rather sparse, so that any proposed location of the reported events is only tentative.

The target of the campaign was Moab, which is usually sought between the biblical rivers Arnon and Zered, the so-called Arḍ el-Kerak and the neighboring regions. At the time of Mesha, however, the Moabite kingdom most probably did not extend to the region south of the Arnon. The fragmentary lines in the Mesha inscription cannot prove that King Mesha undertook a southerly foray already in the ninth century, since the location of Ḥawronēn is hard to establish. Thus, it is far from certain whether this toponym is to be sought in southern Moab.[19] Moreover, it is orthographically questionable whether Ḥawronēn can be identified with the biblical Horonaim, which lies in the western part of the Arḍ el-Kerak. Furthermore, only in the late eighth to seventh century B.C.E. is there a remarkable increase in settlement in southern Moab. All in all, at the time of Mesha, the toponym Moab most probably extended only over the region north of Wādī el-Mūğib (210.089). In that respect, the southern detour of the three kings is quite remarkable.

The Desert of Edom

In v. 8 another location is introduced: the desert of Edom (מדבר אדום). The toponym Edom is usually situated south of the biblical river Zered, Wādī el-Ḥesā (210.040). The existence of an early political entity called Edom is hard to establish. Although sparse settlement began in the best agricultural land in northern Edom already in Iron Age I, it was only in the eighth–seventh century B.C.E. that settle-

[19] Ḥawronēn could be located north of the Arnon where the modern toponym Ḥaurān—located south of el-Mukāwir (2102.1084)—may preserve the ancient name. Unfortunately, archaeological surveys are lacking for that region.


2000
2200
2400
1200
1000
0800
0600
Kiriathaim
Ḥawronēn?
Dead
Sea
Dibon
Kerioth
Moab
Arnon
Wādī
ed-Dabba
Kerak
Zered

ment in Edom expanded considerably as a result of the *pax Assyriaca,* copper mining, and Arabian trade.[20] Thus, the mention of the king of Edom probably reflects a later period. Furthermore, it is striking that the army followed the route through the desert of Edom, since the easiest and fastest approach toward the southern part of Moab would have been along the shore of the Dead Sea. Since the desert of Zin is located to the west of Edom (see Num 34:3; Josh 15:1), the desert of Edom can only mean the region to the east of Edom, so that the kings had to pass through the Arabah, then climb and cross the Edomite highland, and finally move northward through the desert of Edom.[21] They implement a flanking maneuver,[22] probably to attack Moab from the east. Furthermore, they run out of water for the camp and the cattle, which could pinpoint their sojourn in the eastern steppe, where the water supplies are minimal. Thus, they reached a position to attack Moab from the east. This location of the allied army camp also accords with v. 22, since the optical illusion seems to imply that the Moabites looked east toward the rising sun and that the water was between the opposing armies. The eastern desert is mentioned also in Judg 11:18, where it refers to the eastern detour of the Israelites skirting Edom and Moab. The desert of Edom, then, seems to be definitely in the east of Edom. However, one wonders why the allied army undertook this rather unnecessary detour. The motivation behind this plan was probably the integration of the Edomite king into the allied army. Without the king of Edom it would have been easier to attack Moab from the north.

The Torrent-valley on the Border of Moab

On the way to Moab, the allied army came to a torrent-valley (נחל) after traveling seven days (see 2 Kgs 3:16–17). After a journey of this length they could have

[20] See Piotr Bienkowski, "Iron Age Settlement in Edom: A Revised Framework," in *The World of the Aramaeans,* vol. 2, *Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P. M. M. Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl; JSOTSup 325; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 257–69, here 257. Even the extension of Edom west of the Arabah into the Negeb already in the ninth century B.C.E. is hardly backed by the archaeological evidence.

[21] To be sure, the meaning of מדבר is not restricted to "desert" in the strict sense of the word, but designates land that is not used agriculturally. In that respect the army of the three kings could have moved forward along the frontier to the cultivated land over a route that traversed Edom to some extent in the east. On the noun מדבר, see already Armin W. Schwarzenbach, *Die geographische Terminologie im Hebräischen des Alten Testamentes* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), 93–96. Detlef Jericke understands מדבר as "Weideflächen am Rande von Ortschaften" ("Wüste," in *Neues Bibellexikon* III [ed. M. Görg; Zurich: Benziger, 2001], 1129–30, here 1129). Stipp (*Elischa*, 107) suggests a route to the east of Edom on the frontier between desert and cultivated land.

[22] According to Hobbs (*2 Kings*, 35), the expression סבב דרך does not indicate that the army wandered around and got lost in the desert. This idiom is also used in Exod 13:18; 2 Kgs 3:9; Ezek 47:2.

reached one of the waterless tributaries of the Arnon, like the Wādī ed-Dabba. The Zered (Wādī el-Ḥesā), however, lies too close to the starting point to be considered a valid candidate. Moreover, the Zered is a rather unsatisfactory option for this torrent-valley, since water runs through this wādī all year long.[23] Another topographical remark indicates that the army has already entered Moabite territory (southern or northern Moab). The allied army was most probably outside of Edom,[24] since the country was flooded by water "from the direction of Edom" (v. 20). Moreover, the phrase "from the direction of Edom" makes sense only if the camp was situated not too far from the territory of Edom.[25] Thus, at least two problems arise with the location of the battlefield: (1) The duration of the journey when interpreted literally conflicts sharply with the other topographical data and might assume a northern location reached by a southern detour. However, the Arnon could not be the torrent-valley mentioned, since one would have to postulate a stretch of Edom north of the Zered, not to mention that the Arnon is a poor candidate for a "torrent-valley." (2) Furthermore, this expansion of Edom is unattested in the sources at hand. Thus, the mention of Edom seems to be a literary invention that cannot be understood on the basis of the topographical conditions in Transjordan.

Kir-Hareseth

A final toponym that is difficult to locate is mentioned in v. 25: Kir-Hareseth. There are several place-names with the nomen regens קיר, such as Kir-Hareseth, Kir-Heres, and Kir-Moab, all of them located in Moab.[26] Perhaps these toponyms are all to be identified with the same place, though they do stand side by side in the same narrative. This, however, might be due to purely onomastic variation.

Apart from Kir-Hareseth, Kir-Heres, and Kir-Moab, the places Kiriathaim[27]

[23] Stipp, *Elischa*, 110–11. However, part of the Arnon could well have shaped the scenery of the natural spectacle since this valley was the southern border of the territory of Moab at least in the ninth century B.C.E. But the southern detour probably does not reflect an original tradition of a punitive campaign against Moab.

[24] Contra Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20), who assumes that the decisive battle took place on Edomite territory and involved an ambush. However, neither of these assertions is made in the text itself.

[25] Stipp (*Elischa*, 114) regards this indication of direction as narrative ornamentation.

[26] Kir-Hareseth in 2 Kgs 3:25; Isa 16:7; Kir-Heres in Isa 16:11; Jer 48:31, 36; and Kir-Moab in Isa 15:1. The translation of the Septuagint does not prove the interpretation Kir-Ḥadaš ("new town") to be correct; see also Würthwein, *Könige*, 283. Even the pejorative meaning of the biblical toponym Kir-Hareseth or Kir-Heres does not provide a sustainable reason for changing it to something more positive. Contra Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 205.

[27] See Gen 14:5; Num 32:37; Josh 13:19; Jer 48:1, 23; Ezek 25:9 and possibly 1 Chr 6:61.

(with a dual ending) and Kerioth[28] (with a plural ending) are attested in the Bible and in the Mesha Inscription. Morphologically they differ from the other three, since they are not formed in the construct state. Kiriathaim might be identified with Ḫirbet el-Qurēye (2160.1242) and Kerioth with Ḫirbet Qurēyāt ʿAlēyān (2338.1045).[29] Usually Kir-Hareseth of 2 Kgs 3:25 is located south of the Arnon at el-Kerak (2170.0660).[30] This identification is mainly based on the targumic interpretation of Kir-Moab in Isa 15:1 as כרכא דמואב. In view of the first element of כרכא דמואב, the biblical place is identified with el-Kerak. Thus, the main argument is the assumed preservation of the biblical name via the targumic rendition.

However, the targumic interpretation betrays the problem of later translators with this enigmatic place-name. Furhermore, the noun כרכא in the emphatic state is nothing more than the literal translation of the Hebrew קיר. Therefore, the argument for the preservation of the biblical name within the Arabic toponym via the Aramaic form does not really stand up—it is merely a translation. In the context of Isaiah 16 it is made clear that the location of Kir-Hareseth should be sought north of the Arnon for the following reasons:

1. Isaiah 16:7 mentions the raisin cakes of Kir-Hareseth, which makes sense only if this site is located in an area known to have had vineyards. South of the Arnon there is no evidence for viticulture, in contrast to the region around Heshbon, which was famous for its vineyards.
2. Isaiah 16:8 laments the deterioration of the vineyards of Heshbon and Sibma. Thus, it is obvious that Kir-Hareseth should be located in the same area.
3. The alternative name Kir-Heres forms an *inclusio* with Kir-Hareseth, framing the section about the lost splendor of the Moabite vineyards in Isa 16:7–11. Thus, it is tempting to regard Kir-Hareseth and Kir-Heres as the same place.

The data preserved in Jer 48:6–11 likewise point to a northern location for Kir-Hareseth. This place must be located in the region of Heshbon, Sibmah, Jazer, and Elealeh. Otherwise the geographical pattern and the chiastic coherence of this section are thoroughly destroyed.[31] It seems, therefore, that Kir-Hareseth of 2 Kings 3

[28] See Jer 48:24, 41; Amos 2:2.

[29] For these identifications, see Erasmus Gass, "Die Moabiter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr." (Habilitationsschrift, Universität Tübingen, 2007), 44 and 53.

[30] Timm (*Dynastie*, 168–69) presumes a southern location for Kir-Moab and its variant forms. Thus, he must exclude this town as a possible candidate for the Moabite capital at the time of Mesha. This view holds true only for the southern location; the northern one favors equating the towns that use the element Kir with Qeriḥō.

[31] See Brian C. Jones, "In Search of Kir Hareseth: A Case Study in Site Identification," *JSOT* 52 (1991): 3–24, here 16.

must be located north of the Arnon. Neither the southern route of the allied army nor the targumic rendition is proof enough to indicate a southern identification of this site.[32]

The toponyms Kir-Hareseth and Kir-Heres are most probably pejorative names meaning "city of sherds."[33] The name either reflects a later description of the ruined state of this site or announces a desired curse on a prospering capital city. Thus, the biblical place-name need not be a correct rendition of the Moabite one, but could be a shameful nickname used to mock the Moabites. Therefore it is appropriate to identify all three names: Kir-Heres, Kir-Hareseth, and Kir-Moab.[34] The first two are biblical alternatives for the Moabite capital city correctly named Kir-Moab, "city of Moab." If this holds true, the site Kir-Hareseth might be identified with Mesha's new capital Qeriḥō, probably a part of Dibon (Ḏībān; 2240.1010).[35]

Thus, the topographical data in 2 Kings 3—inconsistent as they are—present two mutually exclusive options: The first is that the final battle at Kir-Hareseth took place in southern Moab, south of the Arnon river. This option is supported by the versions and by the mention of the Edomite king as one of the participants in the allied army. The other option is that Kir-Hareseth is a denigrating invective toward the Moabite capital city, in keeping with the fact that Moabite cities are often called קיר.

Bearing in mind the settlement history of Transjordan, the question of a Moabite royal city named Kir-Hareseth south of the Arnon river in the ninth century B.C.E. is a dead issue—there were most likely no large, prospering cities in the Arḍ el-Kerak at that time. Therefore, we should look for the Moabite capital in northern Moab, which also accords with the biblical evidence. It seems that a redactional reworking of the story of the Moabite campaign shifted the topographical setting to the south. Until the present the redactors had fooled biblical commentators,

[32] For a northern location, see also the arguments of Jones, "Search," 3–24; Klaas A. D. Smelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography* (OTS 28; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 85–89; Brian C. Jones, *Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* (SBLDS 157; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 244; Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3," 260. Moreover, the seven-day march might suggest a northern location for Kir-Hareseth. However, this temporal indication may simply be a classical idiom for the burdensome trip of the allies. Thus, even a synchronic reading of 2 Kings 3 does not support a southern location.

[33] See Wolfgang Richter, *Materialien einer althebräischen Datenbank: Die bibelhebräischen und -aramäischen Eigennamen morphologisch und syntaktisch analysiert* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 47; St. Ottilien: Eos, 1996), 143. For the name Kir-Hareseth as a mockery, see Jones, "Search," 17. It might also be a pun on חרס, "sun." This delightful town fell into a town of sherds.

[34] For a diachronic explanation of the different names, see Jones, "Search," 17 n. 1.

[35] On the identification of these places with each other, see esp. Smelik, *Converting the Past*, 88; John Andrew Dearman, "Roads and Settlements in Moab," *BA* 60 (1997): 205–13, here 212. For Qeriḥō in the Mesha Inscription, see *KAI* 181:3, 21, 24, 25.

who commonly hold the popular southern identification of Kir-Hareseth with modern el-Kerak (2170.0660) in high esteem.[36]

III. Syntactical and Lexical Considerations Regarding 2 Kings 3

Diachronic strata are best explained by syntactical and lexical fractures, without which they remain tentative at best. There are many indications in the syntax and vocabulary of 2 Kings 3 that betray redactional reworking of a more original story. These indications will now be considered.

In 2 Kgs 3:4 a new story is started with a typical *w=x-qatal* introduction.[37] The *w=qatal* formation of the next clause is to be interpreted as frequentative:[38] Mesha was paying tribute again and again. Verse 5 marks the termination of this usual custom: After the death of Ahab, the Moabite king rebelled against the king of Israel.[39] The next chapter starts with a *w=x-qatal,* indicating the beginning of a new story, which is shown also by the choice of a new topic. Thus, 2 Kgs 3:4–27 is a self-sufficient unit.

Neither king is named in v. 5; they are assignable only by the context. The two antagonists are named in v. 4 (Mesha) and v. 6 (Jehoram).[40] It is remarkable that the running narrative is mostly devoid of names, so that the tradition of the Moabite campaign need not be attributed to Mesha and Jehoram. The name Jehoram in v. 6 is often considered to be a gloss since the personal name follows the determined

[36] However, owing to its elevated position on a mountain ridge, el-Kerak is a mighty stronghold especially suited for withdrawal and therefore would be an appropriate place for the events described in 2 Kings 3.

[37] According to Long (*2 Kings*, 40), this syntactic construction, which signals a background statement, here suggests an enduring state of affairs. Regarding the notation, *w* = conjunction *waw; x* = any element except the conjunction *waw* and the negation *ʾal; qatal* = perfect; *yiqtol* = imperfect.

[38] See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 43.

[39] This seems to be a repetition similar to 2 Kgs 1:1. For the relationship between the verses, see Stipp, *Elischa*, 94–96. Stern ("Of Kings," 9) stresses the fact that the rebellion was against the king but not against Israel as such. Satterthwaite (*Elisha*, 11) argues that the revolt of Moab is a manifestation of divine judgment on the house of Ahab since, according to 2 Kgs 1:1 and 3:4–5, it is a consequence of Ahab's death.

[40] See also Jean P. Sternberger, who thinks that "le récit ancien ne concernerait que les seuls rois dont les noms sont donnés: Mesha de Moab et Yéoram d'Israël" ("L'Holocauste à la Frontière: Une Lecture de 2 Rois 3," *FoiVie* 95 [1996]: 19–32, here 26). The other two kings are probably redactional additions. Hans-Peter Müller wonders whether all three kings were not anonymous in the original account ("König Mêšaʿ von Moab und der Gott der Geschichte," *UF* 26 [1994]: 373–95, here 389).

noun המלך.[41] If this is so, only the Moabite king is named in the introduction to the campaign, whereas the Israelite antagonist is ignored. However, the construction המלך followed by a personal name can be found in other texts as well,[42] so the peculiar word order is not a sufficient argument to dismiss the name Jehoram from the narrative.[43]

In what follows, the narrative advances mostly by *wayyiqtol* forms, between which appears direct speech. In v. 6, the temporal expression "at that time" (ביום ההוא) is conspicuous.[44] It cannot refer to the immediate time after Ahab's death, since in that case one would expect Ahaziah to be king of Israel. The spokesmen of v. 8 are difficult to establish, as both direct speeches are introduced by a simple ויאמר. As a structuring device this expression could denote a change of the actual speaker. Thus, the king of Israel asked for the best route using the verb עלה, mentioned before by the king of Judah, whereas the king of Judah suggested the southern way via the desert of Edom.[45] In that case it would have been the Judean king's idea to take this southern detour. In v. 9 the king of Edom is added as a participant in the campaign, though without a formal invitation.[46] However, the land of Edom is important for the plot of the story only on account of the pun between אדום and דם. Thus, the reference to the king of Edom might have been inspired by the toponym.

[41] See Schweizer, *Elischa*, 21–22; Simon J. de Vries, "The Three Comparisons in 1 Kings XXII 4b and Its Parallel and 2 Kings III 7b," *VT* 39 (1989): 283–306, here 305. Bernhardt ("Feldzug," 12) thinks that perhaps all three kings were originally unnamed.

[42] See, e.g., 2 Sam 5:3; 6:16; 7:18; 8:8, 10, 11; 9:5; 16:5, 6; 19:17; 1 Kgs 1:13, 28, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 43, 47, 51(*bis*), 53; 2:19, 22, 23, 25; 4:1; 5:7(*bis*), 27; 6:2; 7:13, 14, 51; 8:1, 2; 9:11, 15, 26, 28; 10:13, 16, 21, 23; 12:2; 2 Kgs 12:8; 23:29; 2 Chr 7:5; 8:18; 9:15, 20, 22; 19:2; 35:16; Jer 26:21, 22, 23; 52:20; Ezek 1:2; Cant 3:9.

[43] The problems with the chronology and the different names are solved in various, sometimes highly speculative ways: Giovanni Garbini eliminates the two Israelite kings Ahaziah and Jehoram because the biblical text gives no supporting evidence for either king—according to 2 Kgs 9–10 Jehu's revolution is directed against Ahab and his family (*History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* [London: SCM, 1988], 37). Edward Lipiński considers Jehoram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah to be the same person. Thus, 2 Kings 3 is the Israelite version of the same war that is recounted in the Judean version of 2 Kings 8 (*On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches* [OLA 153; Leuven: Peters, 2006], 350–51). Rendsburg ("Reconstruction," 70) argues that the omission of Ahaziah might be an indication that the campaign of the three kings occurred later than the revolt of Moab. However, the exact chronology of the Israelite kings is far from certain and ought not be a linchpin for further arguments.

[44] The enigmatic temporal expression ביום ההוא might be a later gloss; see Simon J. de Vries, *Prophet against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (I Kings 22) in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 88 n. 47.

[45] Contra Brueggemann (*Kings*, 308), who thinks that Jehoram chose the route.

[46] John R. Bartlett, "The 'United' Campaign against Moab in 2 Kings 3:4–27," in *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia* (ed. J. F. A. Sawyer and D. J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 135–46,

The formation *w=x-qatal* in v. 9 is not necessarily a sign of redactional work; it marks a new element in the story, indicating that the people had used up all their water after a seven-day march.[47] In v. 10, the king of Israel—apparently the commander of the allies—bewails the desperate situation of the army with a typical Dtr formula (נתן ביד). His use of the third person indicates a certain distance. Thus, the Dtr idiom and the change to the third person might be signs of redactional work.

In v. 13 Elisha refuses to help the king of Israel and suggests that he seek help from the ordinary court prophets.[48] The king of Israel answers with a simple "No" (אל), indicating that the solution to the problem lies only with YHWH and not with Baal, since YHWH led the three kings into this trap. Here he repeats the same phrase as in v. 10, which has the above-mentioned Dtr flavoring. The resumption of this lament might be an indication of the secondary character of v. 13.[49]

The perplexing *w=qatal* in v. 15 can be interpreted as frequentative, referring to the usual *ekstasis* of the prophet when music was playing.[50] When the music started, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha so that he could deliver the word of the Lord. Thus, this syntactic construction does not necessarily indicate incon-

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here 143. Müller ("König Mêša‘," 389 n. 63) regards the mention of the king of Edom in vv. 9, 26 as a secondary addition.

[47] Würthwein (*Könige*, 283) regards *seven* as a round number. Similarly Bernhardt, "Feldzug," 21 n. 6; Stipp, *Elischa*, 104.

[48] Bernhard Lehnart thinks that "the prophets of your father and your mother" in v. 13 is a reference to 1 Kings 18 (*Prophet und König im Nordreich Israel: Studien zur sogenannten vorklassischen Prophetie im Nordreich Israel anhand der Samuel-, Elija- und Elischa-Überlieferungen* [VTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 381). However, נביאי אמך might be secondary.

[49] This verse emphasizes the negative estimation of the Israelite king by stressing the relatedness of Jehoram to Ahab and their bad experience with prophets, see Susanne Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa: Die Erzählung von der Jehu-Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa-Erzählungen* (BWANT 152; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 210. See already Georg Hentschel, *2 Könige* (NEchtB 11; Würzburg: Echter, 1985), 15.

The vow and the expression "to stand before" (עמד לפני) in v. 14 are familiar from the narratives of Elijah and Elisha, so this combination could reflect traditional linguistic usage. This formula is not mentioned before Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and later texts, and only here are both idioms combined. See Winfried Thiel, "Sprachliche und thematische Gemeinsamkeiten nordisraelitischer Propheten-Überlieferungen," in *Die alttestamentliche Botschaft als Wegweisung: Festschrift für Heinz Reinelt* (ed. J. Zmijewski; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 359–76, here 368–69. According to Long (*2 Kings*, 45–46), the oath is just an exclamation whose link with the standing formula adds solemnity to the speech and indicates continuity within the Elijah-Elisha narratives.

[50] See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 45; Long, *2 Kings*, 42. Lehnart (*Prophet*, 382) thinks that Elisha was placed in a visionary trance by music, while still maintaining his self-control. Butler (*Elisha*, 100) interprets the playing of music as a tool to calm Elisha's spirit. According to Thiel ("Gemeinsamkeiten," 367–68), the formula היה יד יהוה על is not dependent on Ezekiel but betrays linguistic usage of north Israelite prophets.

sistency. In vv. 16–17, Elisha announces two words of the Lord, each opening with כה אמר יהוה, and the second explaining the first. Both oracles require their context and so could not have been handed down separately.[51] Furthermore, the doubling of the so-called *Botenformel* need not indicate literary-critical manipulation because the text is written in poetic form.[52] The phrasing of v. 17 (ומקניכם ובהמתכם) is significantly different from that of v. 9 (למחנה ולבהמה), although the reason for this change is not clear.

The deictic change in v. 18 from YHWH's speech to a speech about YHWH might be an indication of inconsistency, like the shift from poetic diction to prose.[53] Moreover, the help of YHWH on behalf of the allies is expressed in Dtr terms (נתן ביד), like the claim of the Israelite king, only reversed.

The assurance of water and final victory over Moab is expressed by four *w=qatal* forms in vv. 17–19, after an introductory *w=x-yiqtol.* All of these indicate individual future events with a progressive nuance. In v. 19 the narrator again uses three *w=x-yiqtol* forms, which set this portion of the total destruction apart. Thus, the scorched-earth tactics might be a later addition to the storming of the fortified and choice towns. It is conspicuous that in v. 24 only Israel is mentioned as fighting. This might be a simplification, the author restricting himself from narrating the thriving force of the allies.[54] Verses 24–27, however, seem to indicate that the original campaign was undertaken by Israel alone. Judah is not mentioned, and in v. 26 the king of Edom might be on friendly terms with the neighboring king of Moab. Thus, the breakout would have served as an escape to Edom, perhaps even to unite the two Transjordanian forces there.

In v. 25 the Israelites fulfilled the prophecy of v. 19; however, there are some differences and augmentations. The towns are not only conquered but cast down (הרס instead of נכה). The throwing of stones not only brought about the ruin of the best fields but completely filled them with stones. Thus, the army did even more than commanded by YHWH. The "over-fulfillment" of these two prophecies is effectively placed at the front of the list in v. 25.

[51] See Schmitt, *Elisa*, 36 n. 17; Stipp, *Elischa*, 119–20. According to Kissling (*Characters*, 185), YHWH over-fulfilled Elisha's prediction in that he filled not only the dry torrent but also the entire land. Contra Werner Reiser, who considers both oracles independent and sources for the legendary expansion ("Eschatologische Gottessprüche in den Elisa-Legenden," *TZ* 5 [1953] 321–38, here 323–25, 331). However, the surrounding narrative does not really pick up topics and linguistic expressions from the oracle, making his argument unconvincing.

[52] See Stipp, *Elischa*, 119–20.

[53] Stipp, *Elischa*, 130. Reiser ("Gottessprüche," 323) also separates v. 18 from the original oracle.

[54] Thus, the singling out of Israel need not be interpreted to mean that only Israel has carried off the victory. André Wénin also explains the absence of Jehoram in the victorious battle of vv. 24–25 in that the narrator "voulait insinuer que la victoire est à attribuer à YHWH plus qu'au roi" ("La cohérence narrative de 2 Rois 3: Une réponse à Jesús Asurmendi," *BibInt* 14 [2006]: 444–55, here 451).

The campaign of destruction[55] is expressed by *w=x-yiqtol* forms, perhaps indicating consecutive actions after the victorious battle in the valley. However, the destructive mob came to a dead stop at Kir-Hareseth,[56] which is indicated by an *x-qatal*. Nevertheless, the slingers surrounded and bombarded the town. Since the verb נכה is used in reference to Kir-Hareseth, the prophecy that all Moabite towns would be "struck" by the Israelite army was literally fulfilled.[57]

In this desperate situation, the king of Moab took his firstborn son,[58] the heir to his throne, and sacrificed him as a burnt offering on the city wall (v. 27).[59] Afterwards a great fury overcame Israel so that they withdrew and retired to their respective territory. What is meant by "great fury" (קצף גדול) and whether this was prompted by YHWH or Chemosh remain highly controversial.[60] It seems that the

[55] Sprinkle ("2 Kings 3," 257) considers this biblical narrative an explanation for the insignificance of Moab at the time of Shalmaneser III. According to Michael G. Hasel, the actions undertaken by the allied army are not in conflict with the siege prohibitions in Deut 20:19–20 ("The Destruction of Trees in the Moabite Campaign of 2 Kings 3:4–27: A Study in the Laws of Warfare," *AUSS* 40 [2002]: 197–206, here 201–6). Contra Stipp, *Elischa*, 365; Brichto, *Grammar*, 207–8; Kissling, *Characters*, 175; Sprinkle, "War," 295–98; Lehnart, *Prophet*, 382.

[56] Perhaps the place-name is a pun on the verb הרס in v. 25; see Jones, "Search," 18. However, this pun assumes a change in the first consonant from ח to ה.

[57] See Long and Sneed, "Yahweh," 265. Similarly Provan, *Kings*, 183: "Elisha did not lie. There is in his prophecy, nevertheless, a certain economy with the truth."

[58] Sometimes it is argued that Mesha offered the son of the king of Edom. See Sternberger, "L'Holocauste," 24–25; Anson F. Rainey, "Syntax, Hermeneutics and History," *IEJ* 48 (1998): 239–51, here 250; Werlitz, *Könige*, 212; Rainey and Notley, *Bridge*, 205. For this rabbinic exegesis, see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 48.

[59] Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20) considers the sacrifice anti-Moabite propaganda that is not rooted in a specific historical event. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer compares the reaction of the Moabite king with the Mesopotamian *namburbi* ritual: a prediction is nullified by a magical ritual ("Prophecy as a Way of Cancelling Prophecy: The Strategic Uses of Foreknowledge," *ZAW* 117 [2005]: 329–50, here 345–46).

[60] Stipp (*Elischa*, 134–37) points out that, for syntactic reasons, the lexeme קצף cannot refer to a human emotion. According to Stipp ("Beobachtungen," 497–98), in the archaic source it was the wrath of Chemosh that caused the withdrawal of the Israelite forces. The orthodox correction omitted only the divine name. Similarly Andreas Scherer, *Überlieferungen von Religion und Krieg: Exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Richter 3–8 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT 105; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005), 71. Contra Sprinkle ("War," 286–98), who claims that it was YHWH's wrath. Sometimes this expression is even interpreted psychologically, insofar as it inspired Moab to fight more valiantly or Israel to lift the siege owing to such indignation; see House, *Kings*, 264. Würthwein (*Könige*, 284) and Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20) opt for the second alternative. Perhaps the author did not want the apostate king of Israel to have an undiluted victory. That is why he had to retreat precipitately. A breakup of the coalition must be excluded, since the anger is attributed to Israel alone and not to the allies; see Kissling, *Characters*, 183. The mention of Israel alone is to be explained by the shift to Israel in the final verses of 2 Kings 3. By using the multilayered noun קצף the author could leave many options open to the readers. For different proposals, see Satterthwaite, *Elisha*, 11 n. 28.

author was trying to denigrate the Moabites, who resorted to human sacrifices in times of danger. Thus, Israel could explain the loss of Moab without losing face.

The syntax of 2 Kings 3 is rather coherent; there are virtually no indications of redactional work, at least on a syntactic level. Only in v. 19 does the narrator set the scorched-earth tactics apart from the context by using *w=x-yiqtol,* which might suggest that this is a later addition. Apart from that, the text of 2 Kings 3 poses content-related, topographical, and lexical problems that do give some hints of redactional reworking.

IV. Redactional Criticism of 2 Kings 3

There are different proposals for coping with the tensions discussed above.[61] In the following, a new model based on topographical considerations will be worked out.[62]

The mention of the desert of Edom is connected to the prophetic tale by several devices.[63] The lack of water is understandable only in a desert. Moreover, the bloody color of the water in the wordplay between דם and אדום reflects natural conditions in the Wādī el-Ḥesā. In that respect, v. 8 (מדבר אדום) is related to vv. 9–17 and vv. 20–23. Thus, the southern location of the campaign is bound both to Elisha's first prophecy (vv. 9–17) and to the Moabites' misinterpretation of the red water (vv. 20–23). Thus, the section consisting of vv. 8–23 seems to be a later enlargement of the original story. However, this part too has probably undergone redactional reworking. But this is another issue that cannot be dealt with here.

The question remains whether the alliance between the kings of Israel and Judah is a secondary expansion related to the parallel account of 1 Kings 22. The parallels between the two accounts indicate that there was a redactor at work who gave the Judean king Jehoshaphat a prominent position within the unfolding of the narrative. Without the king of Judah, however, the northern Israelite advance is

[61] In most cases two literary sources have been detected, augmented by glosses and further redactional layers. See Würthwein, *Könige*, 281; similarly Fritz, *2 Könige*, 18–19; contra Schweizer (*Elischa*, 41–47), who argues for the literary unity of the narrative in 2 Kings 3, augmented by short redactional interpolations. Wénin ("Cohérence," 454–55), too, considers 2 Kings 3 to be a coherent narrative.

[62] The oldest source deals with the campaign against Moab, which resulted in a preliminary success but a final desperate retreat. Another layer describes being supplied with water by prophetic intervention. This layer needs the original source as its setting. It can be labeled a prophetic redaction in that it relates all events to Yhwh, and it betrays a Judean viewpoint, since the king of Judah is depicted positively over against the king of Israel. Contra de Vries (*Prophet*, 89 n. 52), who argues for a Jehuite provenance, as the story polemizes against the Omrides.

[63] See also Stipp, *Elischa*, 114–15.

even more probable. The mention of Jehoshaphat[64] is all the more conspicuous since, according to 1 Kgs 22:51, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had already died.[65] Since Jehoshaphat and Judah disappear from the final episode of the narrative, only Israel is defeated.[66]

Therefore, v. 7, which tells about the forging of the alliance between Israel and Judah, must also be secondary. In light of this, vv. 7–23 should be regarded as a redactional layer that favors the southern advance of the campaign. The redaction apparently displays a pro-Judean and anti-Israelite bias, picking up on the negative experiences the Judean kings faced in their alliances with Israel.

It is remarkable that in vv. 24–27 only Israelites attack Moab.[67] The allied forces are not mentioned here, whereas in vv. 20–23 the three kings are all regarded as enemies by the Moabites.[68] Thus, the end of this chapter might preserve a fragment of an original narrative about an Israelite campaign against Moab that was later expanded into a campaign of three kings.[69] In that respect, ויבאו אל־מחנה

[64] See esp. Schweizer, *Elischa*, 22–24, 176. According to Rainey ("Attempt," 176), the attempted Moabite invasion recounted in 2 Chronicles 20 motivated Jehoshaphat to take part in the allied campaign. Similarly Rendsburg, "Reconstruction," 70; Butler, *Elisha*, 88. However, the historicity of 2 Chronicles 20 is far from certain; see Timm, *Dynastie*, 176. Therefore, this cannot serve as a historical basis on which to reconstruct relations between Judah and Moab.

[65] His later appearance in 2 Kings 3 might be due to the redaction that is responsible for other parallels between 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3.

[66] This may indicate that any alliance with Israel is not good for Judah; see Bartlett, "Campaign," 137. According to Stern ("Of Kings," 8), "King Jehoshaphat the Good is saved by the expedient of having him drop out of the story." Thus, this narrative could not have been compiled in the northern kingdom of Israel but is perhaps the product of priestly redactors, which may be suggested by the reference to the *minḥâ* sacrifice in v. 20; see Lehnart, *Prophet*, 383. For priestly redactors, see already Schweizer, *Elischa*, 169–72. However, the narrator displays a certain degree of dramatic objectivity, since he himself gives no hint of approval or disapproval of any of the four kings; see Brichto, *Grammar*, 209.

[67] According to de Vries (*Prophet*, 88 n. 48), the desperate end of the allied campaign in 2 Kgs 3:25b–27 might be an independent text because Elisha's prophecy in v. 19 was already fulfilled in 2 Kgs 3:25a. However, the historical memory preserved in 2 Kings 3 describes the definitive end of Israel's sovereignty over Moab, so the last verses could hardly be secondary.

[68] Stipp (*Elischa*, 139) points out that in v. 26 the allied coalition is the opponent of the Moabites. The mention of the king of Edom, however, does not really require this conclusion because reaching the king of Edom might also have been the desired objective of the king of Moab. See Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13; Stipp, *Elischa*, 150. Long ("2 Kings iii," 340) refers to the pun on Edom and blood that might hold vv. 20–27 together. But even a redactor could have established literary unity between originally separate accounts. Without further argument, Long even assumes that the king of Edom is a secondary element in the narrative, whereas the land of Edom belongs to the original tradition (ibid., 341).

[69] See Otto, *Jehu*, 216, who holds that the secondary insertion is consistent though composed of some conflicting stories and traditions. The verbal form וילך in v. 7 might also indicate that in the original account the campaign against Moab was an Israelite enterprise; see Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13. However, the construction וילך + *wayyiqtol* is widespread: Gen 25:34; 27:14; 32:1;

ישראל in v. 24 must be interpreted as the assembling of the militia of Israel mentioned in v. 6 within the army camp of Israel. It would thus read:

> (6) At once the King Jehoram left Samaria and mustered all Israel[70] . . .
> (24) And they [i.e., the militia of Israel] reached the camp of Israel [i.e., the location of the regular army].

The mention of the Edomite king in v. 26b could be explained either as indicating that King Mesha was trying to reach him to unite both Transjordanian forces, or it could be a later redactional addition to increase further the hopeless distress of the Moabite king. The story line flows nicely with or without v. 26b, so both options are equally valid. On the one hand, the beginning of the narrative in vv. 4–5 is an awkward introduction, since the quaint description of Mesha has no function in the subsequent story.[71] On the other hand, these verses correctly preserve the historical revolution of Moab under the aegis of Mesha. It seems that vv. 4–6 might be the original beginning of a story describing an Israelite campaign against Moab, to which the prophetic tale integrating Jehoshaphat, Elisha, and the unnamed Edomite king in vv. 7–23 is a secondary expansion.[72]

Since the narrative of 2 Kings 3 has thematic and lexical parallels to other passages in the Bible, such as 1 Kings 22 or Numbers 20, a decision regarding the interdependence of these texts—though controversial—is especially relevant for the redaction criticism of the biblical books of Kings.[73] When considering the redac-

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Exod 4:27; Num 24:25; Deut 17:3; Judg 1:16; 3:13; 9:7; 19:10; 1 Sam 3:5; 17:48; 19:12; 21:1; 1 Kgs 1:50; 13:24, 28; 16:31; 17:5; 2 Kgs 3:7; 5:5, 11; 13:21; 19:36; Job 27:21; Isa 37:37; Hos 1:3.

[70] The reference to "all Israel" might reflect the way that Jehoram called up both the regular army and the local militia; see Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 35.

[71] These verses only heighten the profile of Mesha; see Stipp, *Elischa*, 102. According to Ernst Axel Knauf, the section consisting of 2 Kgs 3:4–5 is an annalistic excerpt that refers to the independence of Moab ("Jordanien in der Bibel," in *Per Aspera ad Astra: Durch Philologie zur Theologie: Prof. Dr. Manfred Weippert zum 60. Geburtstag* [ed. Manfred Oeming and A. Berlejung; Heidelberg, 1997], 140–46, here 144). Verse 5 is reminiscent of 2 Kgs 1:1, but it is impossible to relate the two.

[72] See also Bartlett, "Campaign," 145; similarly Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13–14.

[73] For 1 Kings 22, see Bartlett, "Campaign," 135–36; Kissling, *Characters,* 182; Naʾaman, "Prophetic Stories," 166; Lehnart, *Prophet,* 381. Provan (*Kings,* 182), however, notes the difference between the two narratives. In 1 Kings 22 the Judean king received the word of YHWH before going to war. Brueggemann (*Kings,* 308) adds that the motivation in 2 Kgs 3 is "no longer piety but practical emergency."

According to Schweizer (*Elischa,* 32–38), the narrative in 1 Kings 22 is dependent on 2 Kings 3. Similarly, Otto (*Jehu,* 216–17) considers 1 Kgs 22:4, 7 secondary expansions drawing on 2 Kings 3. However, for dependence of 2 Kings 3 on 1 Kings 22, see de Vries, "Comparisons," 299–300. Thus, the dependence of one text on the other has been discussed from various perspectives.

With regard to Numbers 20, see, for topics shared by both accounts, Bartlett, "Campaign," 138. The basis of the Moabite campaign might be more theological and prophetic than historical; see Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3," 253; Long and Sneed, "'Yahweh," 258. Similarly, Fritz (*Könige,* 20) thinks

tion criticism of 2 Kings 3 alone, however, this aspect is of minor importance and can be readily dismissed here.[74]

In sum, seen in the light of topographical considerations and thematic inconsistencies, the narrative in 2 Kings 3 has at least two layers: the original tradition, devoid of the problems discussed here, is preserved in vv. 4–6, 24–27. This narrative describes the punitive war of Israel against Moab some time after the rebellion of Mesha.[75] The Israelite army invaded from the north and stopped at the capital, Kir-Hareseth (Mesha's Qeriḥō), at which point they had to withdraw. This picture is in accord with the extrabiblical evidence and the settlement history of Transjordan in the ninth century B.C.E. This basic layer, which could preserve Israelite traditions, was augmented by vv. 7–23, introducing the formation of an alliance between Israel, Judah, and Edom; the oracle of Elisha; and an attack on Moab from the south. Although this expansion of the story also has some inconsistencies, the pro-Judean redactor did a good job joining the disparate information.

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that the narrative tries to discredit the Moabites though they could not be subdued. Thus, the story is a tendentious construct without historical value.

[74] Moreover, the topographical picture in the two parallel accounts is completely different (one is set in Gilead, the other in Edom); topographical alteration was therefore probably not employed as a redactional device in these stories.

[75] The campaign of the three kings could not have taken place in the time of Mesha. The absence of the Moabite victory at Kir-Hareseth on the Mesha Inscription might be a further hint that the events of 2 Kings 3 occurred after Mesha's reign; see Bernhardt, "Feldzug," 20. The absence of the victory at Kir-Hareseth on the Mesha Inscription is a problem also for Rendsburg ("Reconstruction," 72 n. 22) and Timm (*Dynastie*, 173).

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Why 2 Kings 17 Does Not Constitute a Chapter of Reflection in the "Deuteronomistic History"

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Martin Noth, the modern "father" of the Deuteronomistic History, regarded the existence of the "chapters of reflection" in the books of Joshua to Kings as important proof for the unity of this history, which in his view was written by one author.[1] As is well known, most modern scholars abandoned the idea of a single author for this literary work, but they still accept the existence of the Deuteronomistic History. In this respect the existence of the chapters of reflection has lost nothing of its significance. The most important chapter of reflection is 2 Kings 17, in which vv. 7–23 explain the course and outcome of Israel's history in its land. The importance of this chapter for theories about the Deuteronomistic History certainly justifies a new look at this text.

To start with, a word of clarification on the Deuteronomistic character of 2 Kings 17 is in order: we do not intend to demonstrate that 2 Kgs 17:7–23 shows no signs of Deuteronomistic language and ideology. The opposite is true: arguably, no text in the book of Kings displays more Deuteronomistic characteristics. Nevertheless, we observe that this chapter is exceptional in "ordinary" Deuteronomistic literature. If this view is correct it carries consequences for the Deuteronomistic literature in general and for the question of the existence of a Deuteronomistic History in particular.

Today most scholars agree that 2 Kgs 17:7–23 is not uniform but was com-

[1] Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Halle a.d. Saale, 1943; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), 5–6.

posed by more than one author.[2] Earlier critics had already reached this conclusion;[3] in modern research a short note by Noth, in which he stresses the special character of vv. 21–23, has proved influential.[4] Although most scholars agree as to the different authorship of these verses, the literary unity of vv. 7–20 is more disputed. Most scholars basically accept it,[5] but some, including Walter Dietrich, Ernst Würthwein, and Erik Aurelius, divide this section into two halves, attributing each to a different author. According to Dietrich, vv. 7–11, 20 belong to DtrH (DtrG), the first Deuteronomist. Verses 12–19 are ascribed to DtrN, and vv. 21–23 belong to his prophetic Deuteronomist DtrP.[6] Würthwein divides vv. 7–20 in a similar manner, but he detects in these verses two nomistic Deuteronomists: DtrN1: vv. 7–12, 18, and DtrN2: vv. 13–17, 20.[7] Verses 21–23aα belong, according to him, to DtrH and were later amended by DtrP, among others. In regard to vv. 7–20 Aurelius's solution[8] is similar to Würthwein's.

Now we turn to several scholars who understand vv. 7–20 basically as one unit. Richard D. Nelson ascribes vv. 7–20, 23b to Dtr2 and considers vv. 21–23 even later.[9] In addition, Iain W. Provan ascribes the better part of vv. 7–20 (except vv. 7a,

[2] As diverging voices among modern scholars, we note Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 275, who excludes only v. 19; Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (AThANT 66; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), 127–32; and Andrew D. H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM, 1983), 126–27. But although Mayes regards 2 Kgs 17:7–23 as *late* Deuteronomistic, the question still arises whether this section can be regarded as one in the series of the chapters of reflection in the so-called Deuteronomistic History.

[3] Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 14 n. 44; Pauline A. Viviano, "2 Kings 17: A Rhetorical and Form-Critical Analysis," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 553 n. 9.

[4] Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I*, 85 n. 4. Noth concluded that vv. 21–23 are a late addition. Most modern scholars disagree with this chronology.

[5] Although some scholars allow smaller additions in this section.

[6] Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 41–46.

[7] Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige* (ATD 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 395–97.

[8] Erik Aurelius, *Zukunft jenseits des Gerichts: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zum Enneateuch* (BZAW 319; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 81–92. Cf. also the division of the first section by Marc Zvi Brettler: A: vv. 7–12; B: vv. 13–18a, 23 ("Ideology, History and Theology in 2 Kings XVII 7–23," *VT* 39 [1989]: 268–82).

[9] Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 55–63.

18a) to Dtr2, but vv. 21–23 are earlier, according to him (Dtr1).[10] A similar division between a later and an earlier Deuteronomistic layer is proposed by Bob Becking.[11] Mark A. O'Brien likewise ascribes vv. 7–19 to DtrN (the comments on Judah are even later) and vv. 21–23 to the first Deuteronomist, who used even earlier material.[12] According to Steven L. McKenzie, vv. 7–20 are later still: he describes them as "Post Deuteronomistic Additions," and vv. 21–23 belong to DtrH.[13]

The first impression of this listing of opinions might be confusing, but several common features do emerge:

1. Most scholars ascribe the better part of vv. 7–20 to one late author, usually DtrN or Dtr2.
2. According to the prevailing opinion vv. 21–23 belong to a different Deuteronomistic author. Most scholars assume an earlier one, but many are reluctant to assign this section to DtrH (Dtr1). Some point to DtrP; others detect here pre-Deuteronomistic traces or late Deuteronomistic appendixes; yet a third group of scholars abandons the idea of an earlier Deuteronomistic author and prefers a later Deuteronomist. Clearly, all these scholars sense the special character of this section (vv. 21–23).

We concur with the prevailing view and subscribe to the existence of two main authors in 2 Kgs 17:7–23. The author of vv. 21–23 is probably the more ancient,[14] but for our purpose we can leave this question open. More important, neither of these two authors is DtrH (Dtr1). This emerges as one of the common features from the short review of modern scholarly opinions. In addition, examination of some of the motifs leads to the same conclusion: we are dealing here with the motifs that led most of the above mentioned scholars to the conclusion that the sections in question do not belong to DtrH (Dtr1); therefore we can cut our discussion short.

The main difference between the usual Deuteronomistic concept in the book

[10] Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 172; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 70–73.

[11] Bob Becking, "From Apostasy to Destruction: A Josianic View on the Fall of Samaria (2 Kings 17,21–23)," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans* (ed. Marc Vervenne and Johan Lust; BETL 133; Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 1997), 279–97; see also idem, "From Exodus to Exile: 2 Kings 17:7–20 in the Context of Its Co-Text," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zechariah Kallai* (ed. Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld; VTSup 81; Leiden/Boston/Cologne: Brill, 2000), 215–31.

[12] Mark A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 208-11, 280.

[13] Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 151–52.

[14] So decidedly Aurelius, *Zukunft*, 71–79.

of Kings and 2 Kings 17 lies in the motif of the sin. Usually it is the kings who are active and accountable in this respect: involvement in sin depends only on them and their initiative. Not that the people are not involved in (cultic) sins—they are, but their involvement is more passive and they are described as showing no initiative. The emphasis is on the individual king and his behavior. 2 Kings 17 is different: the text starts with the statement that it was the people of Israel who sinned, and the people of Israel remain the subject in the succeeding verses. There the author elaborates in detail the sins of Israel, which actually are only variations of the one cardinal sin: idolatry. This "democratization of sin" is unique to this chapter and not typical of the book of Kings in general.

We may add some details, mostly related to this main difference. According to v. 7, "the people of Israel sinned"—a very rare expression in Kings.[15] Furthermore, the phrase "they feared other gods" in v. 7 appears in this chapter of the book alone. Verse 8 explains the sin of Israel as walking in the "laws of the (foreign) people." This very late phrase appears again only in the context of P, in Lev 18:3, 30; 20:23.[16] According to v. 9, the people of Israel built high places; usually, however, a certain king builds them, not the people of Israel (1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 21:3; 23:13).[17] Similarly, the motif of "idols" (גללים) in v. 12 always appears in connection with kings, not in connection with the people, as here. In v. 13 the prophets are described as an institution of preachers of the law who call the people to return to Yahweh. This understanding is typical of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and is alien to the Deuteronomist, especially to the Deuteronomists in Kings, who describe the prophets as intervening in Israel's history according to a schema of prophecy and fulfillment. Verse 15 uses the verb מאס ("reject") as an expression for human sin; this again is characteristic of the great biblical prophets, not of the "Deuteronomistic History," where it describes divine reaction. The clause "they served the Baal" appears in the book of Kings as a sin of the individual king and not, as in v. 16, in the plural as the sin of all Israel. The motif of causing sons and daughters to pass through the fire appears in v. 17 in an unusual way: the subject is the Israelites—"sons" and "daughters" in the plural. Usually a king is the subject, and "son" is in the singular (2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6).[18] The wording "they sold themselves to do the evil in the sight of Yahweh" is exceptional. True, this phrase appears in 2 Kgs 21:20, 25, but there it is in the singular, being related to special kings. Again we see the "democratization of sin," which is characteristic of 2 Kings 17 only.

[15] In 1 Kgs 14:22 a similar sentence appears with "Judah" as the subject. 1 Kings 8:50 is different, as it deals with forgiveness of sins in the exile.

[16] Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Das spätdeuteronomistische Geschichtswerk Genesis i–2 Regum xxv und seine theologische Intention," in *Congress Volume: Cambridge 1995* (ed. John A. Emerton; VTSup 66; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1997), 278.

[17] The exception is again 1 Kgs 14:23: "Judah."

[18] 2 Kings 23:10 is different, but even here the construction is in the singular.

Verses 21–23 are exceptional also.[19] Verse 21 states that the Israelites made Jeroboam king. After the preparatory sentence that Israel "tore away from the house of David," this must be understood as designating a sin by the people of Israel. Verse 22, too, phrases the cardinal sin as Israel's, not the king's. Again, this is exceptional. Verse 23 contains another summary evaluation of the function of the prophets. Compared with v. 13 this evaluation is indeed nearer to the roles of the different prophets in the book of Kings, although actually those prophets did *not* prophesy the end of the kingdom of Israel and the Assyrian deportation. According to Aurelius the phrasing of v. 23b (גלה + מעל אדמתו) is unusual also.[20]

To close this short investigation, intended to demonstrate that 2 Kgs 17:7–23 is exceptional in the book of Kings, it should be mentioned that I. L. Seeligmann, without going into detail, reached a similar conclusion when he wrote that 2 Kgs 17:13 belongs to "a very late historical theological excursus of quite peculiar origin"[21] and therefore is not characteristic of Deuteronomistic historiography.

This conclusion has far-reaching implications: the view still prevails that 2 Kgs 17 is the last in a series of several "chapters of reflection" in the Deuteronomistic History, which according to Martin Noth and his followers thereby proves the unity of this large literary creation. These texts aim to explain the fall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah as divine punishment. But this idea dominates only in 2 Kings 17.[22] It is alien to the other "chapters of reflection" and appears only very rarely in the Deuteronomistic historical books. Only at the end of 2 Kings does this motif become dominant. The other "chapters of reflection" differ in regard to their contents: they cannot be ascribed to one single author, so together they cannot prove the unity of such a "Deuteronomistic History."

Concerning 2 Kings 17 we can summarize now and propose a fairly simple answer to the question intimated by the title of this paper: 2 Kgs 17:7–23 is not a chapter of reflection in the "Deuteronomistic History" because it is a later text that did not appear in the original literary work. Accordingly, the "chapters of reflection"

[19] One might argue that this section is less exceptional than vv. 7-20. This is why more scholars are prepared to attribute vv. 21–23 to Dtr1 (DtrH) than vv. 7–20, as demonstrated above. We do not think that this fact weakens our argument decisively: in any case these three verses are not sufficient to serve as a "chapter of reflection."

[20] Aurelius, *Zukunft*, 78.

[21] Isac L. Seeligmann, "Die Auffassung von der Prophetie in der deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtsschreibung," in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (ed. John A. Emerton et al.; VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill 1978), 254–84, here 267: "der Vers [2 Rg. xvii 13] steht in einem sehr späten geschichtstheologischen Exkurs ganz eigener Herkunft." One should also compare the view of Schmitt, who ascribes 2 Kgs 17:7–20 to a very late Deuteronomistic author who wrote later than P ("Das spätdeuteronomistische Geschichtswerk," 278).

[22] To a lesser degree it can be found in Joshua 23, but today most scholars agree that this chapter does not belong to Dtr1 (DtrH) either.

can no longer be used to prove the existence of such a history. This is one of the reasons why the very existence of the Deuteronomistic History as understood by Martin Noth and his followers becomes doubtful.[23]

[23] In a discussion of a recent book by Thomas Römer (*The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* [London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005]), we tried to demonstrate that a more appropriate view is that the different Deuteronomistic books of the "Former Prophets," taken together, describe the history of Israel from the settlement to the end of the monarchies (lecture to be published in the "Collected Communications to the XIXth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament," Ljubljana, July 2007); see now also Kurt L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)," *JSOT* 31 (2007): 311–45.

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The Devil Made David Do It . . . Or *Did* He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the *Satan* in 1 Chronicles 21:1

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In 2 Samuel 24, King David commits one of his very few blunders as God's handpicked ruler of Israel and orders that a census be taken of the people. As a result of this royal faux pas, God sends a plague that wipes out much of Israel's population.[1] Of all of the perplexing facets of this story, the most intriguing and the most troubling is that the historian credits David's error and, by implication, the ensuing plague to none other than the deity, who is said to have incited David to order the census in the first place. On the whole, the Chronistic version of this story parallels its Deuteronomistic source. But in several instances the Chronicler deviates from the story as we have it in the MT of 2 Samuel. The most remarkable of these deviations is in the very first line of the account, in which a redactor attempts to shed light on the source of David's plan and Israel's troubles. 2 Samuel 24:1 reads,

ויסף אף־יהוה לחרות בישראל ויסת את־דוד בהם לאמר לך מנה את־ישראל ואת־יהודה

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[1] Although both versions of this incident describe the plague as punishment for David's sin (2 Sam 24:10, 17; 1 Chr 21:8, 17), from a tradition-historical perspective the plague that follows the census is certainly not unrelated to the ancient cultic taboo of census taking, such as that mentioned in Exod 30:12–16.

> Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah."[2]

But the parallel account in 1 Chronicles (21:1) begins somewhat differently:

ויעמד שטן על־ישראל ויסת את־דויד למנות את־ישראל

> Satan/a *śāṭān* stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel.[3]

In 2 Samuel, it is Yhwh who is angry with Israel and incites David against them, but in 1 Chronicles the direct cause of David's error is identified as a certain שטן, "*śāṭān*." That a *śāṭān* is named as the instigator of David's census and the plague that ensues rather than Yhwh, as in the earlier version of the story, raises two perplexing and related questions. Who is this *śāṭān*? And why would a redactor substitute this figure for the deity?

Traditionally, these questions have been answered as follows: The *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 is none other than Satan, the archenemy of God, who appears so prominently in later literature. According to this interpretation, the Chonicler has replaced the deity with Satan as the instigator of David's sin in this passage in order to clear the deity of any charge of wrongdoing. More recent exegetes, well aware of the anachronistic interpretive tendencies of their predecessors, have exercised more caution in their explanation of the passage. These scholars are careful not to assume that the Chronicler conceived of Satan in exactly the same way as did the early Jews and Christians. But for many of these scholars, perhaps still the majority of them, 1 Chr 21:1 represents the final stage in the development of the doctrine concerning a superhuman *śāṭān* in the OT. They regard שטן in 1 Chronicles 21 as a proper noun. *The śāṭān* had finally become *Satan*.[4] Moreover, a growing number of recent

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are taken from the NRSV.

[3] The NRSV renders שטן as Satan.

[4] Those who translate שטן in 1 Chr 21:1 as a proper name include Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco: Word Books, 1986), 216–17; Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 246–47; Peter B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven/Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005), 257; Hans Duhm, *Die Bösen Geister im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904), 61; Paul Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology," *Bib* 85 (2004): 545–58; Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 119–21; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 418–19; Rivkah Schärf Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament* (Studies in Jungian Thought; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 155; Edward Langton, *Satan, a Portrait: A Study of the Character of Satan through the Ages* (1945; repr., Philadelphia: R. West, 1978), 10; J. G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles* (Daily Study Bible; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 69-70; Kirsten Nielsen, *Satan: The Prodigal Son? A Family Problem in the Bible* (Biblical Seminar 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 100–105; Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and*

interpreters take things a step further. They claim that even reading שטן in 1 Chronicles 21 as "Satan" is anachronistic. Instead, they prefer to understand the word as a common noun referring to an anonymous opponent of some sort. Some of these scholars have suggested that this figure be taken as an anonymous heavenly accuser.[5] But several recent interpreters have made a case for regarding this individual as an unnamed human adversary, whether a military opponent of Israel or an adviser in David's royal court who gives the king adverse counsel.[6] In this article, I respond to some of the more significant and more recent arguments regarding the identity and nature of the Chronicler's *śāṭān* figure and set forth my own explanation of this figure's identity and his presence in this story, an explanation that has been overlooked by scholars.

I. A Brief Survey of the Use of שטן ("Satan") Elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures

In all but four passages in the OT/Hebrew Bible, the noun שטן refers to a human individual and means something like "adversary" or "opponent" (see, e.g.,

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Demons (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 33–37; T. J. Wray and Gregory Mobley, *The Birth of Satan: Tracing the Devil's Biblical Roots* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 67. See also the following English translations: JB, KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, NJB, NRSV, and RSV. Werner E. Lemke translates שטן in this passage as "Satan" but allows that this translation is far from certain ("Synoptic Studies in the Chronicler's History" [Th.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1963], 60–61, esp. 61 n. 83).

[5] E.g, Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: śāṭān in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 43; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 127–45; Marvin E. Tate, "Satan in the Old Testament," *RevExp* 89 (1992): 464–66.

[6] E.g., Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (BEATAJ 9; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 145–49; eadem, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 373–75; eadem, *1 Chronik* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2002), 346–48; Gary N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 751–52; Steven L. McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentary; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 170–71; John H. Sailhamer, "1 Chronicles 21:1—A Study in Inter-Biblical Interpretation," *TJ* 10 n.s. (1989): 33–48; John W. Wright, "The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21," *JSOT* 60 (1993): 92-93. John Jarick seems to prefer the human understanding of the *śāṭān* in this verse (*1 Chronicles* [Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 125). He rules out the possibility of translating שטן as Satan. Instead, says Jarick, the Chonicler here, "may be saying no more than that the king received adverse counsel (that is to say, advice which ran counter to the best interest of the nation) upon which he was persuaded to undertake a census of the people." Pancratius C. Beentjes concludes his discussion of this matter with the recommendation that "one should at least reckon with the possibility that 1 Chr 21:1 refers to an unknown (military) adversary" ("Satan, God, and the Angel[s] in 1 Chronicles 21," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings—Origins, Development and Reception* [ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer et al; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2008], 140).

1 Sam 29:4; 1 Kgs 5:4 [Eng. 5:18]). In a couple of instances, the noun occurs in a legal context and may denote more specifically "accuser."[7] The four passages in which שטן refers to a heavenly adversary are the story of Balaam and his donkey in Numbers 22, the narrative prologue to Job (chs. 1–2), the vision of the high priest Joshua's trial in the heavenly court in Zechariah 3, and the passage under consideration here, the story of David's census in 1 Chronicles 21. In these four passages, שטן reflects the same semantic range that it carries when used with reference to humans, except, perhaps, in 1 Chronicles 21, where many suppose that it is a proper noun.

In Numbers 22, Balaam, a renowned sorcerer, is summoned by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the Israelites and, in so doing—Balak hopes—to give the Moabites the advantage in a battle with Israel. Although Balaam initially refuses the king's request, he eventually accedes and sets out for Moab. YHWH, the God of Israel, becomes angry that Balaam would set out with this purpose, so the angel of YHWH, sword in hand, positions himself in Balaam's path "as his opponent," לשטן לו (Num 22:22–23). Here the angel of YHWH acts as an adversary, a *śāṭān*, to Balaam. In particular, the angel has the task of punishing Balaam if the sorcerer is not obedient, ready to use his sword and strike Balaam dead on the road to Moab.[8]

In the well-known and tragic story of Job, one reads not just of "a *śāṭān*" but of "the Satan," השטן. Here שטן appears to function as the title of a particular member of the heavenly court.[9] The Satan suggests to God that the faithful Job is not nearly as righteous as God presumes but serves God only in exchange for divine blessing. So God allows the Satan to attack Job, testing Job's piety. Since the story of Job appears to be presented as exceptional in the workings of the heavenly court,

[7] See Ps 109:6 and, perhaps, 2 Sam 19:23 (Eng. 19:22). On the etymology and meaning of שטן, see Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 17–43.

[8] This summary smooths over certain tensions in the Balaam story, which most commentators cite as evidence that the pericope involving Balaam, his donkey, and the angel (Num 22:22–35) is not of a piece with the surrounding narrative. The most glaring of these tensions is the fact that the deity condones Balaam's journey in 22:20 but becomes angry when Balaam sets out in 22:22. Several recent commentators regard this pericope as an interpolation from a later tradition, a tradition that casts Balaam in a more negative light than does the surrounding narrative. See, e.g., Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 45–67; Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers = Ba-midbar: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 468–69; Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 154–59. Since the present discussion of the concept of a heavenly *śāṭān* in the OT is not diachronic, the source and date of this story need not detain us here. It is important only that this story would have been available to the redactor responsible for the mention of *śāṭān* 1 Chr 21:1.

[9] *Pace* the arguments of Day, who translates the definite article with the sense of "a certain one" and understands this figure as an ad hoc accuser (*Adversary in Heaven*, 43). In this interpretation, Day follows T. H. Gaster, who suggests a similar understanding of the *satan* in Job and in Zechariah—as ad hoc accusers ("Satan," *IDB* 4:224–25).

one must speculate a bit if one is to ascertain what would be business as usual for the court and its Satan figure. It is probable that the Satan in the narrative of Job is the member of the heavenly court who is commissioned to travel about the earth opposing humans who are deserving of divine punishment. But in Job's case he is given permission to exercise this function over an innocent—even exemplary—person.

Finally, in Zechariah 3, "the Satan," השטן, makes another appearance in the heavenly court. In this vision, Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest. Standing to Joshua's right (עמד על־ימינו) as an accuser is the Satan. As in Job 1–2, השטן is the title of a member of the heavenly court.[10] In Zechariah's vision, this figure takes on the role of juridical opponent or heavenly prosecutor, though the postexilic prophet may also have assumed that the Satan served as an agent of divine judgment, as seems to be presumed by the Joban narrative.

II. Previous Scholarship on the *Satan* in 1 Chronicles 21:1

Until just a few decades ago, the overwhelming majority of commentators and translators assumed that the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles was the same Satan, albeit perhaps in an earlier form, who appears so prominently in early Jewish and Christian tradition. This assumption was entirely understandable, since, in addition to being called שטן, this *śāṭān*'s activity, leading David into sin, sounds an awful lot like the activity of the devil of later tradition.[11] Furthermore, this interpretation seems to make sense on redaction-critical grounds. That the Chronicler would replace an angry Yhwh with Satan in this context would resolve the theological difficulty of having God lead David to do something for which Yhwh then punishes the king. In addition, there are terminological parallels between this passage and those that speak of "the Satan." The *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 stands up against (עמד על) Israel, and the Satan of Zech 3:1 stands at (עמד על) the right of Joshua the high priest. Further, the figure in Chronicles "incites" David to take a census of Israel, just as *the* Satan "incited" God against Job, both passages using the verb סות for the act of "inciting."

Although occasional dissenters would make their opinion known, the tide did not begin to turn on this matter until recent decades, prompted by the work of Sara Japhet and Peggy Day.[12] In 1988, Day made a case that this figure was not in fact

[10] Again, *pace* Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 43. See n. 9.

[11] Cf. the temptation of Jesus by "the devil" (ὁ διάβολος) in Matt 4:1–11. Note that the LXX of 1 Chr 21:1 translates שטן as διάβολος.

[12] Earlier dissenters from the consensus position included Heinrich Kaupel (*Die Dämonen im Alten Testament* [Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1930], 104–9), Franz Xaver Kugler (*Von Moses bis Paulus: Forschungen zur Geschichte Israels* [Münster: Aschendorff, 1922], 242–43), and N. H. Tur-Sinai (*The Book of Job: A New Commentary* [rev. ed.; Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967], 44), who

Satan but an unnamed heavenly accuser. She argued that, outside of 1 Chr 21:1 as it is normally translated, the earliest occurrence of Satan as a proper noun is not until the mid-second century B.C.E., about two centuries after the work of the Chronicler. Therefore, argued Day, it should not be taken for granted that the שטן of 1 Chronicles is the proper noun Satan.[13] She leveled a critique also against the redaction-critical basis for the traditional interpretation that the Chronicler wanted to free the LORD from any blame with regard to David's sin. She pointed out that the Chronicler does not elsewhere appear concerned to "clean up" the deity's act. The troubling story of the spirit commissioned by YHWH to lead Ahab astray (1 Kgs 22:1–28), for instance, appears in 2 Chronicles (18:1–27), which seems to undermine the redaction-critical explanation for the substitution of שטן for YHWH in 1 Chr 21:1. Day then made a case for understanding the *śāṭān* of this verse as a human opponent. She observed that *śāṭān* is used in 1 Kings 11 to refer to terrestrial opponents of Israel. Moreover, that a military census is carried out by Joab, a military officer, accords well with this interpretation. Finally, that the *śāṭān* stood up against (ויעמד על) Israel may denote military action.[14] Day also considered the possibility that the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 was a heavenly opponent, such as the deceptive spirit of 1 Kings 22 who led Ahab to his death.[15] In the end, however, she favored a third interpretation, namely, that the Chronicler's *śāṭān* was a divine accuser, rather than either a terrestrial or a celestial opponent.[16] She argued that the announcement of divine wrath as in 2 Sam 24:1 is a legalistic expression and that the Chronicler's mention of a heavenly accuser in this context would have constituted a faithful reading of his Deuteronomistic source.

A year after the publication of Day's arguments, Sara Japhet's 1977 work on Chronicles, originally published in Hebrew, was translated into English.[17] In her discussion of the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21, Japhet argued that, were שטן to become a proper name, it would likely do so by adding the definite article, not by dropping it. That it lacks the article in 1 Chr 21:1 indicates that it is merely a generic noun.[18]

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argue that the satan is a human adversary, and Gaster ("Satan," 225) who regards this figure as an unnamed heavenly opponent.

[13] Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 132. There is a range of opinions as to the precise date of the Chronicler's work, with perhaps the majority of scholars dating it to the fourth century B.C.E. See the recent discussions in Japhet, *1 Chronik*, 50–54; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 13–16; Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 101–17; McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 29–33.

[14] Day cites 2 Chr 20:23, where this same construction is used of the attack of Ammon and Moab on the people of Seir (*Adversary in Heaven*, 143).

[15] Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 143–44.

[16] Ibid., 144. Tate is persuaded by Day's arguments ("Satan in the Old Testament," 464–66).

[17] Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*. This work, a revision of her doctoral dissertation at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was originally published by Mosad Bialik in Jerusalem, in 1977.

[18] For this grammatical principle, Japhet cites GKC §126d (*Ideology,* 146–47).

If one accepts that שטן is a generic noun rather than a proper noun, Japhet contends, then there is no reason to understand the adversary of 1 Chronicles 21 as anything other than human. Japhet also responded to the argument that the shared terminology with Zechariah 3 indicates that *the* Satan was in the Chronicler's mind. According to Japhet, one should distinguish between "standing to the right" (עמד על־ימין) of someone for the purpose of accusation, as in Zech 3:1 and Ps 109:6, and "standing up against" (עמד על) someone, as in 1 Chr 21:1 and, e.g., Judg 6:31.[19]

Despite the objections that have been issued against the interpretation of *śāṭān* as the proper noun Satan (capital *S*) in 1 Chr 21:1 and the growing number of scholars who are persuaded by them, there remain a number of proponents for the traditional reading.[20] Ralph Klein, for example, responds to Japhet's claim that the lack of the definite article on the noun שטן indicates that it is not a proper noun. Klein cites as a counterexample the use of אדם, "Adam," as a proper noun in Gen 5:1 as opposed to the common האדם, "the human," of Gen 2:7.[21]

III. The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Chronicler's Satan

Deciding one way or another as to the identity of the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles is not a simple matter. Reasonable arguments have been made for each of the positions presented above. It may be impossible to refute any of them absolutely, leaving only the correct answer standing. Deciding between them will more likely come down to which position has the most in its favor, not which one cannot be absolutely disproved. In order to sort through and evaluate the arguments made up to this point and also to add others to them, it makes sense to separate the discussion, albeit somewhat artificially, into two parts. First, I will deal with the matter of whether the *śāṭān* of 1 Chr 21:1 is heavenly or earthly. Then, I will address the issue of whether the Chronicler speaks of Satan or a *śāṭān*.[22]

Either a human *śāṭān* or a superhuman *śāṭān* would make a certain amount of sense in the context of 1 Chr 21:1. But a superhuman interpretation is to be preferred for the following reasons. First, the idea of Yhwh delegating certain less pleasant aspects of the deity's work to a superhuman *śāṭān* is paralleled in both

[19] Japhet, *Ideology,* 147–48.

[20] For examples of recent advocates of each of these positions, refer to nn. 4–6 above.

[21] Klein (*1 Chronicles*, 418 n. 6) refers the reader to GKC §125f.

[22] It would also be possible to reverse the order and address the question of whether שטן is a proper or a common noun and then whether this figure is heavenly or earthly. The conclusion reached here does not depend on the order in which the issues are raised, and there is considerable overlap between the two facets of the discussion. Evidence that *śāṭān* is a proper noun, for instance, might be set in opposition to regarding it as either an unnamed earthly or an unnamed heavenly opponent.

earlier and later texts (e.g., Numbers 22; Job 1–2; *Jubilees* 10). In addition, while YHWH raises up human *śāṭān*s in response to Solomon's sin (1 Kings 11), the work of leading someone to make a disastrous decision has a closer parallel in the deceptive superhuman spirit who led Ahab to his death in 1 Kings 22. Solomon's *śāṭān*s, on the other hand, were military opponents. While John H. Sailhamer and Steven L. McKenzie have argued that the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles refers to a military opponent, this is not really a viable option, since it would be odd for a military opponent to סות David to take a census.[23] The word סות, translated in this verse as "incite," refers elsewhere in the biblical literature to the act of persuasion, often in the negative context of one party seductively "enticing" or "misleading" another.[24] It would not likely be used to describe military aggression to which the threatened king responds by taking inventory of his fighting force.[25] Japhet's suggestion that this *śāṭān* is a member of David's court who gives the king adverse counsel fits the language of 1 Chr 21:1 better than does the idea that this *śāṭān* is a military enemy, but, again, the work of misleading someone to make a disastrous move is more closely paralleled by a superhuman figure than a human one.

Second, the closest biblical parallel to 1 Chronicles 21 is, of course, its source, 2 Samuel 24. The *śāṭān* in the Chronicles passage is doing exactly what YHWH does in Samuel, attacking Israel by moving David to take a census. To understand this individual as a heavenly rather than an earthly opponent requires one to posit a much less drastic interpretive maneuver on the part of the redactor. The redactor in the former case would have intended merely to make explicit the intermediary through which YHWH exercised divine judgment and probably thought that he was being faithful to the meaning of the text before him. If the redactor intended his *śāṭān* to denote a human adversary, then he would have been creating a reading that significantly alters, if not contradicts, his source.[26]

Third, for one to interpret the *śāṭān* in this passage as a human member of

[23] Sailhamer, "1 Chronicles 21:1," 33–48; McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 170–71.

[24] In addition to its occurrences in 1 Chr 21:1 and 2 Sam 24:1, this verb is found also in Deut 13:7; Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14; 1 Sam 26:19; 1 Kgs 21:25; 2 Kgs 18:32; 2 Chr 18:2, 31; 32:11, 15; Job 2:3; 36:16, 18; Isa 36:18; Jer 38:22; 43:3.

[25] See the explanation of סות offered by Knoppers, who seems to argue that one of the surrounding nations set out to attack Israel, not directly but indirectly by seducing David into taking a census, thus bringing God's wrath upon Israel (*I Chronicles 10–29*, 751–52). This interpretation reconciles the verb סות with the notion of a foreign military opponent, but the complexity that it requires the verse to imply renders this interpretation less likely than a superhuman understanding of the *śāṭān*.

[26] Sailhamer argues that the Chronicler was faithfully interpreting his source according to the exegetical conventions of his day and understood the reference to YHWH's anger in 2 Sam 24:1 to imply that the deity raised up a military adversary against David ("1 Chronicles 21:1," 33–48). Sailhamer's inclination to prefer a reading of 1 Chr 21:1 that is not at odds with 2 Sam 24:1 is correct. But, as we observed above, the military-adversary reading is not really a viable option, since such an opponent probably would not be said to "incite" (סות) David.

David's court leaves some vexing gaps in the story. Who is this human opponent? Why is he seeking Israel's harm or, at least, counseling the king so tragically poorly?[27] A heavenly *śāṭān* would need no further explanation. The ancient reader would presume that such a figure must have been a punishing emissary of the deity. Granted, a reader might wonder why YHWH was angry with Israel in the first place, but this question is left unanswered also by the Chronicler's source text 2 Sam 24:1 and creates no problem for the superhuman *śāṭān* interpretation. We have sufficient grounds, then, for concluding that the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 is a heavenly being. Although the following paragraphs will attempt to ascertain whether this *śāṭān* is an anonymous heavenly adversary or *the* heavenly Satan, the arguments below also qualify as further support for the idea of this *śāṭān* as indeed a celestial being, as opposed to a human one.

A preliminary remark is in order before we begin our examination of whether שטן in 1 Chr 21:1 is a proper noun or a common noun. It is important to realize that whether one translates שטן as "a satan" or "Satan," this figure is certainly not to be thought of as an independent opponent of God. All three previous super-human *śāṭān*s, those of Numbers, Job, and Zechariah, have been about the work of the deity. In Numbers 22, the *śāṭān* is none other than the angel of YHWH. In Job and Zechariah he is a member of the heavenly court, employed by and subject to God. Even in the second-century B.C.E. book of *Jubilees*, the "*śāṭān*" figure (the Prince of Mastema) is still on assignment, carrying out God's work of judgment on earth. In texts both earlier and later than 1 Chronicles, superhuman *śāṭān*s work for God. It would be superbly anachronistic to conclude any differently in the case of 1 Chronicles. The targumic rendering of this verse, "The Lord raised up a *śāṭān*/Satan against Israel, and he [the aforementioned *śāṭān*/Satan] incited David to number Israel," supposed by many scholars to be a conflation of 2 Sam 24:1 and 1 Chr 21:1, is in keeping with the intent behind the text of Chronicles.[28]

In deciding just who the שטן of 1 Chronicles 21 is, an anonymous superhuman *śāṭān* or the Satan, the best evidence is the conceptual and terminological parallels between this passage and other passages that speak of a *śāṭān* figure. Arguments that have been made on the basis of the redactor's theological agenda are inadequate to explain the presence of this figure in the Chronicler's narrative. The hypothesis that the redactor replaces God with Satan in order to free the deity from

[27] And if this opponent was a military aggressor, then how was this threat finally resolved?

[28] See, e.g., J. Stanley McIvor, *The Targum of Chronicles: Translated, with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (ArBib 19; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 21; he says that the targumist here answers the question of how 1 Chr 21:1 and 2 Sam 24:1 can be reconciled. See also Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 418–19; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955), 143. Rudolph acknowledges that the theology of the targumist and the Chronicler are not all that far apart, but the targumist was even more in line with Chronicles than Rudolph realized. Evans similarly acknowledges that the thinking of the redactor, whom he identifies as the Chronicler, and that of the targumist are analogous ("Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21," 554).

any charge of wrongdoing fails to take into account that, whether Satan or *a śāṭān*, this heavenly figure is doing the work of the deity. Any distance between YHWH and David's sin created by this substitution is very slight, since YHWH would have been understood as the ultimate mover behind the action of the Chronicler's *śāṭān*. Likewise, Biblical Hebrew grammar does not point unambiguously to one interpretation over the other. Although it is possible that the absence of the definite article on שטן suggests that the word is being used as common noun, it is entirely plausible that the very same form would appear as a proper noun.[29]

With regard to parallels with other *śāṭān*s in the OT, exegetes who favor the Satan interpretation have noted the occurrence of עמד על in both 1 Chronicles 21 and Zechariah 3. Likewise, סות is found in both 1 Chronicles 21 and Job 2.[30] These parallels with passages that speak of "the Satan" may indicate that a particular individual was in mind. Interpreters who regard the *śāṭān* of this passage as an unnamed individual, however, are correct to emphasize the dissimilarity between 1 Chronicles 21 and these supposed parallels. For example, Japhet's contention that one ought to distinguish between עמד על־ימין ("to stand at the right [in order to accuse]") in Zechariah 3 and Psalm 109 and עמד על in 1 Chr 21:1, which denotes more general opposition, is well taken.[31] Furthermore, the use of the root סות in both Job and 1 Chronicles is probably not all that telling. In Job, God is the object of the verb, while in Chronicles, David is.[32] Despite the parallel vocabulary, the two passages are quite different conceptually. What undermines the force of this parallel with Job even more, however, is the fact that ויסת in 1 Chr 21:1, this verse's lone parallel with Job, is found in 2 Sam 24:1. It was not supplied by the redactor but copied by him from his Deuteronomistic source, so one should not make too much of this single parallel as evidence that the redactor had something like the Joban *śāṭān* in mind.

What seems to have gone unnoticed by commentators, however, is that there is another OT passage that speaks of a *śāṭān* figure, and the parallels between 1 Chronicles 21 and this passage are much more numerous and more significant than those supposed between Chronicles and Job–Zechariah. These more weighty parallels should be determinative in one's interpretation of 1 Chr 21:1.

Aside from the Deuteronomistic version of the same story in 2 Samuel 24, the biblical pericope with which one can most meaningfully compare 1 Chronicles 21 is the story of Balaam and his donkey in Num 22:22–35. Further, there are com-

[29] For common nouns that become proper via the addition of the definite article, see GKC §126e and Joüon §137b. For common nouns that behave as proper nouns without the use of the article, see GKC §125f and Joüon §137d.

[30] Those who adduce this parallel with Job in support of their interpretation of the passage include Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, 257; Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21," 553–54; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 418–19; Nielsen, *Satan: The Prodigal Son?* 102.

[31] Japhet, *Ideology*, 147–48.

[32] Klein also notes the different direct objects (*1 Chronicles*, 418 n. 8).

pelling reasons to suspect that certain parallels between the story of Balaam and his donkey and 2 Samuel 24 tipped the redactor off as to how to interpret the latter. The similarities between Num 22:22–35 and 2 Samuel 24 include the following.

1. Both of these accounts begin in a like fashion by declaring that the deity is angry.

   Num 22:22a

   ויחר־אף אלהים

   God's anger was kindled . . .

   2 Sam 24:1a

   ויסף אף־יהוה לחרות

   Again the anger of the Lord was kindled . . .

2. In both of these stories the angel of Yhwh goes forth to execute God's judgment.

   Num 22:22b

   ויתיצב מלאך יהוה בדרך לשטן לו

   [A]nd the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary.

   2 Sam 24:16

   וישלח ידו המלאך ירושלם לשחתה וינחם יהוה אל־הרעה ויאמר למלאך המשחית בעם רב עתה הרף ידך ומלאך יהוה היה עם־גרן האורנה היבסי

   But when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented concerning the evil, and said to the angel who was bringing destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." The angel of the Lord was then by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

3. When Balaam and David see the angel of Yhwh, they both confess their sin.

   Num 22:34

   ויאמר בלעם אל־מלאך יהוה חטאתי . . .

   Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned . . ."

   2 Sam 24:17

   ויאמר הנה אנכי חטאתי . . .

   He said, "It is I who have sinned . . ."[33]

[33] The NRSV translates this phrase in context, "he said to the Lord, 'I alone have sinned.'"

4. The situation is then resolved in both accounts as the deity instructs Balaam and David how they might avert disaster—or further disaster in the case of David. In the case of Balaam, he will not be killed if he speaks only what YHWH commands him to speak when he arrives in Moab. As for David, the plague will be stopped and Jerusalem spared, if David builds an altar and makes an offering on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (Num 22:35; 2 Sam 24:18–25). Both men obey their orders.

5. A further parallel, and one that should not be underestimated, is the seemingly inconsistent dealings of the deity in both of these passages. In the Balaam story as it now stands, the deity appears to grant Balaam permission to undertake his journey but then responds in anger when the sorcerer sets out on it (Num 22:20–22).[34] Likewise, God moves David to take the census of Israel but then sends a plague against the people in response (2 Sam 24:1).

Given the uncanny resemblance between these two narratives, it would not be surprising for an exegete of the postexilic period to read one of them in light of the other. The Chronicler's history elsewhere makes use of information found in the Pentateuch, including the book of Numbers, and it is entirely plausible that the historian would have had access to both sources necessary for this type of reading.[35]

Moreover, since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars have come to recognize that the Chronicler relied on a copy of Samuel that was in many respects more closely akin to 4QSam[a] than to MT Samuel.[36] This is relevant to our discussion, since the account of David's census in 4QSam[a] contains an additional and

[34] On the present shape of the Balaam story, see n. 8 above.

[35] Klein (*1 Chronicles*, 38) identifies the following places where 1 Chronicles makes use of material found in Numbers: 2:3–8 (Num 26:19–22); 4:24 (Num 26:12–14); 5:3 (Num 26:5–7); 5:27–41 [Eng 6:1–15] (Num 3:17–19); 7:1 (Num 26:23–24); 7:6 (Num 26:38–41); 7:13 (Num 26:48–49); 7:20 (Num 26:35–36); 8:1–2 (Num 26:38–41). The traditions common to Chronicles and Numbers, however, are often shared by another book of the Pentateuch. But that our redactor had access to the Balaam pericope of Numbers 22 is certainly more than plausible. Of course, one cannot be certain that it is the Chronicler who is responsible for the reading in 1 Chr 21:1, as opposed to an earlier redactor on whose work the Chronicler relied. Lemke ("Synoptic Studies in the Chronicler's History," 3–6) and Steven L. McKenzie (*The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* [HSM 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], 34) urge redaction critics to approach the text of Chronicles with restraint. According to these scholars, two criteria must be met in order for one to be confident that the Chonicler's text is a tendentious reworking: (1) the reading in Chronicles can be attested by no major version of Samuel; and (2) the reading must reflect an agenda of the Chronicler that can be discerned throughout the work. Based on this second criterion, perhaps, one ought to refrain from passing judgment on the source of *śāṭān* in 1 Chr 21:1.

[36] Werner E. Lemke, "Synoptic Studies in the Chronicler's History," 239–40; idem, "The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History," *HTR* 58 (1965): 362; Eugene C. Ulrich, Jr., *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), 163–64.

substantial parallel with the Balaam pericope, which, though not present in the MT of 2 Samuel, is found in 1 Chronicles 21. Upon seeing the angel, in all three versions of the census story, David confesses his sin (MT 2 Sam 24:17; 4QSam[a] frg.164, lines 3–5; 1 Chr 21:17), as does Balaam in Num 22:34. But in 4QSam[a] and Chronicles, the description of the angel and of David's reaction to this heavenly being sounds much like that of the Balaam story:

Num 22:31	*1 Chr. 21:16 (//4QSam[a] frg. 164, lines 1–3)*
ויגל יהוה את־עיני בלעם וירא את־מלאך יהוה נצב בדרך וחרבו שלפה בידו ויקד וישתחו לאפיו	וישא דויד את־עיניו וירא את־מלאך יהוה עמד בין הארץ ובין השמים וחרבו שלופה בידו נטויה על־ירושלם ויפל דויד והזקנים מכסים בשקים על־פניהם
Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face.	David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces.

In strikingly similar language, Numbers and 4QSam[a] (//1 Chronicles) describe the angel of Yhwh and the encounters of Balaam and David with this armed messenger.[37] This further parallel between the Balaam passage and the census story, as it is told in 4QSam[a], increases the potential for an interpreter to read the Samuel text in light of Numbers 22.[38]

[37] The text of 4QSam[a] frg. 164, lines 1–3, differs somewhat from 1 Chr 21:16, but these minor divergences are inconsequential as far as the present investigation is concerned. For a reconstruction of the Qumran text and a list of the differences from the Chronicles version, see F. M. Cross, D. W. Parry, and R. J. Saley, "4QSam[a]," in *Qumran Cave 4.XII: 1–2 Samuel* (ed. Frank Moore Cross, Donald W. Parry, Richard J. Saley, and Eugene Ulrich; DJD 17; Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 192–93. A similar passage is found in Josh 5:13–15, which describes Joshua's meeting with the commander of the army of Yhwh.

[38] Most scholars conclude that the depiction of the angel with the drawn sword was lost from MT 2 Samuel 24 through haplography rather than interpolated into the story by a later redactor. See, e.g., Ulrich, *Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, 157; McKenzie, *Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 56 ; Cross, Parry, and Saley, "4QSam[a]," 193; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 415–16 n. 30; Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 747. Cf. Paul E. Dion, who draws attention to the way the Chronicler makes use of this tradition found in his *Vorlage* ("The Angel with the Drawn Sword [II Chr 21, 16]: An Exercise in Restoring the Balance of Text Criticism *and* Attention to Context," *ZAW* 97 [1985]: 114–17). If one allows, however, for the possibility that the shorter form of the text, as found in the MT, is the earlier and that the description of the sword-wielding angel is an

At last, we return to 1 Chr 21:1, keeping in mind the traditions to which the redactor who revised the Deuteronomistic census story had access.

Num 22:22

ויחר־אף אלהים כי־הולך הוא
ויתיצב מלאך יהוה בדרך לשטן לו

God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as a *śāṭān* to him.[39]

2 Sam 24:1

ויסף אף־יהוה לחרות בישראל . . .

Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel . . .

1 Chr 21:1

ויעמד שטן על־ישראל . . .

A *śāṭān*/Satan stood up against Israel . . .

It is not difficult to see why a redactor would have substituted *śāṭān* for Yhwh in this passage. The stories are so similar that it would have made sense to an interpreter to understand one of them on the basis of the other. While it is not impossible that the redactor also had access to copies of Job and Zechariah, let us not forget that when choosing the word to substitute for Yhwh here, the redactor did not choose השטן, "the Satan," as it is found in those two works. He chose simply שטן, "*śāṭān*," without the definite article. *The only other place in all of the OT where* שטן *without the article refers to a heavenly being is the Balaam pericope of Numbers 22.* This fact, along with the many other parallels between the Balaam story and the story of David's census, makes it unlikely that the redactor would have intended anything else by שטן than what is intended in the Balaam story, "a *śāṭān*."[40] These

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interpolation, then the addition of this text would easily be explained on the basis of similarities between the census story and Numbers 22. This would mean that interpreters had already begun to read the census story and the Balaam story together prior to the composition of Chronicles. Continuing this line of thought, one might observe that the portion of 4QSam[a] that would contain 24:1 is not extant. Were one to grant the possibility that the census story had already begun to be conformed to the one in Numbers 22, one could also ask whether the *śāṭān*, too, appeared already in this version of the story. Whatever the origin of the description of the angel, the textual tradition that lies behind the Chronicler's census story appears to have resembled the Balaam story even more closely than does MT Samuel, which increases the potential for a redactor, whether the Chronicler or another interpreter, to merge the two traditions.

[39] The NRSV translates לשטן לו as "as his adversary."

[40] That the Chronicler understood the *śāṭān* to be the "angel of Yhwh" in exactly the same sense as the author of the Balaam story is unlikely. But this fact is not a problem for our interpretation of the Chronicles passage. The angel of Yhwh who appears in 2 Kgs 19:35 is referred to in 2 Chr 32:21 simply as "an angel." Similarly, the angel of Yhwh who appears later in 1 Chronicles 21 is introduced only as "an angel" in 21:15. The angel of Yhwh in Chronicles was no more than an angel sent by Yhwh. So also Meier, "Angel of Yahweh," 54. Thus, the angel of Yhwh who

parallels also make it unlikely that a terrestrial *śāṭān* is intended by שטן in 1 Chr 21:1. Even if one is not inclined to accept the redaction-critical basis for this editorial move as posited above, the parallelism alone that exists between the two passages renders it likely that the *śāṭān* in 1 Chronicles is to be understood in the same way as that of Numbers 22, "a (superhuman) opponent."[41]

One cannot rule out beyond the shadow of a doubt the possibility that the redactor was using שטן as a proper noun, "Satan." Even if he was making use of the Balaam story, he may have reinterpreted that *śāṭān* tradition in light of his knowledge of a particular heavenly adversary named "Satan." But, although the redactor could have in theory intended something different by שטן from the *śāṭān* (lowercase *s*) of the Balaam story, there is no evidence whatsoever in Chronicles for this shift in meaning. In the absence of such evidence, one should presume that the redactor means by *śāṭān* something very much like the opponent of the Balaam narrative, a heavenly punisher.

One should also be careful to distinguish the superhuman-opponent interpretation from the heavenly-"accuser" interpretation preferred by some scholars.[42] These scholars are correct that this *śāṭān* is an unnamed heavenly individual. But they go beyond what the text itself suggests when they further define this figure as a heavenly "accuser." There is no hint of legal accusation in this passage, only divine opposition similar to that which Balaam receives from his *śāṭān*. There is no court scene, and the *śāṭān* stands at no one's right in accusation, as do the *śāṭān* of Zechariah 3 and Psalm 109.[43] The Chronicler's *śāṭān* comes to inflict divine punishment, as does Balaam's *śāṭān*.

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comes as a *śāṭān* in Numbers 22 becomes simply "a *śāṭān*" in 1 Chr 21:1. The Balaam narrative blurs the distinction between YHWH and the angel of YHWH, but the distinction was probably much more clear in the mind of our redactor. Granted, also, the roles of the two *śāṭān*s are not identical. In Numbers, the *śāṭān* comes with a sword to kill Balaam. In Chronicles, the *śāṭān* punishes Israel by leading David into grave error. But the similarities need not be exact for the parallelism to be overwhelming and decisive.

[41] That the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 is to be taken as an anonymous heavenly opponent most closely resembles the view stated by Gaster in the *IDB* ("Satan," 225). Gaster, however, does not explain his rationale for this interpretation.

[42] Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 144; Tate, "Satan in the Old Testament," 464–66.

[43] Day's claim that the announcement of YHWH's anger in 2 Sam 24:1 is a "legalistic expression" does not go very far toward establishing the presence of an accuser in this passage (*Adversary in Heaven*, 144). She cites as support Dennis J. McCarthy ("The Wrath of Yahweh and the Structural Unity of the Deuteronomistic History," in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* [ed. James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis; New York: Ktav, 1974], 100), who says only that this expression of wrath in the Deuteronomistic History "is always tied to a proclamation of a divine judgment announcing a penalty." But McCarthy does not go so far as to refer to the Deuteronomistic terminology concerning God's wrath as "legalistic." It is "legalistic" only to the extent that any punishment for sin is legalistic. There is no reason to suppose that it would call to the mind of the Chronicler a formal trial requiring the services of a heavenly accuser.

One would probably be going too far to read much more than this into the activity of this satanic emissary. For example, although this *śāṭān* leads David to commit a sin, it is not correct to think of this figure as a tempter, let alone the Tempter. That he incites David to do wrong is merely circumstantial. He does not incite David to sin for the sake of sin itself or in rebellion against God. This would be contrary to his identity as YHWH's emissary. His method is merely the means to an end. Note that the verse reads, "A *śāṭān* stood up against Israel." Israel is the ultimate object of this opponent's work, not David. His objective is Israel's punishment; David's misdeed merely happens to be his strategy in this particular instance. While this *śāṭān*'s activity may have contributed to later notions of Satan as tempter, the *śāṭān* of 1 Chronicles 21 is to be regarded exclusively as a superhuman agent of divine punishment.

IV. Conclusion

The preceding analysis leads one to conclude that the *śāṭān* of 1 Chr 21:1 came to be there by the hand of a redactor who was reading 2 Samuel 24 through the lens of the Balaam story in Numbers 22. This *śāṭān* is not merely a human opponent of Israel but a superhuman, angelic figure. Though it is not absolutely impossible that שטן in this passage is a proper noun, there is little to suggest this. The opponent here is more likely an anonymous superhuman adversary. Whether Satan or *a śāṭān*, this superhuman figure is not the archenemy of God or a tempter, as is the devil in later tradition. The *śāṭān* of 1 Chr 21:1 is an emissary of the deity, carrying out YHWH's punishment of Israel.

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"She Binds Her Arms": Rereading Proverbs 31:17

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The verb אמץ *piel* takes זרע ("arm") as a direct object once in the Hebrew Bible, in Prov 31:17, in the hymn to the woman of valor: חגרה בעוז מתניה ותאמץ זרעותיה.[1] The phrase is generally taken to refer to strengthening one's arms:

> She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. (KJV)
> She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. (NRSV)
> She girds herself with strength, [a]nd exerts her arms. (NJPS)
> She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong. (AB)[2]
> She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms sturdy. (WBC)[3]

It is not altogether clear what concrete action, if any, is involved in strengthening one's arms; in any case, most translators seem to take it as a metaphor for entering upon one's task eagerly or vigorously.[4] Henoch Yalon offers a different rendering of

I wish to thank Dr. Aaron Koller and Avi Shmidman for their many helpful comments on an earlier draft of this note.

[1] The phrase אמץ *piel* + זרע recurs in a fragmentary ostracon from Arad, evidently in a military context. See Yohanan Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions* (in cooperation with Joseph Naveh; trans. Judith Ben-Or; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981), 103. Contra Aharoni and Katrin Brockmöller, *Eine Frau der Stärke—wer findet sie? Exegetische Analysen und intertextuelle Lektüren zu Spr 31, 10-31* (Berlin: Philo, 2004), 125 n. 430, this phrase must be distinguished from Ps 89:22, אף זרועי תאמצנו, where זרועי is the subject, not the object, of אמץ *piel*. אמץ *piel* + זרע is attested postbiblically in a prayer in Sir 33:7 (MS B): האדר יד ואמץ זרוע וימין ("glorify hand, and strengthen arm and right").

[2] R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 18; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 187.

[3] Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), 243.

[4] Scott's idiomatic rendering of the second half of the verse is: "And goes to work with a will" (*Proverbs*, 185). NJPS paraphrases: "And performs her tasks with vigor." Christine Roy Yoder

the phrase: "and she binds her arms"; that is, she fastens her upper garment to free her arms for work.[5] Yalon's approach is anticipated by the tenth-century Karaite translator and commentator Yefet, who writes that the woman "sets about (her) tasks while girded (*mašdūd*) of waists and sleeves, in order that she not become tangled up in her work, and that her hands not falter."[6] On this rendering, the parallelism of the verse is stronger, as both halves now concern the act of binding. Yalon gathers evidence, primarily from postbiblical Hebrew, for the meaning אמץ *piel* "to bind." He also cites two late rabbinic sources, both narrative expansions of Genesis 22, that allegedly employ the phrase attested in Prov 31:17b with the sense of binding:

> He tied his two arms and two legs and trussed him upon the altar. And he bound (אמץ) his two arms (זרועותיו) and placed his two knees upon him, and arranged the fire and the wood.[7]

> Straightaway he arranged the wood and trussed him on the altar above the wood, and bound (אמץ) his arms (זרועותיו) and rolled up his garment and placed his two knees upon him with great force.[8]

The sense of אמץ *piel* + זרע in these texts is unclear. In the second, not אמץ *piel* + זרע but the following phrase ("and rolled up his garment") seems to depict Abraham as freeing his arms in preparation for the sacrifice. The probative value of these late rabbinic texts for the interpretation of Prov 31:17b is questionable not only because of their obscurity and lateness but also because they are too close to the biblical verse. The fact that these texts employ the same words as Prov 31:17b allows for the possibility that they depend on it. In this case, the two texts would offer (ambiguous) evidence for a rabbinic take on Prov 31:17b, but would not constitute independent instantiations of the phrase. Here I adduce new evidence from rabbinic and other sources that confirms Yefet's and Yalon's interpretation of Prov 31:17b. Before treating this material, I review the biblical evidence for אמץ *piel* with the sense "to bind."

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offers this restatement of the verse: "Binding up her skirts and strengthening her arms (for work, so LXX; 31:17), the Woman of Substance sets about her task" (*Wisdom as a Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31* [BZAW 304; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001], 82).

[5] See Henoch Yalon, "אמץ," *Leš* 32 (1967): 1–4; idem, "Addenda to אמץ," *Leš* 32 (1968): 407–8. Both are reprinted in idem, *Studies in the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1971), 350–55. David Yellin, in a posthumously published note ("חזק, אמץ, יסר," *Sinai* 65 [1969]: 139–40), also assigns אמץ in Prov 31:17b the sense of הידוק, but does not elaborate on the meaning of the phrase.

[6] Michael G. Wechsler, "The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben ʿEli on Proverbs 31:10–31," *JJS* 54 (2003): 305.

[7] *Pirqe R. El.* 30 (Higger ed., p. 195); for "placed," see MS B (Higger ed., p. 261 n. 60).

[8] Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrasch* (3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1967), 1.37 (*Midrash Wa-yosha*).

The semantic fields of binding and strength overlap because both instantiate the more general notion of fastness or securedness. The root חזק ordinarily conveys strength in Biblical Hebrew, but its cognates in Syriac and Arabic (*ḥzq*) indicate binding. The latter sense is preserved in at least one case in Biblical Hebrew חזק, Isa 22:21: ואבנטך אחזקנו, "I will . . . gird him with your sash" (NJPS).[9] From the opposite direction, passive participles of the root קשר signal strength in Gen 30:41: הצאן המקשרות, "the sturdier animals"; and Gen 30:42: הקשרים, "the sturdy" (NJPS).[10] That the root אמץ also straddles the boundary between strength and binding is suggested by its two standard translation equivalents in *Neofiti*, זרז (etymologically "to gird") and תקף ("to be strong"). The case of Prov 31:17b aside, no unambiguous instance of אמץ *piel* "to bind" is preserved in Biblical Hebrew, but the more general sense of securing or attaching is called for in a number of cases. Twice אמץ *piel* governs ברכים ("knees") (Nah 2:11; Job 4:4). As knees tend to tremble (Nah 2:11) or shake (Dan 5:6)—in the latter case, the shaking knees parallel the "loosened knots" of the loins (וקטרי חרצה משתרין)—to "strengthen" them is, concretely, to set them fast. Yalon takes note of two verses, Isa 44:14 and Ps 80:16, where אמץ *piel* parallels נטע ("to plant"), which is a kind of setting fast.[11] A link between binding and planting is supported by Akkadian *ḫarāšu*, used for planting trees and also for mooring, tethering, and tying.[12]

At various places in the tannaitic and amoraic corpora the phrase קשר *piel* + כתף (or a variant thereof) is attested in parallel with חגר *qal* + מתן. One tannaitic text, *t. Kelim B. Meṣiʿa* 2:1 (MS Vienna), addresses the purity status of טבעת שהוא חוגר בה את מתניו ומקשר בה בין כתיפיו, "a ring with which one girds his loins or binds between his shoulders."[13] The Tosefta evidently refers to a beltlike structure used to collect loose clothing around the hips and chest, and thus to free the legs

[9] Yalon ("אמץ," 350) and Yellin ("חזק, אמץ, יסר," 139) both cite this verse.

[10] Abraham Tal demonstrates that the roots סעד, סיע, and סמך (and more tentatively עזר) can convey the action not only of assisting or supporting but also of approaching or gathering ("Observations on the Meaning of סעד," in *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic in Memory of Dov Eron* [ed. Aron Dotan; *Teʿuda* 6; Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1988], 31–35). I believe, however, that this phenomenon is different from the one of concern here and that the polysemy of these roots stems rather from the core notion of proximity. Cf. the Arabic root *wly*.

[11] See Yalon, "אמץ," 353.

[12] *CAD H* 95–96 (s.v. *ḫarāšu*). See also Ps 80:18, which plays on Ps 80:16. The psalmist prays that God set his hand על איש ימינך על בן אדם אמצת לך. If אמץ *piel* in the second prepositional phrase has the sense "to attach, secure," then a semantic correlate emerges for the syntactic parallelism of the two prepositional phrases: the object of God's protection is at God's right hand (ימינך), attached to God (אמצת לך). Another noteworthy case is Prov 8:28, where God is said to have "strengthened" the clouds (באמצו שחקים); in Akkadian, one "gathers" (*kaṣāru*) clouds. *CAD K* 260–61 (s.v. *kaṣāru*).

[13] The pericope is cited in *b. Šabb.* 52b.

and arms for movement.[14] Again the *Sifra* (*Milu'im* 1:2 [Weiss ed., p. 43b; Codex Assemani, p. 189) offers a parable about a woman who, having lost but then regained her husband's favor, חגרה את מותניה וקישרה את כתפיה והיתה משמשתו יתיר מדאי, "girt her loins and bound her shoulders and took to serving him more than sufficiently." In *Gen. Rab.* 101 (Theodor-Albeck ed., p. 1287) = *y. Soṭah* 1:10 (7b), which comments on Gen 50:10, the Canaanites perform some kindness for the party of Israelites that has arrived from Egypt to bury Jacob. According to one view, אזורי מתניהם התירו, "they unloosed the belts of their loins." According to another, קשרות כתפותיהן התירו, "they unloosed the ties of their shoulders."[15]

The semantic proximity of אמץ *piel* and קשר *piel* and the fact that both אמץ *piel* + זרע in Prov 31:17b and קשר *piel* + כתף in the rabbinic sources parallel the girding of loins suggest that the two expressions, אמץ *piel* + זרע and קשר *piel* + כתף, are idiomatic equivalents. The variation between זרע in the biblical idiom and כתף in the rabbinic poses little problem. It is widely recognized that כתף and זרע describe bordering and partially overlapping regions of the human or animal anatomy: the כתף region centers on the shoulders but extends down to the chest and upper arm, while the area of the זרע creeps upward from the arm toward the shoulder. זרע in the sense of shoulder or scapula is called for in 2 Kgs 9:24, where the king, fleeing, is struck בין זרעיו, while the parallelism of כתף and חצן in Isa 49:22 situates the כתף around the chest.[16] אזרע and כתף occur in parallel in Job 31:22, and the כתף of the sacrificial animal, a choice cut according to Ezek 24:4, is probably identical to the זרע of Deut 18:3, which is reserved for the priest. The usages of Greek ὦμος and Latin *umerus* provide cross-linguistic evidence for the absence of a sharp terminological distinction between shoulder and upper arm.[17] Given, then,

[14] Reference to fastening clothing by means of a belt and a knot between the shoulders occurs also in *t. Kil.* 5:15.

[15] I have cited the text of *Genesis Rabbah;* the Yerushalmi (MS Leiden) has אזוריהם and קישרי. The traditional Yerushalmi commentators פני משה and קרבן העדה (ad loc.) understand the loosening of the shoulder ties as a ritual act of mourning involving exposure of the skin (see n. 17 below). I think it more likely that the Israelites girt their loins and bound their shoulders upon leaving Egypt for ease of travel, and that the Canaanites, in untying these knots, are, as it were, simply helping the Israelites out of their travel gear. The Canaanites do not expose the Israelites' skin but, on the contrary, cover it by loosening their knotted garments.

[16] On the latter verse, see Hans-Jürgen Zobel, "כָּתֵף *kāṯēp*," *TDOT* 7:388. Zobel supports this interpretation with evidence from Ugaritic, where *ktp* parallels *bn ydm*. Cf. also Deut 33:12, בין כתפיו שכן. Given the intimate context—Benjamin is God's ידיד—we should probably understand בין כתפיו as marking God's chest and serving as the masculine equivalent of בין שדי (Song 1:13).

[17] This comparative evidence is cited in R. T. O'Callaghan, "The Word *ktp* in Ugaritic and Egypto-Canaanite Mythology," *Or* n.s. 21 (1952): 43. Cf. Maimonides' laws of mourning (8:3), which dictate that one in mourning for a parent חולץ כתפו ומוציא זרועו מן החלוק עד שיתגלה כתפו וזרועו, "bares his shoulder, removing his arm from the shirt so that his shoulder and arm are

the overlapping reference of זרע and כתף, it is altogether possible that biblical אמץ *piel* + זרע and rabbinic קשר *piel* + כתף describe precisely the same action. The difference in anatomical terminology may, alternatively, reflect cultural variation in how the material that hindered arm movement was secured. This alternative becomes more attractive in light of an idiomatic parallel from Arabic: *šadda ḥazīmahu,* "he girded his chest."[18] Taking the ordinary senses of the anatomical terms as a guide, we may infer that the inhibiting material was either bound tightly to the arms themselves, or secured at the shoulder, or fastened to a belt or ring at the chest.

A concrete interpretation of ותאמץ זרעותיה is therefore plausible: the woman does not "strengthen" her arms, but binds her sleeves or upper garment to free her arms for work. The abstract interpretation is also possible and arguably gains support from the occurrence of בעוז in Prov 31:17a, but I am inclined to run the hermeneutic arrow in the opposite direction. The first half of the verse is ambiguous: Does the woman of valor gird עוז ("strength") around her loins (an abstract image), or does she strongly (with עוז) gird her loins (a concrete image)?[19] Three

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exposed" (after Abraham H. Hershman, trans., *The Code of Maimonides, Book Fourteen: The Book of Judges* [1949; repr., Yale Judaica Series 3; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977], 185).

[18] Cf. Yefet's use of *mašdūd* in his commentary on Prov 31:17 quoted above. Arabic also uses *ḥayzūm* and its plural *ḥayāzīm*, also meaning "chest," thus: *šadda ḥayzūmahu*; *šadda ḥayāzīmahu*. The idiom is used to describe energetic preparation or endurance in connection with a task or adverse circumstances. See Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1865), 561; Moustafa Chouémi and Charles Pellat, *Al-Kâmil: Arabic/French/English Dictionary* (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1978), 2595-98. Curiously, though Chouémi and Pellat define *ḥazīm* and *ḥayzūm* as "chest," and provide ample attestation for this meaning, in these instances (and these alone) they render it as "loins" (Fr. *reins*). Ibn Manẓur (*Lisān al-ʿArab* [Beirut: Dar Sader Publishers, 2005], 4:108) does entertain the meaning "waist" (*wasaṭ*), but decidedly secondarily. Another relevant Arabic idiom is *šammara ʿan sāʿidayhi,* "he contracted from his forearms," that is, he tucked up his garment from his forearm, apparently to indicate exertion. It parallels אמץ *piel* + זרע, while its pair, *šammara ʿan sāqihi,* "he contracted from his shank," corresponds to חגר *qal* + מתן. See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1595. Note should also be taken of Akkadian *ḫarāšu ša ammati*, *ḫurrušu ša ammati* (*CAD Ḫ* 96 [s.v. *ḫarāšu*]). These expressions are the literal equivalents of אמץ *piel* + זרע, but they are attested only in lexical lists, where the absence of context leaves us ignorant of their idiomatic meaning.

[19] I distinguish the dichotomy *concrete*/*abstract*, which is of primary concern here, from the dichotomy *literal*/*metaphorical*. Girding strength upon one's loins is an abstract image, because strength is an abstract concept; and metaphorical, because one cannot literally attach strength to one's loins. Girding one's loins with a belt is a concrete image, but it can be employed either literally (e.g., 2 Kgs 3:21, where it describes individuals who don battle gear) or metaphorically (e.g., Job 38:3, where God from the whirlwind tells Job to gird his loins like a warrior, i.e., to address himself vigorously to God's interrogation). Likewise, strengthening one's arms is an abstract image, and binding one's arms a concrete one, but either can have a literal or a metaphorical sense. Thus, if ותאמץ זרעותיה has the concrete sense "she binds her arms," the poet may intend it literally (to

of the five translations quoted above (NRSV, NJPS, WBC), insofar as they suppress מתנים ("loins"), seem to assume the abstract interpretation, while the other two (KJV, AB) preserve the ambiguity of the verse. The abstract interpretation is supported by many verses describing individuals as girt (אזר) or clothed (לבש) with strength (עז, גבורה, חיל); indeed, the woman of valor herself is later said to have עז as her garment (Prov 31:25: לבושה . . . עז).[20] But the root חגר is very seldom used abstractly.[21] Moreover, when חגר takes as objects both the girding instrument and the girded body, the syntax patterns after ויחגר אתו (ב)אבנט or grammatical variants thereof (Exod 29:9; Lev 8:7, 13), or ויחגרו שקים במתניהם (1 Kgs 20:32). Thus, there is no immediate parallel for the syntax presupposed by the abstract approach to Prov 31:17a. It is worth noting, too, that the images in the body of the hymn are almost exclusively concrete: only at the beginning (31:10–12) and end (31:25–31) does the poet speak in abstractions. The concrete approach to Prov 31:17a is supported by 2 Sam 6:14: ודוד מכרכר בכל עז, "and David whirled with all (his) strength" (where בכל עז functions adverbially); by Ps 74:13: אתה פוררת בעזך ים, "you shook the sea with your strength"; and by Ps 78:26: וינהג בעזו תימן, "he drove the south wind with his strength" (where בעזך and בעזו function adverbially and intervene between verb and object). In light of the available concrete interpretation of Prov 31:17b, the concrete approach to 31:17a becomes still more plausible. The verse is therefore best translated: "Strongly she girds her loins, and binds her arms."

It should be noted that the single occurrence of Biblical Hebrew אמץ *piel* + זרע is reflexive (i.e., the grammatical subject of אמץ is co-referential with the possessive pronoun of זרע), while the three occurrences of Biblical Hebrew חזק *piel* + זרע (Ezek 30:24–25; Hos 7:15) are not. This distribution lends support to the concrete interpretation of אמץ *piel* + זרע: it is confined to the reflexive case because one binds one's own garment.[22] While אמץ *piel* + זרע occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, the action to which it refers is implicit elsewhere, predicated of God in Isa 52:10: חשף יהוה את זרוע קדשו, "The Lord will bare His holy arm" (NJPS), and of Ezekiel as God's messenger in Ezek 4:7: וזרעך חשופה, "with bared arm" (NJPS). In both cases, the bared arm seems to convey preparedness for the doing of mighty

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mean that the woman regularly tucks up her sleeves) or metaphorically (to mean that the woman approaches her tasks with verve). I favor reading Prov 31:17 in its entirety concretely (the verse is stating that the woman girds her loins with a belt, and tucks up her sleeves) and literally (the verse is stating that she *actually* does so, and is not merely asserting [though it clearly means to imply] that she undertakes her duties eagerly).

[20] See also Isa 52:6; 1 Sam 2:4; 2 Sam 22:40; Pss 18:33, 40; 65:9; 93:1.

[21] See Ps 65:13 and possibly Ps 76:11.

[22] Cf. also the use of the root חזק with יד. In all cases save one, either one individual strengthens (חזק *piel*) the hands of another—note that ידים רפות תחזק parallels יסרת in Job 4:3, as חזקתי זרעותם parallels יסרתי in Hos 7:15—or one's own hands become strong (חזק *qal*). The only case in which individuals strengthen their own hands is the late Neh 2:18: ויחזקו ידיהם לטובה.

deeds.[23] The biblical idiom אמץ *piel* + זרע was apparently displaced in rabbinic prose, where neither it nor the root אמץ occurs productively, by קשר *piel* + כתף.[24] The two late rabbinic sources cited by Yalon appear to have turned to Prov 31:17b in order to biblicize the idiom.

[23] God's זרוע becomes visible again in Isa 53:1, but here a form of the root גלה rather than חשף is used, so that, contra F. J. Helfmeyer (זְרוֹעַ *zᵉrôaʿ*," *TDOT* 4:135–36), this verse should not constrain our interpretation of Isa 52:10 and Ezek 4:7. Cf. Kimḥi's comment on Ezek 4:7, cited in Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 106: "For one who wishes to strike and make war with strength bares his arm from the clothing that covers it." Cf. *Midrash Wa-yosha* (Jellineck ed., p. 1.37), one of the two late rabbinic texts cited above, where Isaac urges Abraham to uncover his arm (חשוף זרועך).

[24] But given that אמץ *piel* + זרע is attested only once in Biblical Hebrew, in a hymn, it is also possible that it represents a higher-register transformation of a more "vulgar" contemporary idiom closer to קשר *piel* + כתף.

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Accession Days and Holidays: The Origins of the Jewish Festival of Purim

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Political elites use not only direct force but also ritual to bolster their authority.[1] The use of ritual is very old and includes examples such as the cult of the Roman emperor, which some now believe is what held the Roman Empire together in the absence of a "credible" military threat.[2] The celebration of holidays is one way that elites use ritual to construct political legitimacy for a dynasty or the nation-state.[3] Thus, Roman emperors had their accession days—*dies imperii*—that were celebrated annually. In England, accession days were not celebrated until about 1570, when the government of Queen Elizabeth I encouraged prayer and festivity on November 17, the anniversary of the queen's accession, in order to bind the nation to the ruling dynasty.[4] Republics have replaced accession days with days commemorating the founding of the government; thus, France exchanged dynastic celebrations for the annual holiday of July 14, or Bastille Day.[5]

The Romans did not invent the celebration of accession days. There is evidence for the annual celebration of the accession day of at least one Achaemenid king—the Persian festival of Magophonia. This festival in fact celebrated the acces-

I would like to thank Yair Zakovitch and two anonymous reviewers for their comments and Eitan Reich for his advice and encouragement.

[1] David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

[2] Richard A. Horsley, "Religion and Other Products of Empire," *JAAR* 71 (2003): 13–44, here 29.

[3] John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[4] David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 50.

[5] Charles Rearick, "Festivals in Modern France: The Experience of the Third Republic," *Journal of Contemporary History* 12 (1977): 435–60.

sion of Darius (522–486 B.C.E.), because it commemorated the victory of Darius over a competitor to the throne, marking the beginning of a new, although perhaps distantly related, dynasty.[6] In this essay, I argue that Purim originally celebrated the accession day of Mordecai the Jew.

Modern Jewish liturgy gives, as the main justification for the festival of Purim, the salvation of the Jews in the Persian Empire during the rule of Xerxes (486–465 B.C.E.). Most biblical researchers, however, doubt that Purim originally celebrated a military victory; they prefer instead a pagan origin for the festival. I question both the traditional etiology and the pagan origins of Purim. My reading of the book of Esther using modern techniques of literary analysis will attempt to show that the salvation of the Jews is used to justify the accession of Mordecai and that Mordecai, rather than Esther, is therefore the principal hero, in spite of the name of the book.[7] If this is correct, then Purim may originally have been an annual celebration of the accession of Mordecai.

There are many theories about the origin of the festival of Purim. Some scholars consider the festival to be pagan in origin, and they suspect that Jews adopted it from their Babylonian or Persian neighbors during the exile. Ever since scholars equated Mordecai and Esther with the Babylonian gods Marduk and Ishtar, the theory of a Babylonian origin of Purim has been popular.[8] Some commentators seek the origins of Purim in the Babylonian New Year, which was celebrated in the month of Nissan. The casting of lots was one of the major foci of the celebration of the Babylonian New Year.[9] Almut Hintze is the most recent proponent of the derivation of the festival and its name from the Persian feast of Fravardigan.[10] Hermann Gunkel suggested that Purim is a Jewish imitation of the Persian festival identified by Herodotus (3.68–79) as Magophonia, which, as noted above, celebrated the victory of Darius over a competitor to the throne.[11] Gillis Gerleman is one of the few scholars who thinks that the festival and its name originated among the Jews. He argues that Purim was instituted by Jews in exile to compete with the festival of Passover and that the story of Mordecai is based on that of Moses.[12]

[6] Carey A. Moore, *Esther: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 7B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), XLVIII.

[7] See also Adam Silverstein, "The Book of Esther and the *Enūma Elish*," *BSOAS* 69 (2006): 209–23.

[8] Moore, *Esther,* XLVII–XLVIII.

[9] Daniel F. Polish, "Aspect of Esther: A Phenomenological Exploration of the *Megillah* of Esther and the Origins of Purim," *JSOT* 85 (1999): 85–106.

[10] Almut Hintze, "The Greek and Hebrew Versions of the Book of Esther and Its Iranian Background," in *Irano-Judaica* III: *Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages* (ed. Shaul Shaked and Amnon Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1994), 34–39.

[11] Hermann Gunkel, *Esther* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1916), 115; and Moore, *Esther*, XLVIII.

[12] Gillis Gerleman, *Esther* (BKAT 21; 2nd ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982).

Any discussion of the origins of Purim must be based on an analysis of the book of Esther, to which much of this essay is devoted. One of the difficulties in such an analysis is to determine as nearly as possible the original intention of the author(s). The methodology adopted here is intertextual analysis, using other biblical texts to clarify the meaning of the book of Esther. Essentially, this methodology consists of reading the book of Esther simultaneously with all other biblical stories alluded to in the book and noting similarities as well as differences.

This essay is organized as follows. After discussing the methodology used in this essay and providing a short introduction to the use of type-scenes in the analysis of biblical texts, I turn to the story of the rise of Mordecai to show that it is a type-scene similar to the stories of the rise of Moses (Exod 1:8–2:10), David (1 Samuel 15–2 Samuel 5), and Joash (2 Kings 11). This section also argues that the identification of the major type-scene in the book provides an important clue to the meaning of the story of Mordecai: a justification for his appointment. As viceroy, Mordecai was also the leader of his own people. The section on dynastic discourse will show that the book of Esther contains direct and indirect references to Mordecai's offspring and that his leadership or that of his descendants was contested by descendants of the kings of Judah. Examination of a secondary type-scene in the book will show that the allusion to the story of Joseph is one way in which the book of Esther argued for Mordecai's loyalty to King Xerxes in spite of his refusal to bow before Haman. Thus, I argue for a much more central role for Mordecai than that suggested by the (modern) name of the book. The section on the role of women will show that the marriage of Esther to King Xerxes is used to justify Mordecai's appointment as viceroy. The next section presents extrabiblical and biblical evidence to suggest that the name Purim is later than the festival itself. Today there is nothing about the festival and its name that reminds us of an accession day.

I. Methodology

Robert Alter uses the term "type-scene" for a set of common motifs.[13] A type-scene is a conventional way of narrating an episode in a hero's career. Literary convention determines a fixed constellation of predetermined motifs for each kind of type-scene. The annunciation of a hero's birth to a barren mother is an example of

[13] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); idem, "How Convention Helps Us Read: The Case of the Bible's Annunciation Type-Scene," *Prooftexts* 3 (1983): 115–30; Yair Zakovitch, *Through the Looking Glass: Reflection Stories in the Bible* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1995); Paul R. Noble, "Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," *VT* 52 (2002): 219–52; and J. Jona Schellekens, "The Murderous-Grandparent Motif: Myth as Political Discourse," *Semiotica* 162 (2006): 245–61.

a type-scene. The stories told about Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, the wife of Manoah, Hannah, and the Shunammite woman are all examples of this sort of type-scene, though they show small, but important, differences. This type-scene includes three predetermined motifs: (a) the plight of barrenness of the future mother of the hero; (b) the annunciation to the barren woman or her husband; (c) and the conception and birth of a son.[14] Type-scenes are a great asset in the search for the meaning of biblical stories. If the meaning of one version of a certain type-scene can be ascertained, then other versions of the same type-scene are likely to have a related meaning.[15]

Many biblical stories contain several interwoven type-scenes. Thus, the story of Moses consists of at least two type-scenes: theophany and a change in leadership.[16] Previous research has uncovered links between the book of Esther and other biblical stories without, however, undertaking a systematic search for all the stories in the rest of the Bible that are alluded to in the book of Esther. While Moshe Gan argues for a significant resemblance between the book of Esther and the story of the rise of Joseph, Gerleman argues for a similarity to the story of the rise of Moses.[17] I believe that the story of the rise of Mordecai belongs to the same type-scene as the story of the rise of Moses.

Although the choice of a particular type-scene is likely to have been determined by the kind of message the author(s) wished to convey, I cannot exclude the possibility that the author(s) of the book of Esther adopted a particular type-scene for its entertainment value. Thus, the analogies presented below between the story of Mordecai and those of Moses and others belonging to the same type-scene do not prove that the story of Mordecai has a meaning similar to that of other stories of the same type-scene. While it will never be known to what extent my interpretation of the book of Esther reflects the intention of the author(s), the explanation presented here, applying the principle of Occam's razor (*lex parsimoniae*), accounts for more features in the book than other explanations while making fewer assumptions.[18]

[14] Alter, "How Convention Helps Us Read." Many more examples of type-scenes are provided by Zakovitch, *Through the Looking Glass*.

[15] The explanation proposed by Zakovitch and Avigdor Shinan for the annunciation story of the wife of Manoah may provide a clue to the understanding of other stories of the same type-scene. See Yair Zakovitch and Avigor Shinan, *That's Not What the Good Book Says* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Miskal – Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books, 2004).

[16] George Savran, "Theophany as Type Scene," *Prooftexts* 23 (2003): 119–49; see also Schellekens, "Murderous-Grandparent Motif," 253–54.

[17] Moshe Gan, "The Book of Esther in the Light of Joseph's Fate in Egypt" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 31 (1961–62): 144–49; and Gerleman, *Esther,* 11–22.

[18] One of the leading modern philosophers of science, Karl Popper, condones the use of the principle, and its use is widespread in the sciences. See Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 1992), 121–32.

II. The Main Type-Scene

The plot of Haman to kill all the Jews and the saving of the Jews by Mordecai and his cousin Esther constitute the core of the book and belong to a type-scene that has been coined "the apology."[19] This type-scene occurs also outside the Bible and includes the stories of royal heroes such as Cyrus, Perseus, and Oedipus.[20] There are at least three biblical heroes whose stories are based on this type-scene: Moses, David, and Joash. In all versions of this type-scene (a) a ruling monarch attempts to murder the hero; (b) the hero is saved by someone from within the royal household; and (c) eventually, the ruler dies a violent death and the hero replaces him/her as the leader of the people. In addition to these general motifs, the stories of Moses, David, and Joash have one other detail in common: the hero is saved by a daughter of the ruler.

According to the book of Kings, (a) queen-mother Athaliah killed all males in the royal house of David (b) except for her infant grandson, Joash, who was rescued by his aunt Jehosheba, a daughter of Athaliah and the wife of the high priest Jehoiada. Subsequently Joash was hidden in the temple for six years, and (c) in the seventh year Jehoiada instigated a revolt, executed Athaliah, and put Joash on the throne of Judah.

David's ascent to the throne also belongs to this type-scene: (a) King Saul attempts to kill his son-in-law David (more than once); (b) David is saved by his wife Michal, a daughter of Saul, when she lets David down through the window; and (c) eventually, the Philistines slay the sons of Saul, and he kills himself, fearing that the Philistines would make a mockery of him.[21]

Table 1 (p. 120) compares the story of Mordecai with that of Moses, with which it has more in common than with either the story of David or that of Joash. Notice, however, that Moses is never referred to either directly or obliquely in the book of Esther, which suggests that the type-scene in the book of Esther is not necessarily patterned on the story of Moses, as Gerleman suggested. Hence, the intertextual analysis is based only on features that all three stories—Moses, David, and Joash—share with the story of Mordecai. The comparison with the story of Moses is mainly to demonstrate that the story of Mordecai belongs to the same type-scene.

Pharaoh seeks to destroy all the Israelite sons, because he suspects that the Israelites will join his enemies, while Haman seeks to destroy all Jews, accusing

[19] P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., "The Apology of David," *JBL* 99 (1980): 489–504.

[20] Katherine Stott, "Herodotus and the Old Testament: A Comparative Reading of the Ascendancy Stories of King David and Cyrus," *SJOT* 16 (2000): 53–78; and Schellekens, "Murderous-Grandparent Motif," 249–50, 254–55.

[21] Stott, "Herodotus and the Old Testament," 61–71.

Table 1. Comparison of the Story of Mordecai with That of Moses

Moses	*Mordecai*
1. Pharaoh suspects the Israelites will join themselves to his enemies	1. Haman accuses the Jews of not keeping the king's laws.
2. Pharaoh attempts to kill Moses and he is hidden in the *reeds*.	2. Haman makes *gallows* for Mordecai.
3. Pharaoh charges his people to cast *every* Israelite son that is born into the river.	3. Haman seeks to destroy *all* the Jews.
4. A woman from within the royal household, Pharaoh's daughter, saves Moses.	4. A woman from within the royal household, Queen Esther, saves Mordecai and her people.
5. God overthrows the Egyptians in the midst of the "Sea of *Reeds*."	5. The king orders Haman to be hanged on the *gallows* that he had prepared for Mordecai.

them of not keeping the king's laws. Thus, both Pharaoh and Haman accuse their victims of being disloyal. Moreover, in both stories the heroes are not the only victims. While *all* the Israelite sons are to be thrown into the Nile, Haman seeks to destroy *all* the Jews. In both stories a woman from within the royal household plays a crucial role in saving the hero—Pharaoh's daughter and Queen Esther. Eventually, Pharaoh drowns, while Haman is hanged. Thus, both die the same death they had planned for the hero. Although the drowning of (the next) Pharaoh may be a punishment for his refusal to let the people of Israel go, the attempted drowning of Moses may also be a justification for Pharaoh's drowning. It is possible that the Bible alludes to the connection between these two events by the use of a *Leitwort*.[22] Moses was saved by being hidden in the reeds (סוף), while Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea or, more accurately, the "Sea of Reeds" (ים סוף).[23] Haman is hanged on the same gallows he had built to execute Mordecai. Neither Moses nor Mordecai is directly implicated in the death of the enemy. While God kills Pharaoh, Xerxes orders Haman to be hanged. Moses becomes the leader of the Israelites as a result of the death of Pharaoh, while Mordecai replaces Haman as viceroy and, consequently, as the most powerful Jew, becomes leader of his fellow Jews in exile.

Having identified part of the book of Esther as belonging to the same type-scene as the stories of the rise of Moses, David, and Joash, I turn to the question

[22] Martin Buber first identified the use of reiterated key words—*Leitwörter*—or key roots to advance and refine the thematic argument (Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation* [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald with Everett Fox; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994]).

[23] Bernard F. Batto, "The Reed Sea: Requiescat in Pace," *JBL* 102 (1983): 27–35.

concerning the main message conveyed by this type-scene. There is something missing in all the stories of this type-scene: a clear motive for the attempted murder. The Bible is at pains to explain the behavior of Saul. A prophecy that his dynasty will be replaced by that of David does not seem to satisfy the biblical author. To the prophecy is added an evil spirit that torments Saul. Why Athaliah would want to kill her grandson seems even more difficult to understand. Persian and Greek versions of the type-scene solve this problem with dreams and oracles warning that the hero will replace the grandfather (in the case of Cyrus and Perseus) or the father (in the case of Oedipus) on the throne. There is a problem also with the motive of Haman. Although one may perhaps understand why Haman would want to kill Mordecai for not bowing before him, the text does not explain why Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman in the first place. This raises the suspicion that the stories of this type-scene have an apologetic character and could be interpreted as a polemic against the accusation that the hero is a usurper. This is suggested also by the common motifs. First, according to the biblical tale neither David nor Joash eliminated the previous ruler. Saul killed himself before the Philistines could do so, while Jehoiada ordered the execution of Athaliah. Second, the Bible wants us to believe that neither hero had any intention of killing the previous ruler. Thus, David's intentions are shown by his refusal to slay Saul when the opportunity was offered, while Joash could not have instigated the revolt against his grandmother, Athaliah, because he was only seven years old at the time. Finally, the Bible wants us to believe that it was the previous ruler who had actually started the whole sequence of events that led to his downfall instead of the hero. Thus, King Saul wanted to kill his son-in-law David, while Athaliah wanted to kill her infant grandson Joash.

None of the motifs mentioned above would fit another scenario very well. Thus, the apologetic character of the stories of David and Joash seems clear. This suggests that other stories of the same type-scene, such as those of Moses and Mordecai, are also of an apologetic character. In addition, they contain most of the motifs that are encountered in the stories of David and Joash. First, Moses did not kill Pharaoh. Second, he certainly did not plan his death, as is made clear when the Bible stresses that Moses did not want to lead the Israelites, claiming he had speech difficulties. Third, (the previous) Pharaoh had tried to kill Moses instead.

Although it is not immediately clear why the story of Moses should be cast in the form of the type-scene of the apology, in the case of Mordecai there is a plausible explanation for this approach.[24] The comparison with the stories of the rise of David and Joash suggests that the book of Esther contains some sort of apology or justification for the appointment of Mordecai. The stories of David and Joash offer

[24] For the story of Moses, see Helena Zlotnick-Sivan, "Moses the Persian? Exodus 2, the 'Other' and Biblical 'Nemohistory,'" *ZAW* 116 (2004): 189–205; and Schellekens, "Murderous-Grandparent Motif," 253–54.

a different sequence of events and suggest that Mordecai wanted to become viceroy and had Haman eliminated. The story employs three arguments to counter the critics: (1) it denies that Mordecai had any hand in Haman's death, by recounting that King Xerxes gave the order to hang Haman; (2) it denies that Mordecai coveted the position of viceroy (see below); and (3) it justifies Haman's death by arguing that he had actually tried to kill Mordecai in the first place.

We are not told why Mordecai commanded Esther not to reveal her people or kindred.[25] Obviously, if Mordecai had not so commanded Esther, there would not have been a plot, because King Xerxes would never have allowed Haman to carry out his plans against the people of his wife. There may, however, be an additional reason why Esther was asked not to reveal her ethnicity. Adele Berlin notes that the word מולדת, which is usually translated as "kindred," is used also in the story of Joseph, where it means "family."[26] Thus, Mordecai may have wanted to hide Esther's relationship to him rather than her ethnicity. Support for this may be found in what happened immediately after Esther told the king of Mordecai's relationship to her. The king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai, suggesting that it was his relationship to Queen Esther that made Mordecai viceroy. From this it follows that if Esther had told the king of her relationship to Mordecai immediately after marriage, then Mordecai would have become viceroy before Haman's nomination. Thus, the book of Esther may have wanted the reader to believe that Mordecai did not want any profit from the marriage of Esther. If this is correct, then Esther's hiding of her origin upon Mordecai's request, has the same purpose as David's refusal to slay Saul when the opportunity was offered and Moses' speech difficulties: the hero was innocent because he had no intention of eliminating his opponent.

The intertextual analysis shows many analogies between the story of Mordecai and the stories of David and Joash. While these analogies do not constitute proof that the story of Mordecai is a justification for his accession, they do provide a parsimonious explanation for the story of Mordecai. Why did Mordecai command Esther not to reveal her people or kindred? Why did Haman want to kill all the Jews? Mordecai could have killed Haman when fighting broke out. So why did the author(s) prefer execution by the king? There is more than one possible answer to each of these questions, but some explanations make more assumptions than others. The *lex parsimoniae* states that the simplest solution is to be preferred, other things being equal. In the present case, just one assumption—the story of Mordecai as a justification for his appointment as viceroy—is sufficient to answer all three questions. By not revealing her relationship to "Mordecai the Jew," the book

[25] Robert Gordis, "Religion, Wisdom and History in the Book of Esther—A New Solution to an Ancient Crux," *JBL* 100 (1981): 359–88, here 376.

[26] Adele Berlin, *Esther = Ester: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), 27.

tries to convince the reader that Mordecai did not plan his accession to the position of viceroy. The story of Haman's attempt to eliminate Mordecai is a pretext to eliminate Haman himself and make way for Mordecai, while execution by the king clears Mordecai of any implication in Haman's death. Further, this same assumption can be used also to explain many other features in the book, such as the divorce of Vashti, the marriage of Esther to King Xerxes, Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman, and the use of a second type-scene.

The stories of David and Joash were needed to legitimize not only their own royal status but also that of their descendants. Both kings founded a dynasty. Although there is no explicit mention of a dynasty of exilarchs or political leaders of the Jewish community in exile descended from Mordecai, [27] there are hints in the book of Esther that the story of Mordecai may have a dynastic background.

III. Dynastic Discourse

The book of Esther contains too much genealogical information for a book whose sole purpose is to report how God's people were saved. What is the purpose of the pedigrees of Mordecai and Haman? Why are all of Haman's sons executed? And why is Mordecai's "seed" mentioned at the end of the book?

Pedigrees were used to bolster the legitimacy of a candidate's claim to a particular office. Thus, Joash is presented as belonging to the house of David. Haman's descent from King Agag would have made him not only an archetypal enemy of the Jews but also an appropriate choice for viceroy, while Mordecai's descent from Kish, the father of King Saul, would have made him a legitimate candidate for leadership of his own people.

If the book aims to bolster the legitimacy of a new dynasty, then the execution of Haman's sons is an important detail. It informs that there are no more legal pretenders from a previous dynasty who could dispute Mordecai's claim to the position of viceroy. A change of dynasty was often accompanied by the extermination of all males in the previous dynasty. Thus, Jehu kills all the house of Ahab (2 Kgs 10:7), and Athaliah kills all the house of David, except Joash (2 Kgs 11:1).[28]

One might ask where the evidence for a dynasty of exilarchs can be found? I believe that this is clearly hinted at in the last word of the book. The last verse ends with Mordecai "speaking peace to all *his seed,*" which suggests a reference to the descendants of Mordecai. Translators invariably ignore this literal reading. Thus,

[27] Julius Gleicher calls Mordecai an exilarch ("Mordecai the Exilarch: Some Thoughts on the Book of Esther," *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 28 [2001]: 187–200). The earliest hints at exilarchs are only from the late Parthian period (Moshe Beer, *The Babylonian Exilarchate* [in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1976]).

[28] Or did a usurper by the name of Joash perhaps kill the house of David?

Carey A. Moore, for example, describes Mordecai as being "concerned for the welfare of his kinsmen," while Michael V. Fox has Mordecai "speaking on behalf of the welfare of all *its* descendants."[29] A literal reading, however, fits in quite well with my interpretation that the story is about the installation of a Jewish exilarch by the name of Mordecai. It makes sense that Mordecai was not the only exilarch but founded a dynasty.

The noun זרע occurs four times in the book of Esther but 225 times elsewhere in the MT. In thirty-nine cases the word is used in an agricultural context; in eight instances it means "semen"; and in the remaining 178 occurrences it clearly refers to sons or descendants in general. There is no reason to assume that it has a special meaning in the book of Esther. Thus, Mordecai interceded for "his seed" rather than his kindred. This is the only explicit reference to Mordecai's offspring. It may be significant that the only other joint occurrence of the words "seed" and "peace" (שלום) (1 Kgs 2:33) clearly refers to a dynasty: "to David, and to his seed . . . shall there be peace."

At this stage I can only speculate that an earlier version of the last chapter of the book may have contained a genealogy of a lineage descended from Mordecai in a way similar to the book of Ruth, which ends with a Davidic genealogy. This might explain why the last chapter of Esther in its present form consists of only three verses.

While the mentioning of "his seed" is now the only direct evidence for the existence of a dynasty of exilarchs in the Persian period, there is also indirect evidence in the form of a hidden polemic against the house of David (see below). Without a dynasty of non-Davidic exilarchs this polemic is difficult to understand. But the existence of a dynasty of exilarchs in the Persian period raises a problem. How did they cope with the competing claims of descendants from the royal house of David? We can trace the descendants of the kings of Judah up to the end of the fifth century,[30] and they were probably among the leaders of the Jewish community in exile. In the beginning of his reign, Darius allowed one of them, Zerubbabel, to lead a group of Jews back to Judah, where he became governor.[31] Some of his descendants at least remained behind in Babylonia until the reign of Artaxerxes (464–424), when one of them, Hattush, left Babylon for Judah (Ezra 8:2). The book of Esther places the story of Mordecai in the generations between Zerubbabel and Hattush, raising the likelihood of a conflict with descendants of the kings of Judah

[29] Moore, *Esther*, 98; and Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 129.

[30] Jacob Liver, *The House of David* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1959), 95.

[31] Israel Ephʿal, "The Jews in Babylonian Exile in the Biblical Period—Cultural Influences and Elements of Distinctiveness" (in Hebrew), in *Acculturation and Assimilation: Continuity and Change in the Cultures of Israel and the Nations* (ed. Yosef Kaplan and Menahem Stern; Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1989), 29–39, here 35.

over the leadership of the Jewish community in exile. It is possible that the book of Esther hints at such a conflict.

The fact that Mordecai is given a Saulide ancestry remains surprising. Considering the number of traditions concerning the Davidic monarchy during the postexilic period, it is amazing that Mordecai is not of Davidic descent.[32] Mordecai's telescoped pedigree contains only three names: Yair (his father), a certain Shimei, and Kish. Shimei is mentioned several times in the Bible, most notably as an opponent of David's kingship. The Babylonian Talmud (*b. Meg.* 12b) already identified Mordecai's ancestor with Shimei son of Gera, first introduced as "a man from the lineage to which the house of Saul belonged," who called David "a man of bloodshed" (2 Sam 16:5, 7). The name Kish also occurs more than once, but it is best known as the name of Saul's father.[33] According to Paul Haupt, Shimei is named because he considered himself at least as good as David.[34] Thus, the choice of Shimei among Mordecai's ancestors may convey a polemical message: Mordecai is as good as any Davidic descendant.

Haman's descent from Agag, who was defeated by Saul, supports an identification of Mordecai's ancestor Kish with Saul's father. King Saul's failure to execute the Amalekite king is the main reason for the rejection of Saul and the appointment of David as his successor (1 Samuel 15). Perhaps the execution of Agag's descendant Haman rectifies the mistake made by Mordecai's ancestors, justifying the return of the leadership from the lineage of David to that of Kish. Further, the biblical author(s) may have intended to portray Haman as an archenemy of the Jews by recounting his descent from Agag; to give Mordecai an illustrious ancestry as befits a hero; and to bless his descendants as a reward for his deeds. One assumption—that the story of Mordecai is a justification for his appointment as viceroy—accounts for all three features.

IV. A Secondary Type-Scene

Much can be learned from the similarities in stories that belong to the same type-scene, but one needs to pay attention also to differences. Although the story of Mordecai's ascent to the position of viceroy belongs to the same type-scene as the stories of the rise of David and Joash, there is a fundamental difference. David was the son-in-law of a previous ruler and Joash the grandson of a previous ruler, but no such relationship exists between Mordecai and Haman. Even Moses was in a sense related to Pharaoh, being his foster grandchild. This difference could be

[32] Sandra Beth Berg, *The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes and Structure* (SBLDS 44; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 68. For the possible existence of a postexilic pro-Saulide party, see Yigal Levin, "Joseph, Judah and the 'Benjamin Conundrum,'" *ZAW* 116 (2004): 223–41, esp. 230.

[33] Berg, *Book of Esther*, 64.

[34] Paul Haupt, "Critical Notes on Esther," *AJSL* 24 (1908): 97–186, here 115.

explained by the fact that a new Jewish dynasty of exilarchs would not be interested in claiming descent from a non-Jewish dynasty of Persian officials.

There is another fundamental difference. While David and Joash were sovereign rulers, Mordecai was no more than a viceroy and his descendants may have been even less than that, just leaders of the Jewish community in exile. Yet a certain degree of Jewish autonomy may have raised doubts about loyalty to a foreign king, and this may be one explanation for the use of an additional type-scene.

Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman is often given a religious connotation; however, this is likely to be an anachronistic interpretation that dates from the Hellenistic period.[35] There is no evidence of a biblical commandment not to bow before humans. Scriptural stories suggest that bowing before humans was a sign of subordination, and this is clear in the case of Jacob's encounter with Esau and in Joseph's dreams, when his family bows before him. Thus, Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman should probably be understood "in terms of the courtier's characteristic concern over rank and position."[36]

Haman interpreted Mordecai's refusal as an act of disloyalty to the king. The book of Esther, however, dismisses Haman's accusation implicitly by using the type-scene of the loyal servant. This type-scene includes the stories of Joseph and Daniel and may be part of a wider family of type-scenes that deal with conflicts between courtiers, such as the story of Ahiqar.[37] In spite of the relatively small number of such stories in the Bible, the identification of part of the account of Mordecai as belonging to this type-scene is fairly certain owing to the large number of similar features, especially with the story of Joseph. The link between the story of Joseph and that of Mordecai is stressed in the book of Esther by the use of the word סריס ("chamberlain") as a *Leitwort*. In the Pentateuch the word סריס is used only for the officers of Pharaoh in the story of Joseph.[38] Table 2 summarizes the comparison between the two stories as presented by Gan and Gerleman. Note that the book of Esther does not follow the exact order of the story of Joseph in Genesis.

Both heroes are exiles and refuse to compromise their principles. Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman, and Joseph withstands the temptations of his master's wife. For his refusal, Mordecai receives the death penalty (so also all other

[35] Berlin, *Esther,* 34–36.

[36] W. Lee Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel," *JBL* 92 (1973): 211–23, here 215.

[37] Ludwig A. Rosenthal, "Die Josephgeschichte mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278–85; Humphreys, "Life-Style for Diaspora," 213; John J. Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* 94 (1975): 218–34; J. Robin King, "The Joseph Story and Divine Politics: A Comparative Study of a Biographic Formula from the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 106 (1987): 577–94.

[38] The word סריס is not the only word the book of Esther uses to allude to the story of Joseph. For more examples, see Gan, "Book of Esther," 148–49.

Table 2. Comparison of the Story of Mordecai with That of Joseph

Joseph	*Mordecai*
1. Joseph is sold as a slave in Egypt.	1. Mordecai had been carried away to Babylonia.
2. He refuses to lie with master's wife.	4. He refuses to bow down or prostrate himself before Haman.
3. His master puts him into prison.	5. Haman seeks to destroy all the Jews.
4. The butler and baker offend their lord the king of Egypt.	2. Two of the king's chamberlains seek to lay hands on King Xerxes.
5. Joseph solves the dreams of the butler and the baker.	3. Mordecai discovers the plot of the chamberlains.
6. The butler forgets Joseph.	6. No honor or dignity is accorded to Mordecai for this.
7. Pharaoh dreams and is told about Joseph.	7. The king cannot sleep and is told about Mordecai.
8. Pharaoh takes off his ring and puts it on Joseph's hand.	8. The king takes off his ring and gives it to Mordecai.
9. Pharaoh makes Joseph ride in a chariot and the people cry before him.	9. Haman causes Mordecai to ride through the street of the city and cries before him.
10. Pharaoh sets Joseph over Egypt.	10 Mordecai is next to king.

Jews); Joseph's punishment is imprisonment. Solving the dreams of Pharaoh's officers, who are called סריסים, gives Joseph hope that he will be set free, but he is forgotten. Mordecai discovers the plot of two eunuch chamberlains, who are also called סריסים, and he is also forgotten. A bad night of the king is the first sign of a change in the fortunes of these heroes. Both are given a king's ring and a ride—Joseph in a chariot and Mordecai on the king's horse. In the case of Joseph, this is on the occasion of his becoming viceroy, whereas for Mordecai it is only a good omen.[39] The book of Esther interrupts the thread of the story of Joseph that leads to the hero becoming viceroy. Although the solution to the dreams of Pharaoh paves the way for Joseph to assume the office of viceroy by showing his wisdom, the sleepless night of Xerxes brings only honor to Mordecai. Perhaps the discovery of a plot to overthrow the king renders Mordecai an unsuitable candidate for the position of viceroy. It shows his loyalty to the king but not the wisdom required in a viceroy.

[39] In addition, Mordecai wears the royal robe. For the meaning of this, see Adele Berlin, "The Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling," *JBL* 120 (2001): 3–14.

Joseph is the ultimate loyal servant, because he suffers for being loyal to his master. The allusion to the story of Joseph may have been one way in which the author(s) of the book of Esther intended to inform readers about Mordecai's loyalty to King Xerxes in spite of his refusal to bow before Haman.

The use of the type-scene of the loyal servant, however, may carry an additional and more important message. Jon D. Levenson argues that the book of Esther displays a bilateral chiastic structure, for which he counts fifteen scenes or elements.[40] Except for one, these do not belong to the type-scene of the loyal servant. The type-scene of the apology provides the core to which the story of Vashti and the celebration of the Jewish victory are added at either end to create a bilateral chiastic structure. The position of the eighth scene in the middle identifies the exchange of status between Haman and Mordecai as the pivotal scene. Significantly, this pivotal scene—the royal procession—is the only element that belongs to the secondary type-scene of the loyal servant. This suggests that the royal procession and the type-scene of the loyal servant are meant to provide the clue to a better understanding of the reason for the surprising reversal in the fortunes of Haman and Mordecai.

In Genesis, Joseph himself explains to his brothers why he was sent into exile and became viceroy: "God sent me before you to preserve life" (46:5). Thus, Joseph's God is one who works behind the scenes. The book of Esther may have wanted to remind its audience in a subtle way that Mordecai's God also works behind the scenes.[41]

V. The Role of Women

The name of the biblical book suggests that the central figure is a heroine by the name of Esther. This challenges our argument that the book is about Mordecai. An analysis of the two type-scenes used in the book suggests that the figure of Mordecai was patterned on other heroes in such type-scenes, but the source for the figure of Esther is not so clear. There are women in both type-scenes. In the story of Joseph there is one woman, but her role is negative: Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph. The story of Joseph, therefore, is an unlikely source for the figure of Esther. Gerleman thinks that Esther is the female equivalent of Moses' brother Aaron, while Helena Zlotnick sees an allusion to Jezebel.[42] Another possibility is that Esther may be the composite of Pharaoh's daughter, Michal (the daughter of

[40] Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 8. This structure is based on the sequence of banquets identified by Fox as a central structuring element (Fox, *Character and Ideology*, 157).

[41] Levenson, *Esther*, 21.

[42] Gerleman, *Esther,* 17; and Helena Zlotnick, "From Jezebel to Esther: Fashioning Images of Queenship in the Hebrew Bible," *Bib* 82 (2001): 477–95.

Saul), and Jehosheba (the daughter of Jehoram). There is a difference, however. Whereas Pharaoh's daughter, Michal, and Jehosheba are all daughters of the ruler who attempted to kill the hero, Esther is not a daughter of Haman, but a cousin of the hero. This deviation from other versions of the same type-scene requires an explanation.

In contrast to David and Joash, Mordecai did not need to legitimate his position by showing a family relationship to the previous person in office. Instead, the marriage of Esther to the king would have made him an appropriate candidate, provided the king knew of his relationship to the queen. As noted above, support for this may be found in what happened immediately after Esther told the king of the relationship. The king took off his ring and gave it to Mordecai, which suggests that it was Mordecai's kinship to Esther that assured his appointment as viceroy.

There remains at least one major difficulty: Why did Mordecai refuse to bow before Haman? As noted above, this unwillingness should be understood as Mordecai's refusal to subordinate himself to Haman. This creates a problem, however, because the king himself had ordered people to bow before Haman. Although this dilemma is not fully resolved, it is anticipated by the first chapter, which discusses the fate of the previous queen, Vashti, who refused to appear before the king wearing the royal crown to show the people and the princes her beauty.

While Esther can plausibly be equated with Pharaoh's daughter, Michal, and Jehosheba, it is not clear on whom the figure of Vashti might have been based. For some, Vashti's role is only incidental to the story, setting the stage for Esther.[43] Undoubtedly the episode does prepare the way for the central drama, but if that were its only function, a compressed summary of events would have been sufficient.[44] If, however, the book of Esther contains a discourse about the loyalty of Mordecai, then Vashti's disobedience may prepare the reader for Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman.[45] Both Vashti and Mordecai refuse a command; both provoke rage; and both are affected by royal proclamations.[46] Using Greek sources, Berlin points out that, from the author's point of view, what probably offended Vashti was the affront to her social status.[47] Thus, Vashti's obedience to her husband had a limit. The book of Esther may be conveying that there is a limit to what a king can expect an otherwise loyal servant to do. In the case of Mordecai this limit is subordination to Haman.

[43] Bruce William Jones, "Two Misconceptions about the Book of Esther," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 171–81, at 175.

[44] Fox, *Character and Ideology*, 166.

[45] Berlin noted that similar motifs are at work in the Vashti incident and in Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman ("Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling," 11). See also Levenson, *Esther,* 9.

[46] Timothy K. Beal, *The Book of Hiding: Gender, Ethnicity, Annihilation, and Esther* (Biblical Limits; London: Routledge, 1997), 50–59.

[47] Berlin, *Esther,* 11–13.

The main type-scene strongly suggests that the book of Esther is really a sort of apology for the rise of Mordecai the Jew. The rest of the book does not contradict this conclusion, because the story of Vashti, the type-scene of the loyal servant, the genealogical discourse in the book, and the marriage of Esther all seem to suggest that Mordecai, rather than Esther, is the hero of the book in spite of its (later) name. Thus, my interpretation of the festival of Purim as originally the celebration of the accession day of a Jewish dynasty of exilarchs is consistent with the results of this analysis of the book of Esther.

VI. A History of Purim

My analysis of the book of Esther suggests that the salvation of the Jews is used to justify the rise of Mordecai and his dynasty. This raises the question whether there is any evidence for a change in the major justification for the festival. The earliest postbiblical source to mention the festival is 2 Maccabees, which refers in 15:36 to a "Day of Mordecai" that was celebrated on the fourteenth of the month Adar at the time of that document's composition (second to first century B.C.E.). Thus, the name Purim may be later than the festival itself and may even postdate the composition of 2 Maccabees. Further evidence that the name of the festival is later than the festival comes from the book of Esther itself. The name of the festival and its derivation look like additions to chs. 3 and 9.

Many scholars believe that 3:7 is intrusive, breaking as it does the narrative flow of vv. 6 and 8.[48] After Haman decided to destroy all the Jews, this verse states that, in the month of Nisan, a *pur*—that is, a lot—was cast before Haman, to determine the day on which to destroy the Jews. (Note that the lot was cast *before* Haman went to King Xerxes to receive his permission.)

Chapter 9 contains two letters. The first is sent by Mordecai to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Xerxes to confirm the celebration of "the fourteenth of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day thereof" as the days in which the Jews had respite from their enemies. The second letter is sent jointly by *Esther* and Mordecai to confirm "these days of Purim." A comparison of the two letters raises many questions.[49] Why was it necessary to confirm the first letter? Why was the first letter sent only by Mordecai, while the second was sent jointly by Esther and Mordecai? But there is another question that may be even more important: Why does the name of the festival—Purim—not appear in the first letter?

I suspect that 9:24–32 is an addition to the chapter. After the first letter, in which Mordecai calls on the Jews to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar yearly as the days when the Jews had rest from their enemies, v. 23 mentions that

[48] Moore, *Esther*, 37.

[49] Fox, *Character and Ideology,* 123–27; and Berlin, *Esther,* 92.

the Jews took it upon themselves to celebrate the festival as Mordecai had written to them. Then, in vv. 24–25, *after* the Jews had already undertaken to celebrate the festival, a summary of the book follows. This is not an exact summary of the events as related in the book,[50] but it serves as an introduction to the explanation of the name of the festival in v. 26. The discontinuity in the text after v. 23 suggests that vv. 24–32, which include the second letter, are an addition. The purpose of the second letter may have been to introduce the name of Purim for the festival, which previously had been known as the Day of Mordecai, and to stress the role of Esther at the expense of Mordecai. This raises a historical question: Why would anyone want to change the name and the emphasis of the festival? I hypothesize that this happened at some unknown date after the dynasty of Mordecai had disappeared.

VII. Conclusion and Discussion

A book whose structure can be interpreted from several perspectives is likely to carry several messages, but some are probably more important than others. The plot of Haman to kill Mordecai and all the Jews and the saving of the Jews by Mordecai and his cousin Esther constitute the core of the book. If this is accepted, then it follows that this core is yet another example of an apologetic type-scene. Within this framework, the book of Esther is viewed as justifying the accession of a Jewish viceroy.

In the book, the execution of Haman and his sons is presented as an act of retaliation or self-defense. Criminological studies warn us, however, that aggressors often describe their act as a retaliation or self-defense when in fact it was premeditated, in order to deny their role in the crime.[51] How do we know that the story of Haman's attempt to kill the Jews was not a pretext to eliminate him? The intertextual analysis raises doubts about Mordecai's intentions. If the stories of Saul's insanity and Athaliah's attempt to kill her infant grandson are pretexts to eliminate them, what about the story of Haman's attempt to kill the Jews? All the biblical and nonbiblical examples of the apologetic type-scene share a weak motive for the attempt to eliminate the hero. Haman's motive is also suspect. While we may perhaps understand why Haman would want to kill Mordecai for not bowing before him, the text does not explain why Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman in the first place. Since there is no religious prohibition against bowing before human beings, one suspects that the story of Haman's attempt to kill the Jews and their subsequent salvation is used to justify the accession of Mordecai.

[50] Fox, *Character and Ideology*, 120.

[51] Stephen Porter and Michael Woodworth, "'I'm Sorry I Did It . . . But He Started It': A Comparison of the Official and Self-Reported Homicide Descriptions of Psychopaths and Non-Psychopaths," *Law and Human Behavior* 31 (2007): 91–107.

Few scholars today accept the historicity of the book of Esther. Although there is some evidence for the existence of a Persian court official at the time by the name of Marduka, the story line of the book is a string of improbable coincidences.[52] Even if the violent encounter between supporters of Mordecai and his foes was historical, the polemical nature of the book prevents us from determining who fired the first shot. If the book of Esther is not a historical record, however, this does not imply that it is a romance. I suggest that the book was intended not as a work of fiction but as historiography for the purpose of bolstering the legitimacy of a dynasty of exilarchs. Except for one hint at the end, however, the book in its present form does not mention a dynasty that claimed descent from Kish and Mordecai the Jew.[53]

Any argument that seeks to differentiate among the various strata of the book of Esther must consider the various versions of the book. It has been argued that there was an earlier, "proto-alpha" text that predates both the MT and the LXX versions of Esther[54] and, moreover, that this "proto-alpha" text does not contain the story of the two chamberlains who plot to assassinate the king.[55] This might have serious repercussions for the thesis offered here that part of the original book is a reworking of the story of Joseph in Egypt. Serge Frolov, however, undertook a detailed analysis of the four versions of the story of the two chamberlains in the MT and the Greek texts and concluded that the "proto-alpha" text did include the story of the two chamberlains.[56] My analysis supports Frolov's conclusion. Part of the book of Esther is patterned on the story of Joseph. Why should this have been done in two stages, the "proto" text initially leaving out the motif of the two chamberlains for some obscure reason? A simpler explanation would be that the story was composed in one stage including the motif of the two chamberlains.

It is generally agreed that the book of Esther is an etiology for the festival of Purim. I have argued that Purim—or the Day of Mordecai, as the festival was once known—may have been the celebration of the accession day of a dynasty of exilarchs. Thus, the festival is probably not the survival of a pagan celebration, although this does not exclude non-Jewish influences.

In his autobiographic Behistun Inscription, Darius, the father of Xerxes, mentions having come to the throne after killing someone accused of being a usurper.[57] Herodotus and Ctesias both mention a festival called Magophonia—literally, Slaughter of the Magians—which celebrated the victory of Darius and the slaugh-

[52] David J. A. Clines, "In Quest of the Historical Mordecai," *VT* 41 (1991): 129–36.

[53] Berlin, "Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling," 3–14

[54] Carey A. Moore, "A Greek Witness to a Different Text of Esther," *ZAW* 79 (1967): 351–58.

[55] David J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story* (JSOTSup 30; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 104–7.

[56] Serge Frolov, "Two Eunuchs, Two Conspiracies, and One Loyal Jew: The Narrative of Botched Regicide in Esther as Text- and Redaction-Critical Test Case," *VT* 52 (2002): 304–25.

[57] Mabel L. Lang, "Prexaspes and Usurper Smerdis," *JNES* 51 (1992): 201–7.

ter of the Magians, whom Darius accused of supporting his opponent. This victory brought a new, although perhaps distantly related, dynasty to the Persian throne. I suspect that the Day of Mordecai may have been patterned on the festival of Magophonia, since both celebrate a victory and probably also the founding of a new dynasty.

Festivals bring people together and serve to reaffirm their common bonds and to reinforce social solidarity;[58] however, not all religious festivals seem to be integrative. Festivals such as Mardi Gras and Purim are perhaps more properly characterized as tension-management festivals.[59] Two types of explanation have been offered to account for the form and content of these festivals: one historical, the other functional. The historical explanation holds that such festivals are mere survivals of pagan rites.[60] The functional explanation views them in terms of psychosocial needs. Tension-management holidays are expected to contribute to the reinforcement of shared beliefs and institutions indirectly, by releasing tension resulting from conformity to societal beliefs and the behavioral prescriptions they entail.[61] In this case study of one tension-management holiday—Purim—I have tried to show that the major tension-management holiday in Judaism is not the survival of a pagan festival but instead started out as a special kind of recommitment holiday—the celebration of an accession day—before it turned into a tension-management holiday.

Consistent with their function, recommitment holidays typically have a clear theological meaning, while tension-management holidays are usually devoid of any clear theological meaning.[62] Thus, Purim, the major Jewish tension-management holiday, simply commemorates a victory of the Jews over their Persian enemies. The profane character of Purim is evident in the biblical book of Esther, which provides the etiology for the festival. By all odds, the major religious difficulty with the book of Esther is the total absence of the name of God or any reference to the deity. This absence is all the more striking to those who believe that the basic theme of the book is the salvation of God's people.[63] If, as I argue, Purim originally served

[58] Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (2nd ed.; Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 136–39. It is not clear how the ritual violence reported on major festivals fits this characterization (Steven Weitzman, "From Feasts into Mourning: The Violence of Early Jewish Festivals," *JR* 75 [1999]: 545–65).

[59] Albert Piette, "Play, Reality, and Fiction: Toward a Theoretical and Methodological Approach to the Festival Framework," *Qualitative Sociology* 15 (1992): 37–52.

[60] Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present* 50 (1971): 41–75, here 47.

[61] Amitai Etzioni, "Toward a Theory of Public Ritual," *Sociological Theory* 18 (2000): 44–59.

[62] The two major Muslim festivals, Eid ul-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, seem to be less integrative since they do not have a clear theological meaning—apparently for theological reasons (Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Muslim Festivals," *Numen* 25 [1978]: 52–64).

[63] Gordis, "Religion, Wisdom and History," 360–61.

to reaffirm political rather than religious bonds in the strict sense—the founding of a dynasty of exilarchs descended from Mordecai the Jew—then as political conditions changed, the festival was left without its political recommitment role and became a tension-management holiday.

All holidays have some tension-management function, but some festivals play a larger role in tension-management than others. Festivals that lack any clear theological content may be more likely to become tension-management holidays than other festivals. Thus, having lost its political role and being devoid of any clear theological content, there may have been little left for Purim but its tension-management role. Perhaps the proximity of Purim to Passover made it an appropriate candidate for becoming a tension-management festival. In modern Judaism, the drinking of wine is a component of both Purim and Passover, but there is a religious command to get drunk on Purim (*b. Meg.* 7b). If the rabbis wanted to save the rich theological content of Passover from becoming too diluted by wine, they may have transferred part of the tension-management role of Passover to a holiday without much theological content.[64]

[64] Most of the other tension-management aspects of Purim are relatively late additions, some of them under the influence of Carnival (Jeffrey Rubenstein, "Purim, Liminality, and Communitas," *AJS Review* 17 [1992]: 247–77).

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Rachel's Tomb

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> How awful what happened to the sisters Helvidiae! They both died giving birth.
> —Pliny the Younger, *Letters*[1]

> The only ghosts, I believe, who creep into this world, are dead young mothers, returned to see how their children fare.
> —James M. Barrie, *The Little White Bird*[2]

Scholarly commentary regarding Gen 35:16–20 has tended to focus on precisely where, along the road from Bethel to Ephrath, the biblical tradition envisions the location of Rachel's tomb.[3] Ephrath, according to Gen 35:19 (and also 48:7), is but another name for Bethlehem, and thus, since the fourth century C.E., Jewish, Christian, and (eventually) Islamic sources have claimed Bethlehem as the place

[1] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 4.21.L, as cited by Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (3rd ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 193.

[2] James M. Barrie, *The Little White Bird, or Adventures in Kensington Gardens* (New York: Scribner, 1902), 45–46.

[3] Nahum Sarna, for example, devotes an entire excursus (no. 27) to this issue in his commentary on Genesis (*Genesis = Be-reshit: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* [JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 407–8), and the site of Rachel's burial is likewise the subject of a full journal article by Matitiahu Tsevat ("Studies in the Book of Samuel, II: Interpretation of I Sam 10:2, Saul at Rachel's Tomb," *HUCA* 33 [1962]: 107–18). Tsevat, moreover, describes the location of Rachel's tomb as a problem that "has troubled students since antiquity" (p. 108).

of Rachel's burial.[4] Still today, in fact, there is a small sanctuary just north of Bethlehem that marks this site. 1 Samuel 10:2, however, locates Rachel's tomb within the tribal allotment of Benjamin; likewise, Jer 31:15, which describes the corpse of the dead Rachel singing forth a dirge over the Israelites who have been exiled to Babylon, presumes Rachel's burial site to have been in Benjaminite Ramah (modern el-Ram, about five miles north of Jerusalem). Scholars tend to agree that this latter tradition is the more authentic, as it certainly makes sense for the biblical authors to have associated Rachel's tomb with the tribal territory of Benjamin, the son during whose delivery she is said to have died. According to this analysis, the Gen 35:19 and 48:7 passages that identify Ephrath with Bethlehem have been secondarily influenced by the close association of Bethlehem with an important Judean clan called Ephrath, attested in texts such as 1 Sam 17:12; Mic 5:1 (in most of the Bible's English versions, 5:2); Ruth 1:2 and 4:11; and 1 Chr 4:4. Alternatively, Ernst Vogt, followed by Gordon J. Wenham, maintains that Gen 35:19 and 48:7 actually agree with 1 Sam 10:2 and Jer 31:15 that Rachel's tomb should be sited in Benjamin,[5] arguing based on the Akkadian *bēru,* meaning "double hour,"[6] that Hebrew כברת־הארץ לבוא אפרתה in Gen 35:16 assumes that the location of Rachel's death was in southern Benjamin, about eleven kilometers, or six to seven miles (the distance a traveler can walk in two hours), north of Bethlehem.

In this article, we too are interested in the location of Rachel's tomb, but for an entirely different reason: not *where* Rachel was buried, be it in Benjamin or Bethlehem, but rather where she was *not.* More specifically, what concerns us is the question of why in its recounting of Rachel's death, the biblical tradition does not presume that Rachel's body would have been carried the roughly twenty miles south from the alleged place of her demise (assuming here the primacy of the Benjaminite location) to the cave at Machpelah, near Mamre, which the Genesis account otherwise understands to be the proper burial site for members of Abraham's family. Indeed, burial at Machpelah is, for the biblical authors, absolutely the norm for every other "chosen" member within the first three generations of Abraham's family line: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and his first wife, Leah. As Jacob reports in Gen 49:29–32, for example, it was in "the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, which is near Mamre in the land of Canaan—the field that Abraham purchased from Ephron the

[4] Sarna, *Genesis,* 244; Susan Starr Sered, "Rachel's Tomb and the Milk Grotto of the Virgin Mary: Two Women's Shrines in Bethlehem," *JFSR* 2 (1986): 8 and n. 6.

[5] Ernst Vogt, "Benjamin geboren 'eine Meile' von Ephrata," *Bib* 56 (1975): 30–36; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis,* vol. 2, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 326. See somewhat similarly Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 1996), 198.

[6] In addition to the standard lexica, see Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 127 n. 21; John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (HSS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 581.

Hittite for a burial site" in which "Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried"; in which "Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried"; and in which "I [Jacob] buried Leah."

So why is Jacob not similarly depicted as burying his beloved Rachel at Machpelah, but rather as committing her body to a roadside grave? The reason clearly cannot be any reservations the biblical tradition had concerning her gender, for as we have just seen, the Genesis account locates the burials of other ancestral wives in Machpelah. Nor can it be that the place of Rachel's death was thought to be too far removed from the Machpelah tomb for her body to have been transported there. In Gen 49:29, immediately prior to his catalogue of those already buried at Machpelah, Jacob requests that his own body be interred there, even though he is about to die at least two hundred miles away in Egypt. That such a request can be fulfilled is indicated in Gen 50:7–14, where Jacob's eleventh-born son, Joseph, along with all Joseph's brothers and numerous others who made up Jacob's funeral cortege, is said to go to Machpelah to bury Jacob's body.

To be sure, the delayed and time-consuming overland transportation of Jacob's body (and later Joseph's) from Egypt to tombs in Canaan would have been facilitated in the minds of the biblical authors by the process of mummification (or, in the Bible's words, "embalming"; Hebrew חנטים). But ancient Israelite tradition also admits the transportation of fresh bodies such as Rachel's. In fact, at least four biblical passages, all roughly contemporaneous with the Genesis accounts,[7] describe the movement of a recently deceased individual from his place of death to his family's tomb.[8] According to Judg 16:31, for example, the family of the deceased Samson came to the Philistine city of Gaza to claim his body after his death and then carried it back with them to the tomb of Samson's father, Manoah, which lay in the tribal territory of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol, a distance of approximately thirty-five miles (assuming the standard identifications of Eshtaol with modern Khirbet Deir Shubeib and Zorah with modern Tel Zorʿa are correct).[9] Similarly, David and the brothers of David's nephew Asahel are said to have transported Asahel's body after his death in battle at Gibeon some ten or so miles to their family's tomb in Bethlehem (2 Sam 2:32). Likewise, the bodies of two Judahite kings—Ahaziah (r. 843/2 B.C.E.) and Josiah (r. 640–609 B.C.E.)—were reportedly brought from Megiddo after their deaths in battle to the city of Jerusalem, approximately sixty miles away, so that, in Ahaziah's case, he might be buried "in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David" (2 Kgs 9:28), and so that Josiah, too, might "be buried in his [own] tomb" (2 Kgs 23:30).

[7] Presuming here, with mainstream biblical scholarship, a date sometime in the midpoint of Iron Age II for J and E and at the end of Iron Age II for the Deuteronomistic History.

[8] These examples are catalogued by Saul M. Olyan, "Some Neglected Aspects of Israelite Interment Ideology," *JBL* 124 (2005): 602–3.

[9] Raphael Greenberg, "Eshtaol," *ABD* 2:617b; idem, "Zorah," *ABD* 6:1168a–b.

The imperative in ancient Israel that one be buried in one's own family tomb indeed seems to have been so pressing that custom even permitted previously interred bodies to be exhumed for transport and reburial. Such is the treatment described concerning the bodies of King Saul and his sons, which, according to 1 Sam 31:13, were buried in Jabesh-Gilead by that city's inhabitants after they were recovered from the walls of Beth-Shan on which the Philistines had suspended them. Subsequently, however, according to 2 Sam 21:12–14, King David exhumed at least two of these bodies, those of Saul and his firstborn son Jonathan, and reburied them in the territory of Saul's tribe, Benjamin, in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish (2 Sam 21:13–14). In addition, although the bones of Joseph were understood to have been originally interred in a coffin in Egypt (Gen 50:26), according to Gen 50:25 the patriarch himself gave instructions before his death that they should be returned to his homeland. Thus, according to Exod 13:19, Moses brought Joseph's bones along with him as he led the Israelites on their exodus out of Egypt, and, according to Josh 24:32, they were buried in the "promised land" once the Israelites had established themselves there. Analogously, we might have supposed that, even if the narrative arc of the Genesis story required that Rachel originally be interred at the site of her death, the text could well have imagined that her body could subsequently have been moved and gathered to her husband's kin at Machpelah. But, as we have already indicated, the tradition reports nothing of the sort.

The story of Joseph's burial, moreover, warrants further consideration, for it leads us to reconsider the aetiological explanation we intimated already in our introduction: that Rachel's tomb is understood to be in Benjamin, not at Machpelah, because that is the territory of the son during whose delivery she is said to have died. Joseph is notably also not buried in the Abrahamic family tomb at Machpelah; instead, his remains are said to have been interred "in Shechem, in the portion of the field that Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem" (Josh 24:32). The tradition's shift in burial venue for Joseph, from Machpelah to Shechem, must be explained, though, by the fairly dramatic change that occurs when the Genesis narrative introduces Joseph's generation into the structure of Abraham's family tree. More specifically, for the first three generations of Abraham's family line, Genesis describes what anthropologists call a linear genealogy, in which the line of descent is traced unilaterally, through a series of exclusions or "narrowings":[10] Abram/Abraham separates from his nephew Lot in Genesis 13, for example, and in the subsequent generations Isaac is promoted as Abraham's rightful heir to the exclusion of his half-brother, Ishmael, while Jacob is likewise promoted to the exclusion of his twin brother, Esau. In Joseph's generation, however, the genealogical structure in Genesis changes to what anthropologists designate as a segmented genealogy, a genealogy that traces more than one line of descent from

[10] Robert A. Oden, *The Bible without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (New Voices in Biblical Studies; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 107–8.

a common ancestor.[11] Indeed, in Genesis, twelve distinct lines of descent trace themselves back to their common ancestor, Jacob.

As this genealogy segments, moreover, into multiple lines of descent, the locations assigned for the family's burial grounds must necessarily segment as well, especially given that, according to the biblical conceit, the twelve sons of Jacob are the eponymous ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel and thus each is associated with a different allotment of tribal territory. Small wonder, then, that Joseph's bones, once they are brought forth from Egypt, are buried at *Shechem,* which is the major political center and a major religious center of the territory held by Israel's two "Joseph" tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh), rather than be interred with his father, Jacob, in Machpelah. Small wonder as well that, immediately following the notice in Josh 24:32 of Joseph's burial in the land in Shechem that Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, we read, "it [i.e., the burial site] became an inheritance of the sons of Joseph."[12] Here, just as Abraham is imagined in the biblical text as originally having established Machpelah as a burial site for his immediate descendants (Gen 23:20), so too is Shechem now seen as having been established for the newly delineated ancestral line of Joseph.

Might one analogously argue that Rachel's burial in Benjaminite tribal territory similarly was understood to establish, albeit proleptically, the burial site for her son Benjamin's ancestral line? A tempting argument, but one that is unfortunately not supported by the text. For example, the Bible does not describe Rachel's burial site as it describes Joseph's, as becoming "an inheritance of the sons of Benjamin." Nor does the biblical text presume that the burials of succeeding generations of the Benjaminite line take place there. Rather, there is only one burial: Rachel's. Hers is a burial, in addition, that is portrayed as being performed in a somewhat cursory fashion: in a roadside grave and with no ceremony apart from the erecting of the *maṣṣēbâ* that is common for West Semitic burials.[13] Indeed, because Rachel, it is implied, is laid simply in the earth, her burial appears more analogous to that described for Deborah—the nurse of Rebekah who is likewise laid simply in the earth beneath an oak near Bethel—than to the burials of Abraham's other descendants. The Hebrew used to recount the burials of Rachel and Deborah is, in fact, exactly the same (Gen 35:8 reads ותקבר . . . ותמת דברה, and in Gen 35:19, we find

[11] Robert R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 9, 18–37; idem, "The Old Testament Genealogies in Recent Research," *JBL* 94 (1975): 180; idem, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel': Interpreting the Biblical Genealogies," *BA* 42 (1979): 13; idem, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 58–59.

[12] Reading וַתְּהִי for MT וַיִּהְיוּ.

[13] As Victor P. Hamilton points out (*The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18-50* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 383 n. 11), Brian B. Peckham has catalogued several instances of the erecting of Phoenician mortuary steles in his "Phoenicia and the Religion of Israel: The Epigraphic Evidence," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 90–91 n. 23.

ותקבר . . . ותמת רחל). But while the sort of *al fresco* burial these verses depict is appropriate for a character like Deborah, a servant who merely sojourns with Abraham's family and not a member of the Abrahamic patriline, it seems strikingly out of place for Rachel, whom we would expect to receive instead the interment in Machpelah due an honored wife, as is accorded to Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah. And so, yet again we ask, why the aberration?

At this point, we are prepared to propose an answer: that the anomalous way in which the biblical authors treat Rachel's burial is the result of the particular *means* by which her death was thought to have come about, in childbirth. Unfortunately, we know very little about death in childbirth from our sources, although such deaths must have been very common in biblical times (according to Jo Anne Scurlock, "the greatest single cause of death among [Mesopotamian] women was complications attending childbirth," and Carol Meyers estimates that the average life expectancy for women in ancient Israel must have been about thirty years of age, as opposed to forty for men, so great was the mortality rate for women during their childbearing years).[14] In the Bible, the only death in childbirth apart from Rachel's that is mentioned is that of Phineas's wife (1 Sam 4:19–22), and that account is so brief that we learn nothing from it about the attitudes of the woman's community toward her death, nor about the nature of her burial. Other West Semitic sources —for example, those from Late Bronze Age Ugarit—are similarly lacking in materials about women's deaths in childbirth. East Semitic tradition is somewhat richer: we have an extraordinary Neo-Assyrian elegy, for example, in which a woman speaks in the first person about dying while giving birth,[15] and also a Middle Assyr-

[14] Jo Anne Scurlock, "Baby-Snatching Demons, Restless Souls and the Dangers of Childbirth: Medico-Magical Means of Dealing with Some of the Perils of Motherhood in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Incognita* 2 (1991): 135; Carol L. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 112–13; eadem, "The Family in Early Israel," in Leo G. Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Family, Religion, and Culture; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 28. John H. Oakley somewhat similarly estimates that in classical Greece, while the life expectancy rate was about 45 years of age for men, it was only 36.2 years for women, again because of mothers commonly dying in childbirth (John H. Oakley, "Death and the Child," in *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past* [ed. Jenifer Neils and John H. Oakley; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003], 163; on Greek women's deaths in childbirth, see also Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995], 35). The slightly higher life expectancy that Oakley notes for women in classical Greece versus ancient Israel is probably due to the fact that women married later in life in Greece than Israel: at about age eighteen in Greece, according to Aristotle's *Poetics* (as cited by Oakley, "Death and the Child," 163), and at puberty in Israel.

[15] Erica Reiner, "An Assyrian Elegy," in eadem, *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut: Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria* (Michigan Studies in the Humanities 5; Ann Arbor: Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), 85–93; for further discussion, see Mary R. Bachvarova, "Successful Birth, Unsuccessful Marriage: Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Mesopotamian Birth Incantations," *NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2

ian incantation that depicts a woman perishing in the midst of a difficult labor as "covered with death's dust . . . sprawl[ing] in her own blood . . . her eyesight waning . . . her eyesight dim."[16] More important, MAL A §53 (ca. 1076 B.C.E.)[17] decrees that a woman who dies as a result of self-induced miscarriage is not to be accorded a normal burial but instead is impaled.[18] This punishment, however, seems to be a response to the *act* of attempted abortion rather than to the death that results from it (thus, even a woman who survives her self-induced abortion is likewise impaled). Whether Mesopotamian women who died in childbirth under other circumstances were also denied normal burials is unknown.[19]

Still, we do find as we move farther afield that, in many parts of the world, the deaths of women in childbirth are often the subject of strikingly different burial rituals than are deaths resulting from other causes. Among the Igorot people of the Philippines, for example, in the funerals of mothers dead in childbirth mourners notably refrain from eating the pig that is traditionally sacrificed to the dead, which they normally would do, but instead bury the offering with the deceased woman.[20] Similarly, at "later memorial sacrifices held by the children, or parents, of the deceased, the animals killed are not eaten but are buried or thrown away."[21] Likewise among the Nigerian Kalabari, the normal burial service—which involves "a wake held throughout the night after the corpse is brought home from the mortuary, followed by burial the next day, and in the case of elders, an additional week of ceremonial mourning"—is suspended in the case of a woman's death in childbirth.[22] Also, we can note that among the Bariba people of Benin, the death of a woman in childbirth is a particular source of concern for the other women in her community, especially those who are pregnant or have small children, who must flee the village until the dead woman is buried. Custom also requires that they throw out all cooked

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(2001): 75–76; and Marten Stol, *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible: Its Mediterranean Setting* (Cuneiform Monographs 14; Groningen: Styx, 2000), 140–41.

[16] Trans. Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1996), 2:875; for discussion, see Bachvarova, "Successful Birth, Unsuccessful Marriage," 70; Stol, *Birth in Babylonia,* 130.

[17] Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2nd ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press), 153.

[18] Ibid., 174; this reference was brought to our attention by Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 41.

[19] Data that intimate that Mesopotamian *infants* dead in childbirth were not accorded a normal burial (see Scurlock, "Baby-Snatching," 150, 177 n. 169) certainly might suggest that the bodies of mothers who died during delivery were similarly treated.

[20] Fred Eggan and William Henry Scott, "Ritual Life of the Igorots of Sagada: From Birth to Adolescence," *Ethnology* 21 (1963): 43.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Joanne B. Eicher and Tonye V. Erekosima, "Kalabari Funerals: Celebration and Display," *African Arts* 21 (1987): 38.

food, empty their water jars, and extinguish fires before they leave—only to cook food, fetch water, and kindle fire anew after the deceased woman has been buried and they are allowed to return.[23]

One of the most notable deviations in standard funeral rites for women dying in childbirth, however, is the frequency with which burial sites are used that isolate the deceased's body from the community's other dead. For the Kpelle of Liberia, for example, death in childbirth "symbolizes offense against the tribe" and therefore results in an atypical burial in a shallow grave.[24] Among the aforementioned Igorots, similarly, while the same dirges are sung for a woman who dies in childbirth as are sung at other deaths, the woman's body is buried not in one of her community's traditional burial caves but rather in "the earth outside the village."[25] Further, beginning in the fifteenth century, the bodies of English women who died in childbirth were frequently interred outside the sanctified walls of their local churchyards.[26]

The Kpelle example of an atypical burial in a shallow grave is, of course, highly reminiscent of the description of Rachel's *al fresco* burial in Gen 35:16–20, as are the descriptions from Igorot and English custom of burying women who died in childbirth elsewhere than in their communities' normal burial grounds. The Filipino and Nigerian data attesting to the suspension of normal funeral ritual also seem paralleled in the Genesis account of Rachel's burial, which, as we have noted above, is described as being performed in a rather cursory fashion.

What unites Rachel with the dead mothers of the Igorot, Kalabari, Kpelle, and others, we submit, is that in each of these women's respective cultures, women who died in childbirth were thought to belong to a special category of deceased known to scholars of religion as the *schlimme Tod:* the "bad" or "evil dead." In the classical source for this term, *Der Schlimme Tod bei den Völkern Indonesiens,* Hans Joachim Sell identifies these "bad dead" as people who have met un*timely* (sudden or unexpected) and/or un*natural* (violent or tragic) ends.[27] In addition to women dying in childbirth, these can include (depending on the culture) victims of warfare, murder, suicide, fatal sorcery, infectious disease, and accidental death (particularly from drowning). Each of these groups has, at different times and in different cultures, been afforded deviant burial rituals due to the aberrant nature of the demise

[23] Carolyn Sargent, "Solitary Confinement: Birth Practices among the Bariba of the People's Republic of Benin," in *Anthropology of Human Birth* (ed. Margarita Artschwager Kay; Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1982), 201–2.

[24] William E. Welmers, "Secret Medicines, Magic, and Rites of the Kpelle Tribe in Liberia," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 5 (1949): 242.

[25] Eggan and Scott, "Ritual Life of the Igorots," 43.

[26] Mike Parker Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 15.

[27] Hans Joachim Sell, *Der Schlimme Tod bei den Völkern Indonesiens* (The Hague: Mouton, 1955).

involved. Thus, the Nigerian Kalabari discussed above suspend their normal burial practices not only for women who have died in childbirth but also in other cases categorized within the culture as "abominable": deaths associated with witchcraft, infectious diseases, or drowning.[28] The Liberian Kpelle likewise bury those dead by smallpox or by suicide in the same sort of atypically shallow grave employed for a woman dead in childbirth.[29] Students of the burial practices of the Filipino Igorots similarly report that the atypical burial rites that culture uses for women dead in childbirth are necessary because the death is among those considered "unnatural."[30]

Among the Igorot, moreover, the atypical burial required for a woman dead in childbirth is said "to prevent 'infection.'"[31] In addition, among many indigenous communities in Borneo, women who die in childbirth are subject to deviant burial practices, according to anthropologists Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, because "the cadaver of a woman who dies in childbirth is the subject of a special revulsion,"[32] dread, and fear. And why this heightened sense of revulsion? At one level, the reason may stem from the unusual nature of childbirth-related deaths that we have already noted: that, unlike many other causes of death, death in childbirth is often unexpected and occurs relatively suddenly. Childbirth deaths, moreover, are imbued with a particularly tragic quality because of their association with the inception of new life.

But for many cultures, the terror and dread that surround the death of a woman in childbirth seem to respond to something more: the manifold dangerous forces this sort of death can unleash. In such cultures, the fear engendered by the corpse of a woman dying in childbirth is above all related to the dangers that are associated with the act of childbirth itself. Indeed, childbirth is frequently seen as a period so dangerous that it calls for a separation of the mother from her community. Particularly germane for our purposes (and to be discussed further below) are Hittite texts that, according to Karel van der Toorn, speak of deliveries taking place in a special and separate hut built for that reason.[33] In New Kingdom Egypt, too, as reported by Geraldine Pinch, women were separated from their households and the society at large at birth, with the delivery taking place "in a specially built

[28] Eicher and Erekosima, "Kalabari Funerals," 38.

[29] Welmers, "Secret Medicines, Magic, and Rites of the Kpelle," 242.

[30] Eggan and Scott, "Ritual Life of the Igorots," 43.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (2nd ed.; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 80.

[33] Karel van der Toorn, *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and the Babylonian Woman* (Biblical Seminar 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 84; such a "seclusion hut" is mentioned in Gary Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals: An Introduction* (Sources from the Ancient Near East 1/4; Malibu, CA: Undena, 1978), text 7, lines 14–16, although Beckman also reports (p. 5 n. 6) that other Hittite texts suggest that the mother gave birth in an "inner chamber" of her home, perhaps the "bedroom of the expectant parents."

arbor or hut outside the house or in an upper chamber like those found on the roof of some houses at al-Amarna."[34] The mother and newborn child then remained in seclusion for at least two weeks until the danger of death, either that of the mother or of her child, was thought to have passed.[35] Among the aforementioned Bariba of Benin as well, the "norm is for a woman to deliver unassisted" and "alone."[36] Native Mayan women of Central America similarly are required to separate themselves from all but their midwives and other "helpers" when a birth is in progress and to have only the most limited contact with non-household members for seven days following delivery.[37] Childbirth rituals practiced by contemporary Hindus in central India in addition require that a woman in labor be separated from all other members of her household and that she remain completely sequestered, with her newborn, until three days after giving birth.[38] Also among the Hopi of native North America, childbirth rites mandate the complete separation of the mother from her entire society, family included, until the birth is complete and the lives of mother and child are no longer in jeopardy.[39]

The example of the Hopi tradition is brought to our attention by Arnold van Gennep, who uses it in his famous work *Les rites de passage* (1909) to illustrate the marginal or liminal phase that occupies the central position within his tripartite rites-of-passage pattern. According to van Gennep's schema, the woman giving birth, especially if it is to her first child, is positioned "betwixt and between" (to use Victor Turner's famous formulation of the liminal state) the identities of not-mother and mother and is, in addition, properly neither one being nor two. It may even be said that the line between the created and creator is blurred in the act of delivery. In order for these ambiguities to be resolved and for the woman's life-changing transformation to take place, van Gennep argues, she must pass through the rite of passage's marginal or liminal state. But liminality carries a double-edge, for because the transformation it effects interrupts that which is otherwise considered normative, and thus violates standard social categories, liminal figures tend to be seen not only as in transition but also as dangerous. As Mary Douglas writes in her seminal book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966), "to have been in the margins is to have been in contact with dan-

[34] Geraldine Pinch, "Private Life in Ancient Egypt," *CANE* 1–2:376.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Sargent, "Solitary Confinement," 193.

[37] Brigitte Jordan, *Birth in Four Cultures: A Crosscultural Investigation of Childbirth in Yucatan, Holland, Sweden, and the United States* (Monographs in Women's Studies; Montreal/St. Albans, VT: Eden, 1978), 18, 29.

[38] Doranne Jacobsen, "Golden Handprints and Red-Painted Feet: Hindu Childbirth Rituals in Central India," in *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures* (ed. Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 80–81, 84–85.

[39] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 43–44.

ger";[40] "persons in a marginal state . . . are people who are somehow left out in the patterning of society . . . [and] their status is indefinable . . . . [They are] often treated as both vulnerable and dangerous."[41]

Because of this danger, it is no wonder that the delivering mother is so often separated from her community for the duration of her travail. Moreover, if even healthy childbirth is considered to be such a potent source of danger, how exacerbated must the threat become in the case of the mother's death, especially since death is also a transformative and therefore liminal process (indeed, so liminal is the transition from life to death that it has often been suggested that all other life-change rituals derive from mortuary custom).[42] Not only does a mother's death in childbirth, therefore, introduce another facet of liminality to an already liminal figure, but because that death interrupts the normal progress of delivery before the woman can be reintegrated into her community, it prevents the performance of whatever rites are needed to remove the liminal danger of childbirth. The body of the dead mother is thus left in a perpetual state of liminality. It is no surprise, then, that in many cultures a woman's death in childbirth is considered profoundly dangerous and can in addition be considered to unleash all sorts of other dangerous forces.

These "dangerous forces," moreover, tend to manifest themselves in two major ways. Often it is the ritual pollution released by the body of the dead mother that constitutes the greatest source of postmortem danger. It would stand to reason, moreover, that this would be true in Near Eastern tradition, in which a religious concern for purity during all childbirths, healthy or not, is a particularly salient feature. We earlier noted Pinch's description, for example, of the "specially built arbor or hut . . . or . . . upper chamber" in which mothers giving birth in Egypt were ensconced; we can now add her observation that the *reason* for this separation was "to save the rest of the household from ritual pollution."[43] The "special and sepa-

[40] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London/Boston/Henley: Ark Paperbacks, 1966), 97.

[41] Ibid., 95.

[42] Women's marriage rites, for example, rely heavily on mortuary imagery. For this phenomenon in the Slavic world, see Natalie K. Moyle, "Mermaids (*Rusalki*) and Russian Beliefs about Women," in *New Studies in Russian Language and Literature, Presented to Bayara Aroutunova* (ed. Anna Lisa Crone and Catherine V. Chvany; Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1986), 229–32; for the ancient Greek world, see Ian Jenkins, "Is There Life after Marriage? A Study of the Abduction Motif in Vase Paintings of the Athenian Wedding Ceremony," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 30 (1983): 142; Steven H. Lonsdale, *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 234; James Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," *Arethusa* 15 (1982): 188–91; Richard Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding," *JHS* 107 (1987): 106–30; and Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings," *JHS* 107 (1987): 139.

[43] Pinch, "Private Life in Ancient Egypt," 376.

rate hut" that can be used in Hittite birth rites similarly seems to function to contain the ritual pollution that was associated with birth, given the numerous purificatory rites that are performed on behalf of the mother and newborn postpartum.[44] Likewise in Mesopotamia, "delivery caused serious impurity,"[45] and so a mother was expected to bear her child in isolation, in a room, for instance, located on the outskirts of her family's house and entered into from the outside by a door other than that used by the rest of the household's inhabitants.[46] "For fear of contagion," van der Toorn writes, "both the mothers and their babies were kept separate from the other inhabitants of the house," for, according to at least one text, a period of thirty days.[47]

Other cultures—sometimes instead of, sometimes in tandem with this preoccupation with ritual pollution—posit the existence of malicious spirits that result from the tragic deaths of women in childbirth. These can include dangerous spiritual forces, as, for example, in some parts of Thailand, where a woman's death in childbirth sets loose a dreaded spirit called the *phii praj,* which is said to roam about during the night, "most often in the shape of some or another animal and its young one," seeking blood. "If bleeding is difficult to stop," according to Thai sources, "this is because the *phii praj* is sucking it."[48] Somewhat similarly in Russian tradition, mothers who died in childbirth were considered prime candidates to become the dreaded *rusalki* of the Slavic low mythology, a special category of the Russian "unquiet dead."[49] These spirits of deceased women seem unable to find a peaceful rest in the afterlife with the other dead.

As for Rachel's case, it is well known that the dangerous forces of ritual pollution unleashed during childbirth are as much a part of Israelite tradition as they are of the other Near Eastern cultures catalogued above. According to Levitical law, for example, a woman is considered impure for a period of seven days after she gives birth to a male child and for fourteen days after giving birth to a girl (Lev 12:2, 5); there then follows for the postpartum woman a second period of impurity, thirty-three days long if her newborn child was male and sixty-six days if the child was female, during which time the communicable nature of the woman's impurity seems to have been less severe (Lev 12:4, 5). Biblical tradition also seems to indicate that, as in Egypt, Hatti, and Mesopotamia, an Israelite woman giving birth is isolated from the rest of her family, or at least her husband (this is why word must

[44] Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals,* 6.

[45] Van der Toorn, *From Her Cradle to Her Grave,* 84.

[46] Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 7; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1996), 122; see similarly Stol, *Birth in Babylonia,* 206.

[47] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion,* 123.

[48] Anders Poulsen, "Customs and Rites Connected with Pregnancy and Childbirth in a Northeastern Thai Village," *Asian Folklore Studies* 43 (1984): 67.

[49] Moyle, "Mermaids (*Rusalki*) and Russian Beliefs about Women," 224.

be brought after delivery to the fathers of Jeremiah [Jer 20:15] and Job [Job 3:3] that a son has been born to them).[50]

Israelite traditions regarding corpse impurity are also well known. Anyone who came in contact with a corpse (Num 19:11, 13, 16, 18; 31:19), or even anyone who came in contact with a human bone or a grave (Num 19:16, 18), was considered impure for seven days, and to be in the same enclosure with a corpse also rendered one impure (Num 19:14, 18). In deaths during childbirth, this pollution, we suggest, is compounded; or, to return to van Gennep, we can propose that in the ancient Israelite imagination, the original liminality of Rachel during childbirth, when coupled with the liminality of her death, marked her as an overwhelmingly potent source of marginal danger. Indeed, the threat posed was so great that it would have rendered it unthinkable, we would argue, for Jacob and the others of his entourage to have been depicted as transporting her body any distance from the site of her demise; in fact, even had Rachel died proximate to her family's burial cave at Machpelah, we submit that her corpse would have been thought such a danger to the other residents of the tomb of her husband's kin that she could not have been portrayed as laid within it. The only acceptable response that could reasonably have been attributed to her survivors upon her death was immediately to perform an abbreviated version of the standard burial, interring her where she expired quickly and with the bare minimum of ceremony and beating a hasty retreat from the site of contagion.

And what, then, of the ghost? Although we have precious little evidence that beliefs in lingering ghosts existed anywhere in the ancient Near East, we nevertheless wonder if Jer 31:15 may in fact suggest that the Israelites believed that the fate of women who die giving birth is to become restless spirits like the Thai *phii praj* or Russian *rusalki*. Recall that in this verse, Rachel sings a dirge from her tomb lamenting the fate of the Israelites being taken away into exile. In no other biblical text we can think of does a dead spirit similarly speak from the grave *unbidden;* rather, the biblical tradition seems to presume that, while it is certainly possible for the dead to speak to the living, this communication can be brought about only with the aid of elaborate necromantic rituals, and even then, if we are to take 1 Sam 28:3–25 as a guide, the dead appear only reluctantly and perceive their rest as having been unduly disturbed. Why, then, might Rachel speak forth from her grave voluntarily, and even after she has been dead, according to biblical chronology, for at least a thousand years? Is it because the Israelites believed that her death in childbirth had left her spirit restless and wandering, lingering to speak to the living in ways most dead do not? We might recall in this regard the extraordinary first-person elegy that an Assyrian woman utters for herself after her demise. In this text as well, a woman dead in childbirth continues to speak from the grave, inverting a

[50] Van der Toorn, *From Her Cradle to Her Grave,* 85; see also, on Mesopotamia, Scurlock, "Baby-Snatching," 140.

standard Mesopotamian metaphor that likens successful delivery to "a ship reaching safe haven" to refer to herself as "a ship, adrift."[51] Also in postbiblical Jewish legend, a story is told of how a distraught Rachel speaks from her grave to comfort her son Joseph after he had been betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery.[52] Might Jeremiah's Rachel be similarly drifting and disquieted in her hereafter, a restless ghost who, like Barrie's "dead young mothers," has crept back into this world to see how her children fare?[53]

[51] Stol, *Birth in Babylonia,* 140.

[52] Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews,* vol. 2, *Bible Times and Characters from Joseph to the Exodus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1913), 20–21; this tradition was brought to our attention by Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 178 n. 13.

[53] While this manuscript was in press, Mayer L. Gruber brought to our attention the fact that a similar interpretation of Rachel's "ghost" has been advanced by his teacher, Theodor H. Gaster, who himself was influenced by the older studies of R. Campbell Thompson and James G. Frazer. See Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1981), 605 and 707 n. 1

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Back to Bethel: Geographical Reiteration in Biblical Narrative

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The history of Syro-Palestine did not begin with the appearance of the Israelites. The topography and climate of that region helped to shape cultures for thousands of years. As a result, many of the cities mentioned in the biblical narrative had long histories prior to the appearance of the ancient Israelites.[1] For instance, archaeological excavations at Jericho have revealed occupation layers reaching back to the Mesolithic era, ca. 9,000 B.C.E. Jerusalem, which would eventually become Israel's capital city, had, according to the mid-fourteenth-century B.C.E. El Amarna tablets, an earlier incarnation as a political center, serving as a Canaanite citadel ruled by an Egyptian political appointee.[2] This prior history associated with significant sites in part explains the inclusion of scribal glosses in the text that provide both old and new names for several cities. Thus, Hebron was once known as Kiriath-arba (Josh 15:13); Dan originally was named Laish (Judg 18:29); and Jerusalem previously was referred to as Jebus (Josh 18:28). The process of placenames evolving also contributes to the development of a scribal and political strategy known as geographic reiteration, which takes advantage of the authority

[1] Uriah Y. Kim provides a useful image for this land of many peoples and cultures as a "palimpsest, written and overwritten by successive inscriptions . . . and other memories" ("Postcolonial Criticism: Who Is the Other in the Book of Judges?" in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* [ed. Gale Yee; 2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 176–77).

[2] Referred to as Urusalim, Jerusalem is mentioned in EA 287, 289, and 290. See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 328, 332–34. Other familiar sites that appear in the Amarna texts include Gezer (Gazru), Hazor (Hasura), Lachish (Lakiša), and Megiddo (Magdalu).

associated with sites and, in some cases, uses this to manipulate the story or the memory of events.

Before exploring the characteristics of geographic reiteration as they relate in particular to the often-mentioned site of Bethel, I want to focus first on the significance of place in the biblical narrative and briefly discuss the contribution of spatiality theory. Using a definition of place as "any area which an observing consciousness . . . distinguishes and separates, by whatever means, from other areas,"[3] I would further note that space can be divided into distinct types or modes. "Firstspace" is used to identify those concrete locations that can be mapped and that we determine to be physical realities, such as cities, mountains, and rivers.[4] "Secondspace" represents imagined space, in other words "ideas about space" such as the traditional significance or sacred character of a place. Finally, "thirdspace," can be thought of as "lived space," which encompasses the full range of human activities associated with a particular "firstspace."[5] Henri Lefebvre uses the term "social space" for what I am calling "thirdspace." He identifies social space as "the outcome of a sequence and set of operations" and notes that "there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it."[6]

There is value in employing this spatial framework for understanding how space is perceived in the ancient world and how the concept of space is manipulated by different elements of society. By applying these concepts, it becomes possible to classify how space is associated with events, legal formulations, architectural design, political boundaries, economic activities, and personal ambitions.[7] For instance, it is instructive to note where modern politicians declare their candidacy for office or

[3] George R. Stewart, *Names on the Globe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 3–4.

[4] Jon L. Berquist, "Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World," in "*Imagining" Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt; JSOTSup 359; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 18.

[5] For a broader explanation of this concept, see Claudia V. Camp, "Stored Space, or Ben Sira 'Tells' a Temple," in "*Imagining" Biblical Worlds,* ed. Gunn and McNutt, 65–69.

[6] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 73. He asserts here that social space "is what permits fresh actions to occur." I would add that it is the cognitive understanding of place and the actions that occur within this designated space that contribute to the development of the scribal, economic, and political strategy of geographic reiteration.

[7] For another method of demonstrating how spatiality interacts with cultural development, see Anselm C. Hagedorn, "Placing (A) God: Central Place Theory in Deuteronomy 12 and at Delphi," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (ed. John Day; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 422; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 188–211. He follows the methodological theory of "central place" as described by W. Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany* (trans. Carlisle W. Baskin; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 198–202. Particularly helpful is the assertion that "a centre is only called a centre if it performs a central function" (Hagedorn, 199, based on Christaller, 18–19).

deliver major policy speeches as a clue to the significance they place on specific sites (a secondspace concept).

One means of deciphering the spatial understanding of the ancient Israelites is to examine the ways in which space is both defined and manipulated by persons and events. This can be as simple as identifying the physical places where the Israelites performed different types of work, worshiped and engaged in religious rituals, transacted business, practiced and executed legal decisions, and gathered for important announcements (all thirdspace designations). However, these mundane social practices take on different meanings, purposes, or intentions depending on where in space and time they occur and the characteristics of the participants (e.g., Boaz calling together the elders of Bethlehem in the gate area to discuss Naomi's legal problem [Ruth 4:1–2]). Thus, the content or substance of the act (farming, public speaking, ritual, and transaction) derives meaning from (1) the rank, authority, or status of the person involved, and (2) the physical and symbolic character of the "space" (including time, place, occasion, or setting) in question.

The language employed by storytellers to define space is also intentionally manipulated or transformed and often plays on combinations of first, second, and third space. For instance, the term "all the land" (Deut 19:8; Josh 11:16) may be used theologically for "the possession of Yahweh," in which case it is to be considered "sacred space," but it also maintains its initial meaning as a geographic reality with specific physical dimensions, however idealized they may become.[8] Similarly, the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" (2 Sam 3:10) embodies both the political boundaries of the land and the range of its economic possibilities and infrastructure needs.[9] By using the spatial model described above, these geographic descriptors can be seen to embody aspects of both secondspace and firstspace.

When we read a narrative that contains references to the topography of a region, the majority of our attention is often directed to aspects of physical geography and the social environment; that is, the actual places where people live, conduct their business, celebrate their joys, and mourn their sorrows. It is also

[8] Hagedorn, in his study of the description of sacred landscape in Deuteronomy 12, concludes that "landscape . . . is much more than the pastoral background that illustrates the verses" and therefore it is to be expected "that the description of the sacred landscape in Deuteronomy allows us to interpret the values of the writer(s) of the text" ("Placing (A) God," 189). This strategy is precisely the type of composition/editing I am positing that results in geographic reiteration.

[9] Steven Grosby also notes an interesting association of usage between a common term for the Israelites, כל־ישראל, "all Israel" (used sixteen times in Joshua) and the term "all the land" (כל־הארץ) ("Sociological Implications of the Distinction between 'Locality' and Extended 'Territory' with Particular Reference to the Old Testament," *Social Compass* 40 [1993]: 183). This similarity of language and concept could contribute to the proprietary understanding of the promised land in its entirety, west of the Jordan River, from one end to the other, as the possession of the Israelites (Josh 22:11).

important, however, to note that these same physical locations also contain elements of "imagined space." For example, in the biblical narrative in Judges 4, Jael's tent comprises a physical space defined by the size of the area that it encompasses (= firstspace). As a portable dwelling, it functions as lived space with all of the social connotations that that involves (= thirdspace), but it also represents in a very real sense evidence of Jael's membership in her husband's household (a secondspace concept). However, in the story of Jael's confrontation with Sisera, the tent's physical reality is overlaid with cultural and potentially dramatic associations that go beyond its mundane social use and its physical characteristics. The storyteller and the reader conspire to create a mental image that transforms a simple tent into a trap that ultimately will consume the life of the Canaanite commander.[10] Its everyday familiarity contributes to the deception, but Sisera's willingness to violate the laws of hospitality and his symbolic "capture" of Jael when he enters her tent without the permission of her husband make it possible for the audience to celebrate her actions as a form of self-defense rather than cold-blooded murder.

Another, more familiar example of the transformation of space is the city of Jerusalem, whose location and defensive position in the midst of several hills made it a good choice to serve as the political and religious capital of Israel and Judah. Going beyond its associations with a transitory political dynasty, however, it is also referred to in portions of the prophetic literature as the "new Eden" and as the primary symbol of the exiles' hope of return (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8).[11] In this way topography and politics are transcended by secondspace qualities: the emotions and imagined joys of an experience associated with the "place where God's name dwells" and where the covenant is the basis for life (Jer 7:12).

Despite our ability to categorize space based on our own observations and the contents of the biblical narrative, when the biblical writers mention a specific geographic site or feature, they are often describing a place that they and their audience are intimately familiar with. They have walked over each harvested field (Gen 37:15–16), climbed the nearby hills looking for lost animals (Ezek 34:11–12), seen the foliage, and smelled the various aromas associated with herding sheep or with cultivating an olive orchard or vineyard and it has become a part of their collective memory of this space.[12] Because of their shared emic frame of reference as geo-

[10] See the discussion of the hospitality protocol and the way in which it is manipulated in this narrative in Victor H. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," *BTB* 21 (1991): 13–21.

[11] For a fuller discussion of the traditional and idealized use of Jerusalem/Zion, see Victor H. Matthews, *Old Testament Turning Points* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 32–35, 172–74.

[12] Edward W. Said cites the method employed by Cicero to remember topics for his speeches ("Invention, Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry* 26 [2000]: 179–80). The orator would imagine a building in which the pieces of his memory resided and from which he could draw these resources together. In a similar manner, ancient peoples stored their collective memories to call to mind where water could be found, where clay could be dug from a cliff to make pottery, and the best places to find good grazing. These pieces of memory also contribute to the development of culturally recognized understandings or traditions about places.

graphic "insiders," they do not have to go into great detail to conjure up a picture in the minds of their listeners.[13] But these omissions mean that modern readers can often get lost amid the strange-sounding place-names and are baffled by descriptions of places that are either unknown or so foreign that they cannot even be imagined in the context of our own etic frame of reference. This means that close attention to geographic information is necessary in order to catch these nuances and to draw fuller meaning from a story.

I. Geographic Reiteration

A close reading of the biblical narrative will quickly demonstrate just how small the land of ancient Israel actually is. Because of this geographic reality, the reader naturally will keep running into the same place-names.[14] This is due in part to the fact that there were only a limited number of significantly sized cities and towns in ancient Syro-Palestine. Situated at strategic points, some, like Megiddo, guarded major crossroads while others, like Damascus, took advantage of nearby trade routes. In those few cases where a major settlement appears off the beaten track, its origin is usually based on the exploitation of a particular natural resource (salt near the Dead Sea or copper at Khirbat en-Nahas in Edom) or a perennial water source (Jericho or Engedi). As time went on, some of these well-placed population centers grew into cities that housed political leaders, temple communities, and prosperous merchants. Some also served as market hubs for the produce and products of the surrounding villages (called "daughters" in Ezek 16:46–55).

Given the frequent invasions of this region, no city managed to retain its importance throughout its history. For instance, Jericho's stratigraphy shows that its size and importance have fluctuated quite radically over its long history.[15] While geography may have played a role in a city's founding and may contribute to its rise to prominence, natural disaster (e.g., earthquake in Amos 1:1) and political or economic shifts may in turn leave it a forgotten, backwater town or an abandoned ruin (e.g., Shiloh in Jer 26:6–9).[16]

[13] Kenneth L. Pike was the first to formulate the "insider-outsider," emic/etic viewpoints in *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior* (2nd ed.; The Hague: Mouton, 1967). The emic, or insider, perspective is that of the original audience and is able to assume a basic familiarity with the culture presented in the story. An etic, or outsider, perspective would be that of modern interpreter, who can analyze data about a culture, but will not be able to reconstruct its social nuances to the same degree as a member of that culture.

[14] See the discussion on historical geography in Victor H. Matthews, *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 19–57, and in particular the chart on p. 35 detailing the reuse of significant city sites throughout Israelite history.

[15] Thomas A. Holland, "Jericho," *OEANE* 3:220–24.

[16] Edward Noort makes the point that, despite its advantageous location in the central hill country and its easy access to trade routes, Shechem did not maintain a position of high impor-

In view of these topographical and economic realities, it is possible to keep a running tally of the number of major events that occur in the biblical account at particular places and get a sense of the confluence of history, tradition, and geography. It may even have been expected that significant battles, political conferences, prophetic pronouncements, or festivals would take place in those towns that have previously gained notoriety. Some, like Megiddo, even acquire a reputation (a secondspace concept) that transcends normal time and events.[17] In this way both historical reality and the familiarity associated with significant sites play a role in the expected setting of a narrative in order to give it or its characters greater authority. Whether it is transformed by sacred events or by its strategic qualities, it thereafter becomes, in the minds of generals, politicians, and writers, the logical site for future significant events. Thus, God may speak to Moses on a barren hillside in an uninhabited wilderness, but thereafter that place takes on a new and enduring character (see Mount Sinai/Mount Horeb in Exodus 24 and 32; 1 Kings 19).

What I would assert, then, is that the repetition of geographic citation is based on both physical realities (= firstspace) and the desire of those producing the account to add greater importance or traditional authority to the events of the story (= secondspace). So when Pharaoh Thutmoses III (1479–1425 B.C.E.) describes "the capturing of Megiddo as the capture of a thousand towns,"[18] he is using a geographic hyperbole to indicate the magnitude of his military victory and the potential gains associated with the acquisition of such a strategic site.[19] In a similar manner, Biridiya, the Egyptian-appointed mayor of Megiddo, reports to another pharaoh in the fourteenth century that his strategically located city is endangered. A lack of archers and a normal-sized garrison have encouraged the rebel Labʾayu to raid the city's work parties, preventing normal herding and farming activities (EA 244).[20] The embattled mayor asserts that the persistence of these raids is predicated on the rebel's desire to seize a prize that guards a major trade route that in

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tance during the monarchy/divided monarchy period ("Invention, Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry* 26 [2000]: 179–80). To be sure, there is some evidence, as he notes (p. 170), of cultic installations on the twin peaks that dominate the city, but the traditions contained in the biblical account shift major cultic activity from Shechem to Bethel and Jerusalem.

[17] Thus the tie between Armageddon and Megiddo in Rev 16:14–16. Amos Nur and Hagai Ron make the telling point that the "active [earthquake] faults around Megiddo are paradoxically responsible for both this city's repeated rise to power and glory and its decline and fall" ("Earthquake: Inspiration for Armageddon," *BAR* 23 [1997]: 51). The resulting destruction in turn contributes to the tradition of a final battle here and may be the basis of the reference in Rev 16:16, 18–20 (see ibid., 55).

[18] *ANET*, 237.

[19] For a summary of Egyptian military activity here and in particular Thutmoses's strategy, see Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin, "Back to Megiddo: A New Expedition Will Explore the Jewel in the Crown of Canaan/Israel," *BAR* 20 (1994): 31–33.

[20] See the full text in Moran, *Amarna Letters,* 298.

turn symbolizes the prestige and power in the region. Its capture, he claims, while enhancing Labʾayu's importance correspondingly diminishes the pharaoh's authority in all of Canaan.

Over time, geographic reiteration in battle accounts, administrative and economic reports by bureaucrats and merchants, and the travel accounts providing intelligence for military and political activities all contribute to the development of a city's or a site's physical and traditional repertoire. These data then become part of the repository of information employed by both scribes and kings, who wish not only to tell a story but to put as good a light as possible on their accounts. Being shrewd bureaucrats and politicians, they see the value of tying the nation's and the king's successes to those of earlier leaders or victorious generals. For this reason, tradition and well-known stories indicate that they should stage their coronations or other official acts at the site of previous triumphs or turning points for the nation.

Such a decision process helps to explain why Saul may have been willing to delay his acclamation as king by the people and the tribal elders in 1 Sam 11:15. Instead of staging a celebration at the site of his victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead (north of the Jabbok River and seven miles east of the Jordan River), a city with little traditional significance, Saul sees the political advantages to traveling with the elders west of the Jordan to Gilgal (1.5 miles northeast of Jericho and nearly forty miles to the south of Jabesh-gilead). Stepping away from any personal political considerations made at the time of the event, a Dtr redaction of the story (1 Sam 11:12–14) plays off Samuel's judicial circuit. Samuel regularly traveled from place to place, including Gilgal as one of his three judicial seats along with Bethel and Mizpah (1 Sam 7:16). It is therefore natural for him to call on Saul's victorious army to go to Gilgal to "renew the kingship" (1 Sam 11:14).[21] In this way, the editor may be attempting to draw Saul back into a position in which it is God, rather than the acclaim associated with a military victory, who has given Saul the kingship.[22]

A political leader like Saul, however, would have seen other possibilities for an association with Gilgal. In addition to a desire to gain Samuel's support, an acceptance of the shift to this site may well have been based on the political tradition that Joshua had initiated the conquest of the promised land by crossing the Jordan River

[21] Nadav Naaman, "The pre-Deuteronomistic story of King Saul and its historical significance," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 642–43.

[22] For a recent review of John Van Seters's position on the Yahwistic authorship of the pentateuchal legal materials (Covenant Code) and the Sinai tradition and the implications for the possible editing of the Deuteronomistic History, see Bernard M. Levinson, "Is the Covenant Code an Exilic Composition? A Response to John Van Seters," in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup 406; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 272–325. My arguments with regard to Bethel and the utilization of geographic reiteration would add to the case for a preexilic Deuteronomistic editing of the political narratives in Samuel–Kings.

at this point (Josh 4:19–20). This former national leader also used Gilgal as the staging area for the campaign against the anti-Gibeonite coalition (Josh 10:6–15) and then again came here after the Israelites' sweep through southern Canaan (Josh 10:43). Therefore, having established himself as an effective war chief, Saul would have benefitted by positioning himself in the minds of the people as the "new Joshua." It would have been a wise political gesture to choose to begin his reign on the site where the last national leader of the people had led them to victory. Coupling this event with the cultic nature of the site of Gilgal further demonstrated that Saul's reign is sanctioned by God (1 Sam 11:15).

Whether it was an intentional political move by Saul or a later editor's attempt to reconcile various Saulide traditions with particular sites does not really matter, given the overall notoriety of Gilgal.[23] The irony and perhaps the political ploy of a Davidic-era editor who also understood the power of geographic reiteration may then play a final role by using Gilgal as the site where Saul's kingship was repudiated by Samuel after the king's failure to complete the destruction of the Amalekites (החרמתם [1 Sam 15:3, 10–35]).[24] This then allows the political narrative to turn to the identification of David as the newly anointed claimant to the throne.

II. Bethel: Real and Imagined Space

To address further the value of geographic reiteration to ancient scribes, priests, and rulers, I now turn to another significant site, the city of Bethel, in order to trace how it has been used and reused throughout biblical history. Mentioned seventy-one times (second only to Jerusalem; see chart, pp. 157-59), Bethel is located ten miles north of Jerusalem on the Ephraim-Benjamin border (Josh 16:2). It is situated on a hilltop with nearby perennial springs and is strategically placed at a crossroads between the Judean plateau and the Ephraimite hill country.[25] Its archaeological history contains evidence of almost continual settlement from the Middle Bronze Age to the Byzantine period, with four phases during the Iron Age and a brief period of destruction and ruin in the sixth century before it was restored during the Persian era (Neh 11:31; Zech 7:1–2).[26] Apparently, its original name was

[23] See the discussion of this passage in P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Notes* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 206–7.

[24] Åke Viberg, "Saul Exposed by Irony: A New Understanding of 1 Samuel 15:27 Based on Two Symbolic Acts," *SEÅ* 70 (2005): 301–8.

[25] The most recent reexamination of the evidence pointing to the location of this site is Anson F. Rainey, "Looking for Bethel: An Exercise in Historical Geography," in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (ed. Seymour Gitin et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 269–73.

[26] Robert Coote, "Bethel," *NIDB* 1:438–42. The excavations at this site have not identified a

Luz, but that name was quickly supplanted by Bethel when the site became incorporated into the territory of the Israelite tribes.[27]

	Bethel in the Biblical Text
Gen 12:8	Abram builds an altar, calls on the Lord's name, stakes out the promised land.
Gen 13:3	Returning from Egypt, Abram stops again at Bethel and calls on the Lord's name as preface to the separation from Lot episode.
Gen 28:19	Jacob renames Luz Bethel as a result of his theophanic dream, indicating a discontinuity between Abram cycle and Jacob cycle.
Gen 31:13	God is self-identified as "God of Bethel," referring to Jacob's pillar and vow made there. God commands Jacob to leave Laban's household and land: return to the "land of your birth."
Gen 35:1-15	After the story of the rape of Dinah (Gen 34), God commands Jacob to go to Bethel to settle, build altar to God who appeared to him when he fled from Esau—put away foreign gods, purify yourself. Jacob goes to Luz (i.e., Bethel [v. 6]), builds an altar, names the place El-Bethel, buries the nurse there, and experiences a theophany with name change to Israel. The covenant is reiterated; Jacob sets up a pillar, pours out a drink offering and oil, and names the place Bethel again (v. 15).
Josh 7, 8, 12	Bethel is used as benchmark to locate Ai; it has a Canaanite king defeated by Joshua.
Josh 16:1	Allotment given to Josephites includes Bethel.
Josh 18:13	Benjamin allotment includes reference to Luz (i.e., Bethel).
Judg 1:22-26	Joseph tribe captures Bethel (formerly Luz) using information from captured citizen to get into the city; this man moves to Hittite territory and founds new city named Luz.
Judg 4:5	Deborah's palm is located "between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim."
Judg 20:18	Israelite tribes, preparing to attack Benjamin at Gibeah, first go to Bethel to inquire of the Lord "Which of us shall go up first," and the answer is Judah (compare Judg 1:1–2, which does not mention place-name but has same answer).

shrine or sanctuary associated with the monarchical period. However, as John C. H. Laughlin is quick to note, the site is badly in need of new, more thorough investigations (*Fifty Major Cities of the Bible* [London/New York: Routledge, 2006], 53–54).

[27] The name Bethel "originally did not point to the town of Bethel, but may have referred to open cult-places" (*DDD,* 174, citing Gen 28:10–19 as an instance of this usage). Further, the god Bethel is found in seventh-century B.C.E. Aramaic texts such as the treaty between Baal I of Tyre and the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (SAA 2, 5 iv:6′).

	Bethel in the Biblical Text (*cont.*)
Judg 20:26-28	After losing initial battle, Israelites return to Bethel, fast, offer burnt sacrifices, inquire of the Lord ("for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days") through Phinehas the priest and are told to fight the next day.
Judg 21:2	After the civil war the need arises to provide wives for the surviving Benjaminites, and Israelites go to Bethel to consult God about this.
1 Sam 7:16	Bethel is part of Samuel's judicial circuit, along with Gilgal and Mizpah.
1 Sam 10:3-4	Three men "going up to God at Bethel" with offerings give Saul two loaves of bread as a sign of his being chosen king by God.
1 Kgs 12:29-33	Jeroboam appoints Dan and Bethel as royal shrines, places golden-calf images in each, and establishes a festival there on the fifteenth day of the eighth month.
1 Kgs 13	Prophet from Judah came to Bethel and "cried out against the altar at Bethel" (v. 4), then was deceived by the "old prophet" of Bethel, and was killed by a lion.
2 Kgs 2	Elijah and Elisha follow a reverse-conquest itinerary, going from Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan River in preparation for Elijah's being taken away; a company of prophets is in Bethel (v. 3).
2 Kgs 2:23-24	Elisha returns to Bethel after Elijah is taken; his bald head is jeered at by "small boys" and he curses them in the Lord's name; forty-two are mauled by bears.
2 Kgs 10:29	Jehu does not remove the golden calves from Dan and Bethel.
2 Kgs 17:28	After Samaria falls to Assyria, the king ordered that a priest teach the new peoples installed in Samaria "the law of the god of the land," and he went to Bethel and "taught them how they should worship the Lord."
2 Kgs 23:4, 15–19	Josiah desacralizes the altar and high place at Bethel; he also takes the ashes of destroyed Baal vessels there.
Jer 48:13	Compares Moab's shame in Chemosh to Israel's shame over Bethel.
Hos 10:5-13	The prophet cites as sources of Israel's sin several cities that are destined to be destroyed: Samaria, Beth-aven (its calf), "high places of Aven," Gibeah, Bethel.
Hos 12:4	Citing God's indictment against Jacob for "striving" with God, Hosea says Jacob "met [God] at Bethel."
Amos 3:14	God will punish "the altars of Bethel" and cut off its horns.

	Bethel in the Biblical Text (*cont.*)
Amos 4:4	Amos sarcastically urges the Israelites to "come to Bethel and transgress."
Amos 5:5	Amos urges people to seek God and live, but "do not seek Bethel" for "Bethel shall come to nothing."
Amos 5:6	God's fire will break out against Bethel with no one to quench it.
Amos 7:10-13	Amos has a confrontation with Amaziah, "the priest of Bethel"—the priest refers to it as "the king's sanctuary and it is a temple of the kingdom."
Zech 7:2	A delegation is sent from Bethel to Jerusalem to inquire about mourning practices.

The history of Bethel in the biblical text is linked to an up-and-down political and cultic cycle. This cycle traces the movements of the city's cultic character from Canaanite to Israelite, including Bethel's periods of political and sacred eclipse, its reemergence as a prominent site, and its destruction as part of Josiah's attempt both to overshadow it and to desacralize its cultic precincts and discredit its priestly community.[28] The city's original Canaanite cultic character is subsumed by the Israelites when they claim control over the central hill country. Bethel, of course, is only one of several cultic sites in the hill country, including Shechem, Shiloh, and Gilgal. Samuel includes it as one of the cities in his judicial itinerary (1 Sam 7:16). After 1050 b.c.e. the most northern of these cities, Shiloh, loses its prominence after the Battle of Aphek and the loss of the ark of the covenant to the Philistines (1 Sam 4:10–11).[29] This gives the more centrally located Bethel the opportunity to rise in prominence during the emergence of the monarchy. The city's possible association with the Aaronide priestly line may play a role here since this group, tied politically to the kingship of David and Solomon, also controlled the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem and at Hebron.[30]

It is precisely these political events that play into the choice of Bethel for inclusion in a number of traditions—all of which are designed to provide geographic claim and political legitimacy to the Davidides within the central portion of Canaan. Geographic reiteration therefore serves the purpose of tying foundation

[28] W. Boyd Barrick, "Burning Bones at Bethel: A Closer Look at 2 Kings 23,16a," *SJOT* 14 (2000): 11.

[29] For a discussion of the Battle of Aphek and its consequences, see J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 132–33; and R .A. Pearce, "Shiloh and Jer 7:12, 14 & 15," *VT* 23 (1973): 105–8.

[30] See Baruch Halpern's careful examination of arguments for and against an Aaronide link to Bethel in "Levitic Participation in the Reform Cult of Jeroboam I," *JBL* 95 (1976): 33–34.

events contained in the ancestral narratives to specific, significant sites that then will play a part in the rise of the Davidic dynasty to power.

In particular, there are several stages in Jacob's career that are intimately tied to Bethel. His career begins after his deception of Esau and his departure for Haran to find a bride. He leaves Beersheba (28:10) and stops at a "certain place" (28:11), Luz, where he has a dream theophany that introduces him to the God of Abraham and Isaac, and he receives the covenant promise (28:13–15). Jacob then applies an "incident name" or "bestowed name" on the place, calling it Bethel as a reflection of his theophanic experience.[31] He then formalizes this event, indicating its sacred character by erecting a pillar, pouring out an oil libation, calling out the name once again, and voicing the terms of a vow to God (28:18–22). Closing the circle, Jacob's next theophanic experience comes from the "God of Bethel," who instructs him to leave Haran and Laban's household and return to the land of his family (31:13). Then, at the end of his cycle of stories, Jacob is commanded to go to Bethel after the disturbing massacre of the male population at Shechem (34:25–31). Completing a geo-cultic *inclusio,* he will once again build a pillar and yet again rename the spot Bethel (35:1–15).[32]

Interestingly, in neither case is there a direct association made with Abram's altar built on a mountain east of Bethel (12:3) or Abram's stop at this same spot after his Egyptian adventure (13:3–4). Such an omission points up the differing traditions within the ancestral narratives that at times operate independently of each other and are not always used to bolster the political fortunes of David's dynasty. However, the fact that Jacob is forced to leave the devastated city of Shechem after his sons massacre its male population may be significant to Bethel's later cultic importance as well, since it removes Shechem from further cultic activity in the ancestral narratives.

Even though the Samuel narrative begins by noting Shiloh's prominent role as the site where the Aaronide priest Eli and his sons officiated before the ark of the covenant (1 Sam 1:3), Bethel can also claim direct association with the ark during the settlement period in the story of the civil war between the tribes in Judges 20–21. On three separate occasions, the allied tribes went to Bethel to consult God, "for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days" (Judg 20:18, 26; 21:2).

[31] For a more detailed discussion of the concept of "bestowed" and "incident" place-names, see Stewart, *Names*, 6, 105.

[32] See John Van Seters, "Divine Encounter at Bethel (Gen 28,10–22) in Recent Literary-Critical Study of Genesis," *ZAW* 110 (1998): 510–11. Van Seters considers the section of the story in Gen 28:11–12, 16aα, 17–19 to be "a cultic etiology of the Bethel sanctuary," while the rest of the text he consigns to the "proto-Pent composition" (p. 512). I would agree to the extent that the cultic etiology fits into the strategy I have identified as geographic reiteration, which in this case serves the agenda of the priestly community at Bethel. The strategy, however, would be most effective in the divided monarchy period when the monarchy and the Bethel priestly community could best benefit from association with Jacob's vow and his assurance of the covenant promise.

While the Judges account does provide a "verbal map" of the northern cultic sites (Shechem, Shiloh, and Bethel [21:19]), only Bethel emerges in this story as a place where Yahweh can be reliably consulted.[33] Shiloh is simply referred to in conjunction with a harvest festival during which the Benjaminites steal new brides for themselves (21:19–21).

The traditions associated with journeying to Bethel continue in the legitimation episode of the Saul narrative. As one of the three signs that will indicate the validity of Samuel's anointing of Saul as Israel's king, three men who are "going up to God at Bethel" with offerings (kids, loaves, and wine) give Saul two loaves of bread, thereby acknowledging his sovereignty as God's chosen king (1 Sam 10:3–4). In this way Bethel's cultic associations are tied to the political narrative of the Israelites. Such associations contribute to the narrative's enhancement and acknowledgment of Saul as an effective war chief who emerges as a strong leader at the end of the eleventh century.[34] The story may also be meant to correspond to the physical decline of Shiloh (ten miles north of Bethel) following the Philistine victory at the Battle of Aphek. Since all of the signs forecast by Samuel occur in Benjaminite territory, Saul's own tribal ties to Benjamin and the importance of that tribe are reinforced. Furthermore, since Bethel is the cultic link in these stories, its importance as a geographic, cultic, and political center located strategically between the northern and southern areas of Israelite territory is reiterated for the story's audience.[35]

Bethel's cultic importance eventually is overshadowed by the shift from the Saulides to the Davidides, who were associated with Hebron and Jerusalem. The transference of political power, the installation of the ark of the covenant, and the construction of the temple in Jerusalem would have eclipsed the importance of all other cultic centers. However, political fortunes shift quickly in newly formed states, and Bethel's importance reemerged after the division of the kingdom when it was designated as one of Jeroboam's two royal sanctuaries. The question could be raised why Jeroboam chose Bethel and Dan, and one answer would simply be geography. They represented the two geographic poles of his new kingdom, and Bethel in particular stood right on the border with Judah and would therefore function as a sort of geopolitical taunt issued by Jeroboam's administration. While Jeroboam is repeatedly identified as the "anti-David" in the Deuteronomistic History,[36] it is clear

[33] Susan Niditch, *Judges* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 47.

[34] See Diana Edelman's argument in "Saul's Rescue of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11:1–11): Sorting Story from History," *ZAW* 96 (1984): 207–9, for the fictional nature of 1 Sam 11:1–11 as part of a *šōphēṭ*-deliverer tradition that ties him back to the judges period and removes a measure of his legitimacy as a true king.

[35] See the fuller discussion of this point in Jules F. Gomes, *The Sanctuary of Bethel and the Configuration of Israelite Identity* (BZAW 368; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006), 135–36.

[36] See the discussion of Jeroboam's legacy and his demonization by the Deuteronomist in Mark Leuchter, "Jeroboam the Ephratite," *JBL* 125 (2006): 51–52. What is particularly interesting

that he is an astute politician who understands the importance of both physical and authoritative space.

In addition, both Dan and Bethel have a history as cultic centers, and that also played into the scheme of geographic reiteration, which in this case has the dual advantages of placing political pressure on the southern kingdom and satisfying the need for well-known religious centers as counterpoints to Jerusalem. In this way, Jeroboam rallies the support of his northern subjects by listening to his people, something Rehoboam had failed to do at the Shechem conference (1 Kgs 12:1–19). By rejecting Jerusalem, its temple, and the ark, and then substituting northern cultic centers, as well as a more compliant priestly staff not tied to the Zadokites, and iconic bulls as visual representations of God's presence,[37] Jeroboam quickly asserts his independence and, of course, earns the eternal enmity of the priestly, political, and scribal voices of the southern kingdom.[38]

Of course, in this capacity, the city of Bethel and its royal-appointed priesthood were tied to the political fortunes of the northern monarchs.[39] Undoubtedly, this meant great prosperity during the height of Israel's emergence as an independent kingdom under the Omrides and during the dynasty of Jehu. However, since it is the southern voice of the Deuteronomistic Historian that will dominate the editing of the biblical narrative, Bethel's traditional and earned fame will be opened to ridicule, and the prophets, who see it as the seat of invalid worship, will defame its sacred precincts and its priesthood, starting with the unnamed prophet of Judah (1 Kgs 13:1–10).

The scribal desire to establish obvious literary links between the stories associated with idolatry is made clear in the narrative in which Aaron constructs the golden calf (Exodus 32) and the chronicle of Jeroboam's placement of golden calves in the shrines at Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:28–33; 13:1). Both fit quite well into a common polemic against those who would identify Israel's God with an idol. Perhaps the most scathing of these attacks on Bethel is the drippingly sarcastic voice

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in Leuchter's examination of the Ahijah incident (pp. 53–59) is the opening given by the prophet to allow Jeroboam to reign in Jerusalem, should he remain faithful to the covenant. Clearly, Jeroboam's rise to power began with much the same hope for the future as Saul's, and his fall (both political and traditional), like Saul's, comes at the hands of the pro-Davidic, Deuteronomic editors who shaped the post-schism history.

[37] Ingrid Hjelm makes a telling argument that Jeroboam's sin is not apostasy but disloyalty (*Jerusalem's Rise to Sovereignty: Zion and Gerizim in Competition* [JSOTSup 404; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004], 66–70). She also suggests, and I would concur, that the insertion of the golden calf into 1 Kgs 12:26-33 could be easily removed without "any loss of meaning." If the calves are allowed to remain, then the issue to be stressed is not idolatry but allegiance to or recognition of foreign cults—thus a further shift of policy and political loyalty away from Jerusalem.

[38] Leuchter provides an excellent summary of Jeroboam's tactics ("Jeroboam the Ephratite," 66–68).

[39] Serge Frolov, "'Days of Shiloh' in the Kingdom of Israel," *Bib* 76 (1995): 217.

of the Judahite prophet Amos, who calls on the people to "come to Bethel"[40]—something that had been an appropriate action in the past when its legitimacy as a Yahwistic cultic site was recognized—"and transgress" in a place now tied, like Gilgal, to the northern kingdom's false practices (Amos 4:4).[41] Turning to a more conciliatory style, Amos later warns the people that their only hope is to seek Yahweh rather than Bethel, for that place "shall come to nothing" (Amos 5:5–6). The prophet's words are intended to desacralize Bethel and to invalidate it as a place where Yahweh dwells or speaks.

Amos continues his denunciation of Bethel in his confrontation with Amaziah, "the priest of Bethel." That functionary challenges an unsanctioned prophet who had presumed to speak in the "king's sanctuary" and instructs him to flee away and never again to "prophesy at Bethel" (7:12–13). In this sense, Amaziah is asserting that the priestly community of the royal city/shrine has usurped all authority as the voice of God in this place. For this reason Amos's sharp retort focuses on his dissociation from the royal or court prophets and priesthood at Bethel and concludes with a condemnation of Amaziah and his family.[42] It would have been appropriate, however, for him to turn around Amaziah's assertion that Amos should "flee away to the land of Judah" (7:12) and continue his denunciation by employing a spatial analogy similar to that used by Jeremiah in the next century: "Go now to my place in Shiloh . . . and see what I did to it" (Jer 7:12). In Jeremiah's case, of course, he is attempting to explode the "myth of inviolability" (a second-space concept) that had been attached to Jerusalem since the time of Sennacherib's siege of the city in 701 B.C.E. Pointing to a desacralized, abandoned site actually presumes the image of God's physical abandonment of the temple and Jerusalem in Ezekiel 10 just prior to the Neo-Babylonian destruction of the city.[43]

Hosea draws this theme full circle in his prophetic indictment of Israel. He notes how God had chosen to appear to Jacob at Bethel and had offered him and his descendants a covenant. However, just as Jacob had been a contentious member of his family and a man willing to wrestle with God, the people of Israel have

[40] For a useful examination of the rhetorical strategy involved in the use of sarcastic speech patterns, see Christopher J. Lee and Albert N. Katz, "The Differential Role of Ridicule in Sarcasm and Irony," *Metaphor and Symbol* 13 (1998): 1–15.

[41] Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 427–33.

[42] Thus, when Amaziah's refers to Amos with the term חזה, Amos's retort is an effort to dissociate himself and his mission completely from prophets who are dependent on royal patronage (לא־נביא אנכי, ולא בן־נביא). For a carefully constructed explanation of this interpretation, see Ziony Zevit, "Misunderstanding at Bethel, Amos 7:12–17," *VT* 25 (1975): 783–90.

[43] See also the rejection of Shiloh in Ps 78:60–62 and the subsequent divine choice of Judah, Mount Zion, and David in 78:67–71. The point is not the rejection of the northern tribes from the covenantal community but rather the divine decision to transfer authority south by sanctioning the Davidic monarchy and the Jerusalem temple. On this, see Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 294–95.

striven against God as well.[44] For them truly to return to their covenantal relationship they must seek "love and justice" rather than placing their faith in Assyria and Egypt (Hos 12:1–6). Bethel, which had been the scene of Jacob's theophany and had been proclaimed by the patriarch as "the House of God," has been transformed by the people's unfaithfulness into Beth-aven, "the House of Wickedness" (Hos 4:15; 5:8; 10:5, 8).[45]

Despite these prophetic proclamations, Bethel remains an abode of priests even after the kingdom of Israel is desolated by the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 17:28, 29). However, these Assyrian appointees, like those appointed by Jeroboam, seem to operate within a syncretistic religious milieu offering instruction on Yahweh and the law in the interests of the government, but they do not work to eliminate the worship of other gods or foreign practices.[46] Finally, the Deuteronomistic Historian almost gleefully recounts how Josiah's opportunistic and nationalistic invasion of the northern kingdom at the end of the seventh century takes him to Bethel once again.[47] This time, however, the task at hand involves a thorough extirpation of its cultic character by destroying the shrine and its altars and by exhuming and burning the bodies of the priests who had served there (2 Kgs 23:15–18). In fact, it is only with the destruction and desecration of the shrine at Bethel that the "enduring house" of Jeroboam (that is, both his cultic center and the memory of his rebellious dynasty) is erased from Israelite consciousness.[48]

Although Josiah is taking a chance of offending his subjects by his desecration of both the sacred precinct and the bodies of the priests,[49] this account is in fact simply one more example of geographic reiteration in the form of a fulfillment of the prophetic statement of the unnamed prophet in 1 Kgs 13:2–3. In the course of this extended reiteration process, the audience has to be convinced of the sacred associations that had made Bethel a place closely tied to God's covenantal promise.[50] Then, just as Jeremiah reminds the people of Jerusalem (Jer 7:13–15), the case

[44] For the equation Jacob = nation of Israel and a call for a "moral return and reaffirmation," see Steven L. McKenzie, "The Jacob Tradition in Hosea 12:4–5," *VT* 36 (1986): 317–18.

[45] If, as Yairah Amit ("Bochim, Bethel, and the Hidden Polemic [Judg 2,1–5]," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zechariah Kallai* [VTSup 81; ed. Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld; Leiden: Brill, 2000], 124–27) and Niditch (*Judges*, 49) suggest, Judg 2:1–6 is a Dtr polemic against the northern shrine, we could compare the renaming of Bethel to Bochim ("weeping") to Hosea's image here as another use of geographic reiteration, but in this case as a form of taunt.

[46] Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 390–91.

[47] Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Way of the Man of God from Judah: True and False Prophecy in the Pre-Deuteronomic Legend of 1 Kings 13," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 383.

[48] Leuchter, "Jeroboam the Ephratite," 69 n. 66.

[49] Barrick, "Burning Bones at Bethel," 11.

[50] Further treatments of this passage are found in Jerome T. Walsh, "The Contexts of 1 Kings

is made that no place is so sacred that it is immune to destruction when its sacred function and character come into question. Further, the royal expedition, representing the "true sanctuary" of Yahweh in Jerusalem, completes the process by eliminating a rival shrine.

The possibility exists, of course, that Josiah's efforts were not as thorough as reported in the biblical narrative. Given its proximity to Mizpah, the Neo-Babylonian administrative center during the first half of the sixth century B.C.E. in the territory of Benjamin, Bethel may well have continued to serve the population as a local shrine.[51] Indications in the census lists contained in Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 2:28; Neh 7:32), combined with a limited amount of archaeological evidence, suggest that the site of Bethel was either rebuilt or restored to some measure of regional significance in the Persian period, but its role as a major cultic center appears to have ended and its former importance was never to be restored.[52] While pilgrims in the Byzantine period could still physically go back to Bethel,[53] its former ties to sacred practice and divine presence were effectively severed.

Regardless of the reality of Bethel's history, it is clear that the Deuteronomistic scribal strategy of geographic reiteration has been applied quite effectively in the biblical narrative to redefine the story of the site. The political and priestly forces engaged in this process first created a traditional authority for the site (second-space concept) and then used that authority to eliminate Bethel's significance when it became necessary or useful to do so. As a result, Bethel never again would be able to overshadow Jerusalem or any other cultic center. If a lingering memory existed, it could no longer tempt leaders to go back to Bethel.

XIII," *VT* 39 (1989): 355–70; and D. W. van Winkle, "1 Kings XII 25–XIII 34: Jeroboam's Cultic Innovations and the Man of God from Judah," *VT* 46 (1996): 101–14.

[51] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 95–99. He suggests that the reference to Bethel in Zech 7:1–7 may be an indication that Bethel remained a pilgrimage site for worshipers as late as 518 B.C.E. (pp. 100–101). In the same volume, Yair Hoffman ("The Fasts in the Book of Zechariah," 200–203) argues that the delegation mentioned in this prophetic text came from Bethel to Jerusalem. He also notes that their Babylonian names do not serve as a valid argument for the delegation having come from Babylonia.

[52] Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible,* vol. 2, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732–332 B.C.E.)* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 431–32. Israel Finkelstein is cautious, given the lack of architectural remains, pottery, or seal impressions that would attest to Persian-period occupation ("Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," *PEQ* 140 [2008]: 9). He also considers the greater evidence of Hellenistic occupation at this site and the others in the census lists to be a strong argument for the lists being composed in the Hellenistic period (pp. 13–15).

[53] Rainey ("Looking for Bethel," 270) cites the mention of Bethel by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (353 C.E.) and notes that the city does appear on the Madaba Map (ca. 565 C.E.).

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Vertical Grammar of Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry

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The phenomenon of parallelism has been long recognized in poetic texts in languages such as Chinese, Finnish, Mongolian, and Russian, as well as in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and other Semitic languages. In the West, however, it was Robert Lowth who laid down the foundations of a systematic inquiry into this phenomenon in his *De sacra poesi hebraeorum* (1753).[1] He classified Hebrew parallelism into three semantic categories: synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic.

In 1954, Peter A. Boodberg, "a master philologist in the rigorous tradition of the best early European sinologists,"[2] wrote what Roman Jakobson in an epoch-making article published in 1966 called a "penetrating prolegomena to a still missing systematic linguistic inquiry into the framework of [the Chinese poetic tradition]." He wrote:

> [Boodberg] has shown that a function of the second line of a couplet is "to give us the clue for the construction of the first" and to bring out the dormant primary meaning of the confronted words; he has made clear that "parallelism is not merely a stylistic device of formularistic syntactical duplication; it is intended to achieve a result reminiscent of binocular vision, the superimposition of two syntactical images in order to endow them with solidity and depth, the repetition of the pattern having the effect of binding together syntagms that appear at first rather loosely aligned."[3]

[1] Robert Lowth, *De sacra poesi hebraeorum* (Oxford, 1753; trans. G. Gregory as *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* [London: Tegg & Son, 1835]); see also Lowth, *Isaiah: A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes* (1778; repr., London: Tegg, 1848).

[2] P. W. Kroll, review of *Selected Works of Peter A. Boodberg,* compiled by Alvin P. Cohen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 2 (1980): 271.

[3] Roman Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet," *Language* 42 (1966):

Some forty years have passed since Jakobson claimed that "the structure of parallelism . . . requires a rigorous linguistic analysis."[4] After discussing the nature of grammatical parallelism, he presented a detailed analysis of a Russian folktale. Encouraged by this challenge,[5] scholars produced a notable number of monographs during the 1980s in the area of Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry.[6] Since then, researchers have been making significant contributions to various aspects of the grammar and style of Hebrew poetic parallelism, by shifting the "emphasis from the semantic to the syntactic component."[7] In his most recent work, Nicholas P. Lunn made a detailed theoretical analysis of word order in Biblical Hebrew poetry.[8] Yet one may still feel the need of a rigorous "grammatical" analysis of parallelism, especially an analysis of the grammatical relation between two parallel lines.

Jakobson presented a concrete example of "a consistent linguistic analysis of pervasive parallelism" in a Russian poetic text. He noted "a typical example of a parallelism based on syntactic government" in a lament. There, a bicolon has the verb in the first line and the direct object in the second line. He stated that "not only agreement or government but also the relation between subject and predicate occasionally underlies parallel lines."[9] Thus, Jakobson noted a grammatical relation in Russian poetry in which a sentence nucleus is divided between two parallel lines. In other words, the grammatical relation in this bicolon works *vertically.* This exact point has not been thoroughly developed in the study of Hebrew poetry.[10]

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402. For Boodberg's work, see Peter A. Boodberg, "Syntactical Metaplasia in Stereoscopic Parallelism," in *Cedules from a Berkeley Workshop on Asiatic Philology* (1954), repr. in *Selected Works of Peter A. Boodberg;* see also E. H. Schafer and A. P. Cohen, "Peter A. Boodberg, 1903–1972," *JAOS* 94 (1974): 1–13, which includes "Bibliography of Peter Alexis Boodberg."

[4] Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet," 400–401.

[5] See the debate over Jakobson's grammatical parallelism between Ziony Zevit ("Roman Jakobson, Psycholinguistics, and Biblical Poetry," *JBL* 109 [1990]: 385–401) and Francis Landy ("In Defense of Jakobson," *JBL* 111 [1992]: 105–13).

[6] For example, Terence Collins, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry: A Grammatical Approach to the Stylistic Study of the Hebrew Prophets* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); Stephen A. Geller, *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry* (HSM 20; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979); M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980); James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984); Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Dennis Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: A Trial Cut (ʿnt and Proverbs 2)* (VTSup 39; Leiden: Brill, 1988).

[7] Collins, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry*, 8.

[8] Nicholas P. Lunn, *Word-Order Variation in Biblical Hebrew Poetry: Differentiating Pragmatics and Poetics* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

[9] Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet," 428.

[10] In her revised and expanded edition of *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Grand

What is still needed for "a rigorous linguistic analysis" of parallelism is an explanation of the *vertical* grammatical relation between the two parallel lines. In the following pages, I discuss the nature of poetic parallelism in terms of two linguistic, or *syntactical* rather than *stylistic,* features. These have been hinted at by Boodberg and Jakobson, but have not been treated concretely, especially in the study of the Hebrew poetry. I phrase them as follows: (1) Parallelism is the device of expressing *one sentence through two lines*. (2) Parallelism is characterized by *vertical grammar,* that is, a syntactic relation between two parallel lines.

I. Parallelism as the Device of Expressing One Sentence through Two Lines

I define parallelism, semantically, in the simplest way, as a device expressing "one thought through two lines."[11] Here, what I call two lines corresponds to what Boodberg designates as "two syntactic images" or two syntagms, which are superimposed and move forward together as if they were two wheels of a railway truck.

Grammatically, however, the parallelism may be defined as a linguistic unit that constitutes "one sentence through two lines."[12] Here a "sentence" is understood as the basic thought unit. It can be either a simple or a compound or a complex sentence.

The simple sentence here corresponds to the "basic sentences" of Terence Collins.[13] However, his concentration on the "line-form" rather than on the parallel structures between two "half-lines"—a half-line is a "colon" (my "line")—leads to a denial of *paradigmatic* repetition and correspondence, as well as of a *vertical* grammatical dependence.

Similarly, James L. Kugel explains "the basic feeling of regularity produced in Hebrew songs derives . . . from the recurrent sequence _____ / _____ //, an

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Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) Adele Berlin briefly summarizes the history of linguistic and nonlinguistic studies of parallelism and includes a three-page bibliography of post-1985 materials. There she gives two further examples that exhibit "intricacies of parallelism": Ps 79:11 and Job 5:14. A "vertical" understanding of the semantic and syntactic relationships between parallel lines might allow a better explanation of such "intricacies."

[11] For recent discussions of the *Definitionsproblem,* see Andreas Wagner, "Der Parallelismus membrorum zwischen poetischer Form und Denkfigur," in *Parallelismus membrorum* (ed. Andreas Wagner; OBO 224; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 1–26; and in the same volume Gerald Moers, "Der Parallelismus (membrorum) als Gegenstand ägyptologischer Forschung," 147–66, esp. 147–53.

[12] Based mainly on his analysis of Proverbs, Alviero Niccacci came to the following principle: "Lines consist of parallel grammatical units, that normally constitute a complete sentence" ("Analysing Biblical Hebrew Poetry," *JSOT* 74 [1997]: 89).

[13] Collins, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry*, 22–24.

abstraction of the 'seconding' assertion 'A is so, and what's more, B.'"[14] Such an explanation, however, might lead us to lose sight of the vertical nature of poetic parallelism.

Superimposition

In Hebrew poetic parallelism, two lines often constitute a compound sentence,[15] with the syntactical images of two lines being perfectly superimposed. For example, Ps 24:3:

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?	מי־יעלה בהר־יהוה
And who shall stand in his holy place?	ומי־יקום במקום קדשו

The syntactical structure of the first colon and that of the second are exactly same, like most of the poetic parallelism in Chinese,[16] with the same word order of interrogative pronoun + verb + prepositional phrase. In this *synonymous* parallelistic structure, two colons of the same syntactical image are superimposed on each other and express the meaning, "Who shall ascend the hill of Yahweh and stand in his holy place?"

In contrast, *antithetic* parallelism, in which two contrastive elements are dealt with is an example of superimposition of the opposite sides of the same coin, not of two contradictory thoughts. For example, Prov 15:8:

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,	זבח רשעים תועבת יהוה
but the prayer of the upright is his delight (NRSV)	ותפלת ישרים רצונו

Chiastic Word Order

In Ps 139:7, each line (colon) has the same syntactical image but with a chiastic word order, that is, interrogative pronoun + verb + prepositional phrase // conjunction, interrogative pronoun + prepositional phrase + verb. The *synonymous*

[14] Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 317.

[15] This is Collins's "Line-type II," in which a line contains "two Basic Sentences of the same kind, in such a way that all the constituents in the first half-line are repeated in the second, though not necessarily in the same order" (*Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry*, 23).

[16] For example, in *Shih Ching*, Mao Text #234, etc. See David Jason Liu, "Parallel Structures in the Canon of Chinese Poetry: The *Shih Ching*," *Poetics Today* 4 (1983): 639-53. For *Tufu*'s Deng Gao, see David Toshio Tsumura, "Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry," in *Philarchisophia in the Chinese and World Perspectives* (ed. Yang Shi; Beijin: Social Sciences Documentation Publishing House, in press).

parallelistic structure also achieves "a result reminiscent of binocular vision" and conveys the meaning, "Where shall I go away from your presence?"

Where can I go from your spirit?	אנה אֵלֵךְ מרוחך
Or where can I flee from your presence? (NRSV)	ואנה מפניך אֶברח

A chiastic word order also appears in the *antithetic* parallelism, as in Ps 1:6:

for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,	כי־יודע יהוה דרך צדיקים
but the way of the wicked will perish. (NRSV)	ודרך רשעים תאבד

Here, in the surface structure—particle-V + S + O // conj.-S + V—the object of the participle of a transitive verb in the first line corresponds to the subject of the intransitive verb in the second line. But, in a deep grammar, both of them are the *patient* of two verbs, that is, "to know" (ידע) and "to perish" (אבד). Again, the two lines are the opposite sides of the same coin, each expressing the same idea from a different perspective.

Gapping (or Ellipsis)

Such "superimposition" of the syntactical image of two lines can be realized also even if there is a *gapping* of element in one of the parallel lines. For example, in Prov 5:15 a verb is missing from the second line and a "ballast variant"[17] מתוך בארך (lit., "from the midst of your well") compensates for it.

Drink waters from your own cistern,	שתה-מים מבורך
flowing from your own well.	ונזלים מתוך בארך

Lunn recently explained this as a case of "dependence in gapping," in which the second line is dependent on the first.[18]

One might explain that the verb does double duty, having a grammatical rela-

[17] This term was coined by Cyrus H. Gordon in *Ugaritic Textbook: Grammar, Texts in Translation, Cuneiform Selections, Glossary, Indices* (AnOr 38; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), 135–37. Gordon explains: "If a major word in the first stichos is not paralleled in the second, then one or more of the words in the second stichos tend to be longer than their counterparts in the first stichos" (§13.116). Such word(s) he calls "ballast variant(s)." For a summary of "ellipsis and ballast variant" in Ugaritic, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Ugaritic Poetry," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt; HO 1/39; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 172–73.

[18] Lunn, *Word-Order Variation,* 116–17.

tionship with מים and נזלים at the same time.[19] However, since it is most likely that נזלים (participle masc. pl., lit., "flowings") of the second line vertically modifies מים (lit., "waters") in the first line, we would rather take two terms *as a whole,* namely, "flowing waters" (מים נזלים), the object of שתה. Hence, "Drink flowing waters from your own cistern—namely, from your own well"—*not,* "Drink water from your own cistern, / [drink] flowing water from your own well," as Lunn suggests, supplying the "missing component," that is, the verb "drink."[20]

Further, in Ps 47:6, the lack of a verb in the second line is *stylistically* balanced by a "ballast variant" (בקול שופר) of בתרועה in the first line.

God has gone up with shouts of joy,	עלה אלהים בתרועה
Yahweh, with the sound of a trumpet.	יהוה בקול שופר

Though Lunn explains this as an example of gapping,[21] this instance is not like the gapping of a verb in prose, for example, "John *ate* a fish and Meg ø a steak." Since the two subjects in Ps 47:6, God and Yahweh, are co-referential, the second line is grammatically dependent on the first. It is reasonable, therefore, to think that the subject "Yahweh" and the verb עלה also have a *vertical* grammatical relation.

Thus, the parallelism as a whole means, "God Yahweh has gone up with shouts of joy and the sound of a trumpet," *not*, "God has gone up with shouts of joy, [while] Yahweh has gone up with the sound of a trumpet." Here too, therefore, it is evident that parallelism is the device of expressing one thought through two lines as well as the linguistic unit that constitutes one sentence through two lines.[22]

As for Lam 5:2, Berlin takes it as an example of verb gapping and explains that "the syntax is the same in both lines (with a gapped verb in the second line)."[23]

Our land was turned over to strangers;	נחלתנו נהפכה לזרים
Our houses to foreigners. (trans. Berlin)	בתינו לנכרים

In terms of *vertical* grammar, however, the paired expression נחלתנו ("our land," lit., "inheritances") and בתינו ("our houses") "as a whole" (see Mic 2:2; Jer 12:7) is better taken as the subject of the verb נהפכה. Hence, "Our real estate [lit., 'our land and our houses'] was turned over to strangers/foreigners."

Similarly, though in a more complicated structure, in Hab 1:2 the two lines express one meaning, that is, "O Yahweh, how long shall I cry to you for help, shouting 'Violence!' and yet you will neither hear nor save?"

[19] For the phenomenon of "double-duty" elements, see Mitchell Dahood and Tadeusz Penar, "The Grammar of the Psalter," in *Psalms,* vol. 3, *101–150: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 17A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 429–44.

[20] Lunn, *Word-Order Variation,* 116.

[21] Ibid., 19.

[22] See nn. 11 and 12 above, 169.

[23] Berlin, *Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 27.

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? — עד־אנה יהוה שועתי ולא תשמע

Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? (NRSV) — אזעק אליך חמס ולא תושיע

Therefore, the above examples of "gapping" should rather be explained as cases of grammatical dependence of the second line on the first line, *vertically*. While terms such as ellipsis or gapping suggest the deletion of what was there originally, and hence that what remains is doing "double duty,"[24] these examples rather suggest that grammar is working *vertically* between two (or more) parallel lines.

The above examples might be depicted as follows:[25]

Proverbs 5:15 (3 stresses : 3 stresses)

	מים	מבורך
שתה		
//	ונזלים	מתוך בארך

Psalm 47:6 (3 : 3)

	אלהים	בתרועה
עלה		
//	יהוה	בקול שופר

Lamentations 5:2 (3 : 2)[26]

	נחלתנו	לזרים
	נהפכה	
//	בתינו	לנכרים

Habakkuk 1:2 (5 : 5)

	שועתי	ולא תשמע
עד־אנה יהוה		
//	אזעק אליך חמס	ולא תושיע

[24] In his most recent study, Niccacci explains ellipsis as "the omission of a given element that is grammatically expected," which is, he holds, "particularly frequent, especially in the form of a technique called 'double-duty modifier.'" See Alviero Niccacci, "The Biblical Hebrew Verbal System in Poetry," in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), 258–59.

[25] Geller's "reconstructed sentences" result from grammatical adjustments (*Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*, 15–29, esp. 17 n. 17).

[26] This passage follows the pattern of *qînâ* ("lamentation") meter, that is, 3 : 2.

The elements in the second lines above (שתה, עלה, נהפכה, and עד־אנה יהוה) are grammatically dependent on the two parallel lines, that is, the first and the third lines in the diagram, *as a whole,* not the separate lines *at the same time*.[27]

II. Parallelism Characterized by Vertical Grammar, That Is, a Syntactic Relation between Two Parallel Lines

Roman Jakobson holds that "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination."[28] According to this technical definition, parallelism is "the invariant verbal structure of poetry" which results when "the poet selects from the paradigmatic axis items that are equivalent and then projects them onto the syntagmatic axis in regular fashion."[29]

However, the poetic expression, insofar as it is a linguistic expression, is characterized by the syntax that "is formed along the axis of combination" and "operates via contiguity" as well as by the principle of "equivalence."[30]

In prose, grammar is characterized by a horizontal or sequential (syntagmatic) combination of various linguistic elements, but in parallelistic poetry, grammar works not only horizontally but also *vertically*.[31] Parallelism is the result of the

[27] The same is true in the case of the AXB pattern, in which X is inserted between the AB complex and yet A and B hold their unity while X holds its grammatical or semantic relationship with AB *as a whole,* rather than with A and B *at the same time.* See David Toshio Tsumura, "Literary Insertion (AXB Pattern) in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 33 (1983): 468–82; idem, "Literary Insertion, AXB Pattern, in Hebrew and Ugaritic: A Problem of Adjacency and Dependency in Poetic Parallelism," *UF* 18 (1986): 351–61; idem, "Coordination Interrupted, or Literary Insertion AX&B Pattern, in the Books of Samuel," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. P. Fokkelman; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 117–32.

[28] Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language* (ed. Thomas A. Sebeok; Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1960), 358.

[29] Steve C. Caton, "Contributions of Roman Jakobson," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987): 240.

[30] Yu-Kung Kao and Tsu-Lin Mei, "Meaning, Metaphor, and Allusion in T'ang Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38 (1978): 344–55.

[31] David T. Tsumura, "Poetic Nature of the Hebrew Narrative Prose in I Samuel 2:12–17," in *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Wilfred G. E. Watson; AOAT 42; Neukirchen Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 293; see also Niccacci, "Analysing Biblical Hebrew Poetry," 93, which supports my view that there is a contrast between the "vertical" grammar of poetry and the "horizontal" one of prose.

On vertical grammar, see further Tsumura, "Coordination Interrupted, or Literary Insertion AX&B Pattern," 119; idem, "Vertical Grammar: The Grammar of Parallelism in Biblical Hebrew," in *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday (*ed. M. F. J. Baasten and W. Th. van Peursen; OLA 118; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 487–97.

poet's projection of the principle of "contiguity" from the axis of horizontal combination to the axis of vertical dependency. In other words, poetic texts are governed by "vertical" grammatical rules between the parallel lines as well as characterized by paradigmatic repetition and correspondence.

In the Hebrew parallel structure, this phenomenon of vertical grammar is recognizable in texts such as Prov 3:6:

In all your ways acknowledge him,	בכל־דרכיך דעהו
who makes straight your paths.	והוא יישר אֹרחתיך

Grammatically speaking, the second line depends *vertically* on the first line, while the word pair *ways* (דרכים) and *paths* (ארחות), corresponding to each other paradigmatically in parallelism,[32] conveys a sense of unity, expressing *one sentence through two lines*. In this example, a complex sentence ("In all your ways acknowledge him, who makes straight your paths") is divided into two parallel lines, which hold a vertical grammatical relation to each other.

Another example is Ps 18:12, where a simple sentence is divided into three parallel lines.

He made darkness his covering,	ישת חשך סתרו
around him his canopy,	סביבותיו סכתו
darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.	חשכת־מים עבי שחקים

He made darkness his covering,
his canopy around him
—the dark rain clouds of the sky. (NIV)

This particular text is often divided into two parallel lines:

ישת חשך סתרו סביבותיו
סכתו חשכת־מים עבי שחקים

He made darkness his covering around him,
his canopy thick clouds dark with water. (NRSV)

He made darkness around him his covering,
dense vapour his canopy. (REB)

Lunn, too, analyzes this text grammatically as a two-line parallelism:

V O O M
O O.[33]

[32] These two terms, both in plural form, appear as a word pair in Isa 2:3; Joel 2:7; Mic 4:2; Ps 25:4; and Prov 2:13.

[33] Lunn, *Word-Order Variation,* 298. Here M stands for a "clause modifier" such as a prepositional phrase or an adverb.

The principle of *vertical grammar,* however, is here clearly recognizable in the three-line parallelism. It should be analyzed as follows:

V – O – Comp
Adv – Comp
O

This is an example of a simple sentence divided into three parallel lines, in which the second and the third lines hold syntactical relation with the first by *vertical grammar.* Hence, the meaning of the entire parallelism is "He made darkness, that is, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies, around him to be his covering, that is, his canopy."

Wilfred G. E. Watson notes several examples of what he calls "vertical parallelism" and explains as follows: "In vertically parallel lines, usually extended beyond the couplet, the correspondence between components is up and down rather than across as is the norm."[34]

He cites 2 Sam 1:23 as an example of "vertical parallelism":

Saul and Jonathan,	שאול ויהונתן
most loved and most pleasant,	הנאהבים והנעימם
in their life and in their death	בחייהם ובמותם
were not separated.	לא נפרדו

and explains:

> Schematically, the first three lines can be set out as
>
> a a′
> b b′
> c c′
>
> instead of the more usual
>
> a b c
> a′ b′ c′
>
> and the like.[35]

Watson's "vertical parallelism," however, has nothing to do with a vertical grammatical relation between the lines.[36] In fact, he ignores the fourth line, where the key element of the sentence—the predicate (לא נפרדו)—appears.

My *vertical grammar* is concerned with the grammatical relation between lines, often a simple sentence being divided into two or three lines *vertically.* For

[34] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 158.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Similarly, Holger Gzella's *vertikaler parallelismus* is not concerned with a grammatical relation between two parallel lines. See Gzella, "Parallelismus und Asymmetrie in ugaritischen Texten," in *Parallelismus membrorum*, ed. Wagner, 133–38.

example, in Mic 7:3b, *vertical grammar* is recognizable in the following poetic structure:

The prince	השר
asks,	שאל
also the judge, for a bribe (NASB)	והשפט בשלום //

While the RSV and the ESV translate "the prince and the judge ask for a bribe," the NIV unjustifiably supplies "gifts" and "accepts" and translates: "the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes." However, the prepositional phrase בשלום *vertically* depends on the participle שאל in the first line; hence, there is no need to supply "gifts" in the first line. Watson calls this pattern a "synonymous-sequential parallelism" and explains the pair "the prince" and "the judge" as "parallel," and "asks" and "for a payment" as "continuous."[37] I would rather explain it as x–a // x′–b, in which x (השר) and x′ (השפט) are parallel (x//x′) and a (שאל) and b (בשלום) are in a *vertical* grammatical relation (a–b).[38]

The vertical grammatical relationship can be most clearly illustrated by such examples as Ps 18:42, which has the pattern a-x // b-x′.

They cried for help, but there was none to save;	ישועו ואין־מושיע
to the Lord, but he did not answer them.	על־יהוה ולא ענם

Here, על־יהוה ("to the Lord") (b) in the second line vertically modifies "They cried for help" (a) in the first line, while the clause "but he did not answer them" (x′) in the second line is a further specification of "but there was none to save" (x). The poetic structure can be illustrated as follows:

(x) ואין־מושיע
(b) על־יהוה // (a) ישועו
(x′) ולא ענם

The element ישועו (a) // על־יהוה (b) holds a grammatical relationship with the two parallel elements (x // x′) *as a whole*. It should be noted that this is not an example of ellipsis or gapping, for if one supplies "they cried" in the second line, one needs also to supply "to the Lord" in the first line, as follows:

ישועו (על־יהוה) ואין־מושיע
(ישועו) על־יהוה ולא ענם

Such an underlying syntactical structure would be too prosaic for a poetic parallelism.

Other examples of vertical grammar in Hebrew parallelism are as follows:

[37] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 157.

[38] For the <a-x // b–x′> type, see Tsumura, "Vertical Grammar," 490–92.

Psalm 105:20:

The king[39] sent and released him;	שלח מלך ויתירהו
the ruler of peoples, and set him free.	משל עמים ויפתחהו

Although in this verse it might be assumed that the verb שלח ("sent") (a) suffers ellipsis in the second line (a-b-c // [a′]-b′-c′), the vertical grammar of the parallelism seems to support that it takes מלך (b: "king") and its "ballast variant" משל עמים (B′: "ruler of peoples") as its subjects (a-b-x // B′-x′).

	(x) ויתירהו	(b) מלך
		(a) שלח
	(x′) ויפתחהו	(B′) משל עמים //

Psalm 18:14 (15):

He shot his arrows and scattered [the enemies],	וישלח חציו ויפיצם
great bolts of lightning and routed them. (NIV)	וברקים רב ויהמם

Similarly, the vertical grammar of the parallelism suggests that the verb וישלח (a: "and he shot") takes both חציו (b: "his arrows") and its "ballast variant" ברקים רב (B′: "great bolts of lightning") as its objects (a-b-x // B′-x′).

	(x) ויפיצם	(b) חציו
		(a) וישלח
	(x′) ויהמם	(B′) וברקים רב //

Here, the element וישלח (a: lit., "and he sent") holds a grammatical relationship with the parallel elements *as a whole*, namely, חציו (b) // וברקים רב (B′) as its objects and ויפיצם (x) // ויהמם (x′) as verbs compounded with it. Hence, the meaning of the parallelism would be: "And he sent his arrows, that is, great bolts of lightning, and scattered and routed them."

Jeremiah 4:23:[40]

I looked at the earth,	ראיתי (a) את־הארץ (b)
and it was desolate and empty;	והנה־תהו ובהו (x)
and to the heavens,	ואל־השמים (B′)
and their light was gone.	ואין אורם (x′)

[39] Genesis 41:14 clearly states that "Pharaoh sent for Joseph," so both "the king" and "the ruler of peoples" are the subject of "sent."

[40] For this verse, see David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the* Chaoskampf *Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 28–32.

In this text, the prepositional phrase אל־השמים (B′) has a vertical grammatical relation with the verb ראיתי (a) in the first line. The parallelistic structure is same as that in the previous examples: a-b-x // B′-x′. The meaning is, "I looked at the earth and the heavens; and the earth was desolate and empty while the heavens were without their light."[41]

A of B (Composite Phrase) ➝ *A // B*

One of the typical examples of the vertical grammatical relation between two parallel lines is the breakup of a construct chain into two parallel lines.

Isaiah 64:9b (Eng. 10b):

Zion has become a wilderness,	ציון מדבר היתה
Jerusalem, a desolation.	ירושלם שממה

ציון מדבר
היתה
//ירושלם שממה

In this text, the construct chain מדבר שממה "desolate wilderness" (lit., "wilderness of desolation"; Jer 12:10, Joel 2:3; 4:19 [Eng. 3:19]) is split into two parts—one in the first line, the other in the second. Thus, these two words are vertically related grammatically.[42] Hence, the meaning is, "Zion Jerusalem has become a desolate wilderness," *not* "Zion has become a wilderness, while Jerusalem [has become] a desolation."

Psalm 18:9 (Eng. 8):

Smoke went up from his nostrils,	עלה עשן באפו
and devouring fire from his mouth;	ואש־מפיו תאכל
glowing coals flamed forth from him. (NRSV)	גחלים בערו ממנו

Here, the construct chain גחלי־אש ("coals of fire") (v. 12) is broken up by the parallelism into אש // גחלים ("fire" // "coals").

Psalm 24:6:

This is the generation, those who seek Him	זה דור דרשיו
those who seek your face, of Jacob.	מבקשי פניך יעקב

[41] The same pattern, a-b-x // B′-x′, may be attested also in such Ugaritic texts as *KTU* 1.14 I 26–27, 33–35.

[42] E. Z. Melamed, "Break-up of Stereotype Phrases as an Artistic Device in Biblical Poetry," in *Studies in the Bible* (ed. Chaim Rabin; ScrHier 8; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 136–37.

Psalm 24:6 also presents a case for the breakup of a composite phrase (a of b) into two parallel lines, as I have explained elsewhere.[43] Here, most probably, the genitive construction דור יעקב ("the generation of Jacob") is broken up into two parts in the parallelism: דור // יעקב.

This is the generation of Jacob,	זה דור יעקב (a of b)
those who seek Him	דרשיו (x)
those who seek your face.	מבקשי פניך (x′)

In addition, X (דרשיו [x] // מבקשי פניך [x′]) is inserted between a and b, thus constituting the AXB pattern:[44] a – x // x′ – b.

A & B (Compound Phrase)* → *A // B

Similarly, a compound phrase can be divided into two elements—one in the first line and the other in the second line—and yet these two behave as if they are one unit. Such a *vertical* grammatical relationship is typical of parallelistic structure in poetry. For example,

Psalm 2:4

He who sits in the heavens laughs,	יושב בשמים ישחק
the Lord scoffs at them.	אדני ילעג-למו

This can be interpreted as

ישחק	יושב בשמים
-למו	//
ילעג	אדני

Here, what appears to be the verbal compound "laugh and scoff" is split up into two parts, one in the first line, the other in the second. Hence, the phrase "at them" (-למו) modifies the entire verbal phrase. The meaning of the parallelism as a whole is: "He who sits in the heavens [i.e., the Lord] laughs and scoffs at them."[45]

Thus, "the two halves of the verse are interdependent to such an extent that they frequently form together a single syntactical structure."[46] In other words, the

[43] Tsumura, "Vertical Grammar," 491–92.

[44] See n. 27 above.

[45] One can take the compound "laugh and scoff" as a verbal hendiadys that is split into two parallel lines not only stylistically but also grammatically. Here, too, my basic theses, (1) parallelism is the device of expressing *one sentence through two lines* and (2) parallelism is characterized by *vertical* grammar, are applicable.

[46] Melamed, "Break-up of Stereotype Phrases," 152. While Melamed emphasizes the liter-

grammar of poetic parallelism is characterized not only by the usual horizontal grammar but also by "vertical grammar,"[47] in which the elements of parallel lines have a grammatical relationship with each other "vertically." Poetry has thus its own grammar, which has both horizontal and vertical aspects and which is more like prose grammar than has been heretofore recognized.

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ary phenomenon of "breakup" of a syntactical unit into parallelism, I focus on the *vertical* grammatical relationship of two elements broken up into two parallel lines.

[47] See Tsumura, "Vertical Grammar," 487–97; see also idem, "Vertical Grammar—The Grammar of Parallelism," in idem, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 55–59; also Takamitsu Muraoka, "Between Linguistics and Philology," *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 41 (2004): 87–88.

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The Sea of Galilee: Development of an Early Christian Toponym

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New Testament scholarship has long recognized that there are toponyms that find no mention outside of the NT. Prominent among those are two sites that appear in the passion narratives of Jesus: Γεθσημανί (Matt 26:36; Mark 14:32) and Γολγοθᾶ (Matt 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17). These terms draw immediate notice because they appear to transliterate Semitic toponyms. Less attention has been given to another place-name of equal rarity: ἡ θάλασσα τῆς Γαλιλαίας (Matt 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 3:7; 7:31; John 6:1).

The uncommon nature of this toponym is indicated in the Fourth Gospel by the evangelist's need to define it further with an additional genitive more familiar to his readers: "After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee [which is the Sea] *of Tiberias*" (John 6:1). The city of Tiberias, built by Herod Antipas on the lakeshore (*Ant.* 18.36; *J.W.* 2.68), appears again at the end of the Gospel to identify the lake (John 21:1: τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Τιβεριάδος) without the previous determinant τῆς Γαλιλαίας. The use of Tiberias to identify the lake parallels Josephus (*J.W.* 3.57: Τιβεριαδί λίμης), rabbinic literature (e.g., *t. Sukkah* 3:9), and the classical authors, Pausanias (*Descr.* 5.7.4: λίμνην Τιβεριάδα ὀνομαζομένην) and Solinus (*Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* 35.3: Est et lacus Sara extentus passuum sedecim milibus . . . Sed lacus Tiberiadis).

The fourth-century writer Julius Honorius likewise employed the city of Tiberias to distinguish the body of water, but he alone among the Latin authors uses the term *mare* rather than *lacus* to describe the lake (*Cosmographia* 2: mare Tiberiadem). There is some question whether Julius was a pagan or a Christian.[1]

[1] See Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Publications of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), 3:45.

Julius's rare combination of "sea" with Tiberias, which occurs elsewhere only in the Fourth Gospel, suggests that the Roman author may have at least been familiar with the Christian work.

The most numerous and detailed references to the lake are those by Josephus. He consistently calls the body of water λίμνη rather than θάλασσα. His personal familiarity with the lake likely led to his practice of referring to it simply as ἡ λίμνη, without any additional topographical determinant (*Life* 96, 153, 165, 304, 327; *J.W.* 2.635). As previously noted, on two occasions he identifies the lake with Tiberias (*J.W.* 3.57; 4.456). More often, however, he uses the toponym familiar to the inhabitants of the region: "the lake, which the native inhabitants call Gennesar" (*J.W.* 3.463; see also 2.573; 3.506; *Ant.* 18.28, 36). The commonplace identification of the lake with Γεννησάρ is further indicated by references to the body of water simply as "the Gennesar" (ἡ Γεννησάρ [*J.W.* 3.515, 516]; see also *Ant.* 5.84: Γενησαρίδος).

The passage cited above by Solinus identified the lake with Tiberias, as well as a place called *Sara*. This is certainly a reference to Gennesar (cf. below Pliny's Gene*sara*). Strabo (*Geogr.* 16.2.16) likewise connects the lake with the fertile plain: καλεῖται δ᾽ ἡ λίμνη Γεννησαρῖτις ("the lake called Gennesar"). Pliny (*Nat.* 5.71) preserves the same identification for the lake: in lacum se fundit, quem plures Genesaram vocant ("[The river Jordan] widens out into a lake usually called Genesara"). He continues in his description but confuses Tarichea with Tiberias in describing the lake:[2] a meridie Tarichea, quo nomine aliqui et lacum appellant, ab occidente Tiberiade . . . ("Tarichea on the south, the name of which place some people give to the lake, and Tiberias on the west . . .") (ibid.).

It is uncertain precisely when the lake began to be identified with the alluvial plain onto which Nahal ʿAmud empties into the lake. Josephus reports on the advances of the Hasmonean forces there, "Jonathan set out from Galilee from *the waters of Gennesar* [*Ant.* 13.158: τῶν ὑδάτων τῶν Γεννησάρων]." Josephus's information is derived from 1 Macc 11:67: "Jonathan and his army encamped by *the waters of Gennesar* [τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ Γεννησάρ]." Not only do the two accounts describe the same campaign, but these are the only two occasions where the term τὸ ὕδωρ is used with Γεννησάρ to identify the lake.

Among the evangelists, Luke alone employs the toponym for the lake that Josephus reports was used by those living in the region: "While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by *the lake of Gennesaret*" (τὴν λίμνην Γεννησαρέτ [5:1]).[3] While the form of Luke's Greek genitive determinant displays secondary characteristics[4] (cf. Γεννησάρ in 1 Macc 11:67 and Codex

[2] Ibid., 1:478

[3] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981), 565.

[4] BDAG, 194, s.v. Γεννησάρ.

Bezae of Matt 14:34; Mark 6:53), Luke consistently avoids the application of the term θάλασσα used by Matthew, Mark, and John for the lake. The Greek term θάλασσα (similar to its Latin equivalent *mare*) typically describes seawater, whereas λίμνη (and the Latin *lacus*) is routinely applied to freshwater.[5] So we have witnessed the consistent use of λίμνη and *lacus* by the classical writers to designate the Lake of Gennesar.

Matthew (14:22–33; 15:29; 17:27) and Mark (6:45–52; 7:31) use θάλασσα for the lake when there are no parallel passages in Luke. More often, however, in triple-tradition narratives[6] Luke's omission of θάλασσα and/or his correct use of λίμνη suggests the evangelist's independence. Luke shows no reluctance to use the term θάλασσα at other times (17:2, 6; 21:25; Acts 4:24; 7:36 et passim), only not when it is applied to the Lake of Gennesar. Whether Luke corrects Mark and Matthew on these occasions or draws his information from elsewhere, what is clear is that Luke presents a more informed picture of the physical nature of the lake.

We are still left with the unusual application of the term θάλασσα by Matthew, Mark, and John to the Lake of Gennesar, and the related question of the origins for the Christian toponym ἡ θάλασσα τῆς Γαλιλαίας (Matt 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 7:31; John 6:1). The name יָם־כִּנֶּרֶת for the lake occurs three times in the Hebrew Scriptures (Num 34:11; Josh 12:3; 13:27) and is translated by the LXX as θάλασσα Χενερεθ (or Χεναρα). Clearly, the translators have employed θάλασσα under the influence of the Hebrew יָם, which can designate either lake or sea.[7] The targums render the three biblical occurrences of ים־כנרת with the toponym יַם גְּנֵיסַר. On two additional occasions where the Lake of Gennesar is understood but the toponym ים־כנרת is lacking in the Hebrew texts, the targums supply יַם גְּנֵיסַר. In Deut 33:23 יָם וְדָרוֹם is rendered יַם גְּנֵיסַר וְדָרוֹמוֹהִי and, again, קִדְמַת הַיָּם in Ezek 39:11 is rendered מַדנַח יַם גְּנֵיסַר.

Some scholars suggest that Matthew, Mark, and John have derived their use of θάλασσα directly from the Septuagintal rendering of ים־כנרת.[8] Yet this seems unlikely. Why would the evangelists not also have preserved the equally important Septuagintal delimiters Χενερεθ or Χεναρα? Moreover, the LXX's translation of ים־כנרת provides no explanation for the Christian use of Γαλιλαία with θάλασσα.

Instead, the genesis for the Christian toponym may be attested in Matthew's scriptural citation immediately prior to his first mention of the "Sea of Galilee."

[5] Ibid., 442, s.v. λίμνη; 596, s.v. θάλασσα; and *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (ed. P. G. W. Glare; Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 995, 1078–79.

[6] Matt 4:18–22//Mark 1:16–20 = Luke 5:1–11; Matt 8:23–27//Mark 4:35–41 = Luke 8:22–25; Matt 8:28–34//Mark 5:1–20 = Luke 8:26–39; Matt 13:1//Mark 4:1 = Luke 8:4; cf. Mark 2:13 = Luke 5:27; Mark 3:7 = Luke 6:17.

[7] See *HALOT* 2:413–14, s.v. יָם; cf. Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (3rd ed.; Oxford Clarendon, 1971), 133; and Arist. *Met.* 1.13.

[8] Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX,* 565.

> He withdrew into *Galilee;* and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the *sea,* in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the *sea,* along the Jordan, *Galilee* of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. . . . As he walked by the *Sea of Galilee.* (Matt 4:12b–16, 18)

Matthew cites Isa 8:23 [Eng. 9:1] to present Jesus' movement in Galilee from Nazareth to Capernaum on the lakeshore as a fulfillment of OT prophecy.[9]

Before we address Matthew's use of Isaiah, a few comments on the Hebrew verse are in order. Anson F. Rainey has argued that גליל in Isa 8:23 should be read not as "Galilee" but as "region."[10] The name גליל הגוים designates the same area as Harosheth Haggoyim (חרשת הגוים) in Judges 4, "from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River (4:13; cf. 4:2, 16). In other words, Gelil Haggoyim refers to the arable lands (likely in the possession of non-Israelites) in the southern portions of the Jezreel Valley.[11]

The tripartite topographical combination by Isaiah, "Way to the Sea," "Gelil Haggoyim," and "Beyond the Jordan," was intended by the prophet to define the frontiers of Israelite settlement in the north that stood in imminent danger before the Assyrian threat. Thus understood, the lands in עבר הירדן marked the eastern frontier in the Transjordan, and גליל הגוים, the southern boundaries of these northern settlements. Along the same lines, Rainey suggests that Isaiah intended דרך הים not to identify with the international route from Egypt to Damascus but to mark the northern boundary of Israelite settlement with the trunk route from Tyre to the area near the biblical city of Dan.

Isaiah's intentions notwithstanding, the LXX's translation of גליל with Γαλιλαία in Isa 8:23 signals that by the Greco-Roman period the Jewish community understood Isaiah to mean Galilee. It is this postbibical interpretation that provided a necessary component for the primitive Christian community's toponymic innovation. They collapsed the three widely divergent geographical points of reference in Isa 8:23 to a single topos—the region around Capernaum that served as the area for Jesus' ministry. So compelling was the ingenuity of this early Christian midrash that the original sense of Isaiah's דרך הים was eclipsed. For subsequent generations of readers it was mistakenly assumed that Isaiah's "Way to the Sea" traversed the region of Galilee near Capernaum.

The combination of Isaiah's geographical points to define the region of Jesus' ministry is explicitly stated in Matt 4:12b–16. What is not so apparent is the exeget-

[9] Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 104–6.

[10] Anson F. Rainey, "Toponymic Problems (cont.), The Way of the Sea, Shim'on—Shimron Once Again," *Tel Aviv* 8 (1981): 146–51; cf. *HALOT* 1:193, s.v. גליל.

[11] See Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 150–51.

ical creativity, likewise based on Isa 8:23, that was responsible for the Christian toponym ἡ θάλασσα τῆς Γαλιλαίας. In the entirety of Hebrew Scripture only in this verse of Isaiah do we find the collocation of the Hebrew terms ים and גליל. Drawing on the postbiblical understanding of גליל in Isa 8:23 to mean Γαλιλαία, the Christian community that gave rise to the toponym combined the terms "sea" and "Galilee" to create a new place-name that alluded elliptically to Isaiah's prophecy. The new toponym ascribed prophetic significance to the very location of Jesus' ministry in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee. If my reading is correct, we can now understand how the term θάλασσα—which in the LXX's rendering of ים in Isa 8:23 was still intended for the Mediterranean Sea—was transferred to another body of water, namely, the Lake of Gennesar.

The place-name was not the creation of any of the evangelists. Instead, the Gospels are a repository of a pre-Synoptic development. Moreover, while Mark embraced the Christian toponym (1:16; 3:7), he also hints that he was familiar with the location of Isaiah's earlier topographical points of reference. The evangelist's account of Jesus' journey to the north records, "Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis" (Mark 7:31). It seems that the verse from Isaiah provided the narrative structure for Mark's presentation of Jesus' unusual journey. According to Mark, Jesus returned from Phoenicia on Isaiah's way to the sea—the trunk road from Tyre to the region of Caesarea Philippi—and then continued on the Transjordanian heights of the Hauran, which Mark identified with the region of the Decapolis (Δεκάπολις).[12] Jesus' circuitous journey concluded on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

There is little geographical logic in a route from Phoenicia to the Sea of Galilee through the Hauran. However, Mark's itinerary uncannily traces the order of the topographical points in Isaiah's passage: The way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that Mark's description of the beginning of Jesus' northern journey placed him on Isaiah's original דרך הים, the trunk route from Tyre to Dan-Paneas-Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27; Matt 16:13). It is likewise fitting that the destination of Jesus' journey according to Mark was the *Sea of Galilee,* whose very name was derived from the same verse in Isaiah that provided the structure for the Markan journey.

It should not be overlooked that Luke, while familiar with current redemptive notions attached to Isa 8:23 (e.g., Luke 1:79),[13] betrays knowledge neither of Mark's northern journey[14] nor of the Christian creativity that gave rise to the new name

[12] See Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of the Gentile Galilee* (SNTSMS 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 130–32; S. T. Parker, "The Decapolis Reviewed," *JBL* 94 (1975): 437–41.

[13] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC: Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 95.

[14] Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge,* 360–62.

for the Lake of Gennesar. We have already noted that Luke avoids the other evangelists' use of θάλασσα for the Sea of Galilee, preferring instead the more correct λίμνη. His apt description challenges the scholarly estimation of Luke's "geographical ineptitude."[15] Why is there such geographical precision, if Conzelmann is correct that, "throughout Luke the lake is more a 'theological' than a geographical factor"?[16]

Luke's preference to apply λίμνη to the Lake of Gennesar is also contrary to the evangelist's often-assumed[17] stylistic penchant to imitate the LXX, where λίμνη appears infrequently (only five times in comparison to 432 occurrences of θάλασσα) and never for the Lake of Gennesar. His omission of the name Sea of Galilee and preference for the name used by the local inhabitants—Lake of Gennesar—lends the impression that he is drawing from sources other than his Synoptic counterparts. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain how Luke could derive the geographical framework for his narrative from Mark or Matthew, while consistently and inexplicably omitting their key terminology.

To summarize, what we witness in the Gospels is the development of an early Christian place-name. The purpose for the early church's exegetical creativity was to depict Jesus' ministry in the vicinity of the Lake of Gennesar as a fulfillment of Isa 8:23. Of secondary interest, we have noted that the use or non-use of ἡ θάλασσα τῆς Γαλιλαίας is a point of independence in terms of source-critical developments in the Gospel tradition. Luke's topographical independence is attested by his exclusive use of λίμνη for the lake and his ignorance of the Christian place-name. His narrative draws from sources that do not reflect the topographical creativity of Matthew, Mark, or John. While the Third Gospel possesses an intimate, firsthand knowledge of the physical nature of the lake, the evangelist's toponymic usage does not reflect the spiritual environment that gave rise to the Christian toponym *Sea of Galilee*.

[15] Chester C. McCown, "Gospel Geography: Fiction, Fact, and Truth," *JBL* 60 (1941): 15; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28A; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1152.

[16] Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960), 42.

[17] Nigel Turner, *Style,* vol. 4 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek,* by James Hope Moulton (4 vols.; 1906; repr., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 4:45–57.

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Restructuring Views on Law in Hebrews 7:12

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μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετάθεσις γίνεται.

For when the priesthood changes of necessity also there is a change of law. (Heb 7:12)

Taking into consideration the importance of the Scriptures for the author of Hebrews, the statement in 7:12 attesting to a necessary change of law comes as a surprise, because it seems to contradict the otherwise positive appeals the author makes to Torah.[1] Furthermore, 7:12 is stylistically different from the verses around it. For these and other reasons, most commentators have tended to avoid this verse. Those who dare to tackle it usually compare it to the bold statement about the "abrogation"[2] of the commandment—and, by implication, of the law—in 7:18–19. Whereas most commentators assume that, in Hebrews, νόμος is equivalent to Torah, I argue that νόμος in 7:12 refers only to cultic laws pertaining to priesthood.[3] In support of this thesis, I also propose an alternative to the current schol-

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[1] The author relies heavily on narratives and motifs found in Torah, for example, the wilderness wanderings and the prominence of Moses in Hebrews 3–4, the meeting of Abram and Melchizedek in ch. 7, and many of the people of faith in ch. 11. Furthermore, in 10:28 the author warns against setting aside νόμον Μωϋσέως, a verse that will be discussed below.

[2] I put "abrogate" and "abrogation" in quotation marks because I do not think that these are good translations for words derived from ἀθετέω. I prefer to translate ἀθέτησις as "set aside."

[3] In addition, the findings of this article have significant implications for how one reads νόμος in Heb 7:19.

arly consensus concerning the structure of ch. 7. While the overwhelming majority of commentators divide this pericope between v. 19 and v. 20, the three parallel μὲν . . . δέ constructions of vv. 18–25 demand that these verses be read as a unit. Delimiting the author's argument in this way frees νόμος in 7:12 to be read in the context of vv. 11–17 as law pertaining to priesthood.

I. On the One Hand (μέν) . . . On the Other Hand (δέ)

One reason why many commentators fail to recognize that νόμος in 7:12 refers only to priestly laws is that they do not properly delimit the contours of the author's argument in ch. 7. The overwhelming majority of commentators make the error of combining vv. 18–19 with vv. 11–17.[4] As a result, most read 7:12 as a portent of the author's ultimate nullification of the law in vv. 18–19. But commentators divide the pericope after v. 19 on insufficient grounds: first, the author's repeated use of γάρ (which occurs seven times between v. 11 and v. 19); and, second, a supposed *inclusio* based on the word group τελείωσις and the word group νόμος in vv. 11 and 19.[5] While vv. 11–19 do indeed contain an impressive aggregation of γάρ(s), the author does not use γάρ to denote the limits of a distinct argument located between these verses. Quite the opposite, both in v. 11 and in v. 19, the author uses γάρ to introduce a parenthetical phrase that expounds on the preced-

[4] There are three common ways to divide ch. 7, though the final result is the same. First, there are those who divide the chapter into three major paragraphs: vv. 1–10, 11–19, 20–28. See, e.g., David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (Studies in Biblical Literature 21; New York: P. Lang, 2001); Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Harald Hegermann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (THKNT 16; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988); Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Alan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews* (SP; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007); James A. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1924); Gerd Schunack, *Der Hebräerbrief* (ZBK 14; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2002). Second, some divide the passage into two sections, vv. 1–10 and 11–28. However, all of them further subdivide the latter section into vv. 11–19 and 20–28. See, e.g., Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 36, new ed; New York: Doubleday, 2001); William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (WBC 47A; Dallas: Word Books, 1991); David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). Third, there are those who believe that 7:1–25 may have at one point been an independent midrash. See, e.g., James Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest: Ps 110,4 as the Substructure of Heb 5,1–7,28* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000). Nevertheless, Kurianal also subdivides ch. 7 into vv. 1–10, 11–19, and 20–25.

[5] The supposed *inclusio* consists of the words τελείωσις (v. 11) and ἐτελείωσεν (v. 19), along with the words νενομοθέτηται (v. 11) and νόμος (v. 19).

ing clause. Moreover, when one recognizes that v. 19a is a parenthetical remark and not the culmination of the author's comments on the law, then the putative *inclusio* begins to break down as well. By repeating key words in v. 19, the author reminds the hearers of his previous argument in v. 11 concerning the law,[6] an argument that will be discussed below.

	Μέν	Δέ
vv. 18–19	ἀθέτησις ***μὲν*** γὰρ γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές.	. . . ἐπεισαγωγὴ ***δὲ*** κρείττονος ἐλπίδος δι᾽ ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ.
NRSV	There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual.	. . . there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.
vv. 20–21	. . . οἱ ***μὲν*** γὰρ χωρὶς ὁρκωμοσίας εἰσὶν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες,	ὁ ***δὲ*** μετὰ ὁρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν· ὤμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται· σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
NRSV	. . . for others who became priests took their office without an oath,	but this one became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'"
vv. 23–24	Καὶ οἱ ***μὲν*** πλείονές εἰσιν γεγονότες ἱερεῖς διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν·	ὁ ***δὲ*** διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην·
NRSV	Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office.	but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

In contrast to the structural divisions proposed by most commentators, I conclude, based on the syntax of ch. 7, that vv. 18–19 should be read with vv. 20–25. The author's comments about ἐντολή/νόμος in vv. 18–19 form the first of three

[6] Although it is not pertinent to argue here, I assume that the anonymous author of Hebrews was male and that the genre of Hebrews is a sermon.

parallel contrasts between the "former" and the "better"[7] in vv. 18–25, each contrast set off by the correlative conjunctions μὲν . . . δέ (on the one hand . . . on the other hand). This striking parallelism in form is strengthened by the author's use of comparative words in each μὲν . . . δέ pair: a better hope (κρείττονος ἐλπίδος) (v. 19), a better covenant (κρείττονος διαθήκης) (v. 22), and "more priests" under the former commandment (πλείων, the comparative of πολύς [v. 23]), as opposed to the single eternal priest of the new covenant (v. 24). Thus, both structurally and linguistically, vv. 18 and 19 should be read with what follows and not as the author's pronouncement of the ultimate demise of all Jewish law.[8]

Most commentators assume that in Hebrews νόμος always means *Torah,* or the first five books in either the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint.[9] However, when vv. 11–17 are read apart from vv. 18–19, the author seems concerned only with a very specific set of laws: requirements for priesthood.[10] According to a "law of phys-

[7] These descriptive words are not used in every claim. I am using them merely to categorize the contrasts into two large groups.

[8] One author, August Strobel, does divide ch. 7 after v. 17 according to the three parallel claims that I have outlined here: "Die Auslegung neigt allgemein dazu, die V.18–25 als eigene gedankliche Einheit abzugrenzen, finden sich doch darin drei gleichartige Sätze nach dem Schema: 'zwar–aber.'" See August Strobel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (NTD 9/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 156. Nevertheless, Strobel's careful attention to the structure of ch. 7 has largely remained unnoticed by interpreters. One possible explanation for why few commentators have been persuaded by Strobel's division of ch. 7 is that he ultimately fails to recognize the implication of this threefold parallelism for the correct interpretation of the author's use of νόμος. Strobel insists that the author of Hebrews abrogates "das Gesetz des Mose." He compares what he views as the author's disparaging use of νόμος to Paul's statement that νόμος leads to death (Rom 7:9–12). Strobel writes, "Der Hebr. hält sein Unvermögen fest, zu 'vollenden'. Die Beurteilung stellt sich weniger radikal dar [than Paul's view], läuft aber im Endeffekt auf das gleiche Resultat hinaus. Wer sich auf das 'Gesetz' verlässt, hat keine 'Hoffnung.'" In contrast, I argue that the threefold structure of Heb 7:18–25 highlights the author's very particular use of νόμος in ch. 7 to refer only to laws pertaining to priesthood.

[9] The majority of commentators render νόμος as "Law." However, all of these interpreters speak about the Law in connection with the Torah and also use a lower-case "law" when referring to any other kind of law. See, e.g., Attridge, *Epistle,* 200; Ellingworth, *Epistle,* 374; and Koester, *Hebrews,* 354. The distinction of upper- and lower-case letters for "law" occurs also in some translations, for example, the NIV and the NASB.

[10] The use of the singular ὁ νόμος to refer to a group of laws (and not to the Torah as a whole) is not uncommon in the LXX. In doing so, the LXX translators maintain the singular form of הַתּוֹרָה to refer to plural הַתּוֹרוֹת, which Jacob Milgrom suggests might be a stylistic preference in the P literature. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* vol. 1, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 383. One particularly interesting example occurs in Lev 7:37 (LXX): οὗτος ὁ νόμος τῶν ὁλοκαυτωμάτων καὶ θυσίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ τῆς πλημμελείας καὶ τῆς τελειώσεως καὶ τῆς θυσίας τοῦ σωτηρίου, "This is the ritual of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the offering of ordination, and the sacrifice of well-being" (NRSV). Here we find a sum-

ical commandment" (νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης [7:16]) pronounced by Moses, a priest must belong to the tribe of Levi. The author of Hebrews claims, however, that a different priest has arisen—one who has not become a priest κατὰ νόμον ("according to the law") but κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου ("according to the power of an indestructible life" [7:16]).[11] Of course, this raises the question, To what does the author of Hebrews refer when he uses the word νόμος? Therefore, in the next section, I will turn to a close reading of the verses in ch. 7 that contain the word νόμος or related words such as νομοθετέω and ἐντολή.

I. Νόμος in Hebrews 7

The first occurrence of νόμος in ch. 7, which is also the first occurrence in Hebrews,[12] is in the context of a commandment (ἐντολή) concerning the Levitical priesthood: "And on the one hand, the ones of the sons of Levi receiving the commandment (ἐντολή)—the priests—have to exact a tithe from the people according to the law (κατὰ τὸν νόμον) . . ." (7:5). Already in this first instance, νόμος is linked in some way to the regulations concerning the priestly office. Yet the more difficult question is that of the relationship between νόμος and ἐντολή.[13] William Lane has argued that in 7:5 the commandment (ἐντολή) to tithe is one part of the Law (νόμος), which he understands to be "the sum of the commandments" given by Moses.[14] While I agree with Lane that in this verse νόμος does seem to encom-

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mary of the "laws," or commandments, concerning sacrifices in Leviticus 5–6 (as well as the "law of priestly ordination/perfection," τῆς τελειώσεως; see Milgrom's n. xxvi on this passage), where ὁ νόμος refers to a collection of very specific laws, but not to the whole Torah.

[11] Charles Anderson also argues for reading νόμος in Hebrews as laws pertaining to priesthood and not as the whole Torah ("Who Are the Heirs of the New Age in the Epistle to the Hebrews?" in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* [ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards; JSNTSup 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989], 255–77). My argument, however, differs slightly from Anderson's, in that he continues to advocate a change *in* the Law/Torah of the regulations pertaining to priesthood. He writes: "Since Torah contains specific commandments and regulations regarding sacrifice, including priests, materials and site, it is obvious to the author that those parts of Torah have been changed by God. . . . It is 'liturgical' law (8.2,6), and only liturgical law, that is changed in Hebrews" (p. 270). Although I am sympathetic to Anderson's broad claim that νόμος should be interpreted only as laws pertaining to priesthood, I am not attempting locate the "change of law" (Heb 7:12) within a dichotomy of liturgical and ethical(?) laws in the Torah.

[12] See also 7:12, 16, 19, 28; 8:4, 10; 9:19, 22; 10:1, 8, 16, 28.

[13] Νόμος and ἐντολή occur together four times in Hebrews: 7:5, 16, 18–19; and 9:19; moreover, these are the only occurrences of ἐντολή.

[14] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* 168. He asserts that the author's distinction between ἐντολή as a specific command and νόμος as the sum of the commandments derives from LXX usage, for which

pass more than ἐντολή, this verse alone does not lead one to conclude that the author of Hebrews equates νόμος with Mosaic Law. On the contrary, νόμος in this verse is closely related to commandments concerning cultus.

Furthermore, the next time νόμος and ἐντολή appear together (Heb 7:16), they refer to the same entity—namely, the physical requirement for becoming a priest. Verse 16 describes the one who arises in the order of Melchizedek as another priest ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου, "one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life" (NRSV). In this verse, which already has been noted because of its emphasis on the requirements for priestly service, Lane's suggestion that the commandment is a part of the "Law" does not work. At first glance, one might surmise the exact opposite, that law in v. 16 is a possession of an overarching physical commandment: κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης. However, if the genitive ἐντολῆς is understood as a genitive of apposition, then νόμος and ἐντολή must refer to the same entity.[15] Νόμος here must mean something like "rule" or "requirement." Since in this verse the commandment is the physical requirement for priesthood in the order of Aaron, the "law" must also refer to the specific, physical requirement concerning priestly lineage.

Before turning to the next instance in which the author uses νόμος and ἐντολή (vv. 18–19), we must go back and analyze the use of the related verb νομοθετέω in v. 11.[16] Verses 11 and 19 are connected by the theme of the inability to bring about perfection. The detection of a common theme in these two verses leads many commentators to surmise an *inclusio*.[17] Although not an *inclusio*, v. 11 qualifies the progression of the author's argument in v. 19. When viewed in isolation, v. 19 might suggest that the Law (Torah) was unable to bring about perfection. Verse 11, however, qualifies this by stating that the problem stemmed from laws

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he offers four examples: Exod 16:18; 24:12; Josh 22:5; and Sir 35:24. But I am not convinced. In two of these examples, Exod 24:12 and Josh 22:5, ἐντολή and νόμος seem to refer to equal entities. Moreover, νόμος is frequently used in the LXX to translate תורה when it refers to specific laws/ordinances (e.g., LXX Exod 12:43; Lev 6:2, 7, 18; 7:1, 11, 37; etc.).

[15] Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest,* 119. The other option—to understand ἐντολή as a possessive genitive—requires one to understand νόμος as a principle derived from natural law. However, the author of Hebrews appeals not to natural but to revealed law throughout the sermon.

[16] The verb νομοθετέω appears one other time in the NT, in Heb 8:6, a verse that raises questions about the relationship between covenant and promises.

[17] See the works cited in n. 4 above. See also Albert Vanhoye, *La structure littéraire de L'Épitre aux Hébreux* (StudNeot, Studia 1; 2nd ed.; Paris: Desclée, 1976), 130–32. Vanhoye structures all of ch. 7 by inclusions based on key-word repetition; however, he fails to take into account the three parallel μὲν . . . δέ constructions in 7:18–25 and, thus, falsely assumes that v. 19 completes (instead of carries forward) the argument begun in v. 11.

concerning an imperfect priesthood. This argument is based on two interpretive decisions in v. 11—the first, concerning αὐτῆς, and the second, concerning ἐπί.

With the identification of ἱερωσύνη as the proper antecedent of αὐτῆς in v. 11, the concepts of law and priesthood are clearly brought together for the first time:

> Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς ἱερωσύνης ἦν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς νενομοθέτηται, τίς ἔτι χρεία κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρὼν λέγεσθαι;
>
> Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood—for the people received the law under this priesthood—what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? (NRSV)

Verse 11 contains two feminine nouns prior to the ambiguous pronoun αὐτῆς, either of which could be an antecedent for the pronoun. The first possible antecedent of αὐτῆς is τελείωσις. However, according to v. 19 the law perfected nothing (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος). If the law did not make anything perfect, then it is highly unlikely that the people[18] received the law ἐπί perfection.[19] Therefore, τελείωσις cannot be the antecedent of αὐτῆς. The only other feminine singular noun in v. 11 that could be an antecedent of αὐτῆς is ἱερωσύνη. Substituting the antecedent ἱερωσύνη for αὐτῆς, the sentence now reads that the law was given to the people ἐπί the Levitical priesthood. Thus, the author establishes a direct relationship between priesthood and law in v. 11. Yet, before the extent of the relationship between priesthood and law can be determined it will be necessary to answer a second exegetical question, the meaning of ἐπί with the genitive αὐτῆς.

Any decision about the translation of the preposition ἐπί must consider v. 28, in which the law constitutes priests (ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησις ἀρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν . . . , "For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness . . ." [NRSV]). Just as v. 11 and v. 19 are thematically connected, vv. 11 and 28 share a theme of the relationship between law and priesthood. In v. 28, the relationship between νόμος and priesthood is not that the law

[18] That the people receive laws concerning the Levitical priesthood in v. 11 stands in striking contrast to the exhortation to draw near to God through Jesus' eternal priesthood (see 4:16; 7:25; 10:22). The exhortation to draw near to God, which delimits the central section of the sermon, is repeated in 7:25 at the climax of the author's argument concerning priesthood. One effect of the "change of law" in 7:12 is that all people—not only priests—can draw near to God through Christ.

[19] For the moment, I am not translating the preposition ἐπί, in order to focus on a translation of the genitive αὐτῆς. For possible translations of ἐπί, see the following paragraph.

is given on the basis of priesthood but that νόμος appoints high priests.[20] Nevertheless, the dominant interpretation of ἐπί in v. 11 contradicts v. 28. According to Lane, the preposition ἐπί has typically been understood in three ways, with the first being preferred: (1) the law was given *on the basis of* the Levitical priesthood (NEB, JB, TEV, and NIV); (2) the law was given *under* (or *through*) the Levitical priesthood; or (3) the law was given *in association with* the Levitical priesthood. Yet none of these options fits with v. 28.[21] Therefore, Lane proposes a fourth reading: *in the case of* (or, *concerning*). He translates v. 11a: "If, then, perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for the people received regulations concerning the Levitical priesthood) . . . ." Lane's translation of v. 11a concurs with the logic of v. 28. In both verses, "law" refers to ordinances concerning priestly order. In support of his argument, Lane also notes examples from Philo of νομοθετέω with ἐπί and the genitive or dative that should be translated "regulations laid down by the law *in the case of* (or, *concerning*)."[22] Moreover, Lane's reading of v. 11a also fits well into the larger context of vv. 11–17 in which references are being made to ordinances concerning priesthood (i.e., tribe, lineage, etc.).

Having looked at the meaning of νόμος (and related words) in the rest of ch. 7, it is now possible to return to vv. 18–19. In these verses, one can now discern that it is not the Law that is "abrogated" but the ἐντολή. The author claims that the preceding commandment is set aside (ἀθέτησις) because it was weak and useless. As we have observed in the two prior verses in which ἐντολή is paired with νόμος (7:5, 16), ἐντολή does not refer to something more encompassing than νόμος. Thus, whatever is being set aside in v. 18 must be commensurate with or less than νόμος in v. 19. This distinction between the commandment that is set aside and the Law is important when one later turns to the author's comments in 10:28.

[20] In v. 28, one could argue that νόμος refers to a comprehensive entity, akin to Torah. However, the author makes only the claim that νόμος appoints high priests. In this verse, νόμος is again closely connected to cultic regulations concerning priesthood. See n. 25 below.

[21] Ellingworth (*Epistle*, 372) attempts to avoid the difficulties that arise between v. 11 and v. 28 when ἐπί is translated as "on the basis of" the Levitical priesthood. He writes, "in order to take ἱερωσύνης as the antecedent of ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς, it is not necessary . . . to see a contradiction with 7:28. . . . Priesthood and law are indissolubly bound together; and within this relation, priesthood is logically prior (cf. v. 12; 8:6). The present clause therefore means 'the levitical priesthood . . . was the basis of the Law given to the people.'" But how can the reception of the law be based on the same entity that the law appoints—priesthood? Ellingworth's reasoning is circular.

[22] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* 174. The examples Lane cites are Philo, *Spec. leg.* 2.35, "These are regulations laid down by law concerning people [ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων]; but concerning animals [ἐπὶ δὲ κτήνων] we have the following regulations [νομοθετεῖται]"; and ibid., 1.235, "regulations concerning sins of ignorance have been laid down [νομοθετήσας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀκουσίοις]." See also Harm W. Hollander, "Hebrews 7.11 and 8.6: A Suggestion for the Translation of *nenomothetetai epi*" *BT* 30 (1979): 247.

> Anyone who set aside [ἀθετήσας] the Law of Moses [νόμον Μωϋσέως] dies without mercy based on two or three testimonies.[23]

Given that the author here seems to condone the severe punishment prescribed for anyone who set aside (ἀθετήσας) the Law of Moses,[24] the diligent exegete must give careful attention to the nature of the preceding commandment that the author sets aside (ἀθέτησις) in 7:18.

The commandment in v. 18 is a physical requirement concerning who could serve as a priest. In the preceding verses, the author argues for the validity of a different priest, one whose lineage traced back to Judah, not Levi. He becomes a priest not on the basis of a law of physical requirement (ἐντολή) but according to the power of an indestructible life (7:16). Therefore, in vv. 18–19, the author calls for the setting aside of the weak and ineffective ἐντολή concerning the lineage of priests in order to bring in a better hope. This interpretation of vv. 18–19, in contrast to the dominant interpretation, concludes that the author of Hebrews does *not* set aside the Mosaic Law but only the commandments pertaining to Levitical priesthood.

Yet why, then, does the author add in 7:19 that "the law perfected nothing"?[25] Because of the thematic link already established between v. 11 and v. 19, any interpretation of νόμος in v. 19 must cohere with v. 11. In v. 11, the failure to attain perfection is closely connected to the Levitical priesthood, concerning which the

[23] Here the NRSV (wrongly) translates ἀθετήσας as "violated."

[24] I do believe that here νόμον Μωϋσέως refers to the Torah (a claim that I am not willing to make in ch. 7). The justification for making this connection is the association of νόμος with Moses. In later writings, the Pentateuch as a whole was most often referred to by the titles "Law of the Lord" or "Law of Moses." Thus, in 10:28, the author refers to the Torah with the extended title "Law of Moses" (νόμον Μωϋσέως). See Walter Gutbrod, "νόμος," *TDNT* 4:1046.

[25] One answer might lie in applying Lane's suggestion from v. 5—that the ἐντολή is part of a greater entity, ὁ νόμος. Thus, the definite article would denote the author's distinction between laws pertaining to priesthood and *the* Torah of Moses. However, ὁ νόμος also occurs in v. 28 with the specific designation that ὁ νόμος appoints high priests. In v. 28, ὁ νόμος refers to priestly ordinances. Furthermore, as has already been addressed, this reading of νόμος as a greater entity comprising multiple commandments (ἐντολή) does not make sense in v. 16, which is closely connected to vv. 18–19.

An interesting connection between Hebrews 7 and νόμος in the LXX that needs to be explored further is the use of ὁ νόμος to introduce a summary of specific laws/ordinances in Lev 7:37–38. Here we find a summary of the "laws," or commandments, concerning sacrifices in Leviticus 5–6 and the "law of priestly ordination/perfection"—ὁ νόμος . . . τῆς τελειώσεως—found in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 7. This law describes the ordination offering that Moses received concerning Aaron and his sons. Milgrom argues, however, that this law was executed only once, and subsequently only high priests were inducted by this rite (Exod 29:29–30) (*Leviticus,* 1:436). This fits extremely well with Heb 7:28, in which "the Law appoints high priests"—in particular ὁ νόμος . . . τῆς τελειώσεως, or the ordination law.

people received laws (see above). Again, in v. 28, the law appoints high priests who are weak. In contrast, the author of Hebrews believes Jesus' priesthood to be different from the Levitical priesthood in that he has been made perfect forever (7:28). Similarly, in vv. 18–19, the author draws a contrast between the weak and ineffective commandment and the bringing in of a better hope. The parenthetical phrase in v. 19 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος ("the law perfected nothing") provides the author's justification for v. 18. He can set aside the former commandment because the requirement that the people received concerning the Levitical priesthood ultimately did not enable that priesthood to bring about perfection. According to this reading, νόμος is commensurate with ἐντολή in vv. 18–19. Both refer to the commandments pertaining to the Levitical priesthood. The failure of the Levitical priesthood to attain perfection is the reason the author can "set aside" the previous *commandment* concerning that priesthood and instead look toward a different priest—a better hope, Jesus.[26]

Before turning to 7:12, let us review the argument thus far. First, every occurrence of νόμος (or related words) in ch. 7 appears in the context of cultic concerns.[27] Second, in vv. 11, 16, 19, and 28, νόμος refers specifically to laws concerning Levitical priesthood. Third, in the analysis of vv. 18–19, the immediate context of the author's statement points to the setting aside of only the commandments concerning the lineage of priests. Accordingly, a close reading of the verses in ch. 7 that contain the word νόμος (or related words) points overwhelmingly toward a very specific use of the word νόμος by the author of Hebrews. The νόμος of ch. 7 refers only to the laws pertaining to Levitical priesthood, or, even more specifically, to laws concerning who could become a Levitical priest.

II. Change of Law in Hebrews 7:12

Given the overwhelming evidence that elsewhere in ch. 7 the author of Hebrews uses νόμος to refer to cultic laws pertaining to priesthood, νόμος in 7:12 must also refer to priestly law. Most likely, the author of Hebrews uses νόμος in v. 12 in the same way he uses νόμος in the rest of ch. 7. As stated above, in the other occurrences in ch. 7, νόμος refers to cultic laws associated with priesthood. Therefore, with considerable certainty, it can be said that the change of νόμος in 7:12 refers only to cultic laws pertaining to priesthood.

[26] Setting aside the commandment does not necessarily imply a supersessionist move. The laws concerning another priest who has arisen do not replace the laws pertaining to the Levitical priesthood. They are two distinct sets of laws pertaining to two different priesthoods.

[27] Some may object that this is not significant because Hebrews is a cultic book; however, νόμος never appears outside of the author's arguments about explicitly cultic matters—priesthood, sacrifices, altars, and so on (chs. 7–10).

Moreover, νόμος understood as cultic laws pertaining to priesthood is consistent with the author's larger argument in vv. 11–17 concerning priestly requirements. When vv. 11–17 are read apart from the supposed *inclusio* with vv. 18–19, one sustained argument emerges. In vv. 11–17, the author attempts to explain how Christ, who came from the tribe of Judah, could be a priest. He concludes that Christ has arisen as a different priest, not on the basis of physical requirement—that is, belonging to the tribe of Levi—but according to the power of an indestructible life. So, in order to make sense, 7:12 (which falls in the middle of this sustained argument about requirements for priestly service) must refer to laws concerning priesthood. This reading avoids the conceptual leap made by those espousing the dominant interpretation of νόμος in Hebrews as Torah. Reading νόμος as Torah inevitably forces those scholars to say that it is not simply the former priesthood that poses a problem for the author of Hebrews. Rather, the whole "Law" viewed via such a reading is ultimately incongruous. Yet nowhere else does the author of Hebrews reject the whole Law;[28] in fact, in 10:28 he warns against setting aside the Law of Moses. Thus, in contrast to the dominant interpretation of νόμος as Torah in 7:12, the author uses νόμος here in the very limited sense of priestly law, in keeping with the larger argument that he is making in vv. 11–17.

Furthermore, this interpretation provides a clear, logical reading of the verse: "When the priesthood changes,[29] the laws concerning priesthood also must change." In v. 12, a change in priesthood results in a corresponding change of law. But what is the law that is changed? The dominant interpretation is that Torah changes. However, in v. 11, the people are given laws concerning the Levitical priesthood. Therefore, when a different priest arises, it is logical to assume that this change of priesthood, from the order of Aaron to the order of Melchizedek (v. 11), must be accompanied by a corresponding change of laws concerning priesthood. A change of priesthood does not presume a rejection of the "Law." Rather, a change of priesthood most naturally results in a change of only those laws pertaining to priesthood.

[28] In 10:1, νόμος is modified by the phrase "having a shadow of the coming good things not itself the image of the things" (Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τῆν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων . . .). But even here the shadow refers to the sacrifices offered continually, year after year (10:3), which are a shadow of Christ's sacrifice once for all (10:12). Νόμος in 10:1, then, refers to the cultic regulations concerning yearly sacrifices.

[29] Although I have chosen to translate the genitive absolute as a circumstantial clause (primarily because I believe that the author of Hebrews is basing his claim about a new priesthood on his prior belief that a different priest already has arisen), my argument still stands if the genitive absolute is translated as a conditional clause: "If the priesthood changes, the laws concerning priesthood also must change."

III. Conclusion

I have argued for the overturning of the scholarly consensus on two matters regarding the interpretation of Hebrews 7. First, in contrast to the dominant opinion that νόμος in 7:12 refers to Torah, I have argued that the author of Hebrews uses νόμος in this verse—as he does throughout ch. 7—to refer to a change only in cultic laws pertaining to priesthood. Second, I have argued, in contrast to the overwhelming majority of commentators, that the threefold μὲν . . . δέ comparisons in ch. 7 structurally mandate that vv. 18–19 be read with vv. 20–25 and not as an *inclusio* with vv. 11–17. When vv. 11–17 are read apart from the supposed *inclusio* with vv. 18–19, the focus of the argument shifts away from a putative "abrogation" of Torah and toward a particular concern about requirements for priestly service. Reading vv. 11–17 as a distinct argument about the requirements for priesthood bolsters my argument that the author of Hebrews uses νόμος in 7:12 as a limited reference to a change only of cultic laws pertaining to priesthood.

While the focus of this article has been limited to the interpretation of νόμος in Hebrews 7, I conclude by gesturing toward some of the broad questions raised by the findings of this study. It is my hope that these questions will encourage further dialogue, particularly on issues surrounding the history of the interpretation of Hebrews. First, my work on the author's use of νόμος in ch. 7 to refer only to cultic laws pertaining to priesthood raises questions about the author's use of νόμος elsewhere. Does the author of Hebrews consistently hold a more general view of law than that of νόμος as Torah? To answer this question would require a careful look at how the author uses νόμος outside of ch. 7.

Second, the findings of this study raise important questions about the interpretation of Hebrews as a supersessionist text.[30] Reading νόμος as laws pertaining to priesthood and not as Torah challenges one key aspect of a supersessionist interpretation of Hebrews: an "abrogation" of the Jewish Law/Torah (7:18–19). If the author of Hebrews does not deny the validity of Torah as a whole but proclaims only a change of the specific commandments related to priesthood, then what is the author's stance toward other cultic aspects of Judaism? For example, the dominant interpretation for some time in Hebrews scholarship has been that the epistle contains an implicit supersessionist claim that the Levitical sacrifices and the Levitical priests have been replaced/superseded by Christ's sacrifice of himself.[31] However,

[30] A classical definition of "supersessionism" maintains that the church "supersedes" Israel, and thus the church takes the place of Israel as the people of God.

[31] For example, see Koester, *Hebrews,* 436–38; Attridge, *Epistle,* 276; and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* 263, 267. In contrast to this position, see the more recent work of Luke Timothy Johnson (*Hebrews*, 252), who emphasizes throughout his commentary that Hebrews is not supersessionist and that Hebrews nowhere claims that "God's covenant with Israel is nullified or replaced by another with Christians."

this seems to contradict the author's claim in 8:4 that if Christ were on earth he would not be a priest because there are *already* those who offer gifts according to the Law.[32] If the author can assert a change of law pertaining to priesthood while at the same time affirming the continuing validity of the Torah, then is it impossible for the author to proclaim the efficacy of Christ's one-time sacrifice while at the same time maintaining certain functions of the Levitical priesthood or the sacrifices associated with it? These are questions that have long been taken for granted by scholars of the epistle to the Hebrews. However, if the author of Hebrews uses νόμος to refer to "law" in a more general sense than Torah, then perhaps my conclusions highlight the need for a more nuanced, better interpretation of the author's view of other aspects of Judaism as well.

[32] David M. Moffitt, "'If Another Priest Arises': Jesus' Resurrection and the High Priestly Christology of Hebrews," in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts* (ed. Richard Bauckham et al.; Library of New Testament Studies 387; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 68–79.

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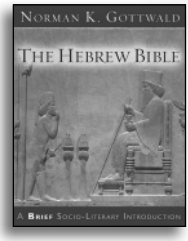

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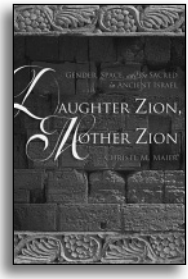

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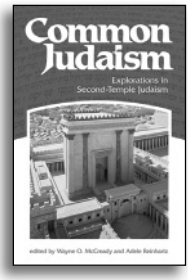

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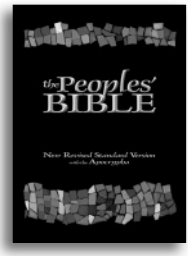

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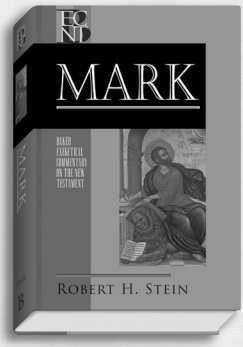

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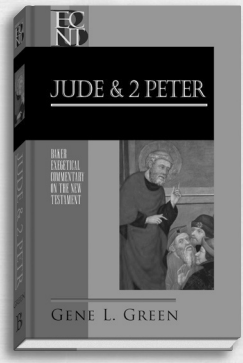

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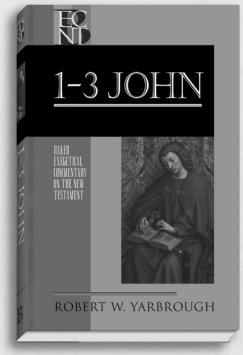

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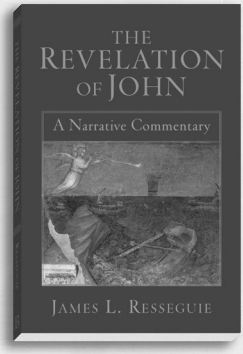

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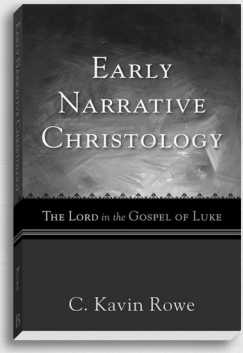

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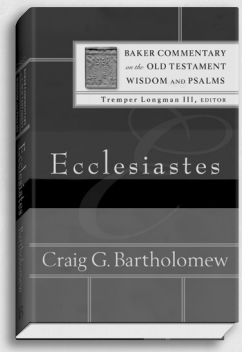

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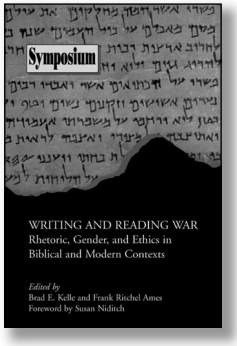

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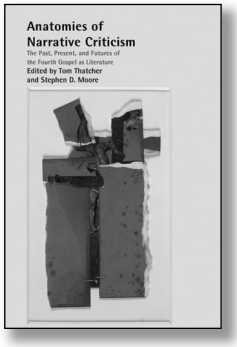

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