The Necessary King

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The Necessary King

A Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic Portrait of the Monarchy

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For Patricia

(ויאמר אליה ברק אם־תלכי עמי והלכתי ואם־לא תלכי עמי לא אלך)

and for my parents,

all of whom showed me that there are cultures beyond my own

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
ABC	A.K. Grayson (ed.), *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS, 5; Locust Valley, NY: J.J. Augustin, 1975)
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Verein
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd edn; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOATS	Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Sonderreihe
ARAB	Daniel David Luckenbill (ed.), *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927)
ARI	Albert Kirk Grayson (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (2 vols.; Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1972–1976)
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BAR	*The Biblical Archaeology Review*
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
BAW	The Bible in its World
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BBRSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement Series
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BCT	*The Bible and Cultural Theory*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BMW	The Bible and the Modern World
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BO	Berit Olam
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte

BZAW	Beihefte zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CAD	Martha T. Roth *et al*. (eds.), *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (21 vols.; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2010)
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Monograph Series
CCOT	Continental Commentaries. Old Testament
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica. Old Testament
CPNIV	College Press NIV Commentary Series
EF	Erträge der Forschung
EI	*Eretz Israel*
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
EUS	European University Studies
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, as Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Kautzsch* (trans. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910)
GTS	Gettysburg Theological Studies
HANEM	History of the Ancient Near East. Monographs
HANES	History of the Ancient Near East. Studies
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HSAO	Heidelberger Studien zum alten Orient
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBHS	Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990)
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	Interpretation
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHNES	The Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRE	*Journal of Religious Ethics*
JRel	*Journal of Religion*
JRS	*Journal of Ritual Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Supplement Series
JSPSup	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

KAW	Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt
LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
LXX^{A}	Codex Alexandrinus
LXX^{B}	Codex Vaticanus
LXX^{L}	Lucianic Recension
MAPS	Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
MC	Mesopotamian Civilizations
MCAAS	Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences
MT	Masoretic Text
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	Ephraim Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993)
NEB	Neue Echter Bibel
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NovTSup	*Novum Testamentum* Supplement Series
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OIS	Oriental Institute Studies
Or	*Orientalia*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTR	Old Testament Readings
OTS	Oudtestamentische studiën
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PDRI	Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute
PEGLMBS	*Proceedings—Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
RS	Religion and Society
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAFPC	Studies in Ancient Folklore and Popular Culture
SBF	Studium biblicum franciscanum
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and its Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology

SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
SHK	Schriften des Historischen Kollegs
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SOFSup	*Symbolae osloenses* Supplements
SOTSM	Society for Old Testament Study Monographs
SPOT	Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
STR	Studies in Theology and Religion
STT	Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia
SWBAS	Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TAB	Texte und Arbeiten zur Bibel
TCBAI	Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
ThB	Theologische Bücherei
ThQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TR	*Theologische Rundschau*
TRev	*Theological Review*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TSTS	Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies
TW	Theologische Wissenschaft
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UCOIP	University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications
VAB	Vorderasiatischen Bibliothek
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTE	*Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum* Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
ZAR	*Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Chapter 1

Introduction: A Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History

1. *Introduction*

When Yhwh informs Samuel that Saul is to be Israel's king, Samuel does not immediately relay this information to Saul, but puts this off until the next day. Instead, Samuel first tells him in 1 Sam. 9.19-20 to come and eat with him at the high place and that the donkeys for which he has been searching have been found, and then adds enigmatically, ולמי כל־חמדת ישראל הלוא לך ולכל בית אבתך. We can translate this as, 'For whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not for you and for the whole house of your father?' However, the line has another perfectly acceptable sense: 'To whom do all the desirable things of Israel belong? Is it not to you and all of your father's house?'[1] Samuel, that is, is telling him through rhetorical questions that all of Israel desires Saul and his house, or that the desirable things of Israel belong to Saul and his house, or is trying to communicate both ideas at once. This final and double sense of Samuel's rhetorical questions neatly encapsulates this book's investigation of the presentation of the monarchy within the narrative of the

1. As a result, some commentators prefer the former sense of these two questions; see, e.g., A. Graeme Auld, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2011), pp. 106-107; J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (4 vols.; SSN, 20, 23, 27, 31; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983–1992), IV, p. 401; David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 277. Others prefer the second sense of the questions; e.g., S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1913), p. 74; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (trans. J.S. Bowden; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 83; Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 57; P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB, 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 165, 179. Others simply allow that both translations are possible; e.g., Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel: Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (trans. Johannes Klein; BWANT, 176; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), p. 159; Robert P. Gordon, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1986), p. 115.

Deuteronomistic History. Israel should desire a monarchy since, according to Dtr, it is a necessary office, as all other forms of leadership—judges, priests, and prophets—fail Israel and Judah in Dtr's narrative, and because the nation itself is too sinful to live as Yhwh's people without some kind of leadership that can force them to be cultically loyal. At the same time, Dtr says, the kings, particularly the Davidides, are given broad latitude to appropriate the desirable things of Israel, so long as they enforce cultic loyalty among the people to their divine suzerain.

To those familiar with the variety of portrayals of the monarchy within Dtr, this reading of its narrative—the monarchy is a necessary form of leadership and, outside of its cultic acts, is given vast latitude in its treatment of its subjects—might appear counter-intuitive. After all, does the Law of the King in Deut. 17.14-20 not strip the monarchy of power and make kings subject to the law like all other Israelites? By the end of 2 Kings, does the narrative not hold up royal failings as the explanation for the destructions of Israel and Judah and for the exile? Is the monarchy not subject to serious critiques elsewhere in Dtr's narrative, such as in the stories of the utter failure of Abimelech, Saul's failings in 1 Samuel 13 and 15, David's adultery and murder in 2 Samuel 11–12, and Solomon's apostasy and other apparent violations of the Law of the King with his wealth, horses, and wives? I will analyze these and the other passages that I will discuss in this book through the lens of postcolonial analysis, the basic aspects of which I will present later in this chapter. At the heart of this examination of Dtr's narrative about the monarchy is the claim that the narrative mimics the imperial discourse of the Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians, the colonial powers to whose hegemony Judah was exposed from the ninth century BCE to the present of the sixth century exiles in Babylonia. After making an argument for the Deuteronomistic History as a unified composition during the exile in Chapter 2, I will turn to the beginning of the narrative in Chapter 3 to discuss some well-known observations concerning Deuteronomy's adoption of aspects of Neo-Assyrian treaties with client rulers. The narrative mimics the ideology and language of these treaties, as well as that of other Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian imperial texts, only to mock Mesopotamian colonial claims of royal and divine authority to control history; Dtr instead portrays Yhwh alone as controlling the fate of the people whom Dtr calls Israel. Deuteronomy portrays Yhwh after the model of Mesopotamian kings only to deny those earthly kings and their divine backing any real power. Deuteronomy mocks the Mesopotamian imperial view that Israel/Judah's fate is dependent on their loyalty to the colonial powers; rather, it is dependent on their loyalty to Yhwh, their true suzerain. The people's fate in this sense lies in their own hands, and even the Israelite king, as Deuteronomy 17 suggests, should not control Israel's choice for loyalty toward their divine suzerain. Dtr mimics the ideology of the colonial powers, but

mocks it through its subversion of the hegemonic discourse of the Mesopotamian empires. According to Dtr, real power resides with Yhwh, not Mesopotamia, and can even be said to lie with the people themselves, since it is their choice for loyalty to the true suzerain, a choice entirely unrelated to the beliefs and actions of the colonial powers, that results in military and economic success.

This initial mockery of ancient Near Eastern imperial discourse, however, is accompanied by doubts in Deuteronomy and the rest of the narrative that Israel can remain loyal to their divine suzerain and avoid destruction, a conclusion to which the exilic readers of Dtr, who have experienced national destruction and deportation, might well give their assent, at least if they have accepted Dtr's premise that they exist in a client-suzerain relationship with Yhwh. Chapter 4 examines the portrayal of Israelites and foreigners in the conquest narrative and in Judges, demonstrating that while Dtr again mimics hegemonic discourse, in this case Mesopotamian imperial portrayals of foreigners, the narrative reinscribes such language in its portrayal of Israel. For the imperial powers, foreigners, particularly the foreign enemies whom they conquer with divine aid to make into the colonized, are the dangerous Other, the uncivilized chaos that lies outside of the borders of the colonizing center, chaos that must be conquered and controlled. Israel, says the narrative of Judges, is just as the Mesopotamians have always described them. That is, as Israel repetitively proves their cultic disloyalty to Yhwh in Judges' cyclical narrative, continually returning to the worship of other gods, the narrative shows them to be by nature uncivilized, disloyal, and impious, a people who must be colonized and controlled for their own good. The real danger to Israel, the narrative suggests, are the Israelites themselves, who begin to take the place of foreigners in the narrative of Judges. While Deuteronomy's mockery of imperial discourse gives power to Israel to determine their fate, Judges resolutely denies that the people are inherently different than the Canaanites whom they were commanded to annihilate. By the end of Judges, Israel is by nature the dangerous Other of colonial ideology and so, as Mesopotamian colonial discourse would lead exilic readers to believe, is prone to destruction and exile at the hands of its suzerain. Key to Dtr's pro-monarchic argument is its narrative creation of Israel as sinful and in need of control. Some kind of leadership is clearly necessary to rein in the natural impulses of the nation, and the judges do not appear to be able to supply it.

This reinscription of colonial discourse in Dtr's emphasis on Israel as the people determined to manifest their nature as the dangerous Other, the rebellious and wicked people determined not to be loyal to their true suzerain, is key to the narrative's pro-monarchic message, for Dtr's answer to this problem of Israel's nature, as we shall see in Chapter 5, is the monarchy. If Abimelech appears to be a failure as the first Israelite king, the

narrative focuses its critique on him as a bad king, and not on the monarchy itself; as we shall see, Judges 9 can actually be read as providing strong support for a monarchy. Judges 17–1 Samuel 12 presents the notion of a leaderless Israel as untenable, while also critiquing the leadership of judges, priests, and prophet. By the time we reach this point in the narrative, a monarchy appears to be necessary, since every other option for leadership that the narrative presents fails to enforce cultic loyalty to Yhwh, the key to the Israel's survival in Dtr. While the Law of the King in Deuteronomy might portray the monarchy as an option that the people are under no obligation to demand, by the opening chapters of 1 Samuel it has become a *de facto* necessity. And while 1 Samuel 8–11 presents Saul's kingship as a clear improvement over a leaderless Israel, his failures in the following chapters inform readers that the only kind of royal success that matters is leadership in cultic loyalty. Like Judges 9, that is, 1 Samuel 13–15, in the larger context of the narrative, criticizes an individual king rather than the concept of a monarchy itself.

As Chapter 6 demonstrates, the narrative of Kings only emphasizes the lesson from the story of Saul that Yhwh will ultimately judge royal leadership solely on the basis of its success in keeping the people cultically loyal, for the monarchs in Kings are indeed evaluated just in this manner. And by this point in the narrative, their leadership is virtually total since the people have almost no say in the cult they practice. For Dtr, it appears, the people of Israel have proven themselves to be so evil and rebellious that they cannot possibly be left without some kind of leadership. But while the narrative offers only the monarchy as an appropriate leadership office, it is also clear that some dynasties are utter failures. The Northern kings, ruling over an area that the narrative presents as originally under Davidic control, are universally condemned as failures in cultic leadership, while the Davidides are variously lauded and critiqued. The narrative of Dtr points the exilic readers of Kings to the conclusion that they can return from exile and flourish in the land so long as they have a king who leads properly in cultic matters. The overall success of the Davidides is not due simply to the unique eternal dynasty Yhwh promises them, but also to Yhwh's somewhat capricious favoritism of David. Yhwh does not hold David to the standards of the law in the story of Bathsheba and Uriah, nor does he or the narrator critique Solomon for any of his violations of the Law of the King—Yhwh is actually an active participant in one of these violations—save for his apostasy. If Dtr shows in Judges that Yhwh evaluates Israel on the basis of their cultic loyalty alone, then it makes sense that he would evaluate the kings based solely on their ability to enforce this. Because of Israel's rebellious and foreign nature, the Law of the King falls by the wayside, for kings are necessary only to regulate Israel's loyalty to Yhwh. And Yhwh does not make his eternal covenant with David based on David's cultic fidelity,

which suggests that Davidic cultic sin will not result in an abrogation of this covenant. This is clearly good news for the Davidides, for they are largely exempt from the Deuteronomic Law in general, and it is good news as well for the exiles, so long as they are willing to submit to Davidic leadership. If Yhwh bases actions on his relationship with David and his extension of this divine favoritism to David's successors, then the people who are ruled by this dynasty can benefit from this, so long as the Davidide in exile can begin to once again lead them in cultic loyalty to Yhwh. Dtr is clear that kings are judged based on their cultic leadership, not their military success.

And, as we shall see in Chapter 7, the final chapters of 2 Kings—which many scholars, and particularly those who follow Frank Cross's theory of redaction of Dtr, divide into the work of different redactional hands—function perfectly well as a unified narrative once we see the stories from the reign of Hezekiah through those of the final monarchs as advice to Jehoiachin in exile. The conclusion of Dtr, that is, makes sense as a unified whole when we see it as privileging Davidic leadership and clearly explaining what cultic actions the Davidic king can take in order to lead a return to the land. The final chapters of Kings suggest to Jehoiachin and exilic readers not only that Yhwh still regards the house of David as Judah/Israel's true leadership, but also that, should Jehoiachin lead like Josiah, Yhwh is willing to consider him as a legitimate ruler and even to judge him to be as perfect a king as Josiah was. This is, finally, the conclusion to which Dtr's narrative leads readers: Davidic leadership is a necessity if the exiles wish to return to the land and thrive there; the only aspect of Davidic leadership that matters is that of cultic loyalty to Yhwh; and this means that other royal actions are of little concern to the divine suzerain. Dtr's argument to the exiles, then, is that they cannot blame the Davidides' military or foreign diplomacy failures for the exile, for a failure in cultic leadership alone is at fault. This is good news for Jehoiachin, the exiled Davidide, who has already lost one military encounter in his surrender of Jerusalem and who is in no position to lead another; continued Davidic rule in the land, Dtr assures readers, is based on something Jehoiachin can control, leading the exiles in repentance, and so he can still become a legitimate leader in Yhwh's eyes.

Ultimately, then, Dtr's narrative presents a three pronged attack in its promotion of the continued leadership of the Davidides, the colonized elite, each part of which mimics Mesopotamian imperial discourse in some way. Deuteronomy's mockery of the ideology of Neo-Assyrian treaties made with colonized rulers and other sources of imperial discourse makes Yhwh Israel's true suzerain, and so makes loyalty to him the standard by which the people will be judged; the cyclical narrative of Judges insists both that cultic action is the measure of this judgment and that Israel, just as the Mesopotamians describe their colonists, is disloyal and wicked by nature; and so a monarchy is necessary in order to colonize them and enforce their

loyalty to Yhwh. If Dtr mocks Mesopotamian colonial discourse in Deuteronomy, it simply reinscribes it in its description of Israel, who ultimately is the foreign enemy of the true suzerain, what Mesopotamian colonial discourse has always described them to be. Dtr's pro-Davidic argument does not work without its picture of an incorrigibly sinful Israel. And Dtr eventually reinscribes colonial discourse in regard to the monarchy as well. As Israel's history demonstrates the people's need to be civilized and controlled, Dtr gradually invests the monarchy with the powers that the Mesopotamian kings wield for the benefit of the colonized peoples whom they rule. Yhwh will not remove kings because of their actions of social injustice or economic exploitation of the people, Dtr demonstrates. It is clear by Judges that Yhwh's punishment of Israel is a response only to their cultic disloyalty, and so by this logic no aspect of royal rule outside of cultic leadership is of any consequence. As a result, then, injustice and exploitation are just aspects of royal rule Israel must endure; they are the foreign Other of colonial discourse whose very survival depends on loyalty to Yhwh, and so social and economic injustices are simply the price they must pay for being the rebellious people they are. And if Israel is the Other who cannot love Yhwh their God with all their heart, soul, and mind as Moses commands (Deut. 6.5), Dtr suggests that it is a possible for a king like Josiah to embody the Self that Moses futilely instructs Israel to become. He alone in Dtr is said to act toward Yhwh with all his heart, soul, and mind (2 Kgs 23.25) and, as we shall see, the final chapters present him as an example for Jehoiachin, the Davidide in exile, to follow. The perfect Davidide, which Jehoiachin can still become according to Dtr, is one who, like the Mesopotamian kings, is perfect in his cultic actions and has his colonized subjects participate in the perfect cult that he maintains.

If Dtr is, as I claim, a remarkably pro-Davidic narrative that mimics and both mocks and reinscribes imperial discourse in order to promote Davidic leadership to the exiles and present Israel as a rebellious and uncivilized people in need of this colonizing leadership, why introduce the monarchy with the Law of the King and, in Deuteronomy, present the possibility of Israel as existing in an unmediated relationship with Yhwh? Why include stories of failed kings such as Abimelech and Saul? Why criticize the reigns of some of the Davidides, most notably Manasseh and the final four kings of Judah? Why not simply begin, like Chronicles, with unqualifiedly positive stories of David, and then move to a positive discussion of his successors? The answer to this series of questions lies in the exilic setting of Dtr's composition, a context in which it would not be difficult for many of the exiles to blame the Davidides for the destruction of 587 and the removal of the people to the colonial center. In the realm of geopolitical explanation, Jehoiakim's defection from Babylon to Egypt in 601 leads directly to Nebuchadnezzar's punitive expedition against Judah in 598/597 (see *ABC*,

p. 102) and the first wave of exile. Zedekiah's imitation of this move leads to the destruction of Jerusalem and the second wave of exile in 587/586.[2] Exiles searching for a religious explanation for the exile might be inclined to trace Judah's subservience to Egypt and then to Babylon and the destruction of the nation to the religious reforms that Josiah instituted, as I will discuss in Chapter 7. Second Isaiah, an exilic prophet, certainly has no difficulty in discussing the exiles' future with no reference to the Davidides; in Isa. 45.1 it is not a Davidide but Cyrus the Persian who is Yhwh's anointed. Jeremiah prophesies to Jehoiakim (and potentially also to Jehoiachin) that he (or they) will not have successors to sit on Judah's throne (Jer. 22.28-30; 36.30-31).[3] An exilic author, that is, cannot simply assume that the readers will support the Davidides, whose failures in political and/or religious leadership might seem to the exiles the most obvious explanation for Judah's destruction. Dtr maintains that Yhwh established an eternal covenant with the Davidides, but eternal promises to royal houses were not the norm in the ancient Near East,[4] and so it is not hard to see how exilic readers

2. For a discussion of the larger contexts of these events, see the discussions in Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century* B.C.E. (trans. David Green; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 53-55; Ephraim Stern, *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. II. *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732–332* BCE (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 303-11; Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup, 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 781-98; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), pp. 406-15.

3. Certainly the failure of the prophecy to Jehoiakim in 36.30-31 to come to fruition suggests that it comes from Jeremiah and is not the creation of a later redactor. While 36.30 says that Jehoiakim will not be buried, the LXX of 2 Chr. 26.8 says that he was. It is certainly possible that the Chronicler received a version of Dtr that referred to Jehoiakim's burial that was later removed from Dtr because of Jeremiah's prophecy; see John Brian Job, *Jeremiah's Kings: A Study of the Monarchy in Jeremiah* (SOTSM; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 76-77. Moreover, while 36.30 says Jehoiakim will have no heir to succeed him on the throne, Jehoiachin succeeds him. Jer. 22.28-30 presents a much more difficult situation in regard to determining whether or not these verses reflect the prophet's opinion or not, given the differences between the MT and LXX here. We certainly can say, however, that Jeremiah opposed Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin because of their anti-Babylonian policies; see Job, *Jeremiah's Kings*, pp. 64, 85, 165. For a discussion of the conflict between prophet and Davidic rulers presented in the book of Jeremiah, see Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 136-57.

4. See Maria deJong Ellis, 'Observations on Mesopotamian Oracles and Prophetic Texts: Literary and Historiographic Considerations', *JCS* 41 (1989), pp. 127-86 (173-78). This is not to say that the concept of an eternal dynasty was entirely absent in Mesopotamia—see the discussion in Antti Laato, 'Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Ideology', *CBQ* 59 (1997), pp. 244-69—but it was not common. In fact,

might doubt the very existence of such a covenant. As a result, Dtr's narrative does not try to claim that the Davidides are perfect, which would strain the credulity of its readers. It maintains instead that Yhwh favors this royal house, that this dynasty functions better in leading cultic loyalty than the others in the narrative do, and that the exiles themselves, 'Israel', in Dtr's formulation of the word, are the real problem. Yhwh and not Mesopotamia controls history, but this benefits the people only if they can remain loyal to the true suzerain and, Dtr's narrative says, they cannot. This is an important point of the cyclical narrative of Judges 2–16 where readers see that Israel, left to their own devices, consistently and repetitively manifest their nature of rebellion and impiety. Dtr's narrative traces the failures of judges, priests, and prophets in their efforts (or lack of them) to maintain cultic loyalty, leaving only one leadership office with the ability to do so.

The narrative's arrogation of powers to the monarchy that ignores the Law of the King is surreptitious rather than logically explained, even if it does fit the narrative's logic. The Law of the King allows readers who blame the Davidides for the exile to accept the concept of a limited monarchy; the pro-Davidic narrative then removes the limits of this law once it makes it clear that the people are so evil that they need a strong hand to colonize them for Yhwh. If the Davidides have the right to treat their subjects as they wish (outside of the cult, at least), the exiles, by Dtr's logic, should be willing to accept the Davidides as a source of social and economic injustice since all that matters is their cultic loyalty to Yhwh, and Davidic leadership in repentance and a reestablishment of proper Yahwistic cult is their only hope for a return to and prosperity in the land. The narrative is willing to concede the obvious to the exiles—the Davidides have made mistakes—but at the same time portrays this house as the one that Yhwh favors, perhaps capriciously so, and in its final chapters offers the Davidide in exile a blueprint for success in return to and renewed prosperity in the land.

a popular explanation among scholars for the eternal covenant with the Davidides is to trace its roots to ancient Near Eastern land grants rather than to royal inscriptions or dynastic oracles. See, e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, 'The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East', *JAOS* 90 (1970), pp. 184-203; Moshe Weinfeld, 'Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and its Influence on the West', *JAOS* 93 (1973), pp. 190-99; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 77-81; Jon D. Levenson, 'The Davidic Covenant and its Modern Interpreters', *CBQ* 41 (1979), pp. 205-19; E. Theodore Mullen, 'The Divine Witness and the Davidic Royal Grant: Ps 89:37-38', *JBL* 102 (1983) 207-18; Timo Veijola, 'The Witness in the Clouds: Ps 89:38', *JBL* 107 (1988), pp. 413-17. Gary Knoppers has challenged this approach, however, arguing that land grants have a more complicated structure, form, and content than these scholars allow, and that they are not normally unconditional. See his 'Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?', *JAOS* 116 (1996), pp. 670-97.

The narrative thus works to convince the exiles that, because of the absolute importance of remaining cultically loyal to their true divine suzerain, because of their wicked and rebellious nature as a people, and because of the failures of other leadership offices, a Davidic king is necessary for their future. And given that the Babylonian ration texts that refer to Jehoiachin call him 'the king of Judah' (*ANET*, p. 308), it is within the realm of possibility that the Babylonians were thinking of reinstating him.[5] Nonetheless, Dtr's narrative explains that the king's leadership in repentance, not decisions the Babylonians make, will determine this, and it explains as well why the exiles should support a Babylonian reinstatement of Jehoiachin, for this would ultimately reflect Yhwh's response to Jehoiachin's imitation of Hezekiah and Josiah, the positive Davidic role models with whom the final chapters of Kings present Jehoiachin and the exilic readers.

2. *Postcolonial analysis and Dtr*

I do not intend this section of the chapter to be a comprehensive review of postcolonial criticism, even in terms of its use in biblical studies (let

5. So Bill T. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?* (SBLABS, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), p. 99. If Arnold's suggestion is correct, then it may be that Evil-Merodach (that is, Amēl-Marduk) developed a plan at some point in his two-year reign to provide more administrative structure in Judah, part of a sensitive region near Egypt. Benjamin largely survived the destruction of 587/6, and there appears to have been a functioning pro-Babylonian administration there, but the same did not exist, at least not at the same level, in Judah in the Neo-Babylonian period. For discussions of these issues, see David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM, 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 104-10; B. Oded, 'Where is the "Myth of the Empty Land" to be Found? History versus Myth', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 55-74; Oded Lipschits, 'Shedding New Light on the Dark Years of the "Exilic Period": New Studies, Further Elucidation, and Some Questions Regarding the Archaeology of Judah as an "Empty Land"', in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames and Jacob L. Wright; SBLAIL, 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 57-90; Oded Lipschits, 'The History of the Benjamin Region', *TA* 26 (1999), pp. 155-90; Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup, 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 119-34, 199-200; John W. Betlyon, 'Neo-Babylonian Military Operations Other than War in Judah and Jerusalem', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 263-83; Jeffrey R. Zorn, 'Tell en-Nasbeh and the Problem of the Material Culture of the Sixth Century', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 413-47 (437-42); Jeffrey R. Zorn, 'Mizpah: Newly Discovered Stratum Reveals Judah's Other Capital', *BAR* 23/5 (1997), pp. 28-37, 66.

alone in the other fields that use it), since readers can find helpful summaries of the development and uses of postcolonial analysis in biblical studies elsewhere.[6] Here I will largely limit my discussion to those aspects of postcolonial analysis that I will emphasize in this book's reading of the Deuteronomistic History. We should note first that biblical scholars who use postcolonial criticism agree that it should not be classified as a method. R.S. Sugirtharajah calls postcolonial analysis 'an amalgam of different methods ranging from the now unfashionable form-criticism to contemporary literary methods… It is more an avenue of inquiry than a homogeneous project';[7] Uriah Kim calls it 'more of an attitude and perspective than a theory or even a method. It is a way of reading or rereading that examines and investigates the link between colonialism and its cultural texts.'[8] As a lens for reading biblical texts, postcolonial analysis 'is not *a* method of

6. Stephen Moore provides a number of 'narratives' about the development of postcolonialism and its uses within the study of biblical literature, particularly the Pauline literature; see his 'Paul after Empire', in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes* (ed. Christopher D. Stanley; Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), pp. 9-23. Fernando Segovia provides another explanation of the factors that led to the adoption of postcolonialism within biblical studies, and explains how these changes in the field led to the adoption of a postcolonial 'optic' in analyzing biblical texts; see his 'Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism: Ideological Criticism as a Mode of Discourse', in *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (ed. Fernando Segovia; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), pp. 34-52 and 'Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies: Toward a Postcolonial Optic', in *Decolonizing Biblical Studies*, pp. 119-32. Other helpful introductions to the use of postcolonialism in biblical studies include Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia, 'Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Beginnings, Trajectories, Intersections', in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia; The Bible and Postcolonialism; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 1-22; R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (The Bible and Liberation; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998); R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003); R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial, and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); Kwok Pui-lan, *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010); Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminister/John Knox Press, 2005); Musa W. Dube, 'Making the Connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 45-63; C.I. David Joy, 'A Post-colonial Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics: Some Preliminary Thoughts', *Religion and Society* 52 (2007), pp. 27-39.

7. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, p. 258.

8. Uriah Y. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History* (BMW, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), p. 18.

interpretation (any more than is feminist criticism, say) so much as a critical sensibility attuned to a specific range of interrelated textual and historical phenomena', working to show how texts from cultures influenced by colonialism 'are enmeshed in ideological formations that exceed and elude the consciousness of their authors'.[9] Sugirtharajah has suggested that the use of postcolonial criticism in the field of biblical studies has introduced five 'new hermeneutical agendas'.[10] The first of these, and the one of importance to this present analysis of Dtr, is that postcolonial analysis has shown the importance of the ancient Near Eastern and Roman empires in any discussion of the cultural, political, and social frameworks of the biblical writings, asking how the texts depict the empire, whether or not they support those subjugated by imperial power, and whether the colonized are represented as the victims or the beneficiaries of the empire. The other new agendas Sugirtharajah identifies include a focus on contemporary interpretations of the biblical texts; asking how modern interpretation, exegesis, and translation reflect the discourse of colonialism and neocolonialism; and examining what kind of hermeneutics the communities of the colonized in the colonies, ex-colonies, and diaspora have adopted in their struggle with colonialism and neocolonialism.

For many biblical scholars who use postcolonial criticism in their analyses of biblical texts, it is an approach or attitude that is oriented toward praxis. For Philip Chia, the attitude that the postcolonial biblical scholar must adopt is one that approaches the Bible in the light of the situation of people in their struggle for rights and freedoms.[11] Musa Dube writes that 'one of my major assumptions of *reading the text is that it is about reading the world, not only to understand it, but also to change it*'.[12] Her postcolonial hermeneutic or attitude or approach is precisely a liberative one, and so she reads Mark as reflecting African struggles in the wakes of colonialism and neocolonialism, beginning her interpretation of a Markan passage specifically by seeking in it 'a postcolonial narrative of resistance, collaboration and search for justice', since this gospel is also the production of a

9. Stephen D. Moore, 'Postcolonialism', in A.K.M. Adam (ed.), *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 182-88 (183). Italics in the original.

10. R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 46-51.

11. Philip Chia, 'The Sun Never Sets on "Marx"? (Marx) Colonizing Postcolonial Theory (Said/Spivak/Bhabha)?', *JSNT* 30 (2008), pp. 481-88 (486).

12. Musa W. Dube, '*Talitha Cum!* A Postcolonial Feminist & HIV/AIDS Reading of Mark 5:21-43', in *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible* (ed. Musa W. Dube and Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), pp. 115-40 (116). Italics in the original.

colonized community.[13] It is not uncommon to see the assertion in works that read biblical literature through a postcolonial lens that a basic goal in approaching biblical texts is to examine them for the promotion of or reaction against imperial discourse, particularly insofar as this is useful to current struggles for liberation in a postcolonial setting.[14]

As important as such work is, this is not the approach that the current study takes. I limit this work to the first of the five hermeneutical agendas that Sugirtharajah identifies as the product of postcolonial approaches to the biblical texts and biblical worlds: the depiction of empire in the narrative of Dtr, including an investigation as to whether the colonized are represented as victims or beneficiaries of imperial power. As the work in general will argue, and as I will point out explicitly in the concluding chapter, I do not see Dtr's narrative as ultimately being a narrative of resistance or overly useful for the struggle for liberation in the postcolonial context, at least not when considered in its totality, for it is a work that privileges the Davidides, the colonized elite, at the expense of the rest of the nation, which Dtr emphasizes time and again is a rebellious people who need to be colonized for their own good. Before we can begin this study, however, it is necessary to introduce a number of concepts that are key to postcolonial analysis in general and that I will use throughout the work. Postcolonialism may not be a method, but those who use it as an attitude or approach to texts do tend to refer to a number of common ideas and terms. The first is that of hegemony. Edward Said, often seen as a founder of postcolonial literary analysis, follows Antonio Gramsci in defining hegemony as a widely accepted culture, which from Said's postcolonial perspective distinguishes the cultured and superior colonial center from the uncivilized and inferior colonized margins of the empire.[15] The postcolonial hegemony Said examines, then, is one in which it is widely accepted, even by the colonized, that the culture of the imperial center is better and is the norm. Relations between colonizers and colonized are obviously shaped by uneven exchanges of different kinds of power, and while this will include military, economic, and political power, it will also include cultural and moral power or authority. The hegemony of the colonizers thus creates certain canons of tastes and values, and it distinguishes between what 'we' can do and understand and

13. Dube, '*Talitha Cum!*', p. 123.

14. E.g., see Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, pp. 81-84; Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 97; Segovia, 'Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies', pp. 126-29; Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, pp. 252-55; Joy, 'A Post-colonial Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics', pp. 33-38; Laura E. Donaldson, 'Postcolonialism and Biblical Reading: An Introduction', in *Postcolonialism and Scriptural Reading* (ed. Laura E. Donaldson; SBLSS, 75; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), pp. 1-14 (1-2).

15. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 6-8.

what 'they' cannot.[16] Hegemony as widely accepted culture promotes certain norms and standards, elevates particular groups of people and ideas and languages and religions above others, and in doing so it 'shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are *because* they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can dislodge or alter.'[17] Hegemony by definition is not something that is often interrogated for truth claims; it is simply what is obvious and self-evident, and is taken to be universally true. And in the colonial setting, it is simply self-evident that the empire should rule, and that the colonized should be governed.

Hegemony in this sense, then, is a non-violent form of control exercised throughout a whole range of cultural institutions and practices.[18] It denies that it is the production of any particular social group, but simply points to some groups as better and more advanced than others. Because hegemony points to particular structures of power and order as universally valid, obvious, and natural, assent is given to these structures by both the colonizers and the colonized; the very notion that people are free to give their assent to hegemonic claims, then, is itself an illusion created by hegemony. They give their assent because it appears ridiculous to assent to anything else.[19] Yet this hegemonic discourse originating from the imperial center is not some kind of ruse dreamed up by the empire to dupe colonized subjects; it is what the colonizers believe to be true. They have appropriated the lives, labor, land, and treasure of others, and they need to explain and justify to themselves why this is necessary and good, just as they need to justify this to the colonized.[20] Hegemonic discourse is culture on the empire's terms, but it does not represent itself as such. If it portrays the empire 'as the possessor of culture—or, better, Culture—the one which owns and defines…the central means of communication and the traditions they communicate,'[21] this is simply because this happens to be true on hegemony's terms. On hegemony's terms, to reject colonial power and order and the cultural claims made for its superiority and validity is to reject Truth.

16. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 12.

17. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 70. Italics in the original.

18. Timothy Mitchell, 'Everyday Metaphors of Power', *Theory and Society* 19 (1990), pp. 545-77 (553).

19. Mitchell, 'Everyday Metaphors of Power', pp. 558-69.

20. Mario Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Mesopotamia, 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 297-317 (299).

21. Peter Machinist, 'Final Response: On the Study of the Ancients, Language, Writing, and the State', in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (ed. Seth L. Sanders; OIS, 2; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006), pp. 291-300 (294).

Homi Bhabha, another scholar often described as a founder of postcolonial analysis, also looks to Gramsci's work in defining a second widely used term in postcolonialism: the subaltern, the colonized subject created and potentially trapped by colonial hegemony.[22] The subaltern, he writes, is described through the hegemonic culture of the colonizers by what it is not—it is the opposite, the negative of what is considered to be good and civilized.[23] Ultimately, the colonizers define themselves, the Self, through their definition of the negation that is the colonized Other. The imperial psyche does not picture the Other as opposed to the Self but 'as the necessary negation of a primordial identity', as the binary opposite of the civilized center.[24] In hegemonic discourse, writes Said, the colonized Other has no existence except for that imposed upon it by this discourse, and so is obviously in need of the government of the colonizers.[25] Drawing on this analysis, Sugirtharajah defines such discourse as 'a kind of narration which tends to misnarrate the "other"', justifying the rule and manipulation of the colonized. The Other of Western colonial discourse is dishonest, sloppy, stupid, and incapable of objective analysis.[26]

And since the colonized subalterns have been defined in their nature by the hegemony of the colonizers, it becomes difficult for them to reject this ontology. Gayatri Spivak, also frequently referred to as a founder of postcolonial criticism, says that if the language of hegemony is understood to be the universal Language, then the subaltern, the colonized Other, is potentially trapped within this discourse. In a discussion of the Subaltern Studies group, which is attempting to rethink Indian colonial historiography apart from the Western and indigenous elite discourse in which it is normally narrated, she finds that the group realizes that this is not possible. The subaltern is a hegemonic creation, constructed through colonial discourse, and so is what hegemony defines it to be.[27] Bhabha argues, however, that since the colonizers need the Other to exist as a binary opposite to the Self, then the Self

22. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 59.

23. '[T]he subject cannot be apprehended without the absence or invisibility that constitutes it…so that the subject speaks, and is seen, from where it is *not*,' Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*, p. 47. Italics in the original.

24. Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 51-52.

25. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 32-34.

26. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 75-77. Quote on p. 75.

27. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 24-28. See also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, with Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, 'Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors', in *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (ed. Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean; New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 287-308 (291).

cannot be understood without the Other. The colonizers need the colonized to indicate their awareness and acceptance of the duality that hegemonic discourse has created, and so the self-identity of the colonizers themselves depends upon the colonized reflecting this discourse back to them. Despite the unceasing efforts of hegemonic discourse to create a binary reality that opposes a pure culture of the colonizers to the bastard cultures of the colonized, the need to have subalterns mimic colonial claims to truth and goodness places them in a hybrid cultural location. They are part of a culture that is wrong and bad, and at the same time mimic the language of the true and good culture, and this hybridity provides power to the subalterns. Hybridity 'unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.'[28] The mimicry that the colonizers demand from their subjects can thus become 'a mask, a mockery'. In outwardly providing the colonizers with the respect that imperial discourse demands, mimicry also provides power to the colonized subjects, who can turn this mimicry into mockery, 'moments of civil disobedience'.[29]

To put Bhabha's argument another way, the colonial powers exert their power not through force alone but through convincing themselves and the colonized that the current political, economic, and social situation is best. If this is going to work, however, then the colonized must accept such claims as true, for authority must be accepted as well as imposed, or else it is merely power, not authority. The colonized are thus required to lend their assent to this hegemonic discourse, but in doing so they are given a voice, an implicit say in defining and assenting. The very point of hegemony as we have been using the term demands that the colonized become a part of the dominant discourse, albeit the part that recognizes its own Alterity and essential failure to be what the imperial center is. The pure duality of hegemony, then, becomes a hybridity, since the subalterns' mimicry of hegemony can also be an appropriation, and hybridity can become a site of resistance against colonial authority as mimicry turns into mockery. What hegemony would like to maintain as a clear, universal, and natural distinction between two cultures and natures becomes precisely what can be unsettled and thrown into question. For the subaltern, then, mimicry becomes 'the secret art of revenge'.[30]

As the introduction to this book in the first part of this Chapter hopefully made clear, Dtr's narrative reinscribes Mesopotamian colonial hegemony in regard to Israel; Dtr reflects the voice of a colonized elite and largely portrays Israel as the rebellious subalterns whom the Mesopotamian colonial powers describe. Dtr's portrayal of Israel as the evil Other, then, is really

28. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 112.
29. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 120-21.
30. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 56.

the result of postcolonial mimicry of colonial discourse that maintains the colonial powers' pejorative view of the subaltern. And indeed, some biblical scholars have further developed Bhabha's concept of mimicry, arguing that it is not only a problem for the colonizer. Tat-siong Benny Liew directly addresses this issue in his reading of Bhabha, arguing that the colonized can simply mimic imperial discourse by reinscribing or duplicating it,[31] as Dtr does in its description of Israel. In his reading of Mark's gospel, Liew argues that the binarism of Roman hegemonic discourse is replicated and transferred from Rome to the Kingdom of God. The eschatological kingdom is good and the Roman kingdom is bad, and Jesus will destroy colonial power with more power.[32] The reinscription Liew describes derives from mimicry, but the mockery that results is also a reinscription of hegemonic discourse through a reversal of it. This goes beyond Bhabha's description of mimicry as something that can appear acceptable to the colonial power but that is slightly different—'almost the same, *but not quite*'[33]—and so subversive through a 'sly civility'.[34] The mimicry Liew describes in Mark has quite openly turned to mockery by reinscribing imperial hegemony in a reversal of its duality. In the following chapters of this book, we will see that at times Dtr's narrative mimics and mocks Mesopotamian binary hegemony, as it does, for example, when it claims that Yhwh and not the Mesopotamian king is suzerain. At other times, however, Dtr merely mimics and reinscribes such hegemony, producing no mockery of imperial claims, not even the reversal of colonial binarism that Liew describes in his analysis of Mark. This is the case, for example, when Dtr claims that the people of Israel and Judah are precisely the rebellious and evil foreign enemies of the true suzerain that the Mesopotamian colonial powers have always described them as. Some postcolonial biblical scholars argue that the concept of hybridity refers also, or even primarily, to a rejection of the dualism that imperial discourse has established between the good Self and bad Other, between the true and civilized metropolitan center and the chaotic and uncivilized margin that needs to be colonized for its own good. Postcolonial criticism 'goes beyond the binary notions of colonized and colonizer and lays weighty emphasis on critical exchanges and mutual transformation between the two…, full of cross-trading and mutual appropriation and confrontation'.[35] As we shall see, it is certainly fair to say that Dtr's narrative appropriates and confronts colonial discourse, yet it really does not go

31. Tat-siong Benny Liew, 'Tyranny, Boundary, and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel', *JSNT* 73 (1999), pp. 7-31 (12-13 n. 9).

32. Liew, 'Tyranny, Boundary, and Might'.

33. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 88. Italics in the original.

34. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 99-100.

35. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, p. 250.

beyond the kind of binary notions promoted by imperial hegemony. Israel's Otherness is central to Dtr's pro-Davidic narrative.

The following analysis of Dtr's view of the monarchy, then, examines it as a writing influenced by the hegemonic discourse of the Mesopotamian colonizers. As a work created within a subaltern community in diaspora in the colonial center, the work mimics this discourse. This mimicry reveals itself at times as mockery of Mesopotamian imperial claims of power through an appropriation but alteration of imperial binarism, locating true power in Yhwh and in Israel's choice of loyalty to its true suzerain. Yet this mockery of colonial claims is itself mocked later in the narrative, as Dtr portrays the people as by nature what the empire portrays the foreigners at its margins to be: rebellious, impious, and disloyal to the rightful suzerain of the world. Only under Davidic leadership can Judah/Israel hope to return to and prosper in the land, a claim for imperial control not unlike that of the Mesopotamian monarchies that understood themselves to control the lives of the colonized for their own good. Dtr mimics, mocks, and reinscribes the hegemonic discourse of its era.

My use of postcolonial analysis clearly shows my disagreement with the notion that it should not be used outside of examinations of the modern situation to which it was originally applied.[36] I am not arguing that the imperial policies of the Mesopotamian powers of the ninth to the sixth centuries BCE were precisely like those of modern European and American colonial and neocolonial powers; I am arguing that concepts such as hegemony, the subaltern, mimicry, mockery, and reinscription are flexible enough to be used in many different contexts in which an imperial power interacts with a colonized margin. Dipesh Chakrabarty sees the goal of postcolonial analysis in regard to the modern situation as 'provincializing Europe';[37] we might say that an important goal of Dtr's narrative is to provincialize Mesopotamia, although at places the narrative reproduces or reinscribes Mesopotamia in order to achieve this goal on Dtr's terms.

Since Uriah Kim is in the midst of writing a series of books that read the Deuteronomistic History through a postcolonial lens, I close this part

36. See, e.g., Aijaz Ahmad, 'The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality', in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (ed. Padmini Mongia; London: Arnold, 1996), pp. 276-93 (283); Gerald O. West, 'Doing Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation @home: Ten Years of (South) African Ambivalence', *Neotestamentica* 42 (2008), pp. 147-64 (158); Brad Ronnell Braxton, 'Paul and Racial Reconciliation: A Postcolonial Approach to 2 Corinthians 3:12-18', in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (ed. Patrick Gray and Gail R. O'Day; NTSup, 129; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), pp. 411-28 (413).

37. Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History', in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin; London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 383-88.

of the chapter with a short explanation of how our approaches differ. He has already published two books in this series,[38] both with the goal of reading Dtr from the standpoint of the Asian-American community.[39] To return to the new hermeneutical agendas that Sugirtharajah describes postcolonial criticism as bringing to biblical studies, Kim's work is clearly tied to the fifth one that Sugirtharajah identifies, addressing the needs of a diaspora community that have resulted from the community's interactions and struggles with colonialism and neocolonialism.[40] His first book, *Decolonizing Josiah*, is aimed at what he describes as a Western distortion of Dtr and its portrayal of Josiah, and it discusses modern scholarship's re-creation of a king and his historical context that suit a colonial Western view that legitimates Western power and identity. He ultimately sees the Deuteronomistic History—or at least a Josianic version of it—as the production of a Judean court that rejects imperial force (a force that Western scholars have reinscribed into the text) in order to be free of the Neo-Assyrian framing of Judah as one of the Others who should be controlled by Assyrian power, the true agent of history.[41] Kim's focus in the book is most particularly on what he sees as a Western misreading of Dtr and its narrative of Josiah, and this approach of using a postcolonial lens to critique contemporary readings of biblical texts is the third postcolonial hermeneutical agenda Sugirtharajah identifies, and so is common among postcolonial biblical scholars,[42] but, as the first part of this chapter shows, very different than my approach in this book.

Kim's second book, *Identity and Loyalty in the David Story*, is a postcolonial approach to the portrayal of David in Dtr, in which Kim argues that the narrative distorts the picture of the historical David who, he says, abandoned Saul's anti-Philistine policy in order to establish a kingdom based on חסד and not tribal identity.[43] Dtr, in this reading, makes the Philistines and other

38. His stated plans call for five in total; see Uriah Y. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty in the David Story: A Postcolonial Reading* (HBM, 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), p. ix.

39. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, pp. 35-41 and Kim, *Identity and Loyalty*, pp. 13-16.

40. Sugirtharajah, *Explaining Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, p. 51.

41. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, p. 222.

42. As just a few examples among many, see Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination*, pp. 81-84; Segovia, 'Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies', pp. 129-31; Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, pp. 255-57; Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 23-39; Hisako Kinukawa, 'De-colonizing Ourselves as Readers: The Story of the Syro-Phoenician Woman as a Text', in *Distant Voices Drawing Near: Essays in Honor of Antoinette Clark Wire* (ed. Holly E. Hearon; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), pp. 131-44; C.I. David Joy, 'Grace for All: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading of Mark 7:24-30', in *The God of All Grace* (ed. Joseph George; Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2005), pp. 73-84.

43. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty*, pp. 149-82.

non-Israelites into the Other.[44] Kim works here to expose the Deuteronomistic History as a document that overwrites historical events to create a language of colonizers, reflecting another point made in the postcolonial study of biblical literature: the biblical texts are not uniformly liberative, and contain non-liberative colonial discourse.[45] Unlike the basic focus of Kim's first book, this certainly is something rather like what I will be doing here; I will demonstrate that Dtr reinscribes colonial discourse, although, unlike *Identity and Loyalty in the David Story*, I will not attempt to contrast this with a scholarly reconstruction of David's reign or any other period that Dtr's narrative covers. My approach is also more wide-ranging, since I will not focus on just one character within Dtr. Moreover, my ultimate goal in this present book is not to study the history behind Dtr's presentation of events but to understand how the narrative reinscribes colonial hegemony to make a case for the monarchy by presenting Israel as by nature a sinful, foreign nation that needs the colonial control that only Davidic leadership can provide.

3. *The imperial milieu of pre-exilic Judah and of the exiles*

Before we begin to use the insights and concepts of postcolonial analysis, we should at least briefly explore Judean exposure to colonial power. The exiles to whom the Deuteronomistic History is addressed lived within the colonial center, of course. They were grouped together and largely settled within rural areas in Babylonia,[46] but some were situated by canals with access to Babylonian cities,[47] and some Judeans could even be found in the cities of Nippur and Babylon and around those of Borsippa and Uruk.[48] The Judean community in Babylonia as a whole, in sum, would hardly have been unaware of Babylonian ideology, culture, and religion.[49] Our modern

44. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty*, pp. 183-215.

45. Again, to list simply a few examples among many, see Dube, '*Talitha Cum!*', p. 123; Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 108-109; Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 19; Dube, *The Bible and the Third World*, pp. 259-60; Laura E. Donaldson, 'The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth through Native Eyes', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 159-70; Liew, 'Tyranny, Boundary, and Might'.

46. David Vanderhooft, 'New Evidence Pertaining to the Transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Administration in Palestine', in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STR, 5; Assen: van Gorcum, 2003), pp. 219-35 (219-23).

47. Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (PDRI, 151; Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 2002), pp. 52-53.

48. Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, pp. 27-28.

49. Peter Machinist, 'Mesopotamian Imperialism and Israelite Religion: A Case Study from the Second Isaiah', in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through the*

knowledge of Babylonian imperial discourse is certainly limited when we compare it to the vast Neo-Assyrian resources at our disposal since we have nothing like a similar number of Neo-Babylonian state archives and royal inscriptions, and so we must largely rely on Neo-Babylonian monumental archives and temple inscriptions.[50] These certainly can tell us something about Babylonian imperial discourse,[51] as we shall see, but we also know that the Babylonians adopted Neo-Assyrian royal ideology,[52] that they saw their monarchy as a continuation of the Assyrian one,[53] and that they continued aspects of Assyrian policies of administration of the colonies.[54] While

Roman Palaestina (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 237-64 (255-56).

50. See Erica Ehrenberg, '*Dieu et mon droit*: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times', in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. Nicole Brisch; OIS, 4; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), pp. 103-31 (103-104); Hayim Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 325-38 (334).

51. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire*, p. 12.

52. Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship and their Heritage in Mediterranean Antiquity', in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger; HANEM, 11; Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), pp. 35-44 (39-40); Muhammad Dandamayev, 'Assyrian Traditions during Achaemenid Times', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 41-48.

53. Not only did the Neo-Babylonian kings adopt Neo-Assyrian royal titles, but they portrayed themselves as the legitimate continuation of the Assyrian dynasty. See Stephanie Dalley, 'The Transition from Neo-Assyrians to Neo-Babylonians: Break or Continuity?', *EI* 27 (2003), pp. 25*-28* and Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.* (YNER, 10; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 139-40. It is notable that as Nabonidus moves to portray Sin as the head of the Mesopotamian pantheon, he refers to Sin as bestowing kingship on the Neo-Assyrian monarchs, and can even refer to Sin as directing Sennacherib, the Neo-Assyrian who destroyed Babylon, to act on his behalf. See Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus*, pp. 56-57.

54. David Vanderhooft argues that the Neo-Assyrian provincial system in the West was not continued by Babylon, which exerted less direct administrative control and instead relied on client rulers to govern on their behalf; see his *The Neo-Babylonian Empire*, pp. 96-99. But the Neo-Babylonian inscriptional evidence refers to officials in the empire who bear such titles as *šakkanakku* and *pīhatu*, colonial administrative titles known from the Neo-Assyrian period. See Vanderhooft, 'Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West: Royal Practice and Rhetoric', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 235-83 (245-47) for the relevant texts, as well as Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selsingrove, PA:

there are no extant Neo-Babylonian vassal treaties, Ezek. 17.11-18 says that Judah was under treaty to Babylon,[55] and so we can only assume that the Babylonians continued the Neo-Assyrian tradition of binding their clients to them by treaty, perhaps even using language and ideology similar to that of the Assyrian treaties. The exiles' exposure to Neo-Babylonian colonial discourse derives, obviously, from their life in Babylonia itself, but we can see here that we certainly should expect some, if not a great deal, of continuity between the imperial ideologies of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Yet even if this were not the case, we would still expect that Neo-Assyrian colonial discourse would leave a distinct mark even in a work from the exilic period composed a half century after the collapse of Assyria. Judah existed within the colonial shadow of the Neo-Assyrian empire—and actually within it during the period of its client or vassal status—from the empire's appearance in Syria and the Levant in the ninth century until its withdrawal from the region in the latter part of the seventh. Between 876 and 645, Assyria invaded the Levant 67 times. The majority of the Western states lost their independence over this 230 year period; between 740 and 677, the Assyrians created 20 provinces in the West.[56] While Judah did not become a province, it was an Assyrian client for about a century,[57] and we can have little doubt that this period under direct Assyrian oversight and supervision, not to mention the more than two centuries of total exposure to Assyrian hegemony, would leave an impressive mark on Judean understandings of the nation and people in the context of empire.

Neo-Assyrian stelae begin to appear in Northern Syria and the Levant when the Assyrians begin to campaign there in the ninth century. Prior to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II in the first half of the ninth century, almost every known royal Assyrian stela was placed in the city of Ashur,[58] but

Susquehanna University Press, 2nd edn, 2004), pp. 89-91. Berossus, who wrote a history of Babylon in the third century BCE, also refers to a governor (σατράπης) whom Nabopolassar had appointed in the West (Josephus, *Apion*, 1.135).

55. See Matitiahu Tsevat, 'The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel', *JBL* 78 (1959), pp. 199-204.

56. Angelika Berlejung, 'The Assyrians in the West: Assyrianization, Colonialism, Indifference, or Development Policy?', in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. Martti Nissinen; VTSup, 148; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012), pp. 21-60 (22-23).

57. 2 Kgs 16.5-9 says that the Syro-Ephraimite War of 735–732 led to Ahaz's request for client status with Assyria, while 18.13-14 says that his son Hezekiah continued this relationship—although he apparently tried to defect to Egypt (18.19-25)—and Assyrian documents indicate that his grandson Manasseh did, as well (*ANET*, pp. 291, 294-95). Judean independence from Assyria was not possible until the empire withdrew from the region in the latter part of the seventh century, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter.

58. Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), p. 69.

Assyrian expansion changes this as the empire brought its hegemony—in both military and cultural senses—to the West. The inscriptions 'all without exception were created to serve the ideological ends of their kings, and thus share informing visions of kingship and empire'.[59] The Neo-Assyrian kings clearly believed the erection of these stelae and their hegemonic messages were important, since, beginning with Ashurnasirpal II, they regularly refer to the placement of stelae on the peripheries of their empire in their accounts of their conquests (e.g., *ARI*, II, pp. 123, 125, 133, 138; *ARAB*, II, pp. 29, 103, 152-53, 227). It appears to have been important to them not just that the enemy and the colonized have experienced the destructive power of the king, but that they have a permanent record that explains and justifies this power. Like other Mesopotamian empires before them, the Neo-Assyrians erected their monuments at gates and palaces of conquered cities or in other prominent locales.[60] (In the regions immediately adjacent to Judah, fragments of Neo-Assyrian victory stelae have been recovered from Ashdod, Samaria, and Qaqun, just to the northwest of Samaria.)[61] The effects of this imperial discourse were clearly not lost on local rulers, who almost immediately begin to mimic Assyrian ideological presentation on their own stelae: local royal inscriptions from the Levant and the Western periphery of the Neo-Assyrian empire, such as the Moabite Stone, the Tel Dan inscription, and the Kilamuwa inscription, first appear in the ninth century, a generation after Ashurnasirpal and his successors begin to erect their stelae at boundaries between Syria, Phoenicia, and Israel. The local stelae are clear imitations of the Assyrian models, although using local languages and alphabetic scripts. Like the Assyrian kings, their Western counterparts narrate in the first person and open their inscriptions by naming themselves, and they follow this with a description of wars and conquests, construction projects, and curses against those who destroy their inscriptions.[62]

Some Western inscriptions mimic and reinscribe Assyrian imperial claims in order to garner prestige for the local king as an Assyrian client. This is the case, for example, with the ninth century inscription of Kilamuwa, king of Sam'al in Anatolia (*ANET*, pp. 654-55). Kilamuwa portrays himself in Assyrian style and as a subaltern of high status to the Assyrian king. He lists

59. Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, p. 91.

60. Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography', pp. 330-31.

61. See Wayne Horowitz and Takayoshi Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006), pp. 19-22, 40-41, 111, 115.

62. Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Traditions; Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 120; Nadav Na'aman, 'Three Notes on the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan', in *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period. Collected Essays*, III (ed. Nadav Na'aman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 173-86 (173-76).

his predecessors and says that each 'did nothing', and claims that a new and better age has dawned with himself, in part, the inscription suggests, because he became an Assyrian client.[63] The reliance on the Assyrians for prosperity is even more evident in the inscription of the eighth century Sam'alian king Barrakab (*ANET*, p. 655). As we shall see, Assyrian hegemonic discourse can be mocked as well as reinscribed, but it was in any case attractive to mimic simply because of the imperial success that it claimed to explain.[64]

The ninth century statue from Tell Fekherye inscribed in both Akkadian and Aramaic indicates that already at this period there were scribes on the Western edge of the empire who could compose in cuneiform,[65] and cuneiform letters from the mid-ninth century have been found in northern Syria.[66] Judean exposure to the Assyrian imperial discourse that justified invasion, destruction, and deportation was vastly augmented once Tiglath-pileser III established direct Assyrian control over the Levant in the 730s, which created a massive shift in the region in terms of settlement patterns, industry, and trade.[67] Judah directly experienced some of the most devastating effects of Assyrian power when Hezekiah's attempt to defect to Egypt was met with a punitive Assyrian invasion in 701 that inflicted massive destruction on the country,[68] but its most thorough exposure to Assyrian hegemonic discourse

63. See the discussion in Mark W. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny: Historical Visions in Sam'al and Judah under Assyrian Hegemony', *HTR* 91 (1998), pp. 215-50 (222-25).

64. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, p. 149.

65. Frederick Fales argues that, because of the very literary Akkadian (Standard Babylonian, the literary dialect of ninth century Akkadian) of the first part of the inscription—lines 1-18 in Akkadian and 1-12 in Aramaic—it appears that this part of the inscription was originally written in Akkadian and then translated into Aramaic. But the second part of the inscription—lines 19-38 in Akkadian and 12-23 in Aramaic—appears to be the work of a single scribe who could compose in both Aramaic and in the Neo-Assyrian dialect of this part of the inscription. The second part of the inscription is not a word-for-word translation, but uses the clearest expressions in both languages. See his 'Le double bilinguisme de la statue de Tell Fekherye', *Syria* 60 (1983), pp. 233-50.

66. Bernard M. Levinson, 'Is the Covenant Code an Exilic Composition?: A Response to John Van Seters', in *'The Right Chorale': Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation* (ed. Bernard M. Levinson; FAT, 54; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 276-330 (305).

67. For a survey of these changes, see Seymour Gitin, 'The Neo-Assyrian Empire and its Western Periphery', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 77-103.

68. For some explanations of the extent of the Assyrian destruction of 701, see the descriptions and the literature cited in Avraham Faust, 'Settlement and Demography in Seventh-Century Judah and the Extent and Intensity of Sennacherib's Campaign', *PEQ* 140 (2008), pp. 168-94, as well as Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, 'The Judahite Shephelah in the Late 8th and Early 7th Centuries BCE', *TA* 31 (2004), pp. 60-79; and Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, 'The Final Destruction of Beth Shemesh and the *Pax Assyriaca* in the Judean Shephelah', *TA* 30 (2003), pp. 3-26.

would have come during its century as a client state. As a client or vassal, Judah had a treaty with Assyria, the discourse of which Deuteronomy clearly mimics and mocks, as we shall see in Chapter 3. We expect that the imperial discourse of the treaty would have been widely known among at least the ruling class of Judah, for one of Esarhaddon's treaties with client rulers (*VTE* ¶¶ 25; 33-34) demands, in language that Deut. 6.2, 6-7 mimics, that the clients teach the treaty to their descendants after them.[69] Client status meant that there was a written copy of the *adê* or loyalty oath in Jerusalem, as well as an Assyrian *qēpu*-official stationed there to oversee compliance with and submission to the terms of the treaty.[70] It is not difficult to see, then, how hegemonic discourse from an Assyrian treaty, whether Esarhaddon's vassal treaty or one specific to Judah, finds its way into Dtr's narrative. The Judean ruling elite was exposed to this language and Assyrian hegemonic ideology for a century, and we know as well that Sargon II actively courted the elites of client states, sending officials to teach them Assyrian culture (*ARAB*, II, pp. 57, 66).[71] Regardless of the fact that Dtr is an exilic production—as I will argue in the next chapter—we should expect to see mimicry of Neo-Assyrian imperial discourse. Judah's centuries-long exposure to it suggests that the exilic community would be familiar with Assyrian as well as Babylonian concepts of divine and royal power, the characterizations of foreigners and enemies, the relationship of kings to the colonized and to the gods, the justifications for the superiority of the Mesopotamian powers, and so on. Before we begin to examine how Dtr's narrative mimics, mocks, and reinscribes such imperial discourse, however, we turn in Chapter 2 to an explanation of why we should see Dtr as a history produced in exile.

69. Simo Parpola, 'Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and its Long-Term Repercussions in the West', in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through the Roman Palaestina* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 99-111 (104). *VTE* ¶ 25 demands that the clients who are agreeing to the treaty 'speak to your children, to your seed and to your seed's seed who will be born in the future' and tell them to keep the treaty and not follow any other suzerain so that they will not be deported from their land. Deut. 6.2, 6-7 commands Israel to fear Yhwh and obey his commands, 'you and your children and your children's children', and tells the people to teach these commands to their children and meditate upon them always. A letter sent to Esarhaddon indicates that the entire population of a client state and not merely the elites knew of the provisions of a treaty; see Simo Parpola, 'A Letter from Šamaš-šumu-ukin to Esarhaddon', *Iraq* 34 (1972), pp. 21-34 (30-31).

70. Karen Radner, 'Assyrische *ṭuppi adê* als Vorbild für Deuteronomium 28,20-44?', in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur "Deuteronomismus"-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (ed. Markus Witte *et al.*; BZAW, 365; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 351-78 (374-75).

71. Parpola, 'Assyria's Expansion', pp. 101-102; Levinson, 'Is the Covenant Code an Exilic Composition?', pp. 304-305.

Chapter 2

Dtr as an Exilic and ancient Near Eastern history

1. *The unity and exilic dating of Dtr*

When I refer to the unity and exilic composition of Dtr's narrative, I mean that it is the production of an exilic writer who has created a narrative that pursues a number of themes in consistent ways from start to finish. To contrast this approach with Frank Cross's theory of redaction, for example, Cross also sees the final form of Dtr as an exilic production, but he does not see it as a unity in the sense that I am using the concept. Cross's exilic redactor, without explicitly saying so, annuls the eternal covenant with David, an idea important to the original version of Dtr that Cross believes was produced during Josiah's reign.[1] This is not a unified composition as I understand it, but one writer ignoring—really, contradicting—an important emphasis of another. I do not deny that the exilic author of Dtr drew upon earlier traditions and documents, such as a version of Deuteronomy's lawcode, stories of the conquest, judges, David, and so on, but these stories and documents have been integrated in such a way that their seams are difficult to locate.[2] I also do not deny that some (normally short) excerpts from Tetrateuchal sources appear in Deuteronomy and Joshua,

1. Frank Moore Cross, 'The Theme of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History', in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (ed. Frank Moore Cross; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274-89.

2. For a more thorough discussion of this issue, see Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einen Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (AThANT, 66; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), pp. 15-21, 316-18 and John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), pp. 292-321.

such as Deut. 32.48-52[3] or 31.14-15,[4] the result of the redactional work that linked those sources to the Deuteronomistic History. My approach to the question of redactional work in Dtr is really governed by three basic concerns. First, I agree with Jan Fokkelman that diachronic approaches to

3. Not only does the vocabulary of this section have parallels with that of the Priestly Writing, but the facts it conveys are in conformity with P's story and contradict what we find in Dtr. Deut. 32.50 says that Aaron dies on Mt. Hor, as do Num. 20.20-28; 33.38, but Deut. 10.6 says that he dies at Moserah. Deut. 32.51 says that both Moses and Aaron were punished for the incident at Meribath-kadesh, as does Num. 20.12-13, but the only action of Moses that results in punishment in Deuteronomy is his acquiescence to the spying mission (1.37), and the only sin of Aaron that Deuteronomy mentions is his acquiescence to the construction of the golden calf (9.20). See Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p. 518.

4. Scholars generally see material from a mix of hands in Deuteronomy 31, although there is no consensus as to which verses derive from which hands. For a sample of the variety of opinions that have been suggested, see Eep Talstra, 'Deuteronomy 31: Confusion or Conclusion? The Story of Moses' Threefold Succession', in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BETL, 133; Leuven: University Press, 1997), pp. 87-110; Leo Laberge, 'Le texte de Deutéronome 31 (Dt 31,1-29; 32,44-47)', in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989* (ed. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust; BETL, 94; Leuven: University Press, 1990), pp. 143-60; F. García López, 'La muerte de Moisés, la sucesión de Josué y la Escritura de la Tôrah (Deuteronomio 31–34)', in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL, 147; Leuven: University Press, 2000), pp. 85-99; and Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 354-57. Except for 31.14-15, however, the repetitions within the passage make narrative sense and emphasize extremely important issues stressed elsewhere in Dtr and Deuteronomy. Moses promises a destruction of the Canaanite nations by Yhwh and orders Israel to obey Yhwh's command in this regard (31.1-6), repeating some of the same instructions to Joshua (31.7-8). This focus on divine commands, a matter of no small importance throughout Dtr, and especially throughout Deuteronomy, leads naturally to an order that Israel must hear the law every seven years (31.9-13). Yhwh, however, then prophesies Israel's coming cultic disloyalty, and commands that Moses teach Israel the song of 32.1-43 so that the nation will know in advance what has caused their punishment (31.16-22); obviously, the theme of national destruction is of key importance throughout Dtr as a whole. Yhwh then commands Joshua to be loyal in the upcoming conquest (31.23) as Moses had been earlier, emphasizing the necessity that Dtr's narrative sees for perfect leadership, a matter that we will discuss in the upcoming chapters. Deuteronomy 31 closes darkly with Moses's repetition of Yhwh's prophecy of Israel's future disloyalty (31.24-29). Moses's focus specifically on nomistic disloyalty is a complement to Yhwh's earlier focus on cultic sin, and both nomistic and cultic sin are important emphases of Deuteronomy. All of these ideas and emphases are clearly common to Dtr's narrative in Deuteronomy, and they will appear in later books. But the references in 31.14-15 to the tent of meeting and a divine appearance in a pillar of cloud, while common in P, appear nowhere else in Dtr.

Dtr tend to overlook the subtlety of the composition, and replace narrative nuance with invented redactional strata;[5] this, in fact, will be the focus of the discussion concerning Dtr's unity in the first part of this chapter. This concern is closely linked to a second, however; as André Wénin points out, we should not assume that the final form of a text is incoherent, and so in need of diachronic explanation, until we consider all the possibilities for the ways in which it might make sense to its intended audience as a unified narrative.[6] And third, when we can compare different versions of redacted texts from elsewhere in the ancient Near East, we can see that redactors alter received texts, even apart from adding material to them, in order to smooth out redactional seams.[7] This makes it very difficult to reconstruct an original, non-redacted version of a text from the final version alone, and yet redactional theories of the Deuteronomistic History rely to an important degree on reconstructing earlier non-redacted versions.

Since I am arguing that the Deuteronomistic History was combined with the Tetrateuchal sources, I am not arguing that it is impossible to see ancient redactors at work in the texts, merely that we should have very strong evidence before we make such arguments. Arguments for redactional insertions are much easier to make when we can appeal to evidence from outside of Dtr itself, which is the case when we discover material from Tetrateuchal sources in Dtr. In such cases, we can then compare a particular passage found within the books of Deuteronomy through Kings with other writings. This is what I have done in regard to the discussion of Deut. 32.48-52 and 31.14-15 in the footnotes above. In these cases, we can see that vocabulary unique to Dtr (as is the case in 31.14-15) is really common Priestly vocabulary, and so most likely is a later redactional interpolation. Or, in 32.48-50, we can see that factual disagreements with other material in Deuteronomy have parallels in Priestly passages, and so this passage as well is most easily explained as a later interpolation of material from P. Without this kind of check, though, what can seem like a separate redactional strand within Dtr

5. J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (4 vols.; SSN, 20, 23, 27, 31; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983–1992), I, pp. 417-27.

6. André Wénin, *Samuel et l'instauration de la monarchie (1 S 1–12): Une recherche littéraire sur le personage* (EUS, 23/342; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 15-17.

7. See Antti Laato, 'Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Ideology', *CBQ* 59 (1997), pp. 244-69 (245); Burke O. Long, *1 Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature* (FOTL, 9; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 15-21; and Robert R. Wilson, 'Unity and Diversity in the Book of Kings', in *'A Wise and Discerning Mind': Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley; BJS, 325; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000), pp. 293-310 (301-303).

might merely be a collection of ideas and/or vocabulary that make perfect sense within the rest of the Deuteronomistic narrative. If we can explain what we find in the narrative without appealing to redaction we will be less likely to create redactional strata *ex nihilo* and more likely to discover the narrative's logic and appreciate its subtlety. Space does not permit anything like a thorough review of the many suggestions in regard to the redactional history of Dtr,[8] but I will briefly discuss here three of the best known ones in order to illustrate some of the ways that redactional theories of Dtr ignore the subtlety through which the narrative can communicate meaning, overwriting narrative nuance with invented redactors.

To begin with the school of redaction that follows the work of Rudolf Smend, we can turn to Smend's analysis of a number of passages from Joshua and Judges that form the basis for this school's conclusions. Smend's investigation of these passages leads him to conclude that there is a redactional hand that emphasizes the importance of the law (Smend's DtrN) that has inserted material into the original version of Dtr (Smend's DtrG).[9] Smend argues, for example, that there is a 'clear break' between Josh. 1.6 and 1.7—'courageous' is used in 1.6 to mean courage in battle, while in 1.7 it refers to adherence to the law. The sense of 1.7 is continued in the following two verses, writes Smend, so 1.7-9 is from a redactor.[10] The difficulty with this conclusion, however, is that it replaces narrative subtlety with a hypothetical redactional insertion. 1.6 does not actually refer to battle,[11] so it makes sense to see the call in both 1.6 and 7 to Joshua to 'be strong and courageous' as a reference to courage in following the law, since the law is actually mentioned in these verses. Nowhere does the book of Joshua or Dtr as a whole ever give readers a sense that victory in battle relies on anything but Yhwh's power, and Yhwh provides victory to Israel when they are loyal to him and keep his law. Most of Dtr focuses on loyalty as expressed cultically, but at this point in the narrative Israel has just received the law. What will matter in the upcoming conquest, says 1.6-9, is Israel's strength

8. A thorough survey is found in Gary N. Knoppers, 'Theories of the Redaction(s) of Kings', in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern; VTSup, 129; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), pp. 69-88.

9. Rudolf Smend, 'The Law and the Nations: A Contribution to Deuteronomistic Tradition History', in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville; SBTS, 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp. 95-110.

10. Smend, 'The Law and the Nations', pp. 96-98.

11. In 1.6, Yhwh tells Joshua that he (Joshua) will cause Israel to inherit (תנחיל) the land, a verb that Deuteronomy and Joshua generally use to refer to Yhwh's gift of the land to Israel and the distribution of it to the people (e.g., Deut. 12.10; 19.3, 14; Josh. 13.32; 14.1; 16.4; 17.6; 19.49). Dtr, however, never uses נחל as a synonym for warfare.

and courage when it comes to being loyal vassals to their divine suzerain, something they are to express through their fidelity to the law. By inventing a redactional insertion here in his assumption that 1.6 refers to courage in battle, Smend reads this verse as insisting that it is Joshua's and Israel's courage in battle that matters in the conquest, an idea at odds with Dtr's message as a whole. We should interpret 1.6 by reading it with 1.7-9: it is not prowess in battle but adherence to the law that will ensure success in the land, precisely the argument of Deuteronomy and Dtr in general.

Smend's analysis of Josh. 13.1-7 also invents a redactional insertion through a misreading of narrative subtlety. In this case, he argues that 13.1bβ-6 is a later insertion into the original text. In 13.6 Yhwh tells Joshua to have the Israelites draw lots for their inheritances in the land, while in 13.7 he tells Joshua to divide the land for the inheritance of the nine and a half Cisjordanian tribes, a duplication of a command that Smend believes points to the work of a redactor. Moreover, the opening of 13.1 and all of 13.7 provide a good parallel to 1.1-2, where Yhwh tells Joshua that Moses is dead (13.1 says that Joshua is old) and gives him a command beginning with ועתה (in 13.7 Yhwh gives Joshua a command beginning with the same word), and this, Smend argues, is evidence that 13.1bα was originally followed immediately by 13.7. And 13.1bβ-6 discusses the land that remains to be conquered, while 10.40-43 and 11.16-20, 23 tell readers that Israel took the whole land, more evidence for Smend that 13.1bβ-6 is a later interpolation.[12] But to begin with this last issue first, 10.40-43 and 11.16-20, 23 can simply be read as hyperbole, a reflection of the general and far-reaching victories of Israel throughout Canaan and a mimicry of similar overarching claims of conquests of entire lands in other ancient Near Eastern conquest narratives.[13] (As we shall see in Chapter 4, many aspects of Dtr's conquest narrative mimic Neo-Assyrian ones.) If, in fact, we were to read these passages literally instead of hyperbolically, as reflecting a complete annihilation of the Canaanites, then they would contradict Moses's claim in Deut. 7.20-24 that the conquest, while an impressive divine victory, will happen slowly. 13.2-6, then, follows a narrative of impressive victories with a list of areas that the Israelites have not yet conquered. This is why, when the tribes move to their individual inheritances in Judges 1 after Joshua's death, they still encounter Canaanites. When we look at 10.40-43 and 11.16-20, 23 as hyperbole, then we have no difficulty making sense of passages such as Josh. 13.2-6, which is entirely in accord with Moses's prediction of

12. Smend, 'The Law and the Nations', pp. 99-102.

13. See K. Lawson Younger, Jr, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (JSOTSup, 98; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp. 241-47. As Younger points out, this tradition of hyperbole also includes claims of the complete destruction of the enemy, just as Joshua 10 and 11 do.

the incremental nature of the conquest in Deuteronomy 7 and with Joshua's claim in Josh. 23.4-13 that Canaanites still remain in the land. And by seeing 13.6's command to draw lots for the land as a simple redactional reduplication of 13.7's command to divide the land, Smend misses the distinction between the two ideas. 14.1-5, however, repeats this logic exactly: the tribes receive their individual inheritances by lot, and then Israel divides the land. By holding both the ideas of lots and division of the land together in 13.1-7 (and 14.1-5, for that matter), the narrative makes clear that the land is divided by Yhwh's command, a command indicated through lots, and not Joshua's or Israel's. Only once this divine decision is clear can the tribes then move to their individual inheritances to finish off the work of the conquest. Smend's unnecessary creation of a redactor here erases subtle but key narrative points, ones that maintain that the land is entirely Yhwh's to give and distribute, and that this gift is dependent on Israel's fidelity to his command, not their courage in battle.

We could go on, but the point has been made, I think, that it is not difficult to find a perfectly logical rationale for these passages as they stand, and that dividing them up into different redactional strata simply misses important nuances of the narrative. Nor is it clear that those who have followed Smend's lead have been more successful in providing better evidence for redactional hands, particularly since their work presumes the validity of Smend's.[14] Moreover, Smend's claim that DtrN can be distinguished as well through its focus on the importance of keeping the law seems odd since the majority of the book of Deuteronomy focuses on precisely that;[15] that is, by bracketing out passages in Dtr after Deuteronomy that focus on the law, Smend removes this as an important aspect of the original version of Dtr. The school of redaction that follows the work of Frank Cross runs into a similar difficulty when it comes to Cross's work in identifying 2 Kgs 23.25b–25.30 and other verses as later exilic additions to an original edition of Dtr, for in Cross's understanding the exilic redactor simply eliminates Yhwh's eternal covenant with the Davidides. It is the supposed incoherence of 2 Kings 21–25, a mix of original text and redactional interpolation according to Cross, that stands at the center of the arguments of Cross and others who follow his conclusions on the redactional theory of Dtr, but

14. For example, Percy S.F. van Keulen, *Manasseh through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists: The Manasseh Account (2 Kings 21:1-18) and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History* (OTS, 38; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 21 and Erik Eynkiel *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (OTS, 33; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 27 both argue that Walter Dietrich, who accepts the existence of Smend's DtrN, fails to establish sufficient distinctive vocabulary for the further redactor he identifies, DtrP.

15. See Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), p. 21.

I will wait for Chapter 7 for a thorough engagement with them, since it is there that I will discuss the conclusion of 2 Kings and show that 2 Kings 21–25 makes perfect sense as the work of a single author once we see these chapters as advice to the Davidide in exile.

The Cross school, however, addresses other issues besides the conclusion of Kings in order to make a claim for an original Deuteronomistic History composed during the reign of Josiah (Dtr[1]) and an exilic redaction of it (Dtr[2]). To once more limit myself to one example from the school, I will examine Richard Nelson's work that attempts to establish the existence of a redactional Dtr[2] based on vocabulary unique to these exilic additions, work that begins with his examination of Judg. 2.1-5 and Josh. 11.23.[16] He argues that Dtr[1] originally moved directly from Joshua 23 to Judg. 2.6, for whereas Josh. 11.23 declares the conquest complete, Judg. 2.1-5 does not. Nor does Judges 1, narrating the continuation of the wars of conquest against the Canaanites, seem related to the preceding material in Joshua, while it does presuppose the picture of an ongoing conquest in Judg. 2.1-5. All of this, argues Nelson, points to Judg. 1.1–2.5 as Dtr[2]'s addition, enabling us to see the language of 2.1-5[17] as the production of an exilic redactor.

With this argument, however, Nelson has misread complexity present in the narrative. As we have seen, we can read 11.23 simply as a hyperbolic comment on Israel's general success over the Canaanite armies—thereby imitating a common feature of ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts—a success which must then be followed by the efforts of the individual tribes to continue the work of annihilating the Canaanites in their own allotments in Judges 1.[18] This is in complete agreement with the picture of the conquest that Moses gives in Deuteronomy 7 and that Joshua gives in Josh. 23.11-13, for both figures tell Israel that they should not intermarry with the Canaanites who remain in the land, since this would lead to the worship of other

16. Nelson, *The Double Redaction*, pp. 43-47.

17. Nelson argues that Dtr[2] added Judges 1 along with 2.1-5, but that while Dtr[2] composed 2.1-5, Judges 1 was a pre-existing text; see especially *The Double Redaction*, pp. 44, 47.

18. The same point can be made in regard to Josh. 21.43-45, which claims that not only did Israel possess the land, but also settled there. Yet we can understand this statement also as a general comment in regard to Israel's overall success in its victories in Canaan during the time of Joshua, without necessarily seeing it as implying a total elimination of the Canaanites and settlement throughout every inch of Canaan, a matter that is the focus of Judges 1. The issue of possession (ירשׁ in the qal) in this case occurs after the narrative of the allotments to each tribe in Joshua 13-21. Possession does not imply that all of the Canaanites have been annihilated (ירשׁ in the hiphil), and neither Joshua 11 nor Joshua 21 says that this is the case. For ירשׁ in the hiphil as referring to annihilation in the context of the conquest narrative, see David Janzen, *The Violent Gift: Trauma's Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History's Narrative* (LHBOTS, 561; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2012), pp. 100-101 n. 17.

gods.[19] Joshua 23, like Judg. 1.1-2.5, does not consider the conquest to be complete. As we saw in the discussion of Smend's work above, a picture of a general victory over Canaanite armies and cities that still necessitates the work of the individual tribes to finish the annihilation of the Canaanites in their own allotments of land is neither contradictory nor dissonant with regard to the general description of the conquest in Dtr. Because the conquest in Joshua 1–11 has not killed all of the Canaanites, Yhwh tells Joshua in Josh. 13.1 that 'very much of the land is left over to possess', and assures him in 13.6 in regard to the Canaanites that 'I will annihilate them from before the Israelites'. Nonetheless, even before this happens, Joshua is to divide the land among the inheritances of the individual tribes (13.6-7), something he does in Joshua 13–21. The narrative in Joshua 13-21 tells readers, however, that once some of the tribes enter their allotments they fail to annihilate the Canaanites there (Josh. 13.13; 15.63; 16.10; 17.12-13), although readers do not learn until Judges 1 that these failures occur after Joshua's death.

So all of this information in Joshua is perfectly compatible with the narrative in Judg. 1.1–2.5, where the individual tribes, having received their allotments, must annihilate the remaining Canaanites. When Israel fails to annihilate the Canaanites as Yhwh had commanded, he becomes angry and refuses to destroy the Canaanites for them (Judg. 2.1-5). Judg. 1.1–2.5, in fact, explains to readers how it is that Israel begins to commit apostasy: they fail to annihilate the Canaanites; and it is this first failure to obey the law of Deut. 20.16-18 and Moses's warning of Deut. 7.1-6 that leads to the intermarriage of Judg. 3.5-6 and the consequent apostasy that dominates the rest of the book, precisely the series of events that Moses and Joshua predict. In fact, it is Judg. 2.1-5 that explains to readers why Yhwh says that he will no longer annihilate the Canaanites for Israel even after he says he will do so in Josh. 13.6. To simply remove this section from the narrative and assign it to a later redactor is to erase an important explanation for why the Canaanites remain in the land to lead Israel in apostasy when Yhwh's power is what drives the conquest. The whole cyclical narrative of Judges 2–16 is dependent upon Israel worshiping the Canaanite gods, an act that Deut. 7.1-6; 20.16-18; and Josh. 23.6-13 say results from leaving Canaanites alive with whom the Israelites can then interact and marry. To understand this, readers need to see the distinction between the overall conquest accomplished

19. Moses explicitly makes a causative connection between intermarriage (חתן) and apostasy in Deut. 7.3-4. Joshua is not quite as specific in articulating this causative link in Joshua 23, but he does talk about coming among (-בוא ב) the remaining nations in the same verse that he warns about apostasy (23.7). Intermarriage (חתן) with the Canaanites, he says, will lead to Israel perishing (אבד) from the land (23.13), precisely what Joshua says will happen to Israel if they worship other gods (23.16).

during the time of Joshua and the failures of the individual tribes after his death, and it is precisely these important ideas in the narrative that Nelson's unnecessary creation of a redactional insertion erases.

In a similar way, when Nelson argues that Judg. 6.7-10,[20] the only prophetic message to Israel in Judges, is a later addition to the narrative,[21] he ignores the fact that the cyclical narrative of Judges 2-16 is marked by a progressive decline in Israel's actions and in Yhwh's responses to Israel's continued apostasy.[22] 6.1-10 as a whole is an example of this decline, for in 6.1-6 we find a more detailed picture of Israel's punishment than in earlier iterations of the cycle of Israel's apostasy, and 6.7-10 is an important part of the decline in Yhwh's response, for here he does not immediately send a savior upon hearing Israel's cry for deliverance as he had done previously, but instead sends a prophet to warn the nation. This divine refusal to act immediately to save is a decline in Israel's fortunes that is exacerbated in Judg. 10.10-14 where Yhwh explicitly refuses to deliver. As a result, to

20. Despite the text of 4QJudg[a], 6.7-10 should be considered an original part of the text. Julio Trebolle Barrera's claim that the absence of 6.7-10 in 4QJudg[a] means that these verses are not original to Judges but a late insertion should be viewed with caution; see his 'Textual Variants in *4QJudg[a]* and the Textual and Editorial History of the Book of Judges', *RevQ* 14 (1989), pp. 229-45 (238). Not only is this the only important textual witness in which these verses are omitted, but the omission occurs between two *parashoth*, one following 6.6 and one following 6.10. As Richard Hess has shown, Qumran's biblical texts put *parashoth* at the same places as the MT, although the scribes at Qumran indicated their presence merely with extended blank spaces rather than with פs and סs as we find in the Masoretic tradition. He points as well to the tradition at Qumran of inserting, deleting, and changing material at the *parashoth*, and explains the absence of 6.7-10 as another example of such a change. See his 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and Higher Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: The Case of 4QJudg[a]', in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans; JSPSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 122-28. There is perhaps an even easier way to explain the omission: the scribe's eye jumped from the blank space following 6.6 to the blank space following 6.10, a kind of haplography.

21. Nelson, *The Double Redaction*, pp. 47-48.

22. For the progressive decline of Israel's actions and Yhwh's responses in these chapters, see, e.g., Gregory T.K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup, 111; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), pp. 156-90; D.W. Gooding, 'The Composition of the Book of Judges', *EI* 16 (1982), pp. 70*-79*; Lawson Grant Stone, *From Tribal Confederation to Monarchic State: The Editorial Perspective of the Book of Judges* (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1988; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI), pp. 290-356; Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (OTR; London: Routledge, 2002), p. 111; Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 116-19; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup, 46; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), p. 112; Daniel I. Block, 'Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up? Narrative Style and Intention in Judges 6–9', *JETS* 40 (1997), pp. 353-66 (364-65).

excise 1.1–2.5 and 6.7-10 as later insertions into the narrative is to ignore issues that are important to it. To use them as a basis for constructing a distinct vocabulary of a hypothetical redactor[23] only compounds the problem, since other passages with similar vocabulary will then also be removed from the narrative, and in all cases the original subtlety and nuance of Dtr is ignored.[24]

To discuss one final seminal theory of redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, I turn to Helga Weippert's theory of a triple redaction in the book of Kings and Enzo Cortese's critique of it. Weippert's theory is based on her identification of five different types of evaluation formulas for monarchs in Kings, and she uses this as evidence for isolating three separate redactions of the book. The first two redactions she identifies (her RI and RII) each have unique evaluation formulas for kings of the North and kings of the South, she argues, and the last one (RIII), an exilic redaction, has yet another unique evaluation formula for the Judean kings after Josiah.[25] Cortese points out, however, that Weippert's attempts to distinguish different evaluation formulas for kings does not work because there is so little difference between them. For example, Weippert argues that RII compares the kings of Judah to David while RI does not, but Cortese rightly shows that of the Judean kings in Weippert's RII only Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah are compared to David, and these three undertake cultic reforms. That is, what Weippert mistakenly believes to be a sign of redaction is really just the narrative's attempt to laud good kings by comparing them to the illustrious founder of their house. Or again, Weippert sees the verb כעס 'to vex' as a unique component of RII's evaluation of the kings of Israel, but Cortese points out that the verb is only used in the evaluations of Omri, Ahab, and Ahaziah, three kings who follow foreign worship practices. It is not used, however, in the evaluations of Joram and Jehu, who both enact positive cultic reforms, even though they are also Northern kings whose reigns are part of Weippert's RII.[26] Marvin Sweeney makes a similar point in regard to the evaluation formula of the final four kings of Judah, which Weippert sees as pointing to the exilic redactor RIII, demonstrating that the evaluations of these four kings have important commonalities with those of Manasseh and Amon, Judean kings of Weippert's RII who are responsible

23. This is what Nelson does in *The Double Redaction*, pp. 49-53.

24. And this is precisely what happens in *The Double Redaction*, pp. 53-69.

25. Helga Weippert, 'Die "deuteronomistischen" Beurteilungen der Könige von Israel und Juda und das Problem der Redaktion der Königsbücher', *Bib* 53 (1972), pp. 301-39. In a later argument, she endorses Cross's theory, and equates her RII with Cross's Dtr[1] and her RIII with Cross's Dtr[2]; see her 'Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk: Sein Ziel und Ende in der neueren Forschung', *TR* 50 (1985), pp. 213-49.

26. Enzo Cortese, 'Lo schema deuteronomistico per i re di Giuda e d'Israele', *Bib* 56 (1975), pp. 37-52.

for negative cultic reforms.[27] By positing redactions where none need to be posited, Weippert overlooks subtle narrative signals that, for example, point readers to link the positive reforms of Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah and to see how important they are. And, as we shall see in Chapter 7, it matters that the final four kings are given evaluations like that of Mannaseh's, since there is a particular reason why Dtr's narrative compares them with him. To separate these evaluations out as a sign of a different redactional hand is to ignore this comparison altogether, and so to miss an important point of the narrative.

So while this can hardly be called an exhaustive critique of every theory of redaction that has been offered for the Deuteronomistic History, it does point to the tendency of those who argue for them to create redactional hands at the expense of the nuance and subtlety of Dtr's narrative. In none of these cases is it necessary to posit redactional insertions, and in each case important information conveyed by the narrative is lost by consigning parts of it to different hands and so removing parts of the narrative from the consideration of its meaning. In our examination of Dtr, then, we will avoid appealing to redactional insertions unless absolutely necessary.

We have not yet considered arguments from scholars who do not believe that there is enough evidence to posit the existence of a Deuteronomistic History. Here again space does not allow anything like a thorough examination of the issue, but some discussion of this is necessary to show that there is evidence for a unity of composition and thought to Deuteronomy through 2 Kings. To some degree, this book as a whole can stand as an argument for this, since I will show that there is a complex but coherent narrative strategy in the presentation of Israel, its relationship to Yhwh, and the role of its leaders and kings, particularly the Davidides. But to begin first with important objections to the unity of Dtr, we can start with K.L. Noll's assertion that the Deuteronomistic language to which some scholars point as evidence for a unified work really consists of late glosses.[28] This is an argument that, like the ones on redaction that we surveyed above, is made only by removing important aspects of the narrative as later insertions. Noll points, for example, to Josh. 2.10-11 as one of these late glosses that 'disrupts' Rahab's speech, yet it does nothing of the sort; it is in fact necessary in order to explain to readers what motivates her to hide the spies in the first place.

Another important objection Noll raises to the existence of the Deuteronomistic History is that there is no overarching narrative to Deuteronomy

27. Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 35-36.

28. K.L. Noll, 'Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)', *JSOT* 31 (2007), pp. 311-45 (323-25).

through 2 Kings,[29] an objection echoed in different ways by different scholars. Claus Westermann argues that each book is best understood as an independent work,[30] that, for example, the presentation of kingship in Samuel is different than that in Kings,[31] and that Judges has a cyclical view of history whereas Kings has a linear one.[32] Ernst Würthwein argues that Dtr is actually a blend of successive Deuteronomistic redactions, the first of which is an exilic edition that begins its narrative with the reign of Solomon and concludes with the current end of Kings. Later, other Deuteronomistic redactors added the story of David, followed by later blocks, each one adding material that takes the work farther into the past. In each block, however, we see a change of theological ideas—Würthwein argues, for example, that in Judg. 2.11–12.6 all of Israel is responsible for evil, while in Kings only the monarchs are,[33] and so this approach also sees a lack of narrative unity from Deuteronomy through 2 Kings. Richard Coggins argues that there is no uniquely Deuteronomistic religious language that truly distinguishes Deuteronomy through 2 Kings from other biblical works,[34] while Hartmut Rösel argues that there are no important motifs that we can follow consistently throughout these books.[35]

My full responses to these kinds of critiques lie implicitly in the chapters that follow, where I show that it is perfectly feasible to see Deuteronomy through 2 Kings as presenting a single and complex narrative argument that concerns the nature of Israel and the necessity for a Davidic monarchy. I will briefly apply some of those observations here to the objections to the existence of a Deuteronomistic History raised above, although a more thorough explanation of each point will have to wait until the following chapters. Westermann is partially, although not entirely, correct when he argues that monarchs in Kings are necessary to mediate between Israel and Yhwh while this is generally not the case in Samuel—Saul's failure

29. Noll, 'Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate?', p. 344.

30. Claus Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments: Gab es ein deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk?* (ThB, 87; Gütersloh: C. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), pp. 41-78.

31. Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments*, pp. 57-74.

32. Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments*, pp. 53-56.

33. Ernst Würthwein, 'Erwägungen zum sog. deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk: Eine Skizze', in *Studien zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (ed. Ernst Würthwein; BZAW, 227; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 1-11.

34. Richard Coggins, 'What Does "Deuteronomistic" Mean?', in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup, 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 22-35.

35. Hartmut N. Rösel, 'Does a Comprehensive "Leitmotiv" Exist in the Deuteronomistic History?', in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL, 147; Leuven: University Press, 2000), pp. 195-211.

to properly lead sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13 and his stated attempt, portrayed as a glaring failure, to follow the people's lead in sacrifice in 1 Samuel 15 are two obvious exceptions to this. As we shall see, however, there is a good reason why we rarely see David involved in sacrifice in Samuel: Yhwh favors David, somewhat capriciously, regardless of his cultic acts, and this sends an important message to readers about the continued viability and necessity of Davidide rulers, even though some fail by the cultic standards the narrative emphasizes in Kings. That is, Samuel is about Yhwh's choice of the Davidides, a choice made without respect to David's cultic actions, and so Davidic cultic failures in Kings do not disqualify this house from ruling after the exile, an important point for a pro-Davidic narrative to make. Westermann is also partially, although not entirely, correct to point out that Judges portrays a cycle of events while Kings does not—an important exception to this is the repetitive failure of the cultic leadership of each Northern monarch in Kings,[36] as is the repetition of reform and apostasy led by the kings[37]—but this is because the narrative wants to emphasize to readers in Judges the utter failure of Israel as a people to maintain cultic loyalty to their suzerain. Left to their own devices, the people repetitively manifest their nature as the foreign enemy whom Yhwh will destroy if they are not controlled by a king who leads properly. Judges focuses on Israel's failures; Kings focuses on the failures of the Northern dynasties while promoting the Davidides (even while acknowledging imperfections in this royal house as well). Different structures reflect different emphases at different points in the narrative that both promote the same pro-Davidic argument. And this is why, to respond to Würthwein's objection above, the people are responsible for their sin in Judges while the monarchs are presented as responsible for Israel's cultic lives in Kings. The point of presenting the people's repetitive sin in Judges is to show that they cannot live without leaders to control their cultic life, and it is for precisely this reason that the monarchs control it in Kings, although some are more successful at that than others.

And in regard to objections concerning the lack of uniquely Deuteronomistic language and motifs, Thomas Römer has shown that the term אלהים אחרים 'other gods' is a standard one in all of the books of Dtr, but otherwise is found only in Chronicles, the deuteronomistic sections of Jeremiah, Hos. 3.1, and twice in Exodus. Also, he points out that while Dtr

36. See David Jobling, 'The Salvation of Israel in "The Book of the Divided Kingdoms", or, Was there any "Fall of the Northern Kingdom"?', in *Redirected Travel: Alternative Journeys and Places in Biblical Studies* (ed. Roland Boer and Edgar W. Conrad; JSOTSup, 382; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), pp. 50-61 (56-58). J.G. McConville also argues that Kings, like Judges, portrays Israel's history as a continual decline wherein the actions and fate of the people are progressively deteriorating; see his 'Narrative and Meaning in the Book of Kings', *Bib* 70 (1989), pp. 31-49 (47).

37. Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, pp. 169-264.

emphasizes the exile as a threat or reality in Deuteronomy 4; 28; 30; 32; Joshua 23; Judg. 18.30; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kings 8; and 2 Kings 22–25, it is mentioned in the Tetrateuch only in Lev. 26.27-33.[38] We can note as well that the emphasis on intermarriage with foreigners as leading to the apostasy that causes national disaster appears in Deuteronomy 7; Joshua 23; Judg. 3.5-6; and 1 Kings 11, but does not appear at all in the Tetrateuch. As a result, intermarriage as leading to the worship of 'other gods' and exile would appear to qualify as a uniquely Deuteronomistic motif.

To all of this, we can add that it strains credulity to believe that the books of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings were each composed independently when each successive book leaves off where the previous one ends. Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses and Israel poised to cross the Jordan under Joshua, Moses's successor, and the book of Joshua begins at exactly this point. Joshua ends with the eponymous leader having led an overall conquest and divided the land among the tribes, who must now enter the land to complete the conquest, and the book of Judges begins with precisely this scenario. Judges ends with Israel's violation of the annual festival of Yhwh at Shiloh, and 1 Samuel opens there, continuing the movement begun in the last chapters of Judges toward a monarchy. 2 Samuel concludes with David at the end of his reign—the narrative even calls the short poem of 2 Sam. 23.1-7 'the last words of David', although this is followed by other stories (and words) of David in 23.8–24.25—and 1 Kings opens with David near death. While one could make the same argument for all of the books from Genesis through 2 Kings, Römer rightly argues that Deuteronomy 1–3 separates Deuteronomy from the Tetrateuch by summarizing parts of its story. This would not be necessary if Deuteronomy (or Deuteronomy and the following books) were part of a writing that originally extended back into the Tetrateuch.[39] But Deuteronomy and the books that follow are linked

38. Thomas Römer, 'The Form-Critical Problem of the So-Called Deuteronomistic History', in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-first Century* (ed. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 240-52 (247-48). Note also Yair Hoffman, 'The Concept of "Other Gods" in the Deuteronomistic Literature', in *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman and Benjamin Uffenheimer; JSOTSup, 171; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 66-99 (70) on Dtr's use of the phrase 'other gods'.

39. Römer, 'The Form-Critical Problem', pp. 246-47. Here, he is specifically responding to Konrad Schmidt's argument that the real beginning of the history that concludes in 2 Kings 25 is Exodus 2; see Schmidt's *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT, 81; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999), pp. 162-65. Reinhard Kratz offers an argument similar to that of Schmidt's, claiming that Deuteronomistic redaction eventually extended back as far as Exodus; see his *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (trans. John Bowden; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 153-215.

together with stories that begin in one book and conclude in another, such as the fulfillment in Joshua 8 of Moses's command in Deuteronomy 27 to inscribe the law on stones at Ebal and Gerizim, or the continuation of the stories of the judges as far as 1 Sam. 8.1-3, or the condemnation of the Elides in 1 Samuel 2 that is not explicitly fulfilled until 1 Kings 2. It appears unlikely to be a coincidence that Jeroboam's idolatrous calves of 1 Kings 12 sound like Aaron and Israel's in Deuteronomy 9,[40] or that Josiah's cultic reform reflects Moses's actions toward Israel's calf in Deuteronomy 9 and the laws in Deuteronomy concerning the destruction of foreign altars,[41] as well as Joshua's actions in Joshua;[42] the fact that Josiah is the only character in all of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings who, in 2 Kgs 23.25, is said to fulfill Moses's command of Deut. 6.5 to act toward Yhwh with all of one's heart, soul, and might, suggests his portrayal is modeled on the story of Deuteronomy.

While it makes the most sense to see Deuteronomy through 2 Kings as a unified work, why should we date it to the exilic period? Graeme Auld's claim that the fact that 2 Kings ends with Jehoiachin in Babylon tells us no more about the date of composition of Dtr than the fact that the Pentateuch ends with Moses's death[43] is not entirely correct, since there are a number of concrete indications in the Pentateuchal stories that they were composed by writers who were aware of specific events—for example, the establishment of a monarchy (cf. Gen. 12.6; 36.31)—that occurred long after the events that the stories relate. While Dtr points to the exile beginning with Deuteronomy 4, it makes no reference to any event beyond it. It is true that in Deuteronomy 30 Moses says that Yhwh will return the people to the land, but nowhere in Dtr do we find any reference to any specific post- or even late-exilic event, such as the appearance of Cyrus or the reconstruction of the temple. When scholars make arguments for the dating of supposed redactional strata to a particular post-exilic period, then, they cannot draw on concrete references

40. The word עגל 'calf' appears in Dtr only in reference to Israel's molded calf (עגל מכסה) in Deut. 9.16, 21 and in reference to Jeroboam's calves in 1 Kgs 12.28, 32; 2 Kgs 10.29; 17.16, with the exception of 1 Sam. 28.24, where it refers to an actual calf. In 2 Kgs 17.16, part of the summary of Israel's sins under the kings of the North, the calves are said to be מסכה, just as the calf of Deut. 9.16 is described.

41. For a list of the actions performed by Josiah in 2 Kings 22–23 that directly reflect Moses's destruction of Israel's calf and the laws concerning the destruction of the Canaanite altars, see Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works* (HSM, 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 7-10.

42. For similarities between Dtr's descriptions of Josiah and Joshua, see Richard D. Nelson, 'Josiah in the Book of Joshua', *JBL* 100 (1981), pp. 531-40.

43. A. Graeme Auld, 'Prophets through the Looking Glass: A Response to Robert Carroll and Hugh Williamson', *JSOT* 27 (1983), pp. 41-44.

in the text itself to any post-exilic event. We have already seen the problems that divisions of Dtr into redactional strata encounter, most basically a tendency to erase the nuance of narratives that make perfect sense in and of themselves. When Römer, to take one more example of this, divides Deut. 12.1-19 into three different strata,[44] it is perhaps easy enough to argue that, since the whole section makes sense in and of itself, this division is unnecessary, and in fact deleterious to the act of making sense of the passage considered as a whole.[45] When he assigns 12.2-7 to the post-exilic period, he does so because he believes that 'violent language' concerning the destruction of foreign altars best suits a minority group concerned about social identity, the case of the returned exilic community.[46] This is one possible situation these verses suit, but it is not the only one, and the fact that Dtr is in general concerned about foreigners—this is an important part of the argument of this present book, which points out that the narrative portrays foreignness as an essential part of the Israelite identity—and the fact that the commands of 12.2-7 are carried out by Josiah, a model Israelite in Dtr if anyone is, suggests that the verses suit an original edition of Dtr perfectly well. There is no concrete post-exilic situation to point to here in order to make a convincing argument to support Römer's position.

Raymond Person has suggested an alternative approach to argue for post-exilic additions to Dtr, an argument based in text-criticism. His summary of text-critical work, which suggests that a Deuteronomic school continued to add material to Dtr,[47] however, runs into the difficulty of confusing redaction with later expansions by copyists. For example, he refers to arguments that the MT's version of 1 Samuel 16-18 has expanded a shorter original version that is preserved in the LXX.[48] While this is certainly not the only argument that has been offered to explain the relation between the MT and LXX here, if we want to accept that the MT is an expansion, then we should see the original text of Dtr as retained by the LXX and make that the text that will be the focus of our examination of 1 Samuel 16–18. The books of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings, like all other biblical books, have undergone

44. Thomas C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 56-64.

45. See, e.g., J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), pp. 215-16; and Peter T. Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology and the Significance of* Torah*: A Reappraisal* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), p. 161.

46. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, p. 63.

47. Raymond F. Person, Jr, *The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature* (SBLSBL, 2; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), pp. 34-50.

48. On this point, Person (in *The Deuteronomic School*, pp. 37-39) refers mainly to Alexander Rofé, 'The Battle of David and Goliath: Folklore, Theology, Eschatology', in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (ed. Jacob Neusner, Baruch A. Levine and Ernest S. Frerichs; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 117-51.

scribal emendations and expansions; while this obviously takes place after the exile in the case of Dtr, such additions are not part of Dtr as I understand it here. To take a somewhat more complicated example, Person refers to Alexander Rofé's textual investigation of Josh. 20.1-7, where the LXX has a shorter version than the MT (the LXX's version contains only 20.1-3, 6b), and where the shorter LXX version appears to reflect Num. 35.9-34, material from P.[49] The MT version adds 20.4-5 and creates a different version of 20.6, one that corresponds to Deut. 4.41-43 and 19.1-13. Rofé has shown that the shorter LXX version of 20.1-7 is original and that a later scribe has expanded the passage in the MT to have it agree with material in Deuteronomy, and this means that we should read the LXX as the original version of 20.1-7. And, since Rofé's analysis of the LXX of 20.1-3, 6b shows that it corresponds to material from the Priestly Writing, we should see this passage as a post-Dtr insertion of Tetrateuchal material that finds its way into the text when Dtr is attached to those sources. In short, nothing in Josh. 20.1-7 is original to Dtr. So while Person believes that parts of Dtr are post-exilic, he concedes that there is no specific evidence from any of the passages he examines that helps him to date them to a specific point in the post-exilic period.[50] Text criticism can help us determine the original extent of Dtr's text, but it does not help us to find a date for the original composition of the work.

Perhaps the strongest recent argument for an exilic date for Dtr is Serge Frolov's.[51] Looking at the very end of Dtr, which refers to Jehoiachin's release by Evil-Merodach, Frolov points out that this Babylonian king, who ruled only from 562-560, is one of the most obscure of the entire ancient Near East.[52] If we date 2 Kgs 25.27-30 to his reign, then, Frolov argues, the verses appear as a confirmation of Yhwh's promise to David. While I will argue in Chapter 7 that the situation of the final verses of 2 Kings is somewhat more complex than this, Frolov's argument that a writer after Evil-Merodach's time would hardly refer to this Babylonian king in the context of portraying a positive future for the Davidide does make sense. While

49. The essay in question is Alexander Rofé, 'Joshua 20: Historico-literary Criticism Illustrated', in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (ed. Jeffrey H. Tigay; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985), pp. 131-47.

50. Person, *The Deuteronomic School*, pp. 103-104.

51. Serge Frolov, 'Evil-Merodach and the Deuteronomist: The Sociohistorical Setting of Dtr in the Light of 2 Kgs 25,27-30', *Bib* 88 (2007), pp. 174-90.

52. Virtually nothing is known of Evil-Merodach (that is, Amēl-Marduk) from Neo-Babylonian sources; they provide no information about his reign except for the fact that it lasted two years. See Ronald Herbert Sack, *Amel-Marduk 562–560 B.C.: A Study Based on Cuneiform, Old Testament, Greek, Latin and Rabbinical Sources* (AOATS, 4; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neurkirchener Verlag, 1972), pp. 2-4.

Evil-Merodach's rule began as a co-regency with Nebuchadnezzar[53] and may have been seen by at least some within his empire as a continuation of an eternal Babylonian dynasty,[54] his reign was, in reality, so short and inconsequential that a writer after his time attempting to send a positive signal about the Davidides' future would surely have referred to a different Babylonian king, or perhaps no king at all. That is, if we assume 25.27-30 is from a pro-Davidic writer trying to send a positive message about the Davidides' future, Jehoiachin's release from prison during Evil-Merodach's reign does not really send this message if the passage is composed after Evil-Merodach was overthrown by Neriglissar. What confidence could Dtr's readers have, in this case, that the usurper would continue his predecessor's policies involving Jehoiachin? The fact that there is no reference to a later king suggests that these verses were not composed later than Evil-Merodach's reign, Frolov concludes, since a pro-Davidic writer would have referred to a different king, and an anti-Davidic writer would have specifically addressed 2 Samuel 7 and the eternal covenant Yhwh makes with the Davidides, since its existence poses a problem for an author who believes the house will not rule again.

But let us assume that 25.27-30 was composed by an anti-Davidic writer, one who saw no leadership future for this royal house. Scholars who make this argument can point to the parallels between 2 Kgs 25.27-30 and David's treatment of the Saulide Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9: both are stories involving the scion of a defeated house receiving food from the ruling king, and the parallel might suggest that the author does not expect the Davidides to rule again, just as the Saulides did not.[55] In this anti-Davidic scenario, we

53. Sack, *Amel-Marduk*, p. 3.

54. Scribes at Uruk produced an Akkadian prophecy text that refers to an unnamed king as 'master over the world' whose 'dynasty will be established forever'. See the text in Hermann Hunger and Stephen A. Kaufman, 'A New Akkadian Prophecy Text', *JAOS* 95 (1975), pp. 371-75 (371-73); for an explanation as to why this unnamed king is likely Evil-Merodach, and why we can likely date the text to his reign, see pp. 373-75. While Paul-Alain Beaulieu dates the text to the Seleucid period, he argues that it is based on a favorable view of Nebucadnezzar and Evil-Merodach in Uruk, and that the unnamed king is Evil-Merodach; see his 'The Historical Background of the Uruk Prophecy', in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (ed. Mark E. Cohen, Daniel L. Snell and David B. Weisberg; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1993), pp. 41-52. For other arguments as to the identity of the unnamed king, see JoAnn Scurlock, 'Whose Truth and Whose Justice? The Uruk Prophecy and Other Late Akkadian Prophecies Re-revisited', in *Orientalism, Assyriology and the Bible* (ed. Steven W. Holloway; HBM, 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 449-67.

55. E.g., Jeremy Schipper, "'Significant Resonances" with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25:27-30: A Response to Donald F. Murray', *JBL* 124 (2005), pp. 521-29; Marvin A. Sweeney, 'King Manasseh of Judah and the Problem of Theodicy in the Deuteronomistic History', in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393;

would still expect the verses to have been written during Evil-Merodach's two years in power. If written later than this, the parallel between Evil-Merodach and the King David of 2 Samuel 7–9 who receives an eternal covenant, many victories over foreign enemies, and a marginalization of the previous royal house disappears. Evil-Merodach reigned only two years before being overthrown and assassinated. A post-560 anti-Davidic writer trying to draw a parallel between Jehoiachin and Mephibosheth would have chosen a more powerful (and thus later) Babylonian monarch to act as a parallel to David. And again, an anti-Davidic author who has no conscious interest in drawing a parallel with 2 Samuel 9 would have to address the problem of the eternal covenant with David's house, something that does not come up here. In short, an author writing after Evil-Merodach's time, no matter what his or her view of the Davidides, would likely have composed an ending that referred to a different Babylonian king. And this explains why 25.27-30 does not refer to any of Jehoiachin's sons, even while the Babylonian documents that refer to Jehoiachin's right to royal rations (*ANET*, p. 308) mention them:[56] the narrative of Kings rarely refers to the sons of a king while that king is still alive. It makes most sense to see Dtr as the production of an author who wrote while Evil-Merodach was still in power and Jehoiachin was still alive.

2. *Dtr as an ancient Near Eastern history*

For exilic readers to believe Dtr's story, two things are necessary: that they believe the author has not simply invented past events; and that they believe that the causes of and relations between these events are as the narrative describes. Let us begin with this second point first. A history writing is a narrative that creates the past insofar as it explains the past events that it describes. It is the explanation that makes a history writing a history writing, as Aristotle recognized when he described a work of history as one that

ESHM, 5; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 264-78 (273); Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 103-106; Jan Jaynes Granowski, 'Jehoiachin at the King's Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings', in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; LCBI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 173-88 (183-84).

56. For this as potentially raising a problem for the interpretation of Dtr that I will pursue in this book, see James Richard Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity* (JSOTSup, 272; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 88-89. Linville asks whether the Davidides can be seen as essential to Israelite identity by Dtr if the conclusion does not refer to any of his sons who could succeed him. My argument in this book is that Dtr presents Davidic rule as essential to the future hope of the people, and so, if Jehoiachin is still alive when Dtr is composed, we would not expect any reference to his sons.

provides narrative and causation.[57] Since there is a virtually infinite number of past events to talk about, historians choose from among them and create a narrative that explains why they need to talk about some events rather than others, and that explains how these events are connected to each other, and these choices and the consequent narrative inevitably lead to the intrusion of the historians' biases.[58] Marc Brettler, following the work of J.L. Gaddis, compares the writing of history to cartography, for cartographers must consider the needs of their audiences when choosing what details to include as they construct maps. Both maps and narratives that represent the past—which is how Brettler defines historiography[59]—are judged on their usefulness for specific audiences.[60] Brettler's definition is one that specifically avoids invoking modern historiography as a criterion for what counts as history writing,[61] and so, if we accept his definition, Dtr appears to be a history regardless of its accuracy as judged by contemporary historiographical standards.

My point here is not to argue that Dtr is a history writing that meets modern standards of historiography, merely that it is one that represents a past in a way that at least some of the exilic readers could find plausible. It is true that Brettler's definition of historiography is not one that suits all scholars, and not all scholars are inclined to classify Dtr as a history writing. For Noll, for example, the Greek word *historia*, which means 'inquiry, investigation', is not something one should really apply even to the book of Kings, which contains 'utterly fantastic tales', such as Elijah's ascent to heaven; there was no attempt in Kings or any other literary work in ancient Israel or Judah, he argues, to exclude folklore or rigorously interrogate source material.[62] Philip Davies expresses a similar concern in the classification of Deuteronomistic material as history, for modern historiography, he writes, draws upon data, whereas the biblical writers rarely had access to 'archives, archaeology, or eyewitnesses', and so had to rely on

57. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 117.

58. Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup, 143; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 214-16.

59. Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 12.

60. Marc Zvi Brettler, 'The David Tradition', in *Israel in Transition: From Late Bronze II to Iron IIa (c. 1250–850 B.C.E.)* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 521; ESHM, 8; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2011), pp. 25-53 (27).

61. Brettler, *The Creation of History*, pp. 152-53 n. 43.

62. K.L. Noll, *Canaan and Israel: An Introduction* (The Biblical Seminar, 83; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 58-59, 70-72.

stories about the past.[63] Unlike their ancient Greek counterparts, the authors of Hebrew Bible writings about the past do not make any explicit references to authorial intention, not the way Thucydides or Josephus or the author of Luke–Acts does, and do not clearly indicate that they are critically weighing sources against each other.[64] It is precisely this lack, combined with the appearance of stories in Dtr that certainly sound fantastical from a modern critical point of view, that make it difficult to know if the author of Dtr was truly intending to create a historiography that rigorously investigates and weighs sources as history writings (as Noll and Davies define them) must.[65]

From this point of view, of course, not all narratives that present a past should be considered histories—after all, writes Noll, if any narrative that presents a past is a history, then Shakespeare wrote them.[66] The difficulty with this argument, however, is that Shakespeare did indeed write histories; for example, the first quarto of Henry IV parts 1 and 2, published in 1598, is entitled 'The History of Henrie the Fovrth'. It is clearly not a history by the standards of modern historiography, but it is a narrative that presents a past and it is given the title of history. Noll and Brettler are likely correct that a term like 'history' in our contemporary context has particular meanings for moderns that, when applied to ancient writings, simply makes them more difficult to understand, since we might expect them to play by the rules of modern historiography and can find them difficult to make sense of when they do not.[67] But we can preserve Brettler's definition of history so long as we are precise as to what kind of history we are talking about. For example,

63. Philip R. Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History—Ancient and Modern* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2008), pp. 9-11.

64. So Jens Bruun Kofoed, *Text and History: Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), p. 231.

65. Baruch Halpern argues both that we should define a work as a history if this was the author's intention and that there is enough evidence in Dtr to show that the hands behind it intended precisely this; see his *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania State Press, 1988), pp. 3, 107-108, 181. The difficulty with this, as Brettler points out, is that even in the case of Chronicles, where we are aware of many of the author's sources, we cannot always say whether the author's alteration of source material is due to an interrogation of it in light of other sources of which we are unaware or to the author's desire to have past events and their explanations conform to a particular theological framework; see his *The Creation of History*, pp. 11-12, 152 n. 40. So it is obviously much more difficult to determine the author of Dtr's intention in regard to weighing his or her sources against each other, since in this case we do not have source material to compare.

66. K.L. Noll, 'Is the Book of Kings Deuteronomistic? And Is It a History?', *SJOT* 21 (2007), pp. 49-72 (57).

67. Brettler, *The Creation of History*, p. 138; Noll, 'Is the Book of Kings Deuteronomistic?', p. 58.

Diana Edelman points out that we need to distinguish between ancient and modern history writing, since they follow different rules in the creation of narrative meaning for the past events they discuss.[68] There are certainly more subgenres that we could mention here; we could talk about dramatic histories, so as to find a way to classify 1 Henry IV, or even Elizabethan dramatic histories, which follow somewhat different rules than their Restoration counterparts.[69] So to follow Brettler's definition of historiography as a narrative that represents the past, Dtr is indeed a history writing. We will have difficulty understanding it, though, if we expect it to follow the rules of modern historiography, and it will help to classify it as an ancient history; and as Noll and Davies (and many others) point out, it does not really follow the rules of ancient Greek history writing, and so we must classify it as an ancient Near Eastern history.

There is an important reason why it is necessary to recognize these kinds of distinctions among histories in order to make sense of Dtr's narrative: readers of histories expect certain things from the narratives they read, expect them to play by particular rules as the history writing explains the past. Readers who expect Dtr to match the standards of ancient Greek or modern history writings will be disappointed, because Dtr is neither Greek nor modern. It is, however, the production of an ancient Near Eastern culture, and so it plays by the rules of ancient Near Eastern history writing. Since history writers, like cartographers, need to meet the needs of their audiences (or at least the needs they believe their audiences have), insofar as Dtr represents and explains past events in the basic ways its readers might expect, it is more likely to persuade them of the validity of its explanations of its version of the past than if it abandons the rules of interpreting the past that were widely accepted in that milieu. Insofar as it plays by standard rules of interpretation, it can make its narrative seem like common sense.

And Dtr's narrative does indeed echo common ancient Near Eastern presentations of past events. It undeniably presents the nation's actions, most particularly its cultic actions, as determining its fate even though, by the time readers reach Kings, the monarchs are in charge of Israel's and Judah's cult. Judges evaluates Israel almost entirely by its cultic actions; Kings evaluates monarchs and the people the same way. The

68. Diana V. Edelman, 'Clio's Dilemma: The Changing Face of History Writing', in *Congress Volume Oslo* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; VTSup, 80; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 247-55.

69. For a brief explanation of the differences between the heroic dramatists of the Restoration period, who often wrote plays based on historical accounts, and the dramatic histories of the Elizabethan period, see George H. Nettleton, Arthur E. Case and George Winchester Stone, Jr, *British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2nd edn, 1969), pp. 3-6.

cultic failures led by Jeroboam and all of his successors doom Israel, the cultic failures led by Manasseh lead to the destruction of Judah and the exile, while Josiah's cultic reforms in and of themselves make him the most lauded figure in the entire narrative. Dtr's fixation on worship in this regard is undeniable: a failure to properly worship Yhwh is conceived of as an expression of disloyalty to the divine suzerain who exercises vast power in history.[70] This is hardly an idea unique to Israel in ancient Near Eastern recountings of the past, for the notion that national and royal sin, particularly in terms of failures to act rightly in cultic activities, could be responsible for divine destruction was common in the ways that Mesopotamian cultures could interpret the past. To refer to just some of the best known examples, the Curse of Agade explains the destruction of the city of Agade through the cultic missteps of Naram-Sin, the king, in regard to Enlil's temple;[71] the Weidner Chronicle uses the examples of past kings to show that obedience to divine cultic commands results in divine support for rule, while the failure to properly maintain the cult results in national disaster (*ABC*, pp. 145-51);[72] Esarhaddon explains the destruction of Babylon at the hands of Sennacherib as the result of the Babylonians' moral and cultic crimes (*ARAB*, II, pp. 245, 259-60, 263); the Esarhaddon and Akitu Chronicles refer to Sennacherib and Esarhaddon's failure in keeping Marduk's statue in Ashur, which results in the failure to celebrate the *akītu* festival, and contrast this with Shamash-shumu-ukin's success in restoring *akītu* (*ABC*, pp. 125-28, 131-32);[73] the Nabonidus Chronicle

70. While this is hardly a controversial matter in the interpretation of Dtr, see also Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, pp. 315-18; Rainer Albertz, 'In Search of the Deuteronomists: A First Solution to a Historical Riddle', in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL, 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), pp. 1-17 (8-9); Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies* (2 vols.; HSM, 52–53; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994), I, pp. 121-22; II, p. 232; Long, *1 Kings*, pp. 26-29; Otto Kaiser, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments* (Uni-Taschenbücher, 1747; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), pp. 128-30; Walter Dietrich, 'Martin Noth and the Future of the Deuteronomistic History', in *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham; JSOTSup, 182; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 153-75 (167-68).

71. Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

72. And regardless of when it was originally composed, the Weidner Chronicle was still being copied in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods; see *ABC*, pp. 43, 145.

73. The Akitu Chronicle picks up with one of the last issues discussed in the Esarhaddon Chronicle, the 20 year gap in the celebration of *akītu* during the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. This gap begins, of course, with Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in 689, when the divine images were removed from the city. After referring to

(*ABC*, pp. 106-108), the Verse Account of Nabonidus (*ANET*, pp. 313-14), and the Cyrus Cylinder (*ANET*, pp. 315-16) all point to Nabonidus's cultic failures as the explanation for the fall of Babylon to Persia; and the autobiography of Adad-guppi, the mother of Nabonidus, suggests that the desolation of Harran was the result of a failure to restore Sin's temple and rightly perform necessary rituals (*ANET*, pp. 560-62).[74] Simply because Dtr's narrative follows a dominant manner of interpreting the past in the ancient Near Eastern context does not automatically mean that all exilic readers would have believed every word of the History—it was as possible for ancients to disagree about the relationships and causations between past events as it is for moderns[75]—but it does indicate that the narrative

Shamash-shumu-ukin's reestablishment of the festival in his ascension year, the Akitu Chonicle next refers to his sixteenth year and the rebellion against Assyria. The rest of the text refers to the failure to celebrate *akītu* over the next five years (the fifth being Nabopolassar's ascension year), assumedly because 'hostilities (and) warfare continued', as we are told at the beginning and end of this final section (lines 16 and 26). For Babylonian readers, the faithful celebration of *akītu* during the first 16 years of Shamash-shumu-ukin's reign is perhaps what explains the rise of Nabopolassar, who destroyed Assyria.

74. Commenting on some of these and other Mesopotamian history writings, Mario Liverani concludes that the Judean hands behind Dtr needed the kind of exposure to historical interpretation that only living in Babylon in the exile could provide; see his 'The Book of Kings and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography', in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern; VTSup, 129; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), pp. 163-84 (178). If Judean history writing were truly so dependent upon a Mesopotamian philosophy of history, however, we might expect a writing style in Dtr far closer to that of the Neo-Babylonian chronicles, but, as John Van Seters points out, Dtr adapts but is not dependent on any of the sources it uses, including ones much like the Babylonian chronicles; see his *In Search of History*, pp. 356-58. A similar critique can be applied to Felipe Blanco Wissmann's argument that the royal evaluations of Kings depend on the Neo-Babylonian Chronicles; see his *'Er tat das Rechte…': Beurteilungskriterien und Deuteronomismus in 1Kön 12–2Kön 25* (AThANT, 93; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag-Zürich, 2008), pp. 213-23. In this case, it is not simply a matter of writing style but the fact that the evaluation of kings for cultic actions is something that appears in Mesopotamia as early as the early second millennium BCE; the author of Dtr did not need exposure to Neo-Babylonian Chronicles to adopt this as a way to make sense of historical events as Blanco Wissmann argues. Blanco Wissmann nonetheless provides a helpful discussion of some parallels between Kings and the Mesopotamian texts that discuss royal cultic actions (pp. 123-26).

75. For example, a prophecy text reflecting upon Nebuchadnezzar I's 12th century victory over the Elamites and the consequent return of Marduk's statue states that Marduk did not abandon the city because of any fault of the Babylonians or their king, but simply that he was traveling. However, another Babylonian text blames the Elamites' original victory on Babylonian evil, which caused Marduk to abandon the city. See J.J.M. Roberts, 'Nebuchadnezzar I's Elamite Crisis in Theological Perspective', in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. Maria de Jong

is not promoting some kind of radical hermeneutic likely to alienate its readers, and it gives us some confidence that the exiles could have found its presentation of the past believable.

And to return to the first point that I raised at the beginning of this section of the chapter, if the narrative presents past events that the exiles simply did not believe had occurred, then they would hardly be inclined to lend their credulity to its account. We need to show, then, that exilic readers who were at least somewhat inclined to trust the narrative's presentation of the past would not see the particular events that Dtr claims occurred in the past as a complete invention, but would see them as corresponding, more or less, to their own memories, as well as to stories of the past told to them by their parents and grandparents. Another way to put this is that we need to ask if Dtr refers to events in the past that actually occurred, at least events within the memories of the exiles and those of the preceding generation or two.

To begin with narrative events in Dtr closest to the historical period of its conclusion, we have no reason to doubt the exile itself. We know that Judeans lived in Babylonia as early as 572, since Babylonian tablets from 572 refer to 'the city of Judah' and contain 120 Yahwistic names.[76] 'The city of Judah' in this context is an area of Babylonia where the Judean exiles were grouped together, the common Babylonian manner of relocating exiles.[77] Some Judeans lived by canals with access to Babylonian cities and others were found around Borsippa and Uruk, giving us little reason to doubt that they would have been aware of Babylonian culture and imperial ideology.[78] The very last claim of the narrative, the reference to royal rations being given to Jehoiachin, is supported by Babylonian ration documents (*ANET*, p. 308). There is overwhelming archaeological evidence for

Ellis; MCAAS, 19; Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), pp. 183-87; and W.G. Lambert, 'Enmeduranki and Related Matters', *JCS* 21 (1967), pp. 126-38. In a similar way, while 2 Chr. 36.13-17 blames the destruction of Jerusalem on the sins of Zedekiah, the priests, and the people, 2 Kgs 21.10-15 blames it on the sin of Manasseh.

76. Laurie E. Pearce, 'New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 399-411.

77. See David Vanderhooft, 'New Evidence Pertaining to the Transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Administration in Palestine', in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STR, 5; Assen: van Gorcum, 2003), pp. 219-35 (219-23).

78. See Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (PDRI, 151; Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 2002), pp. 52-53, 27-28; and Peter Machinist, 'Mesopotamian Imperialism and Israelite Religion: A Case Study from the Second Isaiah', in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 237-64 (255-56).

the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 that 2 Kings 25 reports—Dan Bahat describes the evidence for this as 'among the most dramatic at any biblical site',[79] and almost every late-monarchic site excavated in Judah shows clear signs of destruction.[80] 25.11-12 suggests that only a small portion of the population of Judah remained following 587/6—'the captain of the bodyguard left some of the poor of the land to tend the vineyards and work the soil'—which does appear to reflect the vast, although certainly not total, decline in Judah's population immediately after the Iron Age,[81] and this description of a largely rural population in Judah following the exile does fit the sharp decline in urban populations in the region following the destruction of Jerusalem.[82] Unlike Lam. 1.1-4, Dtr avoids echoing

79. Dan Bahat, 'Jerusalem', in *NEAEHL*, II, pp. 698-800 (709).

80. Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origins of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), pp. 294-95. The territory of Benjamin, however, was generally spared from this destruction; see, e.g., Ephraim Stern, *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. II. *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 321-26; Hans M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the 'Exilic' Period* (SOFSup, 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), pp. 47-48; Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 237-49.

81. See, e.g., Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup, 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 119-34, 199-200; Oded Lipschits, 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and Fifth Centuries B.C.E.', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 323-76; Oded Lipschits, 'The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule', *TA* 26 (1999), pp. 155-90; David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM, 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 83-86, 104-10; Stern, *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, II, pp. 321-26; Kirsi Valkama, 'What do Archaeological Remains Reveal of the Settlements in Judah during the Mid-Sixth Century BCE?', in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW, 404; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 39-59. B. Oded's point that the biblical texts do not actually describe a complete emptying of the land is a good one—see his 'Where is the "Myth of the Empty Land" to be Found?: History versus Myth', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 55-74—and while I certainly would not go so far as to argue that life in Judah went on largely as normal (contra Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land*, pp. 19, 42-43, 79), there is evidence of a functioning society in Judah in the Neo-Babylonian period (see below).

82. See, e.g., Charles E. Carter, 'The Province of Yehud in the Post-exilic Period: Soundings in Site Distribution and Demography', in *Second Temple Studies*. II. *Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards; JSOTSup, 175; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 106-45; Oded Lipschits, 'Shedding

the empty land motif of ancient Near Eastern laments, which commonly describe destroyed cities as completely abandoned.[83] Dtr ultimately does present the exilic community as, in its essence, embodying what is left of 'Israel', as if there were no one outside of Babylonia who would understand him or herself to be part of a people by that name. Perhaps it is easiest to see this usage of the name as a kind of hyperbole that suits an exilic identity and that at least some of the exiles would accept, wherein this community sees itself as being Judah/Israel in its essence, regardless of who was or was not deported,[84] a usage that is no different than Second Isaiah's, for example, which gives no sense that 'Israel' refers to anything outside of the exilic community,[85] or the post-exilic Ezra-Nehemiah, which sees the returned exilic community alone as 'the people of Israel' (Ezra 2.2, 70; Neh. 7.7, 73) who cannot permit Yahwists from outside of this group to participate in the temple cult (Ezra 4.1-3).[86]

New Light on the Dark Years of the "Exilic Period": New Studies, Further Elucidation, and Some Questions Regarding the Archaeology of Judah as an "Empty Land'", in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames and Jacob L. Wright; SBLAIL, 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 57-90 (74-75); Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, pp. 206-71.

83. See Diana Edelman, 'The "Empty Land" as a Motif in City Laments', in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL, 207; Leuven: University Press, 2007), pp. 127-49.

84. 25.11-12 makes it appear that the Judean population whom the Babylonians did not deport was merely a tiny portion of the original population, barely worth mentioning, since 'Nebuzaradan the chief of the bodyguard exiled the rest of the multitude'. For the reading of הֶהָמוֹן in 25.11 rather than הָאֻמָּן 'the master workers, artisans' in the parallel passage from Jer. 52.15, see Janzen, *The Violent Gift*, p. 2 n. 5. As Kari Latvus points out, however, 24.14 makes a very similar claim in regard to those who are left in the land following the exile of 598/7, and yet 'the poor of the people of the land' manage, under Zedekiah's leadership, to maintain an army and garrison Jerusalem well enough to withstand Nebuchadnezzar's siege of 587/6 that lasts longer than a year; see his 'Decolonizing Yahweh: A Postcolonial Reading of 2 Kings 24–25', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 186-92 (188). It would appear that the narrative engages in exaggeration at 24.14 and 25.11-12 so that it can portray the exilic community as embodying Israel/Judah. On this point see also Lipschits, 'Shedding New Light', p. 76.

85. Blanco Wissmann argues that Samuel and Kings portray Judah and Israel as two separate states, unlike the picture of Israel in Deuteronomy (*'Er tat das Rechte…'*, pp. 33-34), and uses this as part of his argument for Samuel-Kings as an originally independent composition. However, there seems to be a self-identification within the exilic community as 'Israel', despite the fact that the state that went by that name had been destroyed more than 150 years earlier. For Dtr as a whole, as we shall see, 'Israel' in its fullest sense is something of which Judah is only the dominant part.

86. Oded argues that Ezra-Nehemiah presents inhabitants of Judah and Benjamin

The fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 598/7, which 2 Kgs 24.8-17 places at the very beginning of Jehoiachin's reign, is attested by a Neo-Babylonian chronicle, which says that Nebuchadnezzar captured 'the city of Judah' and replaced its king with one of his own choosing (*ABC*, p. 102), assumedly a reference to Jehoiachin's exile to Babylon and his replacement as king by Zedekiah.[87] We have no extra-biblical information for Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, the two kings who immediately precede Jehoiachin on the throne according to 2 Kings 23–24, but Dtr's narrative says almost nothing about them, or about Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, for that matter. The narrative evaluates all four of them with practically identical language, claiming that each repeated all of the evil of their ancestors. We will discuss this Deuteronomistic interpretation of their reigns in more detail in Chapter 7, where we will see that it refers to their rejection of Josiah's reforms. But beyond standard evaluation, accession, and death formulas, all that the narrative really tells us of the reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim is that they were Egyptian clients and that Jehoiakim then became a Babylonian one (23.33-35; 24.1). We have no reason to doubt this presentation of events, since Egypt replaced Assyria as the major power in the region no later than the 620s, while Josiah was still reigning.[88] (Josiah was likely an Egyptian

who did not go into the exile as part of the returned exilic community ('Where Is the "Myth of the Empty Land" to Be Found?', pp. 62-63), but the list of returnees in Ezra 2 (= Nehemiah 7) to which he refers specifically labels 'the people of Israel' and 'the people of the province' of Yehud as 'the ones who went up from the captivity of the exile' (Ezra 2.1-2; Neh. 7.6-7). For Ezra-Nehemiah as specifically limiting 'Israel' to descendants of the exiles and distinguishing Israel from 'the peoples of the land', see David Janzen, 'The Cries of Jerusalem: Ethnic, Cultic, Legal, and Geographic Boundaries in Ezra-Nehemiah', in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt; HBM, 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), pp. 117-35.

87. 24.2-4 also states that Yhwh sent Chaldeans, Arameans, Moabites and Ammonites against Jehoiakim in order to destroy Judah for the sin of Manasseh, so although this reference appears during the reign of Jehoiakim, whose death is reported in 24.6, it seems to be a part of the reference to the Babylonian invasion of 598/7 that occurred only three months after his death. It would certainly make sense that a Babylonian campaign would be aided by the forces of local clients, since this is an obligation of vassals attested in Neo-Assyrian treaties—see Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA, 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), pp. xxxviii, 4, 11, 66, and *VTE* ¶ 35—and royal inscriptions (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 294, 299, 304; *ARAB*, II, p. 293; *ABC*, pp. 125-26, 131).

88. Assyria withdraws from the region no later than 623, when an Assyrian civil war follows immediately upon a Babylonian revolt against Assyrian power. Egypt replaces Assyria in the Levant so quickly that Nadav Na'aman speculates that the two empires might have negotiated the withdrawal; see his 'Josiah and the Kingdom of Judah', in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393; ESHM, 5; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 189-247 (212-16).

vassal as well, although the narrative does not mention this for reasons that we will discuss in Chapter 7.) Given Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt at Carchemish in 605 (*ABC*, p. 99), there is no reason to doubt Jehoiakim's change of allegiance to Babylon.

Virtually all of Dtr's interest in Josiah is in his cultic reforms. There is some extra-biblical evidence for this, specifically in the movement that we can see in Judean iconography of the seventh century to aniconic seals and seal impressions, as well as the disappearance from these records of Aramean-influenced astral imagery.[89] The timing of the reform described by Dtr's narrative—the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, or 622—makes sense, given that by this point, and potentially as recently as 623, the Assyrians had withdrawn from the region,[90] and Josiah's removal of the horses and chariots dedicated to the sun god (2 Kgs 23.11) reflects a reaction against an Assyro-Aramean astral cult and would not have offended the Egyptians,[91] and a similar situation exists with the כמרים priests he deposes in 23.5, who were likely associated with Aramean worship of the moon god.[92] This is not, as Christoph Uehlinger puts it, an argument that Josiah carried out every act of reform with which he is credited in 2 Kings 23, merely that we have no reason to doubt that he carried out some of these actions. Let us suppose that exiles born in the year 600 had been told by their parents of a cultic reform enacted by Josiah, a king who had died before their births. The emphasis and extent of this reform in Dtr may exceed that of their parents' tale, but the exilic readers, if they are inclined to give the narrative the benefit of the doubt, could simply assume that their memories of their parents' stories are lacking, or that their parents had not emphasized the reforms enough.

89. See, e.g., Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), pp. 184-85, 212; Christoph Uehlinger, 'Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah? The Case for a Well-Grounded Minimum', in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393; ESHM, 5; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 279-316 (292-95); Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, p. 288; Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 354-67, 372.

90. See Na'aman, 'Josiah and the Kingdom of Judah', pp. 212-16.

91. So Uehlinger, 'Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah?', pp. 299-303; Martin Arneth, 'Die antiassyrische Reform Josias von Juda: Überlegungen zur Komposition und Intention von 2 Reg 23,4-15', *ZAR* 7 (2001), pp. 189-216; J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup, 111; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 176-82; Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit* (FRLANT, 129; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 245-51.

92. See Uehlinger, 'Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah?', pp. 303-305; Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur*, p. 85.

In a similar way, while 23.19 claims that Josiah removed all of the apostate high places throughout 'the cities of Samaria', thereby suggesting something like a full-scale invasion or even occupation of that whole area, it does not explicitly claim that Josiah invaded and controlled the former Assyrian province of Samerina. The discussion of Josiah's removal of what had been the official cultic apparatus of the North in 23.15-20 focuses almost entirely on what Josiah does in Bethel, a site only fifteen kilometers to the north of Jerusalem, and there is evidence to suggest that Josiah did expand Judah's borders this far to the north following the Assyrian withdrawal.[93] While Dtr leaves open the possibility that Josiah's kingdom extended much farther than this, it does not precisely say so; given the narrative's account of Josiah's death at Neco's hands at Megiddo (23.29), it also leaves open the possibility of what we know to be true, that it was Egypt and not Judah who controlled the North. Still, an exilic reader encountering this story a half century after Josiah's death would be unlikely to know precisely how extensive Josiah's conquests were, and Dtr's narrative is vague in this regard.

We know that Josiah's grandfather Manasseh, to whom Dtr attributes a 55 year reign (21.1), was an Assyrian client ruler (*ANET*, pp. 291, 294-95), although Dtr does not mention this fact; the narrative shows no interest in him at all except insofar as it claims that his leadership in cultic matters is so awful that it leads to the destruction of Judah and the exile. These are the reforms, in fact, that Josiah eliminates, according to Dtr.[94] The narrative accuses Manasseh of instituting the worship of Baal and Asherah as Ahab did (21.3), and as Israel had repetitively done in Judges (Judg. 2.11-19; 3.7, 12; 4.1; 6.1; 8.33; 10.6; 13.1), although the narrative does not refer to Israel's past sin. It charges Manasseh as well with worshipping the host of heaven (21.3) and building altars for them (21.5). Under the influence of Assyria and of Aramean religion, adoration of heavenly powers appears widespread in Judah, at least before Josiah's cultic purge, and this is also true of the worship of Asherah.[95] Since the account of Josiah's reform, or at

93. See, e.g., Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, pp. 288-89, 352-53; Na'aman, 'Josiah and the Kingdom of Judah', pp. 217-19; Grabbe, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 204-205.

94. Dtr portrays Josiah as specifically eliminating the cultic reforms that Manasseh introduces. For a chart of that lists the sins of Manasseh in 21.3-7 that Josiah undoes in 23.4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 24, see Baruch Halpern and David S. Vanderhooft, 'The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries B.C.E.', *HUCA* 62 (1991), pp. 179-244 (240-41). See also, e.g., Richard E. Friedman, 'From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr^1 to Dtr^2', in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 167-92 (176-78); Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), p. 126.

95. The 'astralization of heavenly powers', as Keel and Uehlinger refer to the ten-

least parts of this account, seems to reflect historical reality, then it is certainly possible for a sympathetic reader of Dtr, who has been told in some general terms of the pre-existing religious proclivities of Judeans, to believe that Manasseh was responsible for reintroducing such worship and returning Judah to the state it was in during the time of Judges. Readers may well have been aware that Manasseh ruled with Assyrian support; why would he not promote religious ideas that accompanied Assyrian hegemony?[96] I am not arguing that there is proof that Manasseh committed all of the Deuteronomistic crimes with which the narrative charges him, only that a sympathetic exilic reader of Dtr, who has some limited information about Manasseh's reign, could see these charges as believable. The narrative does not say when during his reign Manasseh implemented these reforms, although one could read the narrative as suggesting that they were begun as soon as he became king, almost a century and a half before Dtr was composed. Such an event would predate even the memories of the grandparents of older exiles in 560,[97] and there may have been little oral memory of such an event (or lack of it) among the exiles.

My point here is not that all of Kings, let alone all of Dtr's narrative, meets modern historiographic standards, merely that it does not seem to present exilic readers with accounts of events within their memories or those of the preceding two generations that might cause them to doubt Dtr's veracity, at least not if they were sympathetic readers inclined to accept Dtr's version of events. The concept of a united monarchy may be a fiction, albeit one that the author believed to be true, for Judah was sparsely populated until the eighth century, and some archaeologists argue that we find no Judean monumental building or bureaucracy or fortifications of Jerusalem until the late eighth century.[98] While the house of David was clearly ruling

dency in seventh century iconography to associate divinities with astral symbols, is well-attested in the archaeological record of the region; see their discussion of finds in *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, pp. 287-323. This is also true of figurines that seem to represent Asherah; see pp. 325-38, especially 333-36.

96. Whether or not the Assyrians might have demanded that Manasseh promote an Assyrian cult in Jerusalem as part of a general requirement for its clients is not something on which scholars have come to consensus. For a survey of scholarship on this issue, see the discussion in Stephen W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), pp. 1-79.

97. A 60 year old member of the community in 560 would have been born in 620, and even if his or her parents and grandparents were very old at the births of the following generations, it is hard to imagine that there were many members of the exilic community with grandparents born before the time Manasseh became king in the early seventh century.

98. E.g., see Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, 'Temple and Dynasty:

by the ninth century,[99] it may not have been very powerful or have ever controlled the kingdom of Israel to the north as Dtr's narrative claims, for the Northern Kingdom was quite advanced while the Judean state may well have been in its infancy.[100] Nonetheless, we have no reason to doubt that the exiles would not believe that Judah was a central part of 'Israel'; Ezra-Nehemiah uses the term to refer to the community of returned exiles, as we have discussed, and Second Isaiah can refer to the exiles as 'Israel' while also referring to 'the cities of Judah' that Cyrus will rebuild for them (Isa. 44.26).[101] We have no reason to doubt that at least sympathetic exilic readers would be inclined to accept the events and the explanations of them that Dtr describes. We can now turn to an investigation of how Dtr's narrative both mocks and reinscribes imperial hegemony in order to explain to readers why they should doubt Israel's ability to live without Davidic leadership in maintaining loyalty to their true suzerain.

Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology', *JSOT* 30 (2006), pp. 259-85; David W. Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archeological Approach* (SWBAS, 9; Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1991; repr. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011); Israel Finkelstein, 'State Formation in Israel and Judah: A Contrast in Context, A Contrast in Trajectory', *NEA* 62/1 (1999), pp. 35-52; J. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz, 'Redefining the Center: The Emergence of the State in Judah', *TA* 31 (2004), pp. 209-44; David Ussishkin, 'Solomon's Jerusalem: The Text and the Facts on the Ground', in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (ed. Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killibrew; SBLSS, 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 103-15; Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, 'The Urban Development of Jerusalem in the Late Eighth Century B.C.E.', in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (ed. Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killibrew; SBLSS, 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 209-18.

99. The Tel Dan stela attests to the existence of the house of David by at least the ninth century; see A. Biran and J. Naveh, 'An Aramaic Stela Fragment from Tel Dan', *IEJ* 43 (1993), pp. 81-98 and A. Biran and J. Naveh, 'The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment', *IEJ* 45 (1995), pp. 1-18. André Lemaire has also reconstructed the reading 'the house [of Da]vid' on the ninth century Moabite Inscription; see his '"House of David": Restored in Moabite Inscription', *BAR* 20/3 (1994), pp. 30-37.

100. Finkelstein, 'State Formation in Israel and Judah'; Nadav Na'aman, 'The "Conquest of Canaan" in the Book of Joshua and in History', in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), pp. 218-81 (219-22); Finkelstein and Silberman, 'Temple and Dynasty', pp. 261-62; Brad E. Kelle, 'What's in a Name? Neo-Assyrian Designations for the Northern Kingdom and their Implications for Israelite History and Biblical Interpretation', *JBL* 121 (2002), pp. 639-66.

101. Van Seters argues that the application of the term 'people of Israel' to Judah was possible only after the destruction of the North and after Judah inherits Benjamin following the Assyrian destruction of the Kingdom of Israel; see his *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 345-47.

Chapter 3

Treaty Language in Deuteronomy: Dtr's Introduction to Yhwh, Israel, and the King

1. *Yhwh, Israel, and the colonial powers in Deuteronomy*

It is well known that sections of Deuteronomy mimic aspects of Neo-Assyrian *adê* treaties made with clients or vassals who submit to and acknowledge the authority of Assyrian power,[1] and our postcolonial examination of Dtr begins with a brief look at how Dtr's mimicry of the hegemony of these treaties and other sources of Mesopotamian imperial discourse mocks the colonial powers' assertions that their rule benefits the colonized subalterns and that the latter owe them their allegiance. This mimicry becomes mockery as Deuteronomy replaces the Mesopotamian king with Yhwh as Israel's suzerain, and this is, as we shall see, the first step in Dtr's pro-Davidic historiography. To begin specifically with the Assyrian treaties, their very point is to refer to the clients' obligations and warn of punishments for disobedience, and so it is fair to say that the discourse we see in them defines the relationship between colonizer and colonized and is based on the hegemonic assumptions of Assyria's right to power that the empire assumes and expects its vassals to assume. There are no extant examples of Neo-Babylonian treaties with clients,[2] but since Judah was an Assyrian client state for about a century, and since, as we saw in Chapter 1, treaty language would have been known at the very least among the elite of the state, we can hardly be surprised that a Judean text from the Neo-Babylonian period mimics Assyrian imperial discourse. And since Ezek. 17.11-18 says that Judah was under treaty to Babylon, we know that the Babylonians made treaties with their clients, and it is certainly possible that the language and ideology of the Neo-Babylonian treaties were similar to the Neo-Assyrian ones.

1. For a brief discussion and definition of the *adê* and its structure, see Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA, 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), pp. xv-xvii, xxxv-xliii; and Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives at Nineveh', *JCS* 39 (1987), pp. 161-89 (180-83).

2. See Juha Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (PFES, 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 44-45.

So much scholarly work has already been devoted to this mimicry, most particularly to the mimicry of language from the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (*VTE*),[3] that I will only offer a brief summary of some of it here. The replacement of the Mesopotamian king with Yhwh as Israel's suzerain is clear enough in the mimicry and mockery of Deuteronomy 13, which warns of threats of cultic disloyalty against Yhwh from various aspects of Israelite society, and begins with language that clearly reflects *VTE* ¶ 4, which tells the clients that 'you shall neither change nor alter the word of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria' (see Deut. 13.1 [12.32] and 4.2).[4] We find a parallel with *VTE* as well in 13.4 [3], which demands that the vassal love (that is, be loyal to) the suzerain to the exclusion of any other figure. Commands to love one's suzerain in the sense of enacting loyalty is standard ancient Near Eastern political language that dates back to the Mari and Amarna correspondence,[5] but the command to love Yhwh here and at places like 6:5[6] reflects the language of *VTE* ¶ 24, which states that the vassals must love the suzerain *kî napšatkunu* 'like your own lives',[7] just as 13.4, like 6.5,

3. *VTE* is largely known from fragments of eight separate manuscripts made with eight different vassals in the eastern part of the Neo-Assyrian empire; the eight documents are nearly identical, and the only important differences lie in the preambles, since each was addressed to a different client ruler. See Paropola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*, pp. xxix-xxx. Recently, a copy has been found at Unqi, the capital of the Neo-Assyrian province of Kullania, at Turkey's border with Syria, indicating that the treaty was known in the western part of the empire as well. See Jacob Lauinger, 'Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary', *JCS* 64 (2012), pp. 87-123.

4. See the discussion in Bernard M. Levinson, 'Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty as the Source for the Canon Formula in Deuteronomy 13:1', *JAOS* 130 (2010), pp. 337-47; Bernard M. Levinson, 'The Neo-Assyrian Origins of the Canon Formula in Deuteronomy 13:1', in *Scriptural Exegesis: The Shapes of Culture and the Religious Imagination* (ed. Deborah A. Green and Laura S. Lieber; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 25-45; Bernard M. Levinson, 'Textual Criticism, Assyriology, and the History of Interpretation: Deuteronomy 13:7 as a Test Case in Method', *JBL* 120 (2001), pp. 211-43.

5. See William L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', in *The Most Magic Word: Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature* (ed. Ronald S. Hendel; CBQMS, 35; Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002), pp. 170-81.

6. And this is not the only parallel between Deuteronomy 6 and *VTE*. Besides the command to love the suzerain in 6.5, the chapter exhorts Israel to fear the suzerain in 6.13 (as does *VTE* ¶ 34), emphasizes the exclusiveness of allegiance to the suzerain in the same verse (as do *VTE* ¶¶ 5; 11), and demands that the commands be taught to the next generation in 6.7 (as do *VTE* ¶¶ 25; 34). See Christof Hardmeier, 'Der Weisheit der Tora (Dtn 4,5-8): Respekt und Loyalität gegenüber JHWH allein und die Befolgung seiner Gebote—ein performatives Lehren und Lernen', in *Freiheit und Recht: Festschrift für Frank Crüsemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Christof Hardmeier, Rainer Kessler and Andreas Ruwe; Gütersloh: C. Kaiser, 2003), pp. 224-54.

7. See Simo Parpola, 'Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and its

tells the Israelites that they must love Yhwh 'with all your heart and with all your life (נפשכם)'.[8] Deuteronomy 13's list of potential groups of traitors to the suzerain has striking similarities to the list of *VTE* ¶ 10, which demands that a client ruler report any word spoken against Ashurbanipal, whether from Ashurbanipal's relatives or the vassal's own brothers, sons, or daughters, or from a prophet. Deuteronomy 13 orders Israel to kill any fellow Israelite who calls others to worship other gods and thus manifest disloyalty to Yhwh, listing the potential traitors as prophets, brothers, sons, daughters, wives, and friends, very much like the part of the list in *VTE* ¶ 10 that refers to traitors within the client's own family (lines 115-16).

The similarities here are so close that Eckart Otto argues that parts of Deuteronomy 13 translate *VTE* ¶ 10.[9] Paul Dion notes as well that if we replaced the occurrences of 'other gods' in this chapter with 'other kings', the language would fit perfectly in the ancient Near Eastern political context. Nonetheless, he points out that demands upon clients to denounce all conspiracies, even if from one's own family, date as early as a fifteenth century Hittite treaty, and that the command in 13.13-19 [12-18] to destroy apostate Israelite cities closely parallels the language of the ninth century Sefire treaty, which commands the destruction of a rebellious town (*ANET*, pp. 660-61).[10] The lesson we can learn from Dion and others who point to similarities between Deuteronomy 13 and the older Hittite treaties[11] is not

Long-Term Repercussions in the West', in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canon, Ancient Israel, and their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 99-111 (104).

8. 6.5 actually reads נפשך. See also *VTE* ¶ 18, which also uses the verb *râmu/ra'āmu* 'to love' to refer to a vassal who acts in loyalty to the suzerain. Ashurbanipal uses the same verb in a treaty with his allies in Babylon in the context of the allies stating that they will swear not to be disloyal by establishing a king for themselves other than Ashurbanipal (Parpola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*, p. 66).

9. Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium: Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien* (BZAW, 284; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 15-90, 364-78. To be more precise, Eckart points to similarities as well with parts of *VTE* ¶¶ 12; 18; 29; and 57, all of which focus on reporting plots of treachery against the suzerain.

10. Paul E. 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 and Deborah W. Hobson; JSOTSup, 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 147-210 (197-203).

11. See, e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 91-100; Joshua Berman, 'CTH 133 and the Hittite Provenance of Deuteronomy 13', *JBL* 130 (2011), pp. 25-44; Markus Zehnder, 'Building on Stone? Deuteronomy and Esarhaddon's Loyalty Oaths (Part 1): Some Preliminary Observations', *BBR* 19 (2009), pp. 341-74; and Markus Zehnder, 'Building on Stone? Deuteronomy and Esarhaddon's Loyalty Oaths (Part 2): Some Additional Observations', *BBR* 19 (2009), pp. 511-34.

only that there were similarities between Hittite and Neo-Assyrian treaties, but that while Deuteronomy 13 may mimic the Neo-Assyrian imperial discourse to which Judah was exposed for two centuries, this discourse had broad similarities with that of other ancient Near Eastern empires. Deuteronomy 13 may well draw from Neo-Assyrian vassal treaty language, but the specific treaty in question may just not be the one Esarhaddon made.[12] The same observation holds for the similarities that we can see when we compare the treaty curses of Deut. 28.26-35 with those of *VTE* ¶¶ 38A-42;[13] we need not argue that parts of Deuteronomy 28 are a translation of parts of *VTE*[14] to point out that, like *VTE* and other Neo-Assyrian treaties, the curse section is extensive. That 28.26-35 involves curses such as diseases, blindness, and the loss of wife and property to an enemy as VTE ¶¶ 38A-42 does may suggest an author copying from this treaty or from some other one, perhaps one unique to Judah, that is lost to us. The larger point concerning the parallel between Deuteronomy 28's extensive list of curses with those of the Neo-Assyrian treaties in general, however, is that the curses that lie at the heart of the Assyrian treaty tradition[15] are also of utmost importance in Deuteronomy. At the heart of the past that Dtr's narrative presents to the exiles is the notion that Yhwh, like the Mesopotamian kings he replaces as Israel's suzerain, demands absolute loyalty, and he will wreak furious punishment on a disloyal vassal.

There is enough evidence to show that, regardless of which treaty or treaties lie behind passages like Deuteronomy 13 and 28, Dtr's narrative adopts Mesopotamian treaty language and so mimics the imperial discourse that underlies the basis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized that the Assyrian treaties promote. Yet such mimicry is not simply a reinscription of colonial discourse, which is an approach taken by other Assyrian client states. In ninth century Anatolia, for example, the Sam'alian king Kilamuwa portrays himself on a stela as a subaltern to the Assyrians, but one of high status. Kilamuwa lists his Sam'alian predecessors but says that each of them 'did nothing', while he himself has generously provided for his people since he has become an Assyrian client (*ANET*, pp. 654-55).[16] Mark Hamilton's study of the ninth and eighth century Sam'alian

12. So Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, pp. 41-44.

13. See, e.g., Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, pp. 116-29; Hans Ulrich Steymans, *Deuteronomium 28 und die adê zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons: Segen und Fluch im Alten Orient und in Israel* (OBO, 145; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

14. Steymans, however, argues that Deut 28.20-44 is a translation of *VTE* ¶ 56 and parts of ¶¶ 38A-42; 63-64.

15. Parpola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*, pp. xli-xlii.

16. Mark W. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny: Historical Visions in Sam'al and Judah under Assyrian Hegemony', *HTR* 91 (1998), pp. 215-50 (222-25).

royal stelae shows that almost all of them reinscribe Assyrian hegemonic discourse by presenting the Assyrian king as suzerain and the time before this political arrangement as chaotic and inferior to the present.[17] Dtr's narrative does not take this approach in Deuteronomy, but mocks Mesopotamian claims to power through a subversion of the binary relationship between the Mesopotamian suzerain and Israel. The claim in Deuteronomy is not that Mesopotamia is suzerain but that Yhwh is, and that Israel's choice for and against loyalty to Yhwh, not Mesopotamia, is what will determine the people's fate. So when Deuteronomy 13 mimics the imperial discourse that demands that clients report conspiracies to revolt against the suzerain, it not only points to Yhwh and not the Mesopotamian king as Israel's true suzerain, but mocks Mesopotamian claims to sovereignty, since Yhwh is the only suzerain who matters and to whom loyalty must be enforced.[18] Deuteronomy has simply made the *adê* of the colonizers an *adê* of Yhwh, and this is the basis of Dtr's concept of covenant.[19] Israel is to love—that is, be loyal to—Yhwh alone, as Moses orders in 6.4-5, where he tells Israel that Yhwh alone is Israel's God.[20] Yhwh in Deuteronomy is not really understandable outside of Mesopotamian concepts of the monarchy, for the mockery of colonial discourse simply replaces a colonial king with a divine one,[21] retaining the binarism of the hegemonic discourse while replacing one suzerain with another.

17. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny', pp. 221-30.

18. For examples of other scholars who have pointed this out, see Levinson, 'Textual Criticism', pp. 236-37; Levinson, 'Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty', pp. 337, 342; Parpola, 'Assyria's Expansion', pp. 104-105; Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p. 46; Eckart Otto, 'Political Theology in Judah and Assyria: The Beginning of the Hebrew Bible as Literature', *SEÅ* 65 (2000), pp. 59-76 (64-65).

19. Otto, *Das Deuteronomium*, p. 74.

20. For the possible translations of יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד in 6.4 see Oswald Loretz, *Des Gottes Einzigkeit: Ein altorientalisches Argumentationsmodell zum 'Schma Jisrael'* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 62-68, and see also the discussion in Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, pp. 75-82. It is possible to read these four words as 'Yhwh our God is one Yhwh', but Timo Veijola points out that if this were the sense of the verse then the three words יהוה אלהינו אחד would suffice; see his 'Höre Israel! Der Sinn und Hintergrund von Deuteronomium vi 4-9', *VT* 42 (1992), pp. 528-41 (529-31). Moreover, this reading, which must be understood as attacking plural representations of Yhwh such as the ones at Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, is one not found anywhere else in the Bible, let alone in Dtr (Veijola, 'Höre Israel!', pp. 530-31; Loretz, *Des Gottes Einzigkeit*, p. 64). The most obvious reading of the words points to Yhwh as Israel's sole suzerain: 'Yhwh is our God, Yhwh alone'.

21. So Stephen A. Geller, 'The God of the Covenant', in *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (ed. Barbara N. Porter; TCBAI, 1; Chebeague, ME: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2000), pp. 273-319 (281, 285).

So Deuteronomy's mockery of Mesopotamian hegemony, then, relies heavily on colonial representations of power. To be more specific as to the imperial discourse Dtr mimics and mocks in its portrayal of Yhwh as Israel's suzerain, we can turn to the representations of the imperial king and his relationship to his colonized subalterns from sources of colonial discourse beyond the *adê* treaties. Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony refers to the king as 'lord of lords', 'lord of kings', 'king of kings', 'the great king', 'king of the universe', and so on,[22] and Neo-Assyrian kings claim that 'I am king, I am lord, I am praiseworthy, I am exalted, I am important, I am magnificent, I am foremost' (*ARI*, II, p. 121).[23] A Neo-Assyrian story of the creation of humanity, which was also copied in the Neo-Babylonian period, describes the king as created after the rest of the humans, a superior person meant to serve as *māliku amēlu* 'counselor man'.[24] Unsurprisingly, then, Mesopotamian imperial hegemony emphasizes that the powerful king has greatly improved the lives of his colonized subalterns. In a text that portrays the Neo-Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar rather like a second Hammurapi, the king describes how he promulgated regulations (*riksātu*) 'for the betterment of all peoples',[25] while in the Wadi Brissa inscription in Lebanon he explains that he has benefitted colonized peoples by imposing just laws upon them, defeating their enemies, providing them with security, and resettling them in their towns (*ANET*, p. 307). As a result, Neo-Babylonian kings understand their rule as benefitting all of the conquered

22. See M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967) for the following titles used by the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings: *bēl bēlē* 'lord of lords' (p. 55); *bēl šarrāni* 'lord of kings,' a title used particularly by Ashurbanipal (p. 56); *šar šarrāni* 'king of kings' (pp. 318-19); *šarru rabû* 'the great king' (pp. 298-300); *šar kiššati* 'king of the universe' (pp. 308-12); *šar kibrāt arba'im*/*erbettim* 'king of the four quarters' (pp. 305-308); *šar lā šanan* 'king without equal' (p. 314).

23. For similar statements see *ARI*, II, p. 85 and *ARAB*, II, p. 226. See also Hayim Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Paropla and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 325-38 (326).

24. The text contrasts the creation of the king as *māliku amēlu* with that of *lullû amēlu*, the rest of humanity, in sequential lines. For the text, see Werner R. Mayer, 'Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs', *Or* 56 (1987), pp. 55-68. See also the discussions in Karen Radner, 'Assyrian and Non-Assyrian Kingship in the First Millennium BC', in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger; HANEM, 11; Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), pp. 25-34 (26-27) and John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 61-62.

25. W.G. Lambert, 'Nebuchadnezzar King of Justice', *Iraq* 27 (1965), pp. 1-11.

subjects within their empire.[26] In one case, Nebuchadnezzar writes that he defeats his enemies and makes the colonized peoples subservient to Marduk 'for their well-being (*ṭābiš*)', since Nebuchadnezzar's reign brings abundance and blessing; in another, Neriglissar describes how he defeated disobedient enemies, established justice, and reigned in 'well-being (*šulmi*)'.[27] While the Neo-Babylonian kings constantly refer to themselves as pious servants of the gods, they must defeat 'rebels' and 'enemies' on the peripheries of the empire and keep those who are evil far from the imperial center. Marduk has given the kings rulership over all peoples,[28] in part so that foreign nations may be brought under Marduk's 'yoke' and so properly serve his cult, just as the kings of Babylon do.[29]

In the same way, the Assyrians can describe the world outside of their empire as chaotic and in confusion, since it does not have the benefit of knowing Assyrian rule, while incorporation of the colonized into the empire is a great advantage for them.[30] Outside of the empire is a 'failed cosmos'; incorporation into it results in the cultivation of once-unproductive lands and the construction of towns in once-unpopulated areas.[31] So, for example, on one of Sargon's inscriptions (*ARAB*, II, pp. 60-66) the king provides a long list of conquests and then describes himself as 'the sagacious king…who gave thought to the restoration of (towns) that had fallen into ruins, to bringing fields under cultivation, to the planting of orchards, who set his mind on raising crops on steep (high) slopes whereon no vegetation had flourished since days of old…'. On a different inscription, in reference to a loyal client who asks for military aid, Sargon says that 'I could promise them to overthrow Urartu (Armenia), to restore their boundaries, to pacify the distressed people of the Mannean land' (*ARAB*, II, p. 77). Ashurbanipal writes that his enthronement gladdened Assyria and all of his client rulers (*ARAB*, II, p. 380), and the kings emphasize how much benefit their loyal

26. David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM, 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 41-45.

27. Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB, 4; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1912), pp. 82-83, 112-13, 124-25.

28. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-89, 94-97, 120-23, 140-41, 144-47.

29. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-91, 94-95, 104-105, 124-25, 146-53.

30. Peter Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C.', in *Anfänge politischen Denkens im Antiken: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (ed. Kurt Raaflaub; SHK, 24; Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 77-104 (85); Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1992), p. 117.

31. Mario Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Mesopotamia, 7;Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 297-317 (306-307).

clients derive from imperial patronage as they are protected, their lands are restored, their authority is widened, and they are made prosperous by their suzerain (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 30, 33, 77, 213, 300-301, 350-51).[32] That both Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings can also say the gods have placed the *ṣerretu* 'yoke, halter, lead-rope' of many peoples in their hands, thus making the colonized sound like animals,[33] suggests that they believe the colonized are better off being like useful, domesticated animals, drawing the yoke of a civilized king and his god, rather than trying to govern themselves. They are simply better off joining civilization as a colonized people of a king who improves their lives.

While a Neo-Assyrian or -Babylonian king can understand himself to be lord of lords, king of kings, magnificent, foremost, and so on, passages such as Deut. 10.17 and 32.39 mimic and mock such claims of primacy. It is Yhwh who is 'God of gods and lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome'; it is Yhwh who claims that 'I kill and I make alive, I shatter and I heal, and no one delivers from my hand'. The narrative of Deuteronomy claims that it is Yhwh who controls history, and so he defeated Egypt (6.17-24) and can give victory or defeat to Israel whenever he chooses (1.42-43; 2.24-36; 3.1-7; 7.17-19; 9.1-5; etc.). It is Yhwh who chooses Israel and provides them with land (e.g., 2.16-3.17; 4.28; 7.6-10; 9.1-3; 10.14-15; 14.1-2, etc.), and Deuteronomy says that prosperity and success there depend on loyalty to Yhwh, not to the Mesopotamian suzerain. It is Yhwh who provided for Israel's survival in the wilderness and the military victories that allow the people to enter the land (e.g., 2.7, 12, 21, 22, 24, 33, 36; 3.2-6, 22; 4.28; 7.17-24, etc.), and Israel will experience prosperity and long life so long as they follow the stipulations of Yhwh's law rather than Mesopotamian demands (e.g., 4.40; 5.33; 6.2-3, 18, 25; 7.12-15; 8.1-10; 11.8-15, 18-25, etc.). It is fidelity to Yhwh's law and covenant that makes Israel and not Mesopotamia the true center of the world, 'Elyon over all the nations' (26.19),[34] and it is Yhwh's rule as expressed through this law and covenant that all the nations will admire (4.5-8).

32. See also Seux, *Epithètes royales*, pp. 271-72. The theme is still current in the time of Cyrus, who writes that he rebuilt temples and restored peoples to their lands (*ANET*, p. 316).

33. For examples of the use of the term in Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian royal inscriptions and a discussion of its meaning in those texts, including a discussion of the transfer of the term from its use in referring to leading animals to leading humans, see *CAD*, XVI, p. 136. The Neo-Babylonian inscriptions also use *sirdû* 'yoke, chariot pole' in the same sense; e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 90-91, 146-47, 176-77, 262-63.

34. See E. Theodore Mullen, Jr, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 58-59.

In the narrative of Deuteronomy, Israel becomes Yhwh's people—the very center of their identity here—only once the generation in Moab has heard the whole law and the litany of their ancestors' failures in the past. Only in 27.9 can Moses say, 'this very day have you become a people for Yhwh your God', an idea repeated in 29.12 [13] after the recitation of the curses. For this reason we can see Deuteronomy as Dtr's polity or constitution:[35] it defines who Israel is, and they are first and foremost a vassal people to their true suzerain. We might also describe it as teaching or catachresis,[36] since it provides Israel's identity as Yhwh's people, bound by his law and his covenant curses, through a teaching narrative that presents stories of the past and links them to Israel's future possibilities of success and failure. In any event, however, their true identity is as Yhwh's people, not as Mesopotamia's subjects, and if they can avoid acting like their ancestors who did not trust in Yhwh's power to control history (1.19-45) and who expressed disloyalty to Yhwh in their apostasy (4.3) and idolatry (9.8-24), and remain loyal to their true suzerain, they can flourish in the land.

And Deuteronomy does not only mock Mesopotamia's hegemonic discourse in regard to the power of its kings, but also in regard to its claims for the divine power that supports the imperial monarchy. The discourse of Judah's colonial powers closely links divine and royal authority, describing the world as under the control of the Mesopotamian gods while also claiming that the gods have granted authority to the king to rule (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 25, 100-101, 203, 291).[37] The Assyrian or Babylonian king is simply the god's *iššakku* 'vice-regent',[38] acting entirely on divine authority,[39] and

35. So S. Dean McBride, Jr, 'Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy', in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.* (ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 17-33.

36. Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 7-14.

37. See also Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-89, 94-97, 112-13, 120-23, 140-41, 144-47, 172-75, 202-203, 262-63; A.K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (TSTS, 3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 84-85. See as well the discussions in Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', pp. 83-84; Hermann Spieckermann, 'God and His People: The Concept of Kingship and Cult in the Ancient Near East', in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; BZAW, 405; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 341-56 (345-46).

38. For this Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian royal title, see Seux, *Epithètes royales*, pp. 110-16.

39. Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', p. 84; Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship and their Heritage in Mesopotamian Antiquity', in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger; HANEM, 11; Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), pp. 35-44 (36).

the empire's victories over its colonies reflect the gods' will and command (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 3, 103, 299-300, 385). As a result, treaties of submission to empire are sometimes recorded as performed before the image of a Mesopotamian god (e.g., *ARI*, II, pp. 13, 100). War is always something the gods have commanded the kings to undertake, which is why the Assyrian kings can refer to themselves as 'the weapon of the gods', and imperial victories are always divine ones as well.[40] Nebuchadnezzar, to take a Neo-Babylonian example, writes of the aid he has received from Marduk and the other gods in his victories over enemies, since Marduk has chosen him as king and given him the world to rule over.[41] Mimicry and mockery of colonial discourse in regard to royal power in Deuteronomy can then hardly be separated from the mimicry and mockery of this discourse in regard to divine authority. The *adê* treaties, like the ones Judah had with Assyria, were administered under the authority of Assyrian and local divine images—*VTE* ¶ 3, for example, demands that the clients swear before Ashur, the Mesopotamian gods, and 'all the gods of one's land and one's district'[42]—so that even the local gods were seen as promoting Mesopotamian control and expansion.[43] Neo-Assyrian hegemony adopts the ancient Mesopotamian concept of divine abandonment, in which the gods of a city abandon it to its destruction, but does so from the standpoint of the victor. That is, whereas the motif had almost always been used previously by the defeated to explain their defeat,[44] Neo-Assyrian colonial discourse claims that the gods of conquered nations abandon their people because of their anger at the population's behavior and so that the local gods could leave

40. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 9, 13-14, 18-20; Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography', p. 327; Peter Machinist, 'The Fall of Assyria in Comparative Ancient Perspective', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 179-95 (186); Parpola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

41. See, e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 82-85, 88-89, 94-97, 112-13, 120-25, 140-41, 144-47, 172-73.

42. As another example, in a vassal treaty that Ashurbanipal makes with Qedar, the *adê* is sworn '[in the presence of all the gods of] Assyria and Qedar' (Parpola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*, p. 68).

43. Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), p. 166.

44. See Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries* B.C.E. (SBLMS, 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), p. 11. As Peter Machinist points out, the first known incidence of the use of this motif from the standpoint of the victor comes in the thirteenth century inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta, who claims that he could defeat Babylon because the Babylonian gods abandoned the city due to their anger with the Babylonian king; see his 'Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible', *CBQ* 38 (1976), pp. 455-82 (464).

for Assyria and praise Ashur, an act of divine acknowledgment of Ashur's superiority among the gods.[45] So Sennacherib, for example, attributes victories against a series of cities to the fact that 'their gods deserted them'.[46] Claims of divine abandonment were physically manifested through the Assyrians' removal of divine images, an act that features more frequently in Assyrian royal inscriptions than references to mass deportations.[47]

The Assyrians did return images to loyal clients,[48] but this act did not ameliorate the submission that, according to Assyrian colonial discourse, the gods had shown to Ashur in the first place. In one such case, Esarhaddon writes that he returned divine images to an Arabian king once he submitted to Assyria, but that Esarhaddon had inscribed on them 'the strength of Ashur my lord and an inscription with my name' (*ANET*, p. 291), leaving a written record on the images of Ashur's and Esarhaddon's power.[49] In another case, Esarhaddon returned divine images to Babylon, but only after he had them restored in the temple workshops of Ashur, an act that his inscriptions describe with the verb *walādu* 'to give birth'; the significance of the act, then, is that it makes the Babylonian gods children of Ashur, and so his inferiors.[50] 'Father of the gods' is, in fact, a common title for Ashur in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 33, 38, 72, 100, 112, 113, 178, 224). And insofar as local gods acknowledge Ashur's authority, they are also witnesses to the *adê* oaths sworn by vassals to suzerain, so that they are also seen as supporting the Assyrian expansion and control of colonies that Ashur has commanded.[51] Sargon broadcasts a similar message when, after capturing the town of Musasir, he places the god Halida in front of the city gate so that the god can publicly oversee the Assyrian army's removal of the temple's treasures, a symbol of his approval of the Assyrian victory.[52] The *adê* oaths also required vassals to acknowledge Ashur's superiority

45. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, pp. 20-21, 40; Patrick D. Miller, Jr, and J.J.M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the 'Ark Narrative' of 1 Samuel* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 11.

46. David Daniel Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (UCOIP, 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 64.

47. Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, p. 145.

48. For a list of such actions and references to the texts in which they appear, see Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, pp. 277-83.

49. See a similar claim in *ARAB*, II, p. 215 and the discussion in Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, pp. 35-36.

50. Barbara Nevling Porter, 'Gods' Statues as a Tool of Assyrian Political Policy: Esarhaddon's Return of Marduk to Babylon', in *Religious Transformation and Socio-Political Change: Eastern Europe and Latin America* (ed. Luther Martin; RS, 33; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), pp. 9-24 (10-13).

51. Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, p. 166.

52. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, p. 23.

among the gods,[53] just as their own gods have done—indeed, *VTE* ¶ 34 stipulates that the client rulers must swear that 'in the future and forever Ashur will be your god'. Vassalship to the king is also vassalship to his god, both for the colonized and their own deities.

We have already seen that Deuteronomy rejects claims that Yhwh is subordinate to any power, and if the claim that Yhwh is 'God of gods and lord of lords' is mimicry and mockery of Mesopotamian royal claims, it also functions to mock the claim that Marduk is 'lord of lords' (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 93, 244, 380),[54] not to mention the claims that he is 'the great lord', 'the lord of the gods', 'king of kings', 'king of the gods', 'king of (the gods of) heaven and earth', and 'the ruler of the gods' (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 14, 33, 35, 225, 233, 330).[55] From the standpoint of colonial hegemony, the destruction of Judah and the forced migration of the exiles is ultimately the result of the violation of an oath of loyalty sworn before the great gods, who have sent the king, their weapon, to punish those who wrongly break a treaty to which even Yhwh has agreed.[56] Dtr mocks this claim through a mimicry of the colonial binary view of reality that insists that the treaty that matters is the one between Yhwh and Israel, that while the exiles have experienced the fulfillment of the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28, these were effected by Yhwh alone, for Deuteronomy does not so much as refer to another god who controls historical events. Deuteronomy emphasizes that adherence to the law is what causes Yhwh to provide security and prosperity in the land (4.40; 5.33; 6.2-3, 18, 25; 7.12-15; 8.1-10; 11.8-15, 18-25; 15.1-6; 32.45-47),[57] but in every case except Deuteronomy 28 the

53. See Hermann Spieckermann's discussion of *VTE* in *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit* (FRLANT, 129; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 333-38.

54. See also, e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 94-97, 126-27, 198-99, 234-35. *bēl bēlē* is a divine title used almost exclusively for Marduk, although it is also used for Ashur and Enlil. See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.* (YNER, 10; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 61 n. 22.

55. And see also, e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 82-83, 96-99, 100-101, 104-105, 126-29, 196-97, 234-35.

56. Since we have no extant Neo-Babylonian treaties, the notion that the local divinities are witnesses derives from the Neo-Assyrian treaty pattern. Remember, however, that Judah would have been subject to Assyrian treaties for a century, and so that such colonial discourse would be well-known among the Judean elite. The idea that warfare and deportation are the result of breaches of an *adê* treaty can certainly be found in Assyrian inscriptions. For the notion that oath violations by clients are a sin since they were sworn before the gods, making such acts clear justification for divinely mandated war, see Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 87-90. See also Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1979), pp. 41-42 and the treaties cited there that refer to deportation as a punishment for treaty violations.

57. The narrative of Deuteronomy continually refers to the fact that Moses is reciting

destruction of the nation—the exilic community's experience—is said to be caused by the people's apostasy and idolatry, their failure to manifest their loyalty cultically (4.26; 7.1-10; 8.11-20; 9.8-14; 11.16-17; 29.17-27 [18-28]; 30.11-18).[58] Dtr may mock the Mesopotamian claims concerning divine and royal power as it makes Yhwh alone Israel's suzerain, but this replacement of one suzerain with another is also a reinscription of the colonial binarism of suzerain and client. Yhwh has taken on the powers and authority of Mesopotamia's kings and gods, and Israel must direct their loyalty to him.

So Dtr's explanation of Israel's and Judah's destructions is one that mimics the common ancient Near Eastern idea that defeat is due to divine anger with the people. We have seen in the previous chapter that at least by the beginning of the second millennium BCE Mesopotamians believe that divine anger with national and royal failures in the cult lead to destruction, but other failures could have similar consequences, and so the claim in the curse section of Deuteronomy 28 that Israel's general failure to follow the law will result in destruction also mimics colonial discourse. For example, when Sennacherib destroys Babylon in 689, Babylonian texts attribute this to Marduk's anger with the Babylonians' lies as well as their theft from his property;[59] Esarhaddon refers to the same destruction as the result of Marduk's anger for the Babylonians' deceit, exploitation of the weak, public cursing of parents, and other social and cultic crimes (*ARAB*, II, p. 263); Nebuchadnezzar I attributes the earlier Elamite destruction of Babylon to Marduk's anger with the people's evil;[60] and so on.[61] What Dtr mocks

a law to Israel, and even that there is a written form of this law (for Deuteronomy's references to the lawcode, see the citations in McBride, 'Polity of the Covenant People', p. 19; the narrative specifically refers to it as existing in written form in 28.58; 29.20 [21]; 30.10; 31.26).

58. 28.15 is the only exception to this rule, for it is here that Moses opens the curse section by warning that the nation will suffer 'all these curses' if they fail to keep the law. Since the curses include the destruction of the nation and deportation (28.47-68), we can see this one place in the narrative as promising destruction for something besides cultic disloyalty alone.

59. See, e.g., Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA, 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), pp. 110-11, where Ashur says that the evil deeds of Shamash-shumu-ukin caused him to fight for Ashurbanipal. For Marduk's anger with Babylonian evil, see Mordechai Cogan, 'Sennacherib and the Angry Gods of Babylon and Israel', *IEJ* 59 (2009), pp. 164-74 (165).

60. Lambert, 'Enmeduranki and Related Matters', p. 130.

61. Closer to Judah, we see the same ideology expressed by Mesha, who assigns blame for Omri's oppression of Moab to the Moabites themselves, who angered Kemosh in some fashion (*ANET*, p. 320). And to go back to the Sumerian city laments, while it is generally agreed that they do not refer to human sin as the cause of divine abandonment and destruction, Diana Edelman suggests that this concept can actually be found in the

throughout Deuteronomy, however, is the interpretation of such divine anger through the lens of colonial discourse, for the Assyrians ultimately saw invasions and deportations that punished treaty violations as the will of Ashur and the Mesopotamian gods. By mimicking this imperial discourse but mocking it through the establishment of Yhwh as the sole suzerain and divine power, Dtr effectively removes Mesopotamia from the equation. As a foreign force, the colonial power exists as a weapon Yhwh can employ to punish his vassals, but Mesopotamia is no more than this.

One motif from colonial hegemony that Dtr avoids completely in Deuteronomy is the concept of divine abandonment, one found in Mesopotamian culture at least as early as the beginning of the second millennium.[62] In 1 Kgs 8.57, Solomon asks that Yhwh 'be with us, as he was with our ancestors; may he not abandon us or forsake us', and Dtr gives no indication in Kings that Yhwh ever does. For Dtr, Yhwh has set his name in the temple,[63] and even when it is destroyed, the exiles must still repent and pray toward it (1 Kgs 8.46-53), suggesting that Yhwh or Yhwh's name remains present there.[64] Even though Ezek. 10.1–11.13 uses the concept of divine abandonment as part of its explanation for the exile, Dtr avoids it, perhaps because of its established use within the Assyrian imperial claims concerning Ashur's primacy among the gods, since they linked the abandonment of the colonized by their gods to the desire of those gods to go to Mesopotamia and worship Ashur. Deuteronomy is clear that Yhwh and not any Mesopotamian god or king controls history and that the exilic generation has experienced destruction because of their own failure of loyalty to the divine suzerain, who has treated their disloyalty the way a Mesopotamian suzerain would.

2. *Israel, the king, and the colonial powers in Deuteronomy*

Dtr's narrative places so much emphasis on the mimicry and mockery of the colonial binarism, on the replacement of the Mesopotamian suzerain

Ur, Uruk, and Nippur laments; see her 'The "Empty Land" as a Motif in City Laments', in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL, 207; Leuven: University Press, 2007), pp. 127-49 (136-38).

62. For a survey of important Mesopotamian texts from the Curse of Agade through Neo-Babylonian works in which we find this concept, see Daniel I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2nd edn, 2000), pp. 114-42.

63. See Deut. 12.5, 11, 21; 14.25; 16.2, 6, 11; 26.2; 2 Sam. 7.13; 1 Kgs 3.2; 5.17, 19 [3, 5]; 8.16-20, 29, 44, 48; 9.3, 7; 2 Kgs 21.4, 7; 23.27.

64. On this point see also Ronald E. Clements, 'The Deuteronomic Law of Centralisation and the Catastrophe of 587 B.C.E.', in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason* (ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), pp. 5-25 (16-18).

with Yhwh, that we should perhaps not be overly surprised at the very marginal role the Israelite king occupies in Deuteronomy's narrative. Mimicry of colonial hegemony suggests that Israel has only one true suzerain, Yhwh, and Deuteronomy does not confuse the issue at any point by suggesting that there could be even an Israelite king who might claim such a position.[65] So the Law of the King in 17.14-20, part of the section of laws in 16.18–18.22 that concern the administration and leadership of Israel, makes the monarchy, unlike the offices of priests, judges, and prophets, optional. If Israel does want a king, Yhwh is to choose him, and he is not to be a foreigner. He is not to acquire for himself many horses or many wives or wealth, or return the people to Egypt to acquire horses. He is to have a copy of the law written for him so that he can follow all of it and not exalt himself above anyone else in Israel. 17.14-20 says nothing about royal leadership in the cult, and nothing about royal leadership in the administration of justice, and so it is simple enough for readers of 16.18–18.22 as a whole to assume that the responsibility for administering justice belongs entirely to the Levitical priests and judges of which this section speaks.

This kind of picture of a national administration hardly appears a realistic one in an ancient Near Eastern context, where kings were exalted above their subjects, did acquire horses and wives and wealth, were ultimately in charge of maintaining a system of justice, and in general wielded extensive powers. It is not hard to see, then, why the Law of the King and 16.18–18.22 as a whole are widely viewed as utopian limitations of royal power.[66] There is no mention of a role for the king in the administration of justice, nor in the organization of the cult, and the passage's limitation on the acquisition of horses has even been read as suggesting that the king is not to control a

65. Theodore Mullen argues that 17.14-20 distinguishes Israel from other nations in terms of its concept of a monarchy with very limited power, and so functions to help define Israel by contrasting it with other nations on precisely this issue; see his *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 73-74. This is not exactly my argument, but like Mullen's, it sees the portrayal of the monarchy here as a reaction against familiar ancient Near Eastern ones.

66. E.g., Bernard M. Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship and the Deuteronomisitc History's Transformation of Torah', *VT* 51 (2001), pp. 511-34 (511); Norbert Lohfink, 'Distribution of the Functions of Power: The Laws Concerning Public Offices in Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22', in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. Duane L. Christensen; SBTS, 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993), pp. 336-52 (346); Lothar Perlitt, 'Der Staatsgedanke im Deuteronomium', in *Language, Theology and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr* (ed. Samuel E. Ballantine and John Barton; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 182-98; Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Deuteronomium* (EF, 164; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), p. 136; Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, 'Die deuteronomische Verfassungsentwurf', in *Bundesdokument und Gesetz: Studien zum Deuteronomium* (ed. Georg Braulik; HBS, 4; Freiburg: Herder, 1995), pp. 105-18 (110-13).

standing army. The law appears practically democratic, both in the way it portrays the monarch as subject to the law just like any other Israelite and in the way it makes the very existence of the monarchy subject to the choice of the people.[67] Indeed, it follows the general trend we have just observed in Deuteronomy's narrative of replacing the human suzerain of Mesopotamia with Yhwh, thereby making Israel as a whole the subordinate party to the covenant; it is the people of Israel and not a Mesopotamian or even Israelite king who is, as Seth Sanders puts it, the 'protagonist of history'.[68] As far as we can see in Deut. 16.18–18.22, it is Israel alone who will determine their loyalty to Yhwh and so their success or failure in the land. Not only is the king no different than any other Israelite in his subordination to the law, but one could argue that in 16.18–18.22 prophets and priests have more power than the king does.[69]

This is hardly the portrayal of the king that we see in the hegemonic discourse of Judah's colonial masters. We have already seen that the Mesopotamian texts portray the kings as vice-regents of the gods, figures who have received the power to rule on the gods' behalf.[70] The Neo-Assyrian king is said to be 'the very image' of Marduk and Shamash, 'the perfect likeness of the god'.[71] The king has a divine mother[72] and images of Neo-Assyrian

67. See Anselm C. Hagedorn, *Between Moses and Plato: Individual and Society in Deuteronomy and Ancient Greek Law* (FRLANT, 204; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), pp. 155-56.

68. Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Traditions; Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 153-54 (quote on p. 154); see also Gary N. Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', *ZAW* 108 (1996), pp. 329-46 (329); Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship', pp. 528-29; Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens* (FAT, 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 123-25.

69. E.g., Mark A. O'Brien, 'Deuteronomy 16.18–18.22: Meeting the Challenge of Towns and Nations', *JSOT* 33 (2008), pp. 155-72 (159); Lohfink, 'Distribution of the Functions of Power', pp. 340, 351; Udo Rüterswörden, *Von der politischen Gemeinschaft zur Gemeinde: Studien zu Dt 16,18–18,22* (BBB, 65; Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987), pp. 90-93; Eckart Otto, 'Von der Gerichtsordnung zum Verfassungsentwurf: Deuteronomische Gestaltung und deuteronomistische Interpretation im "Ämtergesetz" Dtn 16,18–18,22', in *Wer ist wie du, Herr, unter den Göttern? Studien zur Theologie und Religionsgeschichte Israels für Otto Kaiser zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper *et al.*; Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), pp. 142-55; Schäfer-Lichtenberger, 'Die deuteronomische Verfassungsentwurf", pp. 117-18.

70. Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', pp. 83-84; Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship', p. 36.

71. Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (SAA, 10; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993), pp. 159, 166, 181; see also Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship', p. 36.

72. Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA, 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press,

and -Babylonian kings were placed in temples, which suggests that the image, if not the king, was divinized.[73] More rarely, we even find some kind of identity between god and king—for example, Sargon II had his name inscribed with the divine determinative on the bricks of a temple built at Uruk,[74] and a text describing the departure of a Neo-Assyrian king into battle describes him as 'the warrior king, the lord (god) Ninurta'.[75] Divinity was also associated with kingship among the Egyptians and Hittites.[76] The close relationship between kings and the divine world makes it unsurprising, then, that they bore priestly titles and were active in administering the cult. Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings refer to themselves with priestly titles such as *šangû* and *išippu*,[77] and Neo-Assyrian palaces had

1997), p. xxxvi; Peter Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria', in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), pp. 152-88 (166-69).

73. Steven W. Cole and Peter Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (SAA, 13; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998), p. xiv; Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, pp.178-93; Irene J. Winter, "'Idols of the King": Royal Images as Recipients of Ritual Action in Ancient Mesopotamia', *JRS* 6 (1992), pp. 13-42 (30); Irene J. Winter, 'Touched by the Gods: Visual Evidence for the Divine Status of Rulers in the Ancient Near East', in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. Nicole Brisch; OIS, 4; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), pp. 75-101 (86). The thirteenth century Tukulti-Ninurta Epic refers to the king not just as Enlil's image but as 'the flesh of the gods', language the Erra myth uses to refer to the wood for the divine images (Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity', pp. 160-63).

74. Hanspeter Schaudig, 'Cult Centralization in the Ancient Near East? Conceptions of the Ideal Capital in the Ancient Near East', in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; BZAW, 405; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 145-68 (158).

75. Livingstone, *Court Poetry*, p. 100.

76. Hittite kings were understood to become gods upon their deaths; see Gary Beckman, 'Royal Ideology and State Administration in Hittite Anatolia', in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; 4 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), I, pp. 529-43 (531-32). In Egypt, the Pharaoh was seen as the son of Re as early as the Fourth Dynasty, although living kings were almost never referred to as gods; see Ronald J. Leprohon, 'Royal Ideology and State Administration in Pharaonic Egypt', in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; 4 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), I, pp. 273-87 (274-75). The Egyptians appear to have distinguished between the royal office and the individual who held it. Some texts suggest the office itself was divine, and it seems that an individual could take on the divine attributes associated with the office. The title 'son of Re' given to an enthroned king may suggest the Pharaoh received divinity retroactively. See David P. Silverman, 'The Nature of Egyptian Kingship', in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (ed. David O'Connor and David P. Silverman; Probleme der Ägyptologie, 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 49-92 (64-72).

77. Seux, *Epithètes royales*, pp. 109-10, 287-88; Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity',

purification rooms often located close to the throne room so the king could remain ritually pure.[78] In charge of the maintenance and provisioning of the cult, the king's *šangûtu* 'priesthood' is said to begin with his rule.[79] The Neo-Babylonian kings emphasize their roles in providing for the shrines and maintaining the functioning of the cult,[80] while the Neo-Assyrian textual record is full of examples of priests writing to the king for requests for supplies for sacrifices, or to ask for royal command or confirmation concerning the enacting of rituals, or to ask for royal commands concerning the repairs of temples and divine images.[81] And as we discussed in the previous chapter, Mesopotamian texts dating back to the Curse of Agade can blame royal cultic failures for national disaster. Royal control and oversight of the cult was part of Egyptian and Hittite royal ideology as well.[82] And beyond these close links to the gods and their cults, the kings of the Mesopotamian colonial powers were also responsible for administering justice.[83]

pp. 153-54; Schaudig, 'Cult Centralization', p. 157; Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 132-35.

78. Schaudig, 'Cult Centralization', pp. 157-58.

79. Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity', p. 156.

80. Almost all of the many Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions in Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* refer to the king as restorer of temples and/or images and/or the one who maintains the sacrificial cults for the gods.

81. See the texts in Cole and Machinist, *Letters from Priests*. For thorough lists of Neo-Assyrian royal involvement in cultic construction projects, see Holloway, *Aššur is King!*, pp. 238-54, 261-68 and 303-18.

82. The Hittite king was the nation's chief priest and so led worship and was considered an indispensable intermediary between the gods and his people. See Henry A. Hofner, 'The Royal Cult in Hatti', in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), pp. 132-51; Beckman, 'Royal Ideology', pp. 529-31. In Egypt, the Pharaoh was responsible for the temple cults, and the construction of temples and other cultic establishments was one of his most important duties. See Paul John Frandsen, 'Aspects of Kingship in Ancient Egypt', in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. Nicole Brisch; OIS, 4; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), pp. 47-73 (47-48); Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (trans. David Lorton; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 159; Dmitri Meeks and Christine Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods* (trans. G.M. Goshgarian; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 8, 124-26.

83. By the early second millennium, Lipit-Ishtar describes himself as being divinely appointed 'to establish justice in the land' (*ANET*, p. 159), the theological rationale for his lawcode, and Hammurapi makes a similar claim (*ANET*, p. 165). Neo-Assyrian kings describe themselves as acting 'to protect justice, to provide the powerless with legal protection, to prevent the legal oppression of the weak', and to punish evildoers (Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 31-34), while the Neo-Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar II, as we have seen, boasts of how his regulations have benefitted the colonized.

I refer to this colonial discourse concerning the king not merely to contrast it with its absence in the Law of the King in Deuteronomy, but to set the stage for later presentations of the monarchy in Dtr. We will find that the many royal powers on which 17.14-20 is silent or limits are powers that kings in Dtr wield: the kings will take complete control of the cult; command the military; administer justice; and Yhwh will even refer to Solomon as his son.[84] Dtr's portrayal of the kingship, in short, ends up mimicking colonial discourse on the monarchy, reinscribing much of the Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony in regard to the king for the kings of Israel and Judah. In fact, the differences between the Law of the King, the first explicit word on an Israelite monarchy, and the portrayal of the monarchy later in Dtr, a portrayal that mimics and reinscribes common ancient Near Eastern understandings of the monarchy, are so stark that it is commonly held in scholarship that the whole administrative section of 16.18–18.22, or at least the Law of the King, is a later addition to Dtr.[85] At first it appears difficult to see why any pro-Davidic faction would produce such an administrative law (or series of them), especially when Josiah, the figure whose evaluation in Dtr surpasses anyone else's, receives this evaluation because of his administration of the cult.[86] And while many scholars argue

84. See, e.g., Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', p. 336; Knoppers, 'Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings', *CBQ* 63 (2001), pp. 393-415; Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship', pp. 512-19.

85. E.g., Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship', pp. 524-25; Knoppers, 'Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy', pp. 412-14; Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies* (2 vols.; HSM, 52-53; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994), II, pp. 122-24; Andrew D.H. Mayes, 'Deuteronomistic Ideology and the Theology of the Old Testament', *JSOT* 82 (1999), pp. 57-82 (68-71); Christoph Bultmann, *Der Fremde in antiken Juda: Eine Untersuchung zum sozialen Typenbegriff 'ger' und seinem Bedeutungswandel in der alttestamentlichen Gesetzgebung* (FRLANT, 153; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), pp. 145-57; Rüterswörden, *Von der politischen Gemeinschaft*, pp. 94-111; Lohfink, 'Distribution of the Functions of Power', p. 347; Eben Scheffler, 'Criticism of Government: Deuteronomy 17:14-20 between (and beyond) Synchrony and Diachrony', in *South African Perspectives on the Pentateuch between Synchrony and Diachrony* (ed. Jurie le Roux and Eckart Otto; LHBOTS, 463; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), pp. 124-37 (133-34); Otto, 'Von der Gerichtsordnung', pp. 152-55.

86. E.g., Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship', pp. 525-26; Ernest Nicholson, '*Traditum* and *traditio*: The Case of Deuteronomy 17:14-20', in *Scriptural Exegesis: The Shapes of Culture and the Religious Imagination* (ed. Deborah A. Green and Laura S. Lieber; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 46-61 (48); J.G. McConville, 'King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History', in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup, 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 271-95 (274); Baruch Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (HSM, 25;

that the narrative of 1 Kings 2–11 implicitly criticizes Solomon based on the standards of the Law of the King,[87] this does not really seem to be the case. The narrative does mention that Solomon had many horses and chariots (1 Kgs 5.6-8 [4.26-28]; 10.26), some even from Egypt (10.28-29), and many wives (11.1), but does not directly condemn such acquisitions. The closest we come to a direct condemnation of Solomon that reflects the Law of the King in these chapters concerns his foreign wives who cause him to worship other gods, but even this is not a clear reflection of Deuteronomy 17, which prohibits the king from accumulating wives—their nationality is not specified—in the context of not accumulating horses or wealth; 1 Kgs 11.1-8 is much more clearly related to the command of Deut. 7.1-6, which warns of intermarriage with foreigners who will cause Israelites to worship other gods.[88] Otherwise, there is no direct condemnation of Solomon for any matter regarding the Law of the King, and Yhwh is actually responsible for providing Solomon with his great wealth (1 Kgs 3.13), and the narrative also links his wealth to the wisdom with which Yhwh provides him (10.24-25).[89] In fact, by Kings the narrative's constant standard in the evaluation of monarchs is their cultic leadership, but the Law of the King really does not point to any cultic role at all for the king.

We will return in the following chapters to the ways that the Law of the King conflicts with presentations of the role of the monarchy in other parts of Dtr; here I will mention only that Dtr's narrative will not begin to arrogate power to the monarchy until it makes it clear that Israel is absolutely unable to remain loyal to Yhwh without royal leadership. Once the necessity for

Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 226-33; Knoppers, *Two Nations under God*, II, pp. 122-24.

87. E.g., Marvin A. Sweeney, 'The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History', *JBL* 114 (1995), pp. 607-22 (611, 615-17); Marc Brettler, 'The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 49 (1991), pp. 87-97 (90-95); Nicholson, '*Traditum* and *traditio*', pp. 52-53; K.I. Parker, 'Solomon as Philosopher King? The Nexus of Law and Wisdom in 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 53 (1992), pp. 75-91 (83-86); Scheffler, 'Criticism of Government', pp. 133-34; Karl William Weyde, 'The Narrative of King Solomon and the Law of the King: On the Relationship between 1 Kings 3–11 and Deut 17:14-20', in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N.D. Mettinger* (ed. Göran Eidevall and Blaženka Scheuer; ConBOT, 58; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), pp. 75-91 (82-83).

88. Deut. 17.17 links a king's action of multiplying wives with the turning aside (סור) of his heart. But the emphasis of 1 Kgs 11.8 is on the foreign origin of these women, and refers specifically to the command of Deut. 7.1-6 not to marry foreign women. It is the foreignness of Solomon's wives, not the fact that there are many of them, that 1 Kings 11 focuses on.

89. Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', pp. 337-44; Knoppers, 'Rethinking the Relationship', pp. 409-13; McConville, 'King and Messiah', pp. 272-73.

the monarchy is established, the narrative surreptitiously begins to assign a much broader array of powers to the kings than Deuteronomy 17 supplies them with. As we shall see, the Law of the King is appropriate for a nation that can remain loyal to its divine suzerain, but Dtr's narrative goes on to insist that this is not possible. In Deuteronomy, however, we can point to a kind of two-fold mockery of Mesopotamia's imperial claims. Yhwh and not Mesopotamia is sovereign, and Israel's fate is completely unrelated to decisions made in the colonial center of Mesopotamia and depends only on the loyalty it extends to Yhwh. True power in the world belongs to Yhwh and, by association as Yhwh's people, to Israel, who can shape their fate completely independently of Mesopotamia's power. The general portrayal of the relationship between Israel and Yhwh in Deuteronomy is one that appears to bypass the monarchy altogether, where the people are the 'protagonist of history', and where some even see the lack of royal power as mockery of Mesopotamian colonial rule.[90] Yet even Deuteronomy, the beginning of Dtr's narrative, suggests that the relationship between Israel and Yhwh cannot remain as simple as we have made it out to be, because Israel's evil and rebellious nature does not make an unmediated relationship with Yhwh possible. If the mockery of Mesopotamian imperial hegemony in the replacement of the colonial kings with Yhwh is the narrative's first pro-Davidic point of attack, its reinscription of the colonial powers' pejorative descriptions of the colonized in its portrayal of Israel is its second. Israel's inherent inability to be a loyal client to Yhwh will, as we shall see in later chapters, demand some kind of leadership so that Yhwh does not destroy his rebellious subalterns.

3. *Israel in Deuteronomy*

For all of the narrative's insistence that the people's fate is in their hands alone, completely unrelated to Mesopotamian power, Deuteronomy contains so many warnings of the possibility of failure and such a negative portrayal of the nation that it appears impossible that Israel will be able to remain loyal to Yhwh. Deuteronomy 1 opens with the failure of the exodus generation's spying mission, one that causes them and Moses to lose the opportunity to enter the land. Moses's opening speech in Deuteronomy

90. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny', pp. 238-46; Ernest Nicholson, "'Do Not Dare to Set a Foreigner over You": The King in Deuteronomy and "The Great King'", *ZAW* 118 (2006), pp. 46-61; Patricia Dutcher-Walls, 'The Circumscription of the King: Deuteronomy 17:16-17 in Its Ancient Social Context', *JBL* 121 (2002), pp. 601-16 (604-605); Stephen L. Cook, 'Those Stubborn Levites: Overcoming Levitical Disenfranchisement', in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* (ed. Mark A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton; SBLAIL, 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 155-70 (157-58).

ends with a prediction of apostasy, destruction, and exile (4.25-31),[91] and so reveals to exilic readers that they may well recapitulate the fate of the exodus generation and die outside of the land.[92] And while at first it appears that in his first speech Moses is addressing the exodus generation themselves—after all, he opens in Deuteronomy 1 by addressing his audience in the second person and describing the failure of this generation—it is not absolutely clear until 2.16 that the exodus generation has died in the wilderness because of their lack of trust in Yhwh's power to give them the land. Moses, that is, has been speaking to the Moab generation, who is preparing to enter the land, as if they had sinned along with their parents, who are now dead. On the one hand, this apparent conflation of two generations, one sinful and one not, reflects Deuteronomy's emphasis on describing all generations of Israel as bound to the same treaty with Yhwh. As Moses begins to recite the Decalogue to the generation at Moab, he tells them that 'Yhwh our God made a covenant with us at Horeb; not with our ancestors did Yhwh make this covenant but with us, we who are here this day, all of us who are alive. Face to face Yhwh spoke with you on the mountain from the midst of the fire' (5.2-4). This is not literally accurate, since it was the dead parents of Moses's audience with whom Yhwh spoke, but Moses suggests with this language that the covenant applies to both generations of Israel, to all of them.[93]

The other consequence of this conflation of generations, however, is that it makes Moses appear to have little confidence that the new generation who is about to enter the land will be any kind of improvement on their parents. When Moses relates the refusal of the parents of the Moab generation to trust Yhwh and enter the land, he tells the Moab generation that 'Yhwh heard your words', and his consequent anger against 'this evil generation' caused him to bar them from entering the land (1.34-35); that is, Moses makes it sound as if the generation to whom he speaks refused to enter the land, when it was actually their parents who did so. Or, when Moses relates the story of the building of the golden calf that took place at Horeb, he tells

91. 4.25 does not open with a conditional clause, and so does not state that the idolatry and destruction of which Moses speaks in the following verses are only possibilities. The verse begins with כי־תוליד בנים 'When you beget children…', followed by a series of verbs in the perfect consecutive, thereby referring to events related in a logical and/or temporal fashion (*GKC*, p. 330). So in 4.25-31, Moses is warning Israel of what will happen, not what might happen.

92. See Olson, *The Death of Moses*, p. 18.

93. See, e.g., Patrick D. Miller, Jr, *Deuteronomy* (Int; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), p. 67; Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (trans. Dorothea Barton; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 55; Georg Braulik, *Deuteronomium* (2 vols.; NEB, 15, 28; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986–1992), I, p. 49; A.D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 165.

the Moab generation that 'at Horeb you angered Yhwh' and 'you sinned against Yhwh' (9.8, 16). The Moab generation did not anger Yhwh, their parents did, but it hardly appears as if Moses can or wishes to distinguish between the two generations. But of course, Dtr's narrative as a whole is full of stories of Israel failing, and Deut. 4.25-31 already discusses the ultimate consequences of failure that Israel will experience, that the exilic readers have experienced. Moses is clear that Israel is evil by nature. Yhwh is giving them the land because the Canaanites are wicked, and because Yhwh made a covenant with the ancestors, but 'it is not because of your righteousness that Yhwh your God is giving this good land to you as a possession, for you are a stubborn (קְשֵׁה־עֹרֶף) people. Remember, do not forget that you angered Yhwh your God in the wilderness; from the day you went out from the land of Egypt until your arrival at this place you have been rebellious (ממרים הייתם) against Yhwh' (9.4-7). Regardless of which generation of Israel was responsible for the golden calf at Horeb, this is a general indictment of Israel's character. Moses tells the Moab generation in 9.12-13 that Israel שׁחת 'acted corruptly' in the construction of the golden calf, and that this demonstrates their stubbornness (קְשֵׁה־עֹרֶף); Moses says in 4.25 that Israel 'will act corruptly (והשׁחתם) and make an idol' and in 31.27, in the context of again prophesying their apostasy (31.16-18, 20) and the destruction of the exile that will punish it,[94] that they are rebellious (ממרים היתם) and stubborn (ערפך הקשׁה).[95] A reader can get the impression that even if the Moab generation did not commit their ancestors' sin at Horeb they might as well have, since all generations of Israel are by nature rebellious against their suzerain. Even after Moses completes the story of the golden calf in 10.11, and opens a new section of his address with ועתה in 10.12,[96] he refers to the generation at Moab as being just like their parents who made the calf: 'Circumcise the foreskin of your heart and do not

94. For Deut. 31.10-13, 16-30 as an original part of Dtr's narrative, see the opening of Chapter 2. Deuteronomy 31 provides warnings of Israel's future evil and punishment that are made more explicit in the song of 32.1-43, which refers directly to Israel's abandonment of cultic loyalty (32.15-18) and destruction and exile (32.25-27, 30), and which Deuteronomy 31 introduces.

95. See Moshe A. Zipor, 'The Deuteronomic Account of the Golden Calf and its Reverberation in Other Parts of the Book of Deuteronomy', *ZAW* 108 (1996), pp. 20-33.

96. 10.12–11.32 is the concluding part of the introduction to the lawcode. It is a discrete section, set between the story of the golden calf, which ends in 10.11, and the beginning of the lawcode in 12.1. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 453-55; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 133-36; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 207-208; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 201-202, 212.

be stubborn (וערפכם לא תקשו) any longer' (10.16). Indeed, Moses's warning at the beginning of the lawcode that 'you will not do all that we here today are doing, each person what is right in their own eyes' (12.8) points to this generation as being just like their parents in their nature and deeds.

The one advantage that Israel has over every other nation is Yhwh's choice of them and their ancestors, and even if this is not rooted in some kind of nature of righteousness that the nation possesses, Yhwh is still willing to honor the original promise to the ancestors by giving Israel the land.[97] If we want to describe how Dtr's narrative portrays Israel in Deuteronomy, a people chosen by Yhwh would have to be as much a part of this description as the nation's propensity to rebellion. Just as Israel is called to love or be loyal to their suzerain, Yhwh is also said to love or be loyal to them (4.37; 7.8, 13; 10.15). Nonetheless, if people within Israel do not cease doing what is right in their own eyes then the חרם that they are commanded to enact upon the Canaanites (7.1-6) will be done to them (7.25-26), and they will be exterminated. So they must stop acting like the nations and begin to manifest their loyalty to Yhwh; and since, as we have seen, every time but one the narrative of Deuteronomy warns of destruction is in connection with apostasy and idolatry, Israel must particularly distinguish itself from the nations by avoiding worship of foreign gods. The lawcode opens by banning worship at Canaanite altars (12.2-3) and in Canaanite fashion (12.4, 29-31), and then, in Deuteronomy 13, warns of the danger of rebels inside of Israel itself who are not loyal to Yhwh and who try to convince others to join their rebellion.

This latter chapter, as we have seen, mimics Mesopotamian imperial discourse and mocks it by replacing the colonial suzerain with a divine one. And the חרם that must be done to the Canaanites according to Deuteronomy and Dtr must be done to rebellious and disloyal Israelites: if an entire city is committing apostasy and urging others to do the same, 'you must certainly put the inhabitants of the city to the sword; utterly destroy (החרם) it and all that is in it, put its animals to the sword' (13.16 [15]). If Israel is rebellious by nature, the narrative says that it must change if the nation wishes to remain in the land. If parts of the nation cannot be loyal then these parts must be destroyed so that the whole might survive. If Israel is to adopt the nature that the narrative says it should, if it is to be Israel as Yhwh wants the nation to be, then it cannot be disloyal and cannot make a choice for a different divine suzerain. In its rebellious and stubborn nature, Israel is really no different than the Canaanites whom Yhwh is about to destroy. It is notable, then, that in the law that describes the appointment of judges and

97. For Israel as chosen, see Deut. 4.37; 7.6, 7; 10.15; 14.2; for the land as the fulfillment as the promise to the ancestors, see 1.8, 35; 4.31; 6.10, 18, 23; 7.8, 12-13; 8.1, 18; 9.5, etc.

officials (16.18), the only specific kind of charge that the narrative mentions as under their jurisdiction is apostasy (17.2-7). The lawcode does not forbid them from ruling on other aspects of conduct, but it also does not mention any others.

Moses warns Israel of the national destruction that will result from the disloyalty of apostasy and idolatry in 4.26; 7.1-10; 8.11-20; 9.8-14; 11.16-17; 29.17-27 [18-28]; 30.11-18, while the curses of Deuteronomy 28 are linked more generally to a failure to keep all of the laws. This repetitive focus on the consequences of Israel's failure hardly sheds positive light on the nation's character, especially when 30.1, like 4.25-31, guarantees that the nation will experience exile. What distinguishes 30.1 from 4.25-31, however, is that it is followed in 30.2-10 by a guarantee of return from exile so long as Israel repents.[98] We will wait until Chapter 7 to discuss the narrative's views of the exiles' future; here, I simply want to point out that 30.1 provides another guarantee of Israel's failure, and so reflects poorly on its character.[99] 31.16-18, 20 provides yet another guarantee, this one from Yhwh, of the foreign worship that Israel will conduct and that will lead to national destruction. At the end of the chapter Moses turns once again to Israel's rebellious and stubborn nature, and this leads directly to the song of 32.1-43 which stands as a 'witness' against Israel (31.19, 21, 28).

The song refers to Yhwh's choice of Israel from among all of the peoples (32.8), his support of them (32.10-15a), the rebellion Israel will commit (32.15b-18), and Yhwh's judgment and punishment of the nation, beginning in 32.19. The song is, at least in part, a *rîb*, a covenant lawsuit Yhwh announces to Israel in the context of his certainty of their failure to keep their treaty with him.[100] 30.26-27, then, brings readers to the punishment of

98. Marc Brettler argues that this guarantee flies in the face of Deuteronomy 4 which speaks of exile but without referring to return; see his 'Predestination in Deuteronomy 30:1-10', in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup, 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 171-88. As we shall see in Chapter 7, however, the narrative of Dtr presents repentance led by the Davidide as the key to return and future prosperity in the land.

99. In fact, one of Brettler's arguments in 'Predestination in Deuteronomy 30:1-10' for 30.1-10 as a later insertion into Dtr is the promise in 30.6 that Yhwh will circumcise Israel's hearts, while 10.16 demands that the Israelites themselves must be responsible for this metaphorical circumcision. However, an important emphasis in Dtr is that Israel is so evil and rebellious that the people cannot hope to follow a command like that of 10.16 by themselves.

100. For this genre see, e.g., Mark Leuchter, 'Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?', *VT* 57 (2007), pp. 295-317 (301); Matthew Theissen, 'The Form and Function of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43)', *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 401-24; Julien Harvey, 'Le "Rîb-Pattern", réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance', *Bib* 43 (1962), pp. 172-96; George E. Mendenhall, 'Samuel's "Broken Rib":

exile, where the exilic readers find themselves. What is not entirely clear, however, is if 32.36-42 takes readers beyond exile to a return to the land or not, or whether the song is simply a thorough indictment of Israel's character that does not repeat the hope of return in 30.1-10. 32.36 begins by stating that כי־ידין יהוה עמו ועל־עבדיו יתנחם, which we could translate as 'Yhwh will vindicate his people and have compassion upon his servants', meaning that we should read the verses that follow as referring to Yhwh's destruction of Israel's captors and the deliverance of Israel from exile.[101] In this case we have another text besides 30.1-10 that points to a return from exile. If, however, we read דין as referring to judgment in the sense of violent punishment (as is the case in, e.g., Gen. 15.14; Jer. 21.12; Ps. 110.6) and נחם in the hithpael as referring to comforting oneself by punishing a wrongdoer (as is the case in Ezek. 5.13; and cf. Gen. 27.42), then we could translate, 'For Yhwh will bring judgment (ידין) on his people and will satisfy himself (יתנחם) on his servants'. In this reading, when the following verses then go on to say that Yhwh 'will take vengeance' on his 'adversaries' and 'repay the ones who hate' him (32.41, 43), the identity of the adversaries and those who hate Yhwh would appear to be Israel. Of course, if we interpret 32.36 in the first way I suggested, then 32.41, 43 would refer to Yhwh taking vengeance on and repaying Babylon. So when the song says in 32.43 that Yhwh 'will avenge the blood of his children' (דם בניו יקום), it may mean that he will avenge the blood of Israel shed by Babylon, or that he will take vengeance on Israel.[102] When 32.43, in the final line of the song, states that Yhwh will 'cleanse his people's land', it may mean that he will cleanse the land on behalf of his people in preparation for their return from exile or cleanse the land of his people by punishing them with exile. It is possible to read the song as pointing to a guarantee of a return from exile following the nation's deserved punishment there, but it is just as possible to see the entire song, even 32.36-42, as a thorough condemnation of Israel's character and actions that concludes only with an emphasis on punishment, not return.

Deuteronomy 32', in *No Famine in the Land: Studies in Honor of John L. McKenzie* (ed. James W. Flanagan and Anita Weisbrod Robinson; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), pp. 63-74.

101. This is the positive sense in which scholars tend to read the verses, although some acknowledge that this is an interpretive choice; see Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p. 376; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p. 391; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p. 312; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 233-34.

102. When used to indicate the party about to be punished in vengeance, נקם will sometimes be followed by the prepositions -ל (so Nah. 1.2) or מן (so 2 Sam. 24.13), which indicate the wrongdoer deserving of punishment. On the other hand, in a case like Josh. 10.13, we see יקם גוי **איביו** 'the nation took vengeance on its enemies'. No preposition precedes the party who receives the vengeance in this case.

And while Moses's last act for Israel is to ask for blessings on the tribes (Deuteronomy 33), even readers who decide to interpret 32.36-42 as referring to Yhwh's act of returning the people from exile are not left with an overly positive view of Israel's character. Deuteronomy's narrative portrays the people as rebellious by nature, not even waiting to leave Horeb to commit the kind of apostasy that will eventually lead to the destruction the exiles have experienced. While it might seem as if Deuteronomy places the control of Israel's fate in its own hands, the narrative here also insists that Israel is by nature too evil to remain loyal to its true suzerain. We can still see Deuteronomy's introduction to Dtr as a mockery of Mesopotamian imperial discourse through an appropriation of that hegemonic binarism—in Deuteronomy, that is, Dtr denies that Mesopotamia and its gods control history, and says that Yhwh does—but we must acknowledge that there is only one part to this mockery and not two, as I suggested toward the end of the last section of the chapter, for while Yhwh certainly does replace the Mesopotamian king in Deuteronomy's mockery of colonial discourse, it is not really clear here that Israel has the ability to exist in an unmediated relationship with Yhwh. Readers of Dtr as a whole must conclude that Israel never does develop the kind of Self or nature Moses urges upon them and that they remain stubborn and rebellious against their suzerain, for the narrative is clear that destruction will occur if Israel cannot control their rebellious nature, and the exiles have experienced destruction.

To some degree Dtr is framing the exilic experience in a postcolonial manner. If the exiles wonder why their nation has been destroyed and why they suffer in exile, why they have become like Sodom and Gomorrah (29.22 [23]), it is because of their disloyalty to Yhwh's treaty (29.21-27 [22-28]), not to Babylon's. This precisely mocks the kind of imperial claim made by Ashurbanipal when he writes that 'Whenever the inhabitants of Arabia asked each other, "On account of what have these calamities befallen Arabia?" (they answered themselves:) "Because we did not keep the solemn oaths (sworn by) Ashur, because we offended the friendliness of Ashurbanipal, the king, beloved by Enlil!'" (*ANET*, p. 300).[103] Dtr maintains the colonial binary view of the world, but replaces Mesopotamia with Yhwh, and so by failing to act better than the Canaanites before them, the nations whom Yhwh is about to destroy because of their evil (9.5), Israel has doomed themselves. While Deuteronomy certainly does not portray all foreigners as evil (see 2.8; 23.8-9 [7-8]; 20.10-20), the narrative begins to portray Israel as a foreign nation itself, as we shall see in the next chap-

103. For a similar text, see *ARAB*, II, p. 368. In Deut. 29.21-27 [22-28], Dtr refers to the way that foreigners and the generation of Israel following the destruction will ask why the land has experienced such devastation, and says that they will conclude that it is because Israel 'abandoned the treaty (ברית) of Yhwh, the God of their ancestors'.

ter, and this portrayal draws from the overwhelmingly negative picture of the Canaanites that Dtr presents, a matter that will be the focus of Chapter 4. This, of course, is not a postcolonial framing of the exile, since colonial hegemony is simply reinscribed. Despite Moses's exhortations and the repetition of Yhwh's law in Deuteronomy, the Self that is held up for exilic readers to see—an Israel who is loyal to Yhwh with all of their hearts, souls, and might as Moses commands (6.5)—is not a Self that Deuteronomy says that Israel can ultimately realize. What readers encounter in the rest of Dtr is Israel as Other, an alterity that is evident because of Deuteronomy's presentation of the Self who is absolutely loyal to the suzerain.

Moses nonetheless tells his listeners that when Israel repents (וְשַׁבְתָּ), Yhwh will restore them to the land (30.2-5). But who is to lead a naturally rebellious nation in repentance? Aaron, the ancestor of the priests, foreshadows Jeroboam's cult in his unsupervised accommodation of the golden calf (9.20).[104] Moses burns the calf and grinds it until it is 'crushed to dust' (9.21), which is exactly what Josiah will do to Jeroboam's altar at Bethel (2 Kgs 23.15) and to apostate cultic images in Jerusalem (23.6, 11). Yet even Moses does not receive quite the praise that Josiah does; despite the fact that he is incomparable among the prophets (Deut. 34.10), Yhwh appears to hold him responsible for the failure of the exodus generation to enter the land (1.37; 3.23-28; 4.21-22), perhaps because he approved and was involved in the spying mission that resulted in the nation's refusal to obey Yhwh's command to enter Canaan (1.23), and so he receives the same punishment that threatens exilic readers, dying outside of the land. Dtr's narrative does not begin to provide the monarchy with the powers and privileges to which I began to point in the previous section of this chapter, powers and privileges that far outstrip what the Law of the King provides for, until the following ideas are clear: (1) Yhwh, not Mesopotamia, is Israel's true suzerain; (2) Israel can theoretically control its own fate, regardless of what the colonial center thinks or does; but (3) the nation is unable to do so. The first step in Dtr's pro-Davidic argument, the mockery of colonial hegemony in Deuteronomy that replaces Mesopotamia with Yhwh, is followed, especially in Judges, by Dtr's second step, a reinscription of colonial hegemony in the depiction of Israel as a foreign and disloyal vassal, just as their colonial masters would describe them. By portraying Yhwh as a Mesopotamian suzerain and Israel as a nation who is by nature disloyal to him, Dtr creates the necessity for a monarchy to colonize and civilize them, and this monarchy will need to take control of Israel's cultic life to do so. As we shall see, then, the more necessary royal control becomes, the more important it is that the monarchs control aspects of life that the Law of the

104. For parallels between the story of the golden calf and Jeroboam's idol, see Braulik, *Deuteronomium*, I, p. 78; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 199-200.

King does not explicitly delegate to them. The colonized Judean subalterns in exile (not to mention those remaining in the land, who are an afterthought for the narrative),[105] cannot speak in Dtr; the narrative gives voice only to the colonized elite, the Davidides, who are to take the place of the current colonial masters, while Dtr's description of Judah/Israel is merely a reinscription of colonial hegemony. In fact, as we shall see, the only figure who attains the true standard of the Self in Dtr, the only character who is said to act towards Yhwh with all of his heart, soul, and might, is the Davidide Josiah (2 Kgs 23.25). And, as we shall see, this mimics Mesopotamian colonial hegemony, which claims that one benefit of colonial rule is that the colonized can now participate in the worship of the gods of the imperial center. For Dtr it is the Davidic king, but not Israel, who has the ability to act rightly in this regard and, as we will discuss in Chapter 7, the narrative holds open the possibility that the Davidide in exile can act as perfectly as Josiah, who reformed Judah's worship. The exiles, then, should acknowledge his leadership.

105. As we discussed in Chapter 2, 2 Kings 24–25 equates 'Israel' almost exclusively with the exilic community. This equation is total in places like Deut. 4.25-31; 28.64; 30.1-4, which give no indication that the term 'Israel' refers to anyone except those who are in exile.

Chapter 4

Israelites and Foreigners in Joshua and Judges

1. *Israelites, Canaanites, and the colonial representation of foreigners*

Once the narrative in Deuteronomy has portrayed Yhwh as Israel's suzerain, Dtr's next step toward a more powerful and active view of the monarchy is the portrayal of Israel's failure to be loyal subalterns to Yhwh, a matter of which Deuteronomy has already warned, and of the failure of its leaders to enforce this loyalty. This increasingly negative picture of Israel and its leadership from Joshua through Judges is one that relies in part on a comparison between Israel and foreign nations. As exilic readers move to the conquest narrative in what we now call the book of Joshua, the kind of foreigner to whom they are most frequently and regularly exposed are the Canaanites. An important part of the character development of Israel that Dtr portrays depends upon the comparison of them to foreigners, and particularly to Canaanites, in Judges, and so readers' exposure to these groups of people in the narrative following Deuteronomy is important, for Dtr will present Israel as becoming like a foreign nation. The narrative will again mimic Mesopotamian imperial discourse to make such comparisons, but this discourse, as we shall see, is not mocked but reinscribed by the narrative so that, by the end of Judges, readers encounter a portrayal of Israel that resembles the Mesopotamians' portrayals of rebellious and uncivilized foreigners who need the benefits of colonial rule. Israel, the narrative suggests by the end of Judges, is precisely the kind of subaltern that Mesopotamian colonial discourse has always presented them to be, and they need to be colonized by a monarchy that has the power to direct the people to loyalty to their true suzerain.

We have already seen that Israel's portrayal of foreigners in Deuteronomy is not monolithic, although it is universally negative in regard to the Canaanites. They are wicked (Deut. 9.4-5), and while Israel is permitted to make peace treaties with non-Canaanite nations with whom they are at war (20.10-15), they must not do so with the Canaanites, who are to be subject to חרם lest their survival lead to intermarriage and the Israelites' worship of their gods (7.1-6; 20.16-18). Even an imitation of Canaanite worship practices in the Yahwistic cult is out of the question (12.2-4, 29-31). We have

seen that the narrative mimics colonial discourse in Deuteronomy 13 in its portrayal of Israelites who act in the cult as Canaanites do and who urge others to do the same. Such Israelites are like client rulers who rebel against their suzerain and they are to be treated just like Canaanites, since, for the narrative, the identity the nation should adopt is one of loyalty to its suzerain. Israelites who act like foreigners when it comes to the cult manifest the true rebellious nature of the people as Dtr has been portraying it, and they are not Israelites as they should truly be; they are the Other who exists in opposition to the Self that Moses urges Israel to become in Deuteronomy.

The distinction between non-Canaanite foreigners and Canaanites in the narrative is, on one level, clear: non-Canaanite foreigners can live within the territory of Israel as Dtr defines it in the lists of tribal territory in Joshua 13–20. Not only can Israel make peace treaties with such peoples, they may take their women and children as spoil (Deut. 20.14). Edomites and Egyptians are permitted to enter 'the assembly of Yhwh' (23.8-9 [7-8]), and Moses describes Edom as 'our kin' (2.8). Yhwh has given land to Edom, Moab, and Ammon (2.5, 9, 19, 21),[1] and the narrative even uses language to suggest that in doing so Yhwh fought for them as he is about to fight for Israel (2.12, 21-22): Yhwh 'destroys' (שׁמד) the previous inhabitants and 'gives' (נתן) the land to these nations so they can 'dispossess' (ירשׁ in the hiphil) those who had been there before them, 'just as Israel did to the land Yhwh gave them as a possession' (2.12).[2] The lawcode permits and legislates economic interactions with the נכרי 'foreigner' (Deut. 14.21; 15.3; 23.21 [20]) and provides a place for the גר 'resident alien' within the people of Israel, albeit at the margins. The most frequent reference to this latter group in Deuteronomy is as a part of the population, along with the poor, widows, orphans, and Levites, to whom special attention is due so that they can receive social and economic justice (5.14; 10.18; 14.29; 16.11, 14; 24.17, 19, 21; 26.11-13; 27.19).[3] Resident aliens have access to the same

1. Moshe Weinfeld argues that verses like 2.5, 9, 19 suggest that Edom, Moab, and Ammon are Yhwh's clients or vassals just as Israel is. As parallels to these verses, he points to Hittite treaties in which a suzerain gives land to a client and urges him to take possession of it while also warning him not to trespass on land given to other clients. See his *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 72-74. See also Eckart Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11*. I. *1,1–4,43* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2012), pp. 416-17; Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980), pp. 37-38; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), pp. 24-29; A.D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 135.

2. For the reuse of this language in Dtr to describe Israel's taking of the land and destruction of the Canaanites, see, e.g., Deut. 2.31; 4.38; 7.17, 23-24; 9.1, 3, 5; 12.30; 31.3-4; Josh. 3.10; 8.7; 9.24; 11.14, 20; 13.6; 24.8.

3. The pairing of widows and orphans as due special attention because of their

legal system as Israel (1.16) and they appear to be called to keep the same covenant as Israel (29.9-13 [10-14]) and thus are required to keep the same law (31.9-13; cf. Josh. 8.30-35). They are participants in two of Deuteronomy's three pilgrimage festivals (16.9-15), but they are not subject to the same food laws as Israel (14.21). Nonetheless, even 14.21 distinguishes the resident alien from the foreigner, for while Israelites may not eat the corpse of any animal that dies of itself, they may sell it to a foreigner or give it to a resident alien, a distinction that perhaps recognizes the marginal economic position of the alien.[4]

The integration of the resident alien into important aspects of what Dtr considers as markers of Israel's true identity—covenant and law—has suggested to some that the use of the term גר simply refers to poor Judeans or to Israelites who fled to Judah following the Assyrians' destruction of the North.[5] However, in the context of Dtr's narrative, Yhwh makes a covenant with all of Israel, both Judah and the North, and by that logic Northerners who flee to Judah following the collapse of Samaria are still Israelites. Deuteronomy distinguishes between Israelites and resident aliens not only in 14.21, but in 1.16 and 24.14, where גר and אח 'kin' are clearly two different groups, even if they are subject to the same law,[6] and J.G. McConville

poverty and weakness has a long pedigree in ancient Near Eastern lawcodes and other writings; placing the גר with this pairing is a Deuteronomistic invention. See José Ramírez Kidd, *Alterity and Identity: The* גר *in the Old Testament* (BZAW, 283; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 36-40.

4. See discussions of these ideas in Christiana van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law* (JSOTSup, 107; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 77-108; Reinhard Achenbach, '*gêr—nåkhrî—tôshav—zâr*: Legal and Sacral Distinctions Regarding Foreigners in the Pentateuch', in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; BZAR, 16; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2011), pp. 29-51 (32-44).

5. For the argument that the term גר in Deuteronomy refers to poor Judeans, see Christoph Bultmann, *Der Fremde in antiken Juda: Eine Untersuchung zum sozialen Typenbegriff '*ger*' und seinem Bedeutungswandel in der alttestamentlichen Gesetzgebung* (FRLANT, 153; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), pp. 22, 213; for the argument that Deuteronomy uses the term to refer to Northerners who fled to Judah following the Assyrian destruction of 701, see Nadav Na'aman, 'Soujourners and Levites in the Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century BCE', *ZAR* 14 (2008), pp. 237-79; Norbert Lohfink, 'Poverty in the Laws of the Ancient Near East and of the Bible', *TS* 52 (1991), pp. 34-50 (41). Ramírez Kidd, who sees Deuteronomy as largely a Josianic composition, argues that Judeans were highly suspicious of foreigners at this time (see Zeph. 1.8), and would be unlikely to compose or sanction laws that benefitted non-Israelites (*Alterity and Identity*, pp. 40-47).

6. See the discussions in Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), pp. 236-37; J.G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (JSOTSup, 33; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 149-50.

has shown that Deuteronomy characteristically uses אח to refer to fellow Israelites 'regardless of social status or tribal divisions'.[7] While resident aliens are invited to celebrate the festivals of Weeks and Booths, the narrative also particularly mentions slaves, Levites, orphans, and widows as participants, and emphasizes that these festivals celebrate blessing and concern for the vulnerable (16.9-15). But the legislation for Passover (16.1-8) does not mention any marginalized group. Its point is to commemorate the exodus, a part of Israel's history that the resident aliens did not share.[8] Israel cannot consume some of the food that the alien can since Israel 'is a people holy to Yhwh your God' (14.21). The resident aliens are not part of Israel to the fullest extent,[9] but they are also not counted as foreigners,[10] and perhaps 'immigrant' makes the best translation for גר.[11] There is clearly, then, legislated space that allows for foreigners to exist within Israel as immigrants or resident aliens, or at least on the margins of what Dtr considers to be Israel.

Nonetheless, in Joshua and Judges the only kind of foreigner that readers encounter with regularity are the Canaanites, so overwhelmingly evil in the narrative that Israel is commanded to exterminate them in חרם lest they be convinced to act like them in their worship. To some degree, Dtr's narrative mimics the view of foreigners that we find in Mesopotamian colonial discourse. Such imperial language does not always or entirely present foreigners in a negative manner, but this generally appears to be the case. The Neo-Assyrian imperial inscriptions largely portray foreigners as abnormal, describing Assyrians with positive qualities and foreigners with negative ones. Foreigners speak incomprehensible languages and are frequently compared to animals.[12] The ninth century reliefs in Ashurnasirpal's palace at Nimrud largely portray the Assyrian army on campaign, and their depictions of foreigners portray them not simply as the enemy but as peoples who are 'strange, contemptible, and out of step with Assyrian values'; they

7. McConville, *Law and Theology*, p. 19. See Deut. 1.16; 3.18, 20; 10.9; 15.3, 7, 9, 11; 17.15.

8. So van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, pp. 89-92.

9. Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, pp. 107-108.

10. Rainer Albertz, 'From Aliens to Proselytes: Non-Priestly and Priestly Legislation Concerning Strangers', in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; BZAR, 16; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2011), pp. 53-69 (55).

11. So Frank Anthony Spina, 'Israelites as *gêrîm*: Sojourners in Social and Historical Context', in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 321-35 (322).

12. Mario Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Mesopotamia, 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 297-317 (309-10).

are consistently the Other, 'inherently sinister and abnormal'.[13] Assyrian inscriptions that describe the foreigners the empire meets in battle begin with the assumption that the foreign periphery, what is outside of the empire's center, is the opposite of Assyria. Assyrian imperial discourse begins with 'the assumption that everything that is peripheral and alien in respect to the centre (i.e., Assyria: the country, its people, its political and religious structure, its leadership, its culture, its sets of values and overall way of life) is automatically qualified as a negation of the positive values belonging to Assyria, as a sub-human antagonist to the only conceivable and existing positive reality, i.e. Assyria.'[14] Even when these texts are not focusing on the foreign enemy's impiety or rebelliousness against king and gods, what we might call their ethnographic descriptions of foreigners paints them in the manner described above, what is Other and opposite of Assyria.[15]

The foreign enemies in these descriptions, then, all end up sounding alike, for they have all been collapsed into a single Other.[16] Sargon can refer to all of the Palestinian kingdoms, including Judah, collectively as 'the wicked Hittites' (*ANET*, pp. 285-87), just as the Babylonian Chronicles can refer to the rulers of the Levant and the West in the time of Nebuchadnezzar as 'all the kings of Hatti' (*ABC*, p. 100) and to Jerusalem as a Hittite city (*ABC*, p. 102), nor do the Assyrians and Babylonians always distinguish clearly between the lands of Hatti and of the Amurru (see *ARAB*, II, pp. 142, 265-66; *ABC*, p. 100).[17] The enemy can always be the same

13. Megan Cifarelli, 'Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria', *The Art Bulletin* 80 (1998), pp. 210-28 (210-11).

14. Carlo Zaccagini, 'The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: The "Ethnographic" Description', in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (ed. Hans Jörg Nissen and Johannes Renger; BBVO, 1; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1987), pp. 409-24 (410).

15. Zaccagini, 'The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', pp. 411-12. Outside of the colonial sources that are our concern here, the vast span of Mesopotamian literature does not generally characterize different ethno-linguistic groups as inferior or sub-human. However, as early as the Curse of Agade from the beginning of the second millennium, the invading Guti are described as having 'human instinct but canine intelligence and monkey's features', and the Weidner Chronicle says that they did not know how to worship properly (*ABC*, pp. 149-50). And the Curse of Agade and other Mesopotamian literature describe the Amorites as being ignorant of aspects of civilization such as agriculture, cooking, and burial. See Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 30-32.

16. Zaccagini, 'The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', p. 411; Frederick Mario Fales, 'The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: "The Moral Judgement"', in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (ed. Hans Jörg Nissen and Johannes Renger; BBVO, 1; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1987), pp. 425-35 (425).

17. See Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel*, pp. 33-34 on the Assyrian

because the enemy is always wicked—again, precisely Dtr's description of the Canaanites (Deut. 9.4-5)—and dangerous, the Other that is necessary for the colonial center to define its own identity as the Self. On the Assyrian inscriptions, it is the values of the *nakru*, the foreign Other whom the Assyrian king defeats, that allow the good and normative values of the king to be cast into relief.[18] The foreign enemy is described with epithets that emphasize 'evil, falsehood, disorder, lawlessness, injustice, oppression, perversity, cowardice, ingratitude, and stupidity'. Assyrian inscriptions repetitively use terms such as sinner, culprit, wicked, wrongdoer and criminal, wicked and evildoer, and so on to describe these foreigners.[19] Foreign enemies have no respect for the gods and their cults (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 22, 32, 33, 79, 125, 243, 301-302, 393) and they are often rebels who do not keep the treaties with their suzerain they have sworn before the gods to uphold, another sign of their disregard for the divine (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 9, 11, 83, 94-95, 294, 350). In a similar way, Neo-Babylonian kings seem to draw little or no distinction between 'enemies' and 'rebels',[20] as if one term simply defines the other. Since, as we have seen, they claim that Marduk has given the peoples to them to rule, then the equation makes sense, for any king who does not submit to Babylonian rule rebels against a divinely ordained order, and so the term *lā māgiru* 'the disobedient' is a common description of the enemies whom the Babylonian kings defeat.[21] Such evil and rebellion against suzerain and gods is, of course, quite the opposite of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, who love and act in justice (e.g., *ARI*, II, p. 120; *ARAB*, II, pp. 81, 83, 115, 128, 190, 254, 372, 414)[22] and who care for the gods and their cults (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 35-36, 42-43, 83-84, 183-94, 269-70, 369-77).[23] Since the gods love justice, the kings are thus their tools to punish the

material. A Neo-Babylonian Chronicle refers to Nebuchadnezzar's army in Carchemish as being in Hatti (*ABC*, p. 102), although the city more obviously seems to be in Amorite territory.

18. Fales, 'The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', p. 426.

19. Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1992), pp. 34-35; Fales, 'The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', pp. 427-30.

20. E.g., Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB, 4; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1912), pp. 112-13, 124-25, 186-87, 216-17.

21. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 78-79, 112-13, 124-25, 186-87, 216-17; *CAD*, X/1, p. 45.

22. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 31-34. Nebuchadnezzar refers to himself as 'king of justice'; see Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-89, 100-101, 172-73, 190-91.

23. Virtually all of the Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions in Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* focus on royal actions in the refurbishment of shrines and provision and maintenance of their sacrificial systems. For an exhaustive list of the Neo-Babylonian royal epithets, many of which refer to precisely these kinds of acts, see

wicked foreigners, and war is often said to be a response to foreigners who despise the gods through cultic failings.

This, of course, is why Assyria can always describe their enemies as the enemies of the gods.[24] The Assyrians often waged war against clients who had violated their vassal treaties and rebelled, thereby failing to acknowledge not only the authority of the colonial suzerain but that of the gods before whom their treaties had been sworn and who had granted authority to the Assyrian king;[25] for this reason, Ashur tells Ashurbanipal that he (Ashur) has defeated Shamash-shumu-ukin for Ashurbanipal because he violated 'my *adê*'.[26] Peter Machinist suggests that foreigners' lack of knowledge of Assyrian authority and their disobedience are really the basic ways that they are defined in the inscriptions.[27] So the gods provide victory to the king (e.g., *ARI*, II, p. 134; *ARAB*, II, pp. 11, 17, 77-78, 124, 156, 265, 292, 333)[28] and, in the inscriptions, the foreign enemy is passive and slaughtered in a one-sided massacre,[29] sometimes described as a total annihilation of the enemy, sometimes even as the slaughter of the entire population of a city, not unlike that of the חרם that we see in the conquest narrative in Dtr (e.g., *ARI*, II, pp. 125-26; *ARAB*, II, pp. 18, 85, 117, 141, 294, 350).[30]

Paul-Richard Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften: Königsinschriften des ausgehenden babylonischen Reiches (626–539 a. Chr.)* (AOAT, 4/1; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), pp. 72-82, and for a discussion of the Neo-Babylonian temple building texts see Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (JSOTSup, 115; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 81-90.

24. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, p. 13; Hayim Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 325-38 (327).

25. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 25-26, 83-90; Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', pp. 301, 310-11; Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA, 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), pp. xxii-xxiii.

26. Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA, 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), p. 110.

27. Peter Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C.', in *Anfänge politischen Denkens im Antiken: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (ed. Kurt Raaflaub; SHK, 24; Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 77-104 (90).

28. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 15-17; Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries* B.C.E. (SBLMS, 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 9-10.

29. Zaccagini, 'The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', p. 414; Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', p. 311.

30. As C.L. Crouch points out, Assyrian kings sometimes claimed that they destroyed the enemy army to the last soldier, a description that sounds like the complete

As rebels are defeated and deported, the Mesopotamian king can establish the colonial order of the center, integrating the periphery into the goodness of the empire's civilization, for outside of the empire and its colonies lies only chaos, a 'failed cosmos'.[31] For this reason, then, the Assyrian king celebrated the *akītu* festival with the participation of various gods in cities that functioned as important border garrisons with Anatolia in the northwest, Urartu in the north, the Manneans in the northeast, and Elam in the southeast. In Babylon, the *akītu* house, symbolizing chaos, was placed just outside the city, which symbolized order, and gods were brought to Babylon from the periphery, thereby elevating Marduk by comparison. But the Assyrian version of the festival emphasized the chaos outside of the borders of the empire, and the king rather than the patron god was the central figure, and so the festival enacted Assyria's claim to control the world, to spread the order and civilization of the imperial center out to the periphery.[32] Sennacherib manages to broadcast the same hegemonic message on a prism inscription that describes his defeat of the Babylonian-Elamite coalition in 691, in which he specifically reuses language from the *Enūma elish* to implicitly compare the king of Babylon with Tiamat, the personification of chaos; the rebellious inhabitants of Babylon with Tiamat's *gallû* demons; and himself with Marduk, the supreme ruler and the founder of city and temple, and so of civilized order.[33] And Nebuchadnezzar, even as he refers to himself as the ruler of humanity, can also claim that one of

destruction of חרם in Joshua; see her *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* (BZAW, 407; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 143-44, 181-82.

31. Quote from Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', p. 306. For the same basic point, see also Mark W. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny: Historical Visions in Sam'al and Judah under Assyrian Hegemony', *HTR* 91 (1998), pp. 215-50 (218-19); Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 177-78; K. Lawson Younger, Jr, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (JSOTSup, 98; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp. 22-23; Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', pp. 85-86.

32. For this analysis, see Beate Pongatz-Leisten, 'The Interplay of Military Strategy and Cultic Practice in Assyrian Politics', in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 245-52.

33. Elnathan Weissert, 'Creating a Political Climate: Literary Allusions to the *Enūma Eliš* in Sennacherib's Account of the Battle of Halule', in *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten: XXXIX^e Recontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. Hartmut Waetzoldt and Harald Hauptmann; HSAO, 6; Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997), pp. 191-202. Bustenay Oded sees a general adoption of the *Enūma elish* story in the Neo-Assyrian conquest inscriptions, which he views as continually portraying the struggle between ordered civilization and chaos (*War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 111-12).

his important accomplishments is that he keeps the evil of the periphery far from the imperial center.[34]

Mesopotamian colonial discourse presents the imperial project as one of civilization, of restoring the failed cosmos that lies on the periphery. For the Neo-Assyrians, conquest 'brings order and discipline', as 'unproductive lands are cultivated, arid lands are irrigated, in uninhabited areas towns and palaces are built'.[35] While the Neo-Assyrian king can refer to the colonists as submitting to 'the yoke of my rule' or 'the yoke of Ashur' (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 285-86, 297, 300), this allows the foreigners to be 'accounted to/with the people of Assyria', becoming 'like Assyrians' (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 282, 284, 286).[36] In the previous chapter, we discussed one of Sargon's inscriptions (*ARAB*, II, pp. 60-66) that begins with a long list of conquests, followed by a description of how the king then planted lands that had long laid fallow and rebuilt cities that had long lain in ruins. The inscription ends, however, with Sargon describing his settlement of deportees in a new city, to whom he sends 'Assyrians, fully competent to teach them how to fear god and the king' (and see a similar text in *ARAB*, II, p. 57), how, in short, to be harmonized into the Assyrian state.[37] Sargon even goes so far as to equate a loyal client ruler with true Assyrians.[38] And the Neo-Babylonians, like the Assyrians, portrayed their rule as a boon to the colonized, who could now live under just regulations promulgated by the king.[39] Just like the Babylonian

34. See, e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 81-82, 112-13, 124-25.

35. Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', p. 307.

36. Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', pp. 85-87. As Machinist points out, the descriptions of foreign colonists as being accounted with Assyrians or being like Assyrians disappear from the inscriptions produced after Sargon's reign ends in the mid-eighth century. He suggests this is because, as the empire vastly expands under Tiglath-pileser, more and more colonists become part of the empire, and so the Assyrians wanted to distinguish between 'true' Assyrians and foreigners (pp. 92-95, and see also Oded, *Mass Deportations*, pp. 81-87). However, Megan Cifarelli points out that we can also see the opposite tendency in Assyrian art; she points as an example to a scene produced during the reign of Tiglath-pileser that portrays two scribes, one of whom is writing with a brush and so must be a Westerner writing in Aramaic, and yet he is portrayed no differently than the scribe writing in cuneiform ('Gesture and Alterity', p. 213).

37. Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria', pp. 95-97.

38. For this reading of *ARAB*, II, p. 77, see Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, 'Consensus to Empire: Some Aspects of Sargon II's Foreign Policy', in *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten: XXXIX^e Recontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. Hartmut Waetzoldt and Harald Hauptmann; HSAO, 6; Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997), pp. 81-87 (83). In this episode from the Letter to the God, Sargon writes that he seats Ullusunu, the Mannean king, 'with the people of Assyria' at a banquet that he holds for his faithful client.

39. David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM, 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 41-45. See also the text in W.G. Lambert, 'Nebuchadnezzar King of Justice', *Iraq* 27 (1965), pp. 1-11, where

king, the colonized are said to pull 'the yoke of Marduk', which means that they have been provided with the opportunity to send provisions to Mesopotamia for Marduk's cult, which the Babylonian king administers.[40] In a similar way, Ashurbanipal writes that 'not [with] my [own strength], not with the strength of my bow, but with the power […and] strength of my goddesses, I made the lands disobedient to me submit to the yoke of Ashur. Unceasingly, yearly, they bring me [sumptuous] presents and protect daily the gate of Ashur and Mullissu.'[41] The foreigners can act properly once they have been colonized, for now they can pull the yoke of the Mesopotamian god who truly controls the cosmos and participate in his cult.

As readers of Dtr move to the books of Joshua and Judges, they can see Israel acting to manifest both the people's rebellious nature as well as their attempts to become the loyal subjects to Yhwh Moses tries to teach them to be in Deuteronomy. The bulk of the action Israel performs in Joshua is done in reference to the Canaanites, whom Yhwh has commanded Israel to destroy. One of the most obvious ways the narrative distinguishes between Israel and Canaan in the conquest narrative, then, is by making one the actor and the other the recipient of חרם; Israel cannot actualize its nature of rebellion against its suzerain if it wishes to remain in the land, and the Canaanites are so wicked and pose such a danger to them that they must be exterminated. חרם, in short, distinguishes between Israelites (at least the true Israelites Moses exhorts the nation to become) and Canaanites.[42] The first consistent picture that readers receive of foreigners in Dtr's narrative is that of the Canaanites, and they are what Israel should not be; they are Israel's Other. It is true, as I pointed out above, that there are positive portrayals of foreigners in Deuteronomy, but these passages are overwhelmed in the narrative by the time readers finish reading Joshua and see the enaction of

Nebuchadnezzar refers to himself as producing 'regulations' (*riksātu*) 'for the betterment of all peoples', and describes himself as 'king of justice', Hammurapi's own self-designation. In the Wadi Brisa inscription, Nebuchadnezzar lists the laws he has promulgated in Lebanon as one of the factors that has improved the lives of the colonized (*ANET*, p. 307). For the texts in which Neo-Babylonian kings refer to themselves as 'king of justice', see Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 73, 76. Note also the title *rā'im (kitti u) mīšari* 'lover of (truth and) justice' used by Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus; see Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 75, 80; M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967), p. 237.

40. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 90-91, 124-25, 146-47, 262-63.

41. Livingstone, *Court Poetry*, p. 12.

42. See Michael Walzer, 'The Idea of Holy War in Ancient Israel', *JRE* 20 (1992), pp. 215-28; E. Theodore Mullen, Jr, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 64-67.

חרם on the Canaanites, a people so evil that they must be destroyed in their entirety throughout the land Yhwh gives to Israel (Deut. 2.34; 3.6; 7.2-3; 20.16-18; Josh. 6.16, 21, 24; 8.26; 10.10-11, 28, etc.). And it is certainly necessary for the second part of Dtr's pro-Davidic argument that readers be clear that the Canaanites are Israel's Other whose annihilation Yhwh, Israel's suzerain, demands, for in Judges, when Israel becomes just like the Canaanites in their cult, then they have taken the place of a people who must be destroyed.

Besides having little interest in distinguishing one group of Canaanites from any other—they are all so evil that they must annihilated, so there is little point in distinctions—Dtr's conquest narrative imitates Neo-Assyrian ones in other ways, and this mimicry of imperial hegemony also has the effect of making the Canaanites into the foreign enemy whom the suzerain destroys in battle. By the time it is clear in the narrative of Judges that Israel has become Canaanite, then they will have taken the place of the disloyal foreigners whom the suzerain will inevitably destroy. Assyrian kings receive oracles of instructions for battle and of victory over their enemies (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 277, 281-82, 286-89, 298-300),[43] as Joshua and Israel do in Josh. 1.3-6; 10.8; and 11.6; their conquest accounts often begin by referring to the Tigris and/or the Euphrates as they cross into the land they are about to conquer (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 277-280, 292, 299), as Dtr opens by featuring the crossing of the Jordan; they describe only a few major battles in detail with the rest provided in a summary fashion (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 73-99), as is the case in Joshua 6-11; they normally portray the Assyrian king as encountering a coalition of forces who are always defeated (*ANET*, pp. 278-81, 285),[44] as is the case in Joshua 10–11; the hailstones Yhwh uses to destroy the enemy in Josh. 10.10-11 have a parallel with the rain and thunderbolt (literally, 'the stone of heaven') Adad uses to destroy Sargon's foe (*ARAB*, II, pp. 82-83);[45] and so on. The imperial conquest accounts do not appear as normal battles but as divinely aided one-sided slaughters that can sometimes result in the absolute annihilation of the enemy forces. Israel settles on the land, as the Mesopotamian colonial powers resettled the land of defeated disloyal vassals with colonists whom they hoped would remain

43. See also Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA, 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), pp. 4-5, 15; Thomas C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), p. 84.

44. For these and other parallels, see John Van Seters, 'Joshua's Campaign of Canaan and Near Eastern Historiography', *SJOT* 2 (1990), pp. 1-12.

45. K. Lawson Younger, Jr, 'The Rhetorical Structuring of the Joshua Conquest Narratives', in *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History* (ed. Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil and Paul J. Ray; BBRSup, 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), pp. 3-32 (10-12).

loyal.[46] In the mimicry and mockery of Dtr's conquest story, Israel is like the Assyrian army, led by Yhwh, who replaces the Mesopotamian king as the true power in the cosmos, and Canaan is the foreign enemy who is inevitably defeated.

While the Assyrian texts do not use some kind of cognate for the Hebrew word חרם, they can describe חרם-like events, as we have already seen, even including the concept of the annihilation of an entire population that we see in Joshua and in the חרם tradition of the Levant and Arabia in general.[47] The totality of conquest is reflected in another act of mimicry of imperial discourse: the hyperbolic claim of Josh. 10.40-42 and 11.16, 23 that Israel, like the Assyrian army in other contexts, conquered the entire land.[48] And like the foreign enemies of the imperial armies, all of the Canaanites are alike because they do not acknowledge the authority of Yhwh. We will discuss the stories of Rahab and Gibeon, which we can see as exceptions to the rule, below, but otherwise the conquest narrative has no interest in describing the Canaanites at all. By the time readers reach the bulk of the victories narrated in Josh. 10.28-11.15, Dtr has no interest in describing the foreign enemy except as the doomed victims of the sovereign of the world. They cannot win, and just as Ishtar deprives Teumman, Ashurbanipal's enemy, of his reason so that Teumman goes out to battle to be defeated (*ARAB*, II, p. 331), Yhwh hardens the hearts of the Canaanites so that they go out to battle against Israel and become חרם (11.20). And just as Ishtar defeats Ashurbanipal's enemy without human aid (*ARAB*, II, pp. 330-33; for a more extensive description of divine victory over enemies see *ANET*, p. 289),[49] victory in battle in Dtr's conquest narrative is

46. Van Seters, 'Joshua's Campaign', p. 8.

47. For discussions of the similarities between חרם as described in Mesha's ninth century inscription from Moab and that portrayed in Joshua, see, e.g., Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical* Ḥerem*: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (BJS, 211; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 19-56; Andrew Dearman, *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (ABS, 2; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 233-37; Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (BZAW, 177; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989), pp. 80-84. The verb is also used in a Sabaean text from Iron Age II; see Lauren A.S. Monroe, 'Israelite, Moabite and Sabaean War-*ḥērem* Traditions and the Forging of National Identity: Reconsidering the Sabaean Text RES 3945 in Light of Biblical and Moabite Evidence', *VT* 57 (2007), pp. 318-41. For another Arabian text that seems to include the concept of חרם, although not the actual root, see François Bron, 'Guerre et conquête dans le Yémen préislamique', in *Guerre et conquête dans le Proche-Orient ancien: Actes de la table ronde du 14 novembre 1998* (ed. Laïla Nehmé; Antiquités sémitiques, 4; Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1999), pp. 143-48.

48. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, pp. 241-47.

49. See also, for example, *ANET*, pp. 277, 279, 292, 299-300. On divine victory in battle in the Assyrian inscriptions, see Liverani, 'The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire', pp. 310-11; Tadmor, 'Propaganda, Literature, Historiography', p. 327; Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 13-15.

entirely Yhwh's (Deut. 2.33; 3.2-3; 7.2; Josh. 6.16; 8.18; 10.8-14, 30, 32, etc.). On one level the Canaanites are Israel's opposite, Israel's Other: they are wicked, they are not chosen, they have no covenant, and they maintain no loyalty to Yhwh. Israel destroys them because Yhwh has commanded it, as the Assyrians fight because the gods command them to defeat enemies who have no respect for the gods and who do not act rightly in the cult.[50] On another level, however, Israel is by nature no different than the Canaanites, as Moses points out in Deut. 9.4-7: Yhwh is destroying the Canaanites because they are wicked, not because Israel is by nature righteous; and as we have already seen, Deuteronomy describes Israel in 9.4-7 and elsewhere as rebellious and stubborn. This is why חרם is to be done to Israelite cities that act like Canaanite ones (Deut. 13.13-17 [12-16]), for when Israel manifests its rebellious nature and acts like the Canaanites, they are Canaanites and not Israel as Yhwh intends Israel to be.

It is understandable that both ancient and modern commentators would find the חרם commands and stories as distasteful and attempt to make them correspond more obviously to their own moral worldviews.[51] For some, the חרם command of Deut. 7.1-6 appears contradictory, since Israel is commanded to both utterly exterminate the Canaanites and not to make covenants or intermarry with them, and the latter command would seem to be unnecessary in light of the former. This, some argue, makes the חרם command really about not intermingling with foreigners, and the command to annihilate them simply metaphorical.[52] There is, however, an explanation in the narrative that makes sense of this, for 7.20-22 insists that Yhwh will not destroy the Canaanites all at once, and while texts like Josh. 11.16-20 and 21.43-45 refer to Israel's general victories over the Canaanites in mimicry of imperial discourse, Josh. 13.1-6 and 23.2-5, 13 portray the individual tribes

50. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 121-22; Zaccagini, 'The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', p. 416.

51. For some examples of these attempts, see Yair Hoffman, 'The Deuteronomistic Concept of the Herem', *ZAW* 111 (1999), pp. 196-210 (197-98); Lawson G. Stone, 'Ethical and Apologetic Tendencies in the Redaction of the Book of Joshua', *CBQ* 53 (1991), pp. 25-36 (25-28).

52. E.g., Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of Monotheism* (FAT, 2/1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 108-22; Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel*, p. 235; Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 64-67; Joel N. Lohr, *Chosen and Unchosen: Conceptions of Election in the Pentateuch and Jewish-Christian Interpretation* (Siphrut, 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 172; Lauren A.S. Monroe, *Josiah's Reform and the Dynamics of Defilement: Israelite Rites of Violence and the Making of a Biblical Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 65; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 98-99; Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, 'Bedeutung und Funktion von Herem in biblisch-hebräischen Texten', *BZ* 38 (1994), pp. 270-75.

as needing to complete the work of conquest in their individual allotments, which is what readers see them doing, with greater and lesser success, in Judges 1. That is, the command to annihilate fits in the narrative's logic, since the Israelites have time to intermarry before all of the Canaanites are to be killed. The presentation of חרם in the conquest narrative is hardly metaphorical; when we first come across the mention of חרם in an actual enactment of it in Deut. 2.33-34, the narrative clearly explains that the act means that 'no survivor remained'. And when Joshua follows the command of Deut. 7.1-6 and orders in Josh. 6.17 that Israel do חרם to Jericho, the narrative explains that this is done to 'all in the city, man and woman, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkey, with the edge of the sword' (6.21). Dtr mimics and mocks imperial discourse by having Israel replace the Assyrian army and Yhwh replace the Assyrian king, but the narrative reinscribes colonial discourse in its portrayal of the Canaanites as the foreign enemy. They are the Other, and if they cannot be civilized and made to pull Yhwh's yoke—and the חרם passages suggest that Yhwh has already decided that this is not possible—then they must be destroyed. So by Judges, when Israel replaces the Canaanites as the foreign Other in the land, it is clear to readers that the nation's fate is grim.

The point of חרם in the conquest narrative is most obviously to eliminate those in the land Yhwh has given to Israel who are disloyal to him.[53] The conquest narrative's reinscription of colonial discourse in its portrayal of the Canaanites makes them the clear target of this annihilation, but the story of Achan in Joshua 7, following immediately upon the first act of חרם against a Canaanite city in Joshua 6, is clear that when Israelites act in disloyalty to their suzerain and violate a divine command then they can be treated just like the Canaanites: 'Israel has sinned', says Yhwh, 'and they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them and they have taken from the חרם and they have stolen and they have acted deceptively and they have set it among their possessions. Israel cannot stand before their enemies

53. So Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 62-68. Insofar as it is possible to see the act in Dtr as reflecting aspects of sacrifice—so, e.g., Niditich, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 40-42; Frédéric Gangloff, 'Joshua 6: Holy War or Extermination by Divine Command (*Herem*)?', *TRev* 25 (2004), pp. 3-23 (18-19); Henriette L. Wiley, 'The War *Ḥērem* as Martial Ritual and Sacrifice', *PEGLMBS* 25 (2005), pp. 69-76—this is not something that narrative goes out of its way to emphasize. Perhaps an aspect of חרם in Dtr that is a bit closer to something the narrative does emphasize is the fact that what is חרם may not be used by Israel, and so Israel's general failure in Judges 1 to complete the חרם of the Canaanites accompanies their decision to put the Canaanites to forced labor. See Richard D. Nelson, '*ḤEREM* and the Deuteronomic Social Conscience', in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BETL, 133; Leuven: University Press, 1997), pp. 39-54, and compare Abraham Malamat, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 70-79.

and they have turned their backs to their enemies, for they have become חרם' (7.11-12). The replacement of one disloyal people with another does not improve the situation; Israel cannot survive on the land, as Moses continually warns them in Deuteronomy, if they do not act in loyalty to their true suzerain. Like the Mesopotamian monarch who expands imperial borders in order to bring civilization to chaos, Yhwh brings Israel to eliminate the Canaanites.[54] But just as the Mesopotamian powers can execute or deport disloyal clients (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 287-89, 291, 294-95), Yhwh can remove and destroy Israel. Assyria punishes client rulers when they fail to wear the 'yoke' of the king and Ashur and are rebellious (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 285-86, 291, 297, 300), failing to keep the treaties they have made with Assyria (e.g., *ANET*, pp. 296-300), and Yhwh will do the same to Israel if they manifest their rebellious nature. Just as Assyrian and Babylonian kings write that they left stelae in the lands they had conquered that make a lasting record of their kingship and their towering achievements (e.g., *ARI*, II, pp. 123, 126-27, 138; *ANET*, pp. 276-78, 280, 293),[55] Yhwh has Israel set up stones upon crossing the Jordan into the land Israel will conquer to commemorate Yhwh's power (Josh. 4.1-3, 20-24); yet perhaps more important than this monument are the stones of Josh. 8.30-35, inscribed with the law and the blessings and curses. We might see these stones as a conflation of both the Mesopotamian imperial tradition of victory stelae and a more local colonial tradition of inscribing a treaty on standing stones,[56] but this is a treaty that Israel, the new inhabitants of the land, will fail to obey, a failure that points to their destruction by their suzerain.

What appears to matter to Yhwh is recognition of his authority within the land—this, we might say, is Dtr's definition of order and civilization—and perhaps this is why Rahab and the Gibeonites remain, for both profess their awareness of Yhwh's power and authority (Josh. 2.11; 9.9-10, 24). Caleb, whose father Josh. 14.6, 14 declares to be an Edomite,[57] is the only person

54. Stern, *The Biblical* Ḥerem, pp. 41, 47, 85-87 sees חרם as rooted in the concept of defeating chaos and replacing it with order.

55. See also Langdon, *Die neubabylonishcen Königsinschriften*, pp. 174-77.

56. The erection of stones with a covenant/treaty mimics a more local form of imperial discourse like that found in the mid-eighth century Aramaic treaty from Sefire, which was carved into stelae. While the Sefire treaty has obviously been influenced by its Neo-Assyrian counterparts—see, e.g., Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh', *JCS* 39 (1987), pp. 161-89 (183)—it contains aspects that do not derive from the Neo-Assyrian tradition. See William Morrow, 'The Sefire Treaty Stipulations and the Mesopotamian Treaty Tradition', in *The World of the Arameans*. III. *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P.M. Michèle-Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl; JSOTSup, 326; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 83-99.

57. Josh. 14.6, 14 calls Jephunnah, Caleb's father, a Kenizzite, but the Kenizzites were understood to an Edomite clan (Gen. 36.11, 15; cf. 1 Chr. 1.36).

besides Moses whose trust is not shaken by the report of the spies in Deuteronomy 1, and he is rewarded accordingly (Deut. 1.36; Josh. 14.6-15).[58] Jael is a Kenite who is praised for her role in delivering Israel in Judg. 4.17-22; 5.24-27, and Shamgar, who saves Israel (Judg. 3.31), also appears to be a foreigner.[59] Uriah the Hittite is not merely a foreigner but a Canaanite, and he clearly acts as a foil to David's ethical failure in 2 Samuel 11. When we think of characters such as these, as well as the portrayals that we discussed above of some foreign nations in Deuteronomy, the case does not appear to be that Dtr erases positive portrayals of foreigners.[60] Non-Israelites who can be taught to be loyal and act properly in cultic matters can become like Israelites, as Sargon was willing to see loyal and civilized clients as 'like Assyrians'. They can be the גר, the 'resident alien' or 'immigrant' who is also bound by covenant and law and considered to be part of Israel to some marginal degree. But the disloyal, Israelite or not, are to be חרם, and the concept of חרם in the narrative divides between what Dtr believes truly is a part of Israel as it should be and what is not. It is possible to see the narrative portray Rahab and the Gibeonites as being primarily defined in terms of their loyalty to Yhwh rather than their foreign origins and thus exempt from חרם, and this is particularly true when we contrast these stories with that of Achan in Joshua 7, an Israelite whose disobedience to divine command almost leads to the destruction of Israel.[61]

58. See Judith McKinlay, 'Meeting Achsah on Achsah's Land', *BCT* 5/3 (2009), pp. 1-11 (3), who also points out that his son-in-law Othniel's father is Kenaz (Judg. 1.13), who is described in Gen. 36.11, 15, 42 as an Edomite.

59. The name Shamgar may be Hurrian in origin, a reference to Šimig, the Hurrian god of the sun; see Volkert Haas, *Hethitische Berggötter und hurritische Steindämonen: Riten, Kulte und Mythen. Eine Einführung in die altkleinasiatischen religiösen Vorstellungen* (KAW, 10; Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1982), p. 198. For the Assyrian form of the name (Šangara, a Hittite ruler), see Knut Leonard Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names* (ASSF, 43/1; Helsinki: Pries, 1914), p. 192; *ANET*, pp. 235, 277. Adrianus van Selms ('Judge Shamgar', *VT* 14 [1964], pp. 294-309 [299-301]) and Alberto Soggin (*Judges: A Commentary* [trans. John Bowden; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981], p. 57-58) argue the name is Semitic, a causative form of the root *mgr*. The fact that Shamgar is called *ben 'Anāt* also suggests a Canaanite origin, since the goddess Anat is known from Ugaritic texts; so van Selms, 'Judge Shamgar', p. 296; Andreas Scherer, *Überlieferungen von Religion und Krieg: Exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Richter 3-8 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT, 105; Neurkirchen-Vluyn: Neurkirchener Verlag, 2005), pp. 77-78; Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB, 6A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. 89; Peter C. Craigie, 'A Reconsideration of Shamgar ben Anath (Judg 3:31 and 5:6)', *JBL* 91 (1972), pp. 239-40.

60. Contra Uriah Y. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty in the David Story: A Postcolonial Reading* (HBM, 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), pp. 185, 202-15.

61. So, e.g., L. Daniel Hawk, 'Conquest Reconfigured: Recasting Warfare in the

But as we move to Judges, Israel consistently and repetitively acts like the Canaanites; they are, as we shall see, portrayed as foreign in the worst possible sense for Dtr, manifesting their rebellious and stubborn nature. The true chaos that needs to be controlled and civilized in Dtr is not outside of Israel, as the chaos in Assyrian hegemonic discourse lies on the periphery of empire, but within, in the nature of Israel. It is the nation itself that needs to be colonized. And, as we shall see, the narrative of Judges explicitly raises the question of who is able to civilize Israel, since, as readers encounter Israel there, the nation will not survive without some kind of leadership. This, in fact, is the beginning of the movement to the third part of Dtr's pro-Davidic argument: if Israel is inherently wicked and rebellious in regard to its suzerain, then the people need leadership to colonize them for their own good, and the question arises as to what kind of leadership it should have. The narrative has already raised this question implicitly in its portrayal of Moses, whom, as we have already discussed, Yhwh prohibits from entering the land (Deut. 1.37; 3.23-27; 4.21-22), assumedly because of his role in approving and involvement in the spying mission (1.22-23). By failing to veto this act and not leading Israel into the land without it, the exodus generation died without entering Canaan. As highly as Dtr evaluates Moses in Deut. 34.10, even his leadership is not perfect and results in disaster for a whole generation of Israelites, whose fate the exilic readers currently face.

It is possible to see an implicit critique of Joshua in the narrative as well, for he actively promotes a spying mission in Josh. 2.1[62] and violates the command to make foreigners חרם in the cases of Rahab and Gibeon. It is true that we can read the inclusion of these Canaanites in a positive sense, as we did above, although neither the narrator nor Yhwh ever approves of the failure to kill them; the narrative even specifically points out in 9.4-5 that the Gibeonites are lying, and says that Israel 'did not consult Yhwh' (9.14), and so Joshua makes a treaty (ברית) with them (9.15a), directly violating Deut. 7.2, which commands that Israel not make a ברית with the Canaanites. Even if we want to read the inclusion of the Gibeonites as positive, this

Redaction of Joshua', in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames; SBLSS, 42; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), pp. 145-60 (152-54); L. Daniel Hawk, *Joshua* (BO; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 25-33; Carolyn Pressler, *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth* (WBC; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 20-21.

62. See Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 85-86; Aaron Sherwood, 'A Leader's Misleading and a Prostitute's Profession: A Re-examination of Joshua 2', *JSOT* 31 (2006), pp. 43-61 (49-51); Yair Zakovitch, 'Humor and Theology or the Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence: A Literary-Folkloric Approach to Joshua 2', in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore* (ed. Susan Niditch; SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 75-98 (90).

does not mean that Joshua does not act poorly in regard to divine command. When Joshua commands that Rahab's life be spared, he justifies this by appealing to her treatment of the spies, not her confession of Yhwh's power (Josh. 6.17).[63] She never actually does state that she will be cultically loyal to Yhwh, and when her story is paralleled by that of the Gibeonites, who lie to Israel and who also do not claim that they will worship Yhwh, readers might wonder how sincere Rahab was. In the story of the Gibeonites, it is Israel who wants to follow divine command and destroy them once they discover that they are Canaanites,[64] but Joshua overrules them and enforces his treaty (9.22-26).[65] So one possibility the narrative raises, but does not confirm or deny, is that these Canaanites set the stage for the incorporation of a foreign, Canaanite influence that exacerbates Israel's natural proclivities to rebellion and stubbornness in regard to its suzerain. Yhwh will condemn Israel for making a ברית 'treaty, covenant' with Canaanites in Judg. 2.2, but at that point in the narrative the only figure who has actually been said to have made a ברית with Canaanites is Joshua. Even if we do not want to interpret Judg. 2.2 as referring to Joshua's covenant with the Gibeonites, it is possible to see Joshua 9 as an implicit critique of Joshua, who acts in disobedience to divine command. But the narrative does not clearly take up the problem of Israel's leadership until the end of Judges.

2. *Israelites as foreigners in Judges*

The process of Israel's conversion into the role of the Canaanites, the foreign enemy whom the suzerain destroys and the Other who is inherently disloyal, is a central and even structural issue in the narrative of Judges. One of the most obvious structural devices in Judges is that the stories of the major judges are placed within a framework that consistently moves from the worship of the Canaanite gods (see especially 2.11; 3.7) to foreign invasion and oppression, followed by Israel's cry to Yhwh and the work of

63. See the discussion in L. Daniel Hawk, *Every Promise Fulfilled: Contrasting Plots in Joshua* (LCBI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), pp. 73-74.

64. 9.15b, 18-21 is likely an interpolation from P; see Roy K. Sutherland, 'Israelite Political Theories in Joshua 9', *JSOT* 53 (1992), pp. 65-74; Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997), pp. 124-25; Jörn Halbe, 'Gibeon und Israel: Art, Veranlassung und Ort der Deutung ihres Verhältnisses in Jos ix', *VT* 25 (1975), pp. 613-41 (613-16); A.D.H. Mayes, 'Deuteronomy 29, Joshua 9, and the Place of the Gibeonites in Israel', in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. Norbert Lohfink; BETL, 68; Leuven: University Press, 1985), pp. 321-25 (325). This means that we see Israel's desire to kill the Gibeonites only in 9.26 in Dtr.

65. Again, see the discussion in Hawk, *Every Promise Fulfilled*, pp. 83-88.

the judge to fight the enemy.[66] This pattern or cycle provides a framework to the vast majority of the narrative from the introduction to the pattern in 2.11-19 through the end of the story of Samson in 16.31. It emphasizes that Israel disloyally acts like the Canaanites in its cultic activities, since 'to do evil in the eyes of Yhwh' (2.11-12; 3.7, 12; 4.1; 6.1; 10.6; 13.1) is defined as worshipping other gods, and particularly Canaanite ones (2.11-12; 3.7; 6.10; 8.33; 10.6); that Yhwh seems to care about nothing that Israel does except for its cultic activities that either express loyalty to him or fail to do so; and that Israel is disloyal by nature, since it repetitively manifests this disloyalty, even after being continually exposed to punishment for it. As the introduction makes clear, however, each turn of this cycle does not produce a mere repetition of events, for 2.19 tells readers that 'when the judge died, they [the Israelites] repented and acted more corruptly than their ancestors, going after other gods to serve them and to worship them'. While the story of the Judean Othniel, the first major judge, hews closely to the 'schematic outline' of 2.11-19,[67] providing a simple embodiment of the framework,[68] the chapters that follow present a progressive decline in the state of Israel and its judges. 2.19, that is, points to a second structural device of the book: as readers progress through the various turns of the cycle, the corruption of Israel and its leaders worsens.[69] Readers learn not just that punishment fails to dissuade Israel from manifesting its foreign nature, but that the nation seems to become more disloyal to Yhwh as time goes on, more and more like the foreigners whom they were supposed to replace. We can point as

66. The most detailed study of this framework and its variations throughout Judg. 2.11-16.31 appears in Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (VTSup, 63; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 19-57.

67. This is Meir Sternberg's description of 2.11-19; see his *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 269.

68. For a comparison of the many similarities in vocabulary and phrasing between the story of Othniel in 3.7-11 and the introduction of 2.11-19, see Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS, 38; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), p. 161. As Andreas Scherer points out, almost every element of the Othniel story appears elsewhere in Judges (*Überlieferungen von Religion*, p. 27).

69. See, for example, Gregory T.K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup, 111; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), pp. 156-90; D.W. Gooding, 'The Composition of the Book of Judges', *EI* 16 (1982), pp. 70*-79*; Lawson Grant Stone, *From Tribal Confederation to Monarchic State: The Editorial Perspective of the Book of Judges* (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1988; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI), pp. 290-356; Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (OTR; London: Routledge, 2002), p. 111; Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 116-19; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup, 46; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), p. 112; Daniel I. Block, 'Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up? Narrative Style and Intention in Judges 6–9', *JETS* 40 (1997), pp. 353-66 (364-65).

well to a third broadly recognized narrative structure, one that accompanies this decline: a south to north progression of the stories from Othniel through Dan's apostasy in Judges 18, a progression that parallels a similar movement in 1.1-36.[70] In Judges 1, Judah alone does חרם to the Canaanites (1.17), while all of the Northern tribes fail to completely annihilate the Canaanites in their territories (1.21-36) as Yhwh had commanded (Deut. 7.1-6; 20.16-18), leading to divine condemnation (Judg. 2.1-5). In fact, the further readers progress through Judges 1, and so the further north the stories lead them, the worse the failures of the tribes seem to become.[71] Judges 1 sets the tone for much of the rest of the book; the south to north pattern parallels that of the decline of Israel, and so the farther readers progress through the narrative of Judges, the worse the North appears. Judges 19–21 breaks this south to north pattern, but in returning the focus of Israel's sin to Benjamin in Judges 19–21 from Dan in Judges 17–18, this final story is often taken as a reflection of the anti-Northern and pro-Judean bias of Judges. The locus of sin here is not merely the North, but specifically Benjamin and Gibeah, the tribe and town of Saul, the nation's first Northern king, and so these chapters are often seen as pro-Davidic.[72]

70. E.g., see Abraham Malamat, 'Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges', in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* (ed. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke and Patrick D. Miller, Jr.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 152-68 (153-54); Marc Brettler, 'The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics', *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 395-414 (404); K. Lawson Younger, 'The Configuration of the Judicial Preliminaries: Judges 1.1–2.5 and Its Dependence on the Book of Joshua', *JSOT* 68 (1995), pp. 75-92 (80); W.J. Dumbrell, '"In those days there were no kings in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes": The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered', *JSOT* 25 (1983), pp. 23-33 (25); Janet E. Tollington, 'The Book of Judges: The Result of Post-Exilic Exegesis?', in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OTS, 40; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 186-96 (188-89). There are some exceptions to this, however; see Serge Frolov, 'Fire, Smoke, and Judah in Judges: A Response to Gregory Wong', *SJOT* 21 (2007), pp. 127-38 (128-29).

71. As Lawson Younger points out, the tribes of Benjamin through Zebulun (1.21-30) allow the Canaanites to live within their territories, while the narrative says that Asher and Naphtali (1.31-33) live among the Canaanites and Dan (1.34) is oppressed by them. See 'The Configuring of Judicial Preliminaries', pp. 80-83. 1.1–2.5 itself appears to be structured to emphasize the failure of the North as the Judean success is followed by northern sin and the resultant divine condemnation. Webb (*The Book of the Judges*, pp. 90-92) and Younger ('Judges 1 and Its Near Eastern Literary Context', in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* [ed. A.R. Millard, James K. Hoffmeier and David W. Baker; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994], pp. 207-27 [215-16]) both point out that the verb עלה opens the account of Judah's successes in going up to defeat the Canaanites (1.2, 4), while עלה appears again in 1.22 as the northern failures begin, and in 2.1 עלה appears as a divine messenger goes up to condemn Israel for allowing Canaanites to live in the land.

72. Since Judges 19–21 turns around the story of a gang-rape and murder in Saul's

The very structure of Judge's narrative emphasizes that as Israel becomes more and more cultically and morally corrupt throughout the book, it can be said to become more and more foreign, more and more like the Canaanites it was supposed to remove from the land. As a result, the nation's progressive decline or foreignness is accompanied by its use as a tool to punish itself through intra-Israelite violence, for as Israel becomes like the foreign nations, Yhwh can use it in the way he uses the nations to punish Israel's apostasy. As we shall see, we find the first occurrences of internecine Israelite conflict in the narrative as soon as the decline of Israel and its leaders first becomes clearly apparent, and at each successive appearance of intra-Israelite violence the narrative emphasizes the foreignness of the Israelite party or parties responsible for this violence, while the violence itself becomes progressively worse, and so parallels the decline of Israel and its judges. By the time we reach the end of Judges, when 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes' (17.6; 21.25), no foreign nation is necessary to wreak violence on the land; the nadir of Israel's cultic and moral life is met with the punishment of intra-Israelite violence alone, for at this point in the narrative Israel is so foreign that it can act just like the foreign nations did earlier in the book, and this civil warfare is of a greater destructive magnitude than any internecine Israelite violence readers have encountered up to that point. It is precisely this decline, this self-Canaanization of Israel that shows us Dtr's narrative reinscribing colonial discourse in regard to the foreign enemy. Israel in Judges becomes the Canaanite Other it was supposed to replace, repetitively acting in disloyalty to its suzerain, and so eventually taking the place even of the foreign enemies whom Yhwh had been sending to punish their disloyalty. It is not just that the narrative of Judges emphasizes that Israel becomes like the Canaanites in their cultic disloyalty,

hometown, some contemporary scholars interpret what they see as the pro-Judean proclivities of Judges as specifically pro-Davidic and anti-Saulide ones. See, e.g., Brettler, 'The Book of Judges', pp. 112-13; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 112-13; Brettler, 'Davidic Polemics in the Book of Judges', *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 517-29; Amit, *The Book of Judges*, pp. 315-16, 342; Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS, 25; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 179-82; Amit, 'The Book of Judges—Dating and Meaning', in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bustenay Oded* (ed. Gershon Galil, Mark Geller and Alan Millard; VTSup, 130; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), pp. 297-322 (313-15, 319-20); O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, pp. 299-303; Uwe Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Richterbuch* (BZAW, 192; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 264-66; Hans-Winfried Jüngling, *Richter 19, ein Plädoyer für das Königtum: Stilistische Analyse der Tendenzerzählung Ri 19,1-30; 21,25* (AnBib, 84; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981); Moshe Weinfeld, 'Judges 1.1–2.5: The Conquest under the Leadership of the House of Judah', in *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* (ed. A. Graeme Auld; JSOTSup, 152; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 388-400.

but that Israel's very nature is foreign, for by the end of Judges Israel has adopted all of the roles that foreigners had previously filled. While it is true that Dtr sees the Canaanites and not all foreign nations in general as Israel's Other, in Judges the non-Canaanite foreign invaders are the force that slowly destroys Israel. By having intra-Israelite violence supplement and then replace foreign invasion, Dtr locates the chaos that colonial hegemony associates with the uncivilized foreigners entirely within Israel. For Dtr, chaos does not stand at the margins, as it does in the Mesopotamian colonial discourse that portrays the foreign enemies on the edges of the empire as the threat to civilization; destruction emerges from Israel's very nature. The foreign threat to Israel is really at its center, not on the margins. They are a people who need to be colonized, lest Yhwh do to them what the colonial powers normally do to their disloyal foreign clients.

Other scholars have already pointed out that Israel seems to act as its own worst enemy at particular points in Judges,[73] but internecine violence is more than a recurring idea in Judges, it is a pattern that accompanies Israel's decline and increases in intensity as the decline does. The worse Israel becomes by Deuteronomistic standards, the more Canaanite it becomes; and as the structure of Judges emphasizes that Israel will not be dissuaded from its disloyalty, that this is rooted in their very nature, it increasingly locates the source of the nation's destruction inside of it as well. Israel is the foreign, uncivilized chaos that colonial hegemony locates on the margins of the Mesopotamian empires and insists must be colonized and controlled. So as Israel becomes the agent of its own חרם, its foreignness is emphasized. By this point in the narrative, Dtr really does not reject the colonial discourse that describes Israel as the Other;[74] this discourse is reinscribed by the narrative as the nation wholeheartedly embraces the most important attribute of foreigners that has been described as negative in the narrative, the failure to recognize Yhwh as suzerain. Apostasy or disloyalty is self-destructive in a quite literal way in Judges. The narrative emphasizes Israel's naturally rebellious

73. E.g., Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (JSOTSup, 68; BLS, 14; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), p. 70; Block, 'Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?', pp. 365-66; Dan Michael Hudson, 'Living in a Land of Epithets: Anonymity in Judges 19–21', *JSOT* 62 (1994), pp. 49-66 (52-53); Jacobus Marais, *Representation in Old Testament Narrative Texts* (BIS, 36; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), p. 140; Beverly Beem, 'The Minor Judges: A Literary Reading of Some Very Short Stories', in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture in Context* IV (ed. K. Lawson Younger, Jr, William W. Hallo and Bernard F. Batto; ANETS, 11; Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), pp. 147-72 (149); J. Cheryl Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges', *CBQ* 52 (1990), pp. 410-31 (430); Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 194.

74. Contra the description of Dtr as a whole (or at least a Josianic version of it) in Uriah Y. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History* (BMW, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), p. 222.

proclivities by having them recur over and over, and by having this rebellion and its consequences become worse over time. Israel is not just rebellious and stubborn by nature; without the proper form of control it becomes increasingly so. The notion that the central section of Judges is not Deuteronomistic because of its cyclical structure[75] misses entirely the issues that the narrative stresses in Judges: Israel is not simply rebellious, but consistently so; and this rebellion simply becomes worse over time when left unchecked. Perhaps Judg. 2.11-19 by itself would suffice to make this point, but this is hardly the same thing as having readers make their way through increasingly lengthy stories of Israel manifesting its true nature of chaos and rebellion that no leadership appears to control, at least for long. By the time readers reach the end of Judges, where a leaderless Israel lives in complete cultic and ethical chaos, readers might be inclined to favor some kind of strong central leadership that can control Israel, leadership like the monarchy to which the narrative refers in 17.6; 18.1; 19.1; and 21.25.

The story of Gideon contains the first example in Judges of intra-Israelite violence, and it is also the story of a judge who is portrayed to some degree in foreign terms and who establishes foreign worship in Israel. It begins, as the other stories of the major judges do, with the notice that 'the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yhwh' (6.1), but in 6.2-6 the narrative provides readers with a longer and more graphic description of the punishment that the foreign nation is visiting on Israel than the ones readers have encountered in 3.8, 12-13; and 4.2-3. Moreover, Israel's cry to Yhwh is not immediately met with the notice that a judge was raised up, but with a prophetic condemnation of their actions (6.7-10).[76] Since the punishment appears to

75. So originally Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; trans. D.M.G. Stalker; New York: Harper & Row, 1962–1965), I, pp. 346-47. For more recent iterations of this argument, see, e.g., Amit, 'The Book of Judges—Dating and Meaning', p. 302; Claus Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments: Gab es ein deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk?* (ThB, 87; Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), pp. 53-56.

76. As I argued in Chapter 2, 6.7-10 should be considered an original part of the text regardless of the evidence of 4QJudg[a], which omits these verses. The omission occurs between two *parashoth*, and, as Richard Hess has shown, Qumran's biblical texts put *parashoth* at the same places as the MT, although the scribes at Qumran indicated their presence merely with extended blank spaces rather than with ס and פ as we find in the Masoretic tradition. He points as well to the tradition at Qumran of inserting, deleting, and changing material at the *parashoth*, and explains the absence of 6.7-10 as another example of such a change. See Richard Hess, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and Higher Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: The Case of 4QJudg[a]', in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans; JSPSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 122-28. There is perhaps an even easier way to explain the omission: the scribe's eye jumped from the blank space following 6.6 to the blank space following 6.10, a kind of haplography.

be worse and since Yhwh is not immediately inclined to respond to Israel's cry with salvation, the narrative suggests here, particularly in light of the claim of 2.19 that each renewal of apostasy is worse than the preceding ones, that Israel's behavior is worse. There is a clear decline in the quality of Israel's leadership as well, for Gideon, despite divine assurances of victory, is repeatedly fearful of going into battle (6.15-17, 27, 36-40; 7.9-11). Disregarding Yhwh's insistence that divine power alone is responsible for the victory over Midian (7.2, 7, 9), Gideon claims partial credit for Israel's military success (7.18), and by the time readers reach the end of his narrative, they find that Israel attributes victory to Gideon alone—'You have saved us from the hand of Midian' (8.22)[77]—a claim in sharp contrast with the narrative's assertion that 'Yhwh their God had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies around' (8.34). Gideon creates a cultic object that leads to apostasy within Israel (8.27),[78] and the nation returns to its worship of the Baals immediately following his death (8.33). As 'all Israel prostituted after' Gideon's cultic object, they 'prostituted after the Baals' upon Gideon's death, and so the narrative suggests that Gideon leads the nation toward the same apostasy that has regularly resulted in Israel's punishment through foreign invasion.

It is in the context of this decline that the first intra-Israelite violence of Judges occurs. After Yhwh provides victory over Midian in 7.22, he is not mentioned again in the narrative of Gideon,[79] and so gives no more commands. Gideon, unlike the previous three major judges, continues to fight following divine victory over the foreign oppressor; he calls out more troops (7.23-24), precisely what Yhwh wanted to avoid in 7.2-8 when he whittled Gideon's army down from 32,000 to 300 men, 'lest Israel glorify itself against me, saying, "My hand has saved me"'. The narrative eventually informs readers that Gideon continues to pursue the Midianite army

77. So Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 152; Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 419.

78. The cultic object is an ephod, and while we would normally associate that with Yahwistic worship—see the discussion in Wolfgang Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism: A Theological Reading of the Gideon-Abimelech Narrative* (JSOTSup, 329; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 170-74—the narrative's claim that 'all Israel prostituted after it' clearly points to it as something involved in apostasy. The ephod here may be the Akkadian *epattu* (see *CAD*, IV, p. 183), a costly garment that was draped over an idol; see Soggin, *Judges*, p. 160; Hans-Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (ATD, 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), p. 197; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 64-65.

79. See Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', pp. 416-18; Yvan Mathieu, 'Le cycle de Gédéon: Pivot dans la trame du livre des Juges?', *Theoforum* 38 (2007), pp. 153-84 (181).

outside of Israel[80] because of a personal vendetta against the Midianite kings, who had killed his brothers (8.18-19). It is as a part of this very personal (rather than divinely mandated) campaign that he threatens two Israelite towns when they refuse to supply his army with sustenance (8.4-9), and then makes good on his threat: 'he took the thorns of the wilderness and the briars and threshed[81] the men of Succoth with them, and the tower of Penuel he tore down and he killed the men of the city' (8.16-17), language reminiscent of Assyrian conquest accounts that commonly use the verb *dâšu* 'to thresh' to describe a victorious king's treatment of a defeated land and people.[82] So the first intra-Israelite violence that we see is carried out by a judge who has disobeyed a divine command and is enacting personal revenge with an army that Yhwh provided for a different purpose, and who will soon lead Israel in apostasy. The connection between disobedience and violence against fellow Israelites is foreshadowed by 8.1-3, where the Ephraimites, whom Gideon had called out to fight for him in 7.24 in a contradiction of Yhwh's intention in drastically shrinking the size of his army, appear to be on the point of doing violence to Gideon.

Gideon's many failures of leadership and trust in Yhwh's power lead some scholars to suggest that the decline of Israel and its leaders really only begins in Judges 6,[83] and while this is not entirely true,[84] this is certainly the place in the narrative where this decline first becomes obvious. So

80. It is not clear where Karkor, the site where Gideon defeats Zebah and Zalmunna, was located—see Erasmus Gass, *Die Ortsnamen des Richterbuchs in historischer und redaktioneller Perspektive* (ADPV, 35; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2005), pp. 449-51 for a list of possible sites—but it is assumedly outside of Israelite territory; this is why 8.11 refers to the Midianite camp as בטח. See Jeremy M. Hutton, 'Mahanaim, Penuel, and Transhumance Routes: Observations on Genesis 32–33 and Judges 8', *JNES* 65 (2006), pp. 161-78 (175 n. 64).

81. Reading וידשׁ with the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate, which follow Gideon's original threat to Succoth in 8.7, rather than וידע in the MT. For the MT as a scribal error, see the discussion in Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (4 vols.; OBO, 50; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982–2005), I, p. 97. Scherer's argument that the MT's reading should be retained and interpreted in the same sense as ידע in 1 Sam. 14.12 (*Überlieferungen von Religion*, p. 333) is speculative, since the use of the verb in 1 Sam. 14.12 does not clearly refer to killing or attacking.

82. See *CAD*, III, p. 121 and Weissert, 'Creating a Political Climate', p. 198.

83. E.g., Elie Assis, *Self-Interest or Communal Interest: An Ideology of Leadership in the Gideon, Abimelech and Jephthah Narratives (Judg 6–12)* (VTSup, 106; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp. 127-30; Block, 'Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?', pp. 364-65; J. Paul Tanner, 'The Gideon Narrative as the Focal Point of Judges', *BibSac* 149 (1992), pp. 146-61 (152-53).

84. As Wong points out, Ehud 'crossed by the idols' (3.26), a note of particular interest since there is no mention of his destroying them as Deut. 12.3 commands (*Compositional Strategy*, p. 84). Scherer suggests that the narrative hints that Ehud stopped by these idols at Gilgal for a war oracle (*Überlieferungen von Religion*, p. 45).

the first occurrence of intra-Israelite violence in Judges coincides with the first obvious declines in Israel's leadership and the nation's cultic actions, and the worsening of Israel's punishment for sin. We can note as well that the narrative presents Gideon as a quasi-foreign figure. Not only does he establish a non-Yahwistic cult, but he bears the Canaanite name Jerubbaal. While 6.32 explains the name as meaning 'Let Baal contend against him', a reference to the fact that Gideon has pulled down Baal's altar as Yhwh commanded (albeit at night, because he was afraid), Baal never does seem to contend with Gideon, but Gideon does a good deal of contending with Yhwh whom, as we have seen, he does not appear to trust and whom he disobeys to pursue his own goals.[85] The movement back and forth between 'Gideon' and 'Jerubbaal' thus points to his own movement between disloyalty and loyalty to Yhwh.[86] At the end of his story, when Israel immediately returns to the worship of Baal, following Jerubbaal's earlier lead in apostasy with his ephod, it seems that Baalist disloyalty has the last word in his story, that, through Gideon, Baal has successfully contended against Yhwh.[87] Moreover, the narrative associates Gideon/Jerubbaal with kingship, an office that, up to this point in Judges, has been held only by foreigners whom Yhwh has used to punish Israel (3.8, 10, 12-23; 4.2, 23) and that appeared in the conquest narrative only as a reference to Canaanite leadership (Josh. 2.2-3; 5.1; 6.2; 8.1-2, 14, 23, 29; 9.1, 10; 10.1-24, etc.). When Israel tells him that 'you have saved us', they do so in the context of asking him to establish a dynastic rule in Israel. Gideon does not deny that he has saved the nation (thereby eliding Yhwh's role in the victory over Midian), and while he does say that he will not rule in Israel (8.22-23), it is widely acknowledged that his subsequent acts of gathering the spoils of victory, establishing a new cult, and amassing many wives and children (8.24-31) portray him as acting like an ancient Near Eastern king.[88] And, in fact, the two Midianite kings tell him that he and his brothers look like 'the sons of the king' (8.18). So Gideon has a Canaanite name, he creates a

85. So Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 54-55.

86. So Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, p. 169.

87. So Assis, *Self-Interest*, pp. 113-14; Block, 'Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?', p. 365.

88. E.g., Assis, *Self-Interest*, pp. 102-103; Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 419; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, p. 117; Jan P. Fokkelman, 'Structural Remarks on Judges 9 and 19', in *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. Michael Fishbane and Emanuel Tov; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 33-45 (33); Gordon K. Oeste, *Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Right to Rule: Windows on Abimelech's Rise and Demise in Judges 9* (LHBOTS, 546; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2011), pp. 59-63; Katie M. Heffelfinger, '"My Father is King": Chiefly Politics and the Rise and Fall of Abimelech', *JSOT* 33 (2009), pp. 277-92 (285).

non-Yahwistic cult, and he is associated with kingship, an office that, until now, has been a uniquely foreign one involved in the punishment of Israel. Like the Assyrian kings, he has 'threshed' Israel. The fact that two foreign kings link him to the office simply underscores this non-Israelite aspect of kingship.

So intra-Israelite violence first appears in the narrative precisely where the judge seems partially foreign in both name and loyalty to Yhwh. It appears where Israel's sin is worse and where the nation no longer recognizes that Yhwh and not the judge has truly saved them, where they wish to reward the judge for the salvation Yhwh has enacted, where they adopt the non-Yahwistic cult the judge creates, and return to Baalism immediately following the judge's death. Israel, that is, appears as foreign and non-Yahwistic in its inclinations as its judge. Even the story of the violence that Gideon enacts upon Succoth and Penuel (8.4-9, 15-17) is intertwined with the story of his pursuit of the foreign kings (8.10-12, 18-21), as if to suggest there is not as much difference between Israel and Midian as readers might at first believe. Gideon tells Succoth and Penuel that his treatment of them is repayment 'because you taunted (חרפתם) me' (8.15). When the verb חרף appears in the Psalms, it is normally associated with what 'enemies' do (e.g., Pss 44.16 [17]; 74.10, 18; 89.52; 102.9 [8]); when it appears in contexts of warfare, as it does in Judg. 8.15, it generally refers to the foreign enemy's mocking of the ability of the Israelite army (or, in the case of 2 Kgs 19.4-23 [= Isa. 37.4-24], of Yhwh) to defeat the enemy (1 Sam. 17.10-25; 2 Sam. 21.21; Zeph. 2.8, 10). Gideon, in short, speaks to Israelite towns here as if they had addressed him and his army as an enemy like the foreign nation he has been fighting. So we should not be surprised that the narrative presents Gideon as being like a king, like one of the figures whom Judges has so far connected only with the foreign entities that wreak violence on Israel. The narrative, it appears, has gone out of its way to portray Gideon as a foreigner and to show him as viewing other Israelites as being just like foreign enemies whom he should attack. The intra-Israelite violence appears not only where the decline of the nation and its judge is first becoming very clear, it appears in the context of a narrative that is stressing the foreignness of judge and nation, who are both now strongly attracted to apostasy and either unaware or willfully ignorant of Yhwh's role in the salvation of Israel. Israel is Canaanite in its worship, the equivalent of the foreign, disloyal, and rebellious nations who stand at the margins of civilization in colonial hegemony. They are the foreign chaos of Mesopotamian imperial discourse, and so they begin to take the place of the foreign enemy in the narrative, because the real threat to the nation's existence lies at its center, in its nature, not outside. Israel and not Mesopotamia is responsible for its fate in Dtr, but as Israel attacks itself the narrative draws readers to see that the real danger to Israel is the innate foreignness, disloyalty, and

rebellion within, a reinscription of colonial claims. We might point out as well that this violence also draws attention to the narrative's disparagement of the North as exemplified through the south to north narrative pattern, for the first occurrence of Israelite self-slaughter is enacted by a Northerner (6.15 tells us Gideon is from Manasseh) on Northern cities.[89]

Abimelech, a son of Jerubbaal (the name 'Gideon' is never used after 8.35), murders his 70 brothers to assume rule in Shechem. The 57 verses devoted to the story of Abimelech, in fact, really deal with nothing else besides internecine violence that occurs within the context of rebellion against Yhwh in foreign worship, since the events take place within the context of a Canaanite Baalism that no one attempts to end or even question.[90] Abimelech murders his brothers with the support of Shechem and becomes king (9.1-6), his surviving brother Jotham condemns this act and warns that Abimelech and Shechem will destroy each other (9.7-21), and this is precisely what happens in 9.22-57. If anything, then, the story of Abimelech appears as a narrative of retribution with 'the precision of a surgical operation. Only those directly responsible have been destroyed'.[91] As 9.23-24, 56-57 make clear, Yhwh enacts this reciprocal violence to pay back both Abimelech and Shechem for their conspiracy in the murder of Abimelech's brothers.

We will return to the story of Abimelech and its presentation of kingship in the following chapter, but we should note for our purposes here that the narrative of Judges 9 explicitly states for the first time that Yhwh actively uses Israelites to punish each other, just as Yhwh has used foreigners to punish Israel earlier in the story. It is not as clear that Judges 9 continues the cyclical history of apostasy of Judges 3–8—we will discuss this point further in the next chapter—but certainly the events of Judges 9 continue the foreign portrayal of Israel, since the Baalism established in Israel at Jerubbaal's death (8.33) continues. We see offhand references to foreign worship in 9.4, 46, but the clearest references to the foreignness of Israel's cultic and moral decline appear in Abimelech's treatment of Shechem and the Tower of Shechem, for he kills all of the inhabitants and burns the tower (9.45-49), exactly the way the Israelites in the conquest period enacted חרם on the Canaanite cities (cf.

89. Succoth and Penuel are both Israelite cities in the Transjordan. Josh. 13.27 locates Succoth in Gad; Penuel is mentioned elsewhere in Dtr only in 1 Kgs 12.25 as a city within the Northern Kingdom. There are a variety of possibilities as to where each was located; see Gass, *Die Ortsnamen des Richterbuchs*, pp. 439-49 for a list of possible locations for each of these sites.

90. As Polzin (*Moses and the Deuteronomist*, p. 174) points out, no one in the narrative of Judges 9, not even Jotham, is portrayed as a Yahwist.

91. Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 158. For a detailed study of the retribution in this story see T.A. Boogaart, 'Stone for Stone: Retribution in the Story of Abimelech and Shechem', *JSOT* 32 (1985), pp. 45-56.

Josh. 6.21; 8.24-25; 10.28, 29, 32, 33; 11.11-12; etc.). Here, that is, Israel is a foreign nation in its cultic practice and is treated like a Canaanite nation in the חרם enacted by an Israelite army. And while the narrative only implies that Jerubbaal wields royal authority, Abimelech is specifically called a king (9.6), an office, as we have already mentioned, that has been associated so far in Judges only with foreigners whom Yhwh uses to punish Israel. Moreover, Abimelech's murder of 70 men is reminiscent of the claim of the Canaanite Adoni-bezek in 1.7 that he had cut off the thumbs and toes of 70 kings, another connection between him and foreigners. Abimelech's death, like Adoni-bezek's, is said to be retribution for the killing of 70 rivals (1.7; 9.56).[92] 'The enemy', as Lillian Klein notes, 'is within: Abimelech is (and symbolizes) the foreign element in Israel'.[93] Abimelech is thus an 'anti-judge' who does not respond to foreign oppression or save Israel,[94] but who acts like a foreign king to punish, even as he is punished in his stead.

I will argue in the next chapter that the narrative does not relate the punishment of Judges 9 to apostasy, but this does not mitigate the foreign picture of Israel and Abimelech here, and it does not mitigate the narrative's parallel between this picture of Israel as foreign and its self-destruction. Israel is a Canaanite-like nation here and Abimelech is like a foreign king, and the story again leads readers to see that Israel's foreignness is self-destructive in a very literal way. It has incorporated within itself all of the aspects of the foreign enemy of colonial discourse, and its disloyal nature is accompanied by its self-slaughter in חרם. The intensity of intra-Israelite violence increases in Judges 9, with the whole chapter devoted to descriptions and a prediction of it. As Canaanite cult and morality come to dominate Israel, intra-Israelite slaughter comes to dominate the narrative.[95] Just as in Judges

92. For a discussion of the parallels between these stories, see Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, pp. 156-59; Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, pp. 204-206; Oeste, *Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Right to Rule*, p. 48; Roy L. Heller, 'What is Abimelek Doing in Judges?', in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (ed. K.L. Noll and Brooks Schramm; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), pp. 225-35 (232). See also the comparisons between the story of Abimelech and those of the Midianite kings in Vince Endris, 'Yahweh versus Baal: A Narrative-Critical Reading of the Gideon/Abimelech Narrative', *JSOT* 33 (2008), pp. 173-95 (186-87).

93. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, p. 70. See also Heller, 'What is Abimelek Doing?', pp. 232-33; and Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism*, pp. 231-32.

94. See Malamat, 'Charismatic Leadership', p. 163; Brettler, 'The Book of Judges', p. 406.

95. The narrative of the minor judge Tola in 10.1-2 says that he 'arose to save Israel' (although does not actually claim that he did save the nation) and that 'he judged Israel 23 years'. No mention of a foreign invasion appears here; readers might assume that Tola endeavors to save Israel by ending the internecine violence of the era of Abimelech, an act that parallels that of the other judges who defeat foreign enemies. See also Amit, *The Book of Judges*, pp. 40-43.

17–21, where foreign cult and morality also go unquestioned, no foreigner is necessary to punish the wrongdoing. As if to match the decline in Israel's behavior, the internecine violence here is worse than that enacted by Jerubbaal, for while he 'killed the men' of Penuel and 'threshed' the men of Succoth, Abimelech 'killed all the people' of Shechem and 'all the people…, men and women' of the Tower of Shechem (9.45, 49). We can note as well that the fact that Abimelech destroys Shechem, the first capital of the North (1 Kgs 12.25), complements the anti-Northern bias of Judges' south to north pattern more clearly than the internecine violence in Gideon's story does.

In a way, Abimelech's murder of his 70 brothers is a microcosm of the intra-Israelite חרם that he does to Shechem, and intra-familial killing followed by intra-Israelite slaughter is also a key component of the Jephthah narrative. Decline in the quality of Israel's cultic life and the character of the judge is obvious again. Israel worships even more foreign gods than earlier in the narrative (10.6), the foreign invasion involves two nations, Ammon and Philistia (10.7-9), and not just one as in the past, and Yhwh is initially unwilling to respond to Israel's cry for help (10.11-14), even following Israel's unprecedented act of repentance (10.16).[96] The narrative does not claim that Jephthah saves Israel, for while Yhwh does give Jephthah victory over Ammon (11.32-33), there is no mention of any kind of battle with the Philistines. Jephthah uses the army for personal gain just as Gideon did: Jephthah negotiates with Gilead to become their head if Yhwh gives him victory over Ammon (11.9), and so his future status is dependent upon the outcome of the battle.[97] He tells the Ammonite king that Gilead belongs to Israel, not Ammon, he calls Yhwh to judge this issue (11.27), and when Jephthah then offers Yhwh a burnt sacrifice in exchange for granting him victory—'the one that goes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites will belong to Yhwh, and I will burn it up as a burnt offering' (11.30-31)—he is, in effect, attempting to bribe the divine judge for his personal advantage.[98] Upon his return from battle, when the

96. When Israel admits its sin and turns aside its foreign gods, the narrative says that ותקצר נפשׁו בעמל ישׂראל 'he [Yhwh] was exasperated with Israel's evil' (10.16). When referring to emotion, the verb קצר refers only to impatience and exasperation (e.g., Num. 21.4; Judg. 16.16; Mic. 2.7). While the noun עמל can refer to suffering, it makes little sense to say that Yhwh becomes exasperated with the suffering he imposed on Israel, and so it is best to understand the word here as referring to evil, as it does in places like Isa. 10.1; Hab. 1.13; Prov. 24.2. For similar arguments and translations, see Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, p. 177; Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, pp. 47-48; O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, p. 172; David Janzen, 'Why the Deuteronomist Told about the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter', *JSOT* 29 (2005), pp. 339-57 (346-47).

97. For discussions of the self-centeredness of Jephthah, see also Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 95-96; Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, pp. 165-76.

98. So also Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 64.

one who meets him is his daughter, he sacrifices her, imitating a Canaanite form of worship that Deut. 12.29-31 specifically forbids in the Yahwistic cult. And here, the decline in the quality of Israel's judge is actually celebrated by all of Israel, who creates an annual festival to commemorate Jephthah's daughter's agreement with and submission to her father's illegal sacrifice (11.40).[99]

In this context of the increasing foreignness of Israel and its leader, we find intra-Israelite violence yet again, as Ephraim fights Jephthah and Gilead in 12.1-6. And as in the cases of such violence in the stories of Gideon and Abimelech, the narrative of Jephthah makes the Israelites appear as foreigners. 12.4 states that 'Gilead struck Ephraim because they said, "Survivors of (פליטי) Ephraim are you, O Gilead, in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh".'[100] The noun פליט generally refers to a survivor from the losing army in a battle (e.g., Gen. 14.13; Josh. 8.22; Jer. 42.17; Amos 9:1; Obad. 14; etc.), but, since Gilead has just defeated Ammon, it makes sense in this context only if Ephraim is telling Gilead that, once Ephraim has defeated them in battle, Gilead will consist merely of survivors who will live in land that Ephraim and Manasseh will have annexed.[101] The importance of placing these words in Ephraim's mouth here lies in the parallel that the narrative draws between this tribe and the Ammonites who appear earlier in the Jephthah narrative. 11.12-28 contains the only story of a judge negotiating with a foreign invader, and in this case Ammon claims that the land of Gilead belongs to them (11.13), while Jephthah's long response of 11.15-23 repeats the story of Deuteronomy 2–3, in which Yhwh gives Gilead to Israel. 'Should you not possess what Chemosh your god[102] causes you to

99. 11.40 says that in this annual festival, the women of Israel go out לתנות לבת־יפתח. The only other appearance in Judges of the verb תנה is in 5.11, where the Israelites 'recount the righteous acts of Yhwh'. By recounting Jephthah's daughter's submission to Canaanite sacrifice (note 11.36), Israel in essence celebrates her acquiescence to a kind of sacrifice that Deuteronomic law forbids. See also Mikael Sjöberg, *Wrestling with Textual Violence: The Jephthah Narrative in Antiquity and Modernity* (BMW, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), p. 66; Janzen, 'Why the Deuteronomist Told', pp. 347-49.

100. Some LXX manuscripts omit this rationale, but it is generally present in the witnesses of the LXX textual tradition, which manifest a variety of omissions in 12.4-5. See the discussion in Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle*, I, pp. 104-105.

101. So also, e.g., Walter Gross, *Richter* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2009), p. 316; Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Ephraim: Studien zur Geschichte des Stammes Ephraim von der Landnahme bis zur frühen Königszeit* (BZAW, 238; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1995), p. 254; Jens Kamlah, 'Das Ostjordanland im Zeitalter der Entstehung Israels', *ThQ* 186 (2006), pp. 118-33 (122).

102. That Jephthah believes that Chemosh is the god of Ammon rather than Moab is perhaps a testament to the same stupidity that leads him to believe that Yhwh would accept a child sacrifice (so Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, p. 89), and it also reflects his

possess', Jephthah asks Ammon, 'and all that Yhwh our God causes us to possess should we not possess?' (11.24). Jephthah's point is that Ammon is a foreign nation claiming land that does not belong to them; 12.4 suggests that Ephraim is acting just like a foreign nation in their invasion of Gilead, wrongly claiming, like the Ammonites, that Gilead actually belongs to them. It is notable that Ephraim ויצעק 'was called out' to fight in 12.1 just as the Ammonites 'were called out' to invade Israel in 10.17.[103] The narrative of Josh. 13.8-33 and 16.1-8 delineates the respective borders of Gilead and Ephraim, and Ephraim's land extends no further east than the Jordan (16.1). The foreignness of Ephraim is emphasized as well in the Shibboleth story that concludes 12.1-6, in which Gilead strikes down 42,000 Ephraimites at the ford of the Jordan, distinguishing them from Gileadites based on whether or not their accent allows them to pronounce the word as it is said in Gilead. The story presents Ephraim as people who do what the foreign nation in the Jephthah narrative does, marked apart from the true inhabitants of Gilead by their foreign accents.

The judge who performs a Canaanite sacrifice presides over a land in which Israelites clearly act as foreigners as they slaughter each other, and again we see that the nation and leader's decline into a kind of Canaanite-like identity is paralleled by intra-Israelite violence. This violence is notably worse than its previous occurrences, just as Israel's apostasy in the Jephthah story is notably worse; the report of the number of Ephraimites who die at the Jordan here dwarfs the intra-Israelite slaughter suggested by the Gideon and Abimelech stories. So again, the narrative clearly shows that the true threat to Israel is from within. They are the foreign enemy of Mesopotamian hegemony whose disloyalty is the cause of violence; they are the source of chaos, and they need to be colonized for their own good. And just as this increasing intensity of internecine violence parallels the increasing decline of Israel and the quality of its leadership, it parallels the anti-Northern bias of the south to north pattern; Ephraim, the dominant tribe of the Northern Kingdom, is particularly singled out as acting just like the foreign nation in this part of the narrative.

Some of the formulaic elements of the cycle of apostasy appear in the Samson narrative (13.1; 14.19; 15.14, 20; 16.31), but one common aspect of that pattern that does not appear there is Israel's cry for deliverance.

ignorance (or intentional misrepresentation) of the true (Deuteronomistic) story of how Ammon received their land, for according to Deut. 2.19-21 it was Yhwh and no other god who provided the Ammonites with their land.

103. The only other time the verb צעק is used in Judges in the sense of gathering an army is in 7.23-24, where it is used to refer to calling out Israel to pursue the defeated Midianites in defiance of Yhwh's earlier decision to make Gideon's army smaller. So the use of the verb here recalls not only the Ammonites' invasion, but an earlier act of a failure to obey Yhwh's command.

While Israel still worships Canaanite gods (13.1), they no longer exhibit any interest in seeking salvation from their foreign invaders; the tribe of Judah states at one point that they do not want to fight with Samson because they recognize their foreign oppressors as legitimate rulers (15.11). Samson exhibits no interest in acting like the previous judges and saving Israel. Following the announcement of his birth in Judges 13, we find two stories in Judges 14–15 and 16 that make up the bulk of the narrative devoted to him, and they share some obvious structural parallels: in both, Samson sees a woman; is persuaded by her to reveal a secret; is bound and handed over to the Philistines; and prays to Yhwh who answers him.[104] Samson's lack of interest in saving Israel means that Yhwh must go so far as to have Samson want to marry a Philistine (14.1-4) to force him into acting to begin to save Israel, which is what the divine messenger says he will do (13.5).[105] Yhwh then empowers him to kill a lion (14.6), and it is Samson's love for a foreign woman, in which Yhwh has involvement, combined with his leocide, that leads to the killings of the Philistines that follow (14.19; 15.14). This strange sequence of events appears necessary because Samson demonstrates no interest in saving Israel, nor does Israel express any interest in being saved. And while the story of 16.1-3 demonstrates Samson's extraordinary power, 16.4-21 shows that it is entirely dependent upon obedience to Yhwh, for when Samson's head is shaved (16.19) in violation of his Nazirite status (13.5), Yhwh leaves him (16.20). The story points to an obvious Deuteronomistic tenet: if Israel is to control its fate and remain free of colonial oppressors like the Philistines of the Samson story, it must remain obedient to Yhwh. There is, however, little in the narrative of Judges that suggests that Israel has the ability or even the desire to consistently act obediently.

Samson's story points forward to the concluding chapters of Judges in a number of ways, but among the most important parallels between his story and Judges 17–21 is his desire to marry a foreign woman because 'she is

104. For these and other similarities, see J. Cheryl Exum, 'Aspects of Symmetry and Balance in the Samson Saga', *JSOT* 19 (1981), pp. 3-29 (3-7).

105. 14.4 alludes to Yhwh's involvement in Samson's love for the Philistine woman by saying that he was searching for תאנה 'an opportunity' from the Philistines. Scholars often read תאנה as 'excuse, pretext, *Vorwand*', in the sense of Yhwh seeking an excuse to set off Samson's violent acts against the Philistines; see, e.g., Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 163; Gross, *Richter*, pp. 678-79; Soggin, *Judges*, p. 239; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 116-17. This is more or less the point I am making. LXX^{A} translates תאנה as ἀνταπόδομα 'repayment' and LXX^{B} as ἐκδίκησιν 'vengeance', but the Hebrew does not imply either one of these translations. Given Israel's failure to cry for salvation and Samson's utter lack of interest in providing it, 14.4 suggests rather that Yhwh is looking for an opportunity to have Samson begin to save Israel as 13.5 says that he will, rather than seeking vengeance against the Philistines, whom he has sent to punish Israel.

right in my eyes' (14.3; cf. 14.7); 17.6 and 21.25 succinctly summarize Israel's decline by saying that, by this point, 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'.[106] Samson is from Dan (13.2), the tribe that, in Judges 18, moves to the north, outside of the land Yhwh assigned to it within Israel in Josh. 19.41-45, and that wholeheartedly embraces idolatry. Samson also dies at his own hands, having been captured by the Philistines because he reveals the secret of his strength while violating his Nazirite vow, only to later kill himself and 3000 Philistines at the same time. As Samson does what is right in his own eyes and is responsible for his own destruction,[107] he prepares readers for Israel doing what is right in their own eyes and acting as their sole enemy in the final chapters. The Samson narrative segues from the cycle of apostasy, in which the Israelites are repetitively disloyal, repetitively cry out for salvation from the foreign enemy, and are repetitively saved by Yhwh through a judge, to the situation of Judges 17–21, where the foreigners disappear entirely from the narrative as Israel replaces them. They have embodied the disloyalty and rebellion that colonial hegemony says lies within the foreign enemies on the margins of the empire. This foreignness stands at the center of who Israel continually reveals themselves to be in Judges, and they are the foreign subalterns who need a colonizer. The foreign rule in the conclusion of Judges is Israelite rule, or at least a self-governance without any particular ruler, and the narrative, since it mentions four times that 'in those days there was no king in Israel' (17.6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25), an assertion twice placed beside the notice that 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes' (17.6; 21.25), suggests that this situation cries out for royal control of the people. The narrative does not explicitly say that a monarchy would have the effect of putting a stop to Israel's behavior and forcing the nation to be an obedient client to their suzerain as Moses orders them to be in Deut. 12.8, where he insists that Israel cease doing what is right in their own eyes, but it certainly does point readers toward one solution in particular.

Israel clearly cannot exist without some kind of rule. They have proven their disloyalty to their suzerain, and so their impiety as well, over and over in Judges, and Judges 17–21, where they have no leadership at all, exposes the depths of their nature as the foreign Other who needs to be colonized. Judges 17–18 is a story of idolatry that moves from a personal to a tribal level, and that concludes with a reference to exile, the situation of Dtr's readers. This leads us to the story of the internecine violence that concludes

106. For a discussion of some of the significant parallels between the story of Samson and Judges 17–21, see Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, pp. 89-111.

107. On this point, see Hudson, 'Living in a Land of Epithets', p. 51; Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 37-67.

Judges. Judges 19 opens with the story of the gang-rape and murder of the Levite's concubine in the Benjaminite city of Gibeah. The story is clearly comparing the men of Gibeah to foreigners,[108] for the Levite insists on traveling on to spend the night in this city because it is Israelite, rejecting his servant's advice to stop in Jebus, 'this Jebusite city', and states that 'we will not turn aside to a city of foreigners who are not Israelites' (19.11-12). It is not simply 'the men of the city' who are implicitly compared to foreigners in their intent to rape the Levite; even the old man who takes the Levite in for the night offers the Levite's concubine, a person who is not his to offer, along with his own daughter to his fellow citizens in lieu of the Levite so that the men can 'do to them what is good in your eyes' (19.24). It is even possible in 19.25 that the host, not the Levite, casts the Levite's concubine out to be raped.[109] It is clear why, in regard to this story, some scholars write of the Canaanization of Israel,[110] for throughout Judges 17–19, Israel is portrayed as foreign in both its cult and morality. The civil war of Judges 20 is most easily interpreted as punishment from Yhwh for all of Israel; Israel's intent is to march against Gibeah (20.9-10) to deal with 'the disgrace that they did in Israel', and against Benjamin, which refuses to punish the men of Gibeah (20.12-14), but as laudable as this attempt to do justice appears, an Israelite army more than 15 times the size of Benjamin's (20.15, 17) is twice defeated in battle and loses 40,000 soldiers (20.21, 25), even though each time Yhwh is first consulted by Israel about their battle plans (20.18-25). What begins as a punishment of Gibeah and Benjamin seems to become a punishment of all Israel in internecine violence, and perhaps readers should not be surprised by this since there has been punishment neither for Dan's idolatry of Judges 18 nor for the fact that, by now, 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'.[111]

108. So also, e.g., Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, pp. 207-208; Yairah Amit, 'Literature in the Service of Politics: Studies in Judges 19–21', in *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman and Benjamin Uffenheimer; JSOTSup, 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 28-40 (35); Jüngling, *Richter 19*, pp. 157-60.

109. So also Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 428; Tollington, 'The Book of Judges', p. 193 n. 32. The narrative says only, 'The man seized his concubine and sent her out to them', so it is not clear who the actor is.

110. E.g., Daniel I. Block, 'The Period of the Judges: Religious Disintegration under Tribal Rule', in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (ed. Avraham Gileadi; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 39-57 (48); Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 118-19.

111. For arguments that the violence of Judges 20 can be seen as punishment of Israel, see Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 194; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 178-85; Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 430; Marais, *Representation in Old Testament Narrative Texts*, p. 141.

As in the case of Judges 9, Yhwh is clearly involved in the intra-Israelite violence of Judges 20. The first two requests for divine guidance in 20.18, 23 lead to Israelite defeats, suggesting that Yhwh is happy to see all of Israel punished and not simply Benjamin. The narrative does not explicitly say that Yhwh fights against Israel in these two battles, yet it is difficult to otherwise explain such losses at the hands of such a numerically inferior foe. And Benjamin is punished as well, for Yhwh responds to Israel's third inquiry of 20.28 by saying, 'Go up, for tomorrow I will give him [Benjamin] into your hand', and 20.35 tells readers that 'Yhwh struck Benjamin from before Israel'. The rapists of Gibeah who do what is good in their own eyes and who are compared to foreigners are presumably killed, since only 600 Benjaminites survive. In fact, when Israel kills off the Benjaminites and burns their cities (20.47-48), they accomplish the virtual equivalent of חרם,[112] what Israel had done to the Canaanites and what Abimelech did to Shechem. Israel is Canaanite in its cult and morality in Judges 17–19, and in Judges 20 Benjamin suffers the same fate as the Canaanites did.

Yet the tribe of Benjamin is not the only group of Israelites to suffer, and the fact that Yhwh twice gives Israel oracles that lead to their own defeat and slaughter before acting to provide victory over Benjamin suggests that he is happy to see the entire nation destroy itself. At the lowest point in Israel's decline, in which the nation loses 40,000 warriors in battle in addition to the near extermination of the tribe of Benjamin, the pattern of intra-Israelite violence indicts the whole nation, including Judah. Both Israel's inquiry of 20.18—'Who will go up first for us?'—and Yhwh's response—'Judah will go up first'—sound much like the question and divine answer of 1.1-2 that led to Judah's successful חרם against the Canaanites,[113] an act that no other Israelite tribe imitates in Judges, at least not in regard to the Canaanites. The result of the inquiry in 20.18, however, is very different, for Judah, the leader of Israel, is defeated along with the rest of the nation. If Judah is the success story in Judges 1, it is singled out by Yhwh among the eleven tribes in 20.18 to lead Israel to failure and punishment.[114] Clearly, then, the

112. So also Robert G. Boling, 'In those days there was no king in Israel', in *A Light unto my Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers* (ed. Howard N. Bream, Ralph D. Heim, and Carey A. Moore; GTS, 4; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 33-48 (41-42); Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, p. 203; Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 69-71; Gross, *Richter*, pp. 865-66; Block, 'The Period of the Judges', p. 47; Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, pp. 36-38.

113. So also, e.g., Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 201; Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 429.

114. The idea, then, that Judah is chosen by Yhwh in 20.18 to enact justice (so, e.g., O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, pp. 12-17; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 119-21) hardly makes sense in the context of 20.18-21, where Judah simply leads Israel

statement that 'in those day there was no king in Israel; *everyone* did what was right in their own eyes' condemns all of Israel, even (and specifically) Judah, not only Benjamin and Dan. It is not simply that Judges continually refers to the apostasy of all of Israel, and not just that of the non-Judean tribes, but by the time of Samson it is Judah specifically who rebukes the judge for fighting the Philistines (15.11), while a Levite from Judah leads the idolatry in Dan in Judges 18.[115] The repetition of the language from Judg. 1.1-2 in regard to Judah but reversal of fortune reinforces the idea that Judah, like the rest of Israel, has become worse as time has gone on and so is as deserving of punishment as the rest of the nation, despite its earlier successes.[116] חרם had once distinguished between Israel and the Canaanites, but now that Israel has become like the Canaanites in their loyalty to Yhwh, they can destroy themselves in this way. Again, the true danger to Israel is from within as they become the foreign enemy of colonial discourse; they are in danger of destroying themselves.

Nor does intra-Israelite חרם stop with the slaughter of Benjamin, for Israel moves immediately to do the same to Jabesh-gilead (21.10-11). There is also little indication that a leaderless Israel has any hope of changing, for after enacting חרם on Jabesh-gilead, זקני העדה 'the elders of the congregation' (21.16) lead Israel at Shiloh in doing what the איש זקן 'old man' (19.16) who hosted the Levite in Gibeah did: they take women

to its own defeat. Susan Niditch refers to arguments for a pro-Judean bias to Judges as a whole as '[a]n influential, perhaps dominant scholarly point of view'—see her 'Judges, Kingship, and Political Ethics: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom', in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; LHBOTS, 502; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2009), pp. 59-70 (59)—and Gregory Wong sees 'an increasing tendency' in scholarship toward this view—see his 'Is There a Direct Pro-Judah Polemic in Judges?', *SJOT* 19 (2005), pp. 84-110 (84). It is not really possible to make this case in the context of Judah's failings toward the end of Judges, however. See Wong, 'Is There a Direct Pro-Judah Polemic?', pp. 103-105 and Dennis T. Olson, 'Buber, Kingship, and the Book of Judges: A Study of Judges 6–9 and 17–21', in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J.J.M. Roberts* (ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), pp. 199-218 (215).

115. See Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, pp. 201-202. See also Olson, 'Buber, Kingship, and the Book of Judges', pp. 214-15.

116. Boling sees Judah's leadership in defeat here as a reflection of the exilic punishment of the South according to the Deuteronomistic History ('In those days', p. 44). On the punishment of Judah (and all of Israel) in the civil war of Judges 20, see Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, pp. 178-85; Exum, 'The Centre Cannot Hold', p. 430; Wong, 'Is There a Direct Pro-Judah Polemic', pp. 102-103; Olson, 'Buber, Kingship, and the Book of Judges', p. 215; Michael Avioz, 'The Role and Significance of Jebus in Judges 19', *BZ* 51 (2007), pp. 249-56 (250-51); Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 194.

who are not theirs to take in order to give them to other men.[117] Israel's disloyal nature is manifested in its repetitive sin and punishment earlier in Judges, and now the foreign, wicked, and rebellious nation appears doomed to self-immolation. As massive and continual Israelite sin now dominates the narrative, foreigners move out of it entirely, and the violence for which foreigners were wholly and then partially responsible has been completely replaced by internecine slaughter, as Israelites who act like Canaanites have חרם done to them by other Israelites. In its sin (Canaanite worship), punishment (חרם), and role as a tool of punishment, Israel entirely replaces the foreign nations who are no longer necessary in the narrative, and as its sin is at its worst, the punishment it inflicts on itself is worse even than that of Gilead's slaughter of Ephraim at the end of the Jephthah narrative. Israel may have replaced the Canaanites in the land, but they have become the foreign Other of colonial discourse that the narrative has been warning is at the base of their nature. They are as wicked and rebellious, as chaotic and impious as any nation portrayed in colonial conquest accounts. If foreigners are Israel's Other and enemy throughout Judges,[118] there is no need to portray them in the conclusion, for Israel is the Other here, the opposite of the Self for which Moses pleaded in Deuteronomy. 17.6; 18.1; 19.1; and 21.25 all suggest that the monarchy might provide a potential solution to this problem, and if we cannot read Judges' conclusion as pro-Judean (and therefore as advocating for a specifically Judean monarchy) we can also read Judges as a whole as portraying the North as somewhat more evil than Judah. But Judges 17–21 is clear that all of Israel is evil and foreign and needs some kind of leadership to colonize the nation and to make them into the loyal subalterns whom Yhwh desires. The narrative ultimately does not allow the Judeans of the exile to see themselves as significantly superior to Northerners. Given how the monarchy has been presented in Dtr's narrative so far—primarily, that is, as a foreign institution—kingship appears to be a somewhat odd solution, and yet, as we shall see in the following chapters, the narrative presents Israel as having a rapidly dwindling number of viable leadership options that can rein in the nation's foreign and self-destructive nature.

117. So, e.g., Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 82-84; Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, p. 196.

118. So Uriah Y. Kim, 'Postcolonial Criticism: Who is the Other in the Book of Judges?', in Gale A. Yee (ed.), *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd edn, 2007), pp. 161-82 (173-74).

Chapter 5

The Necessary King in the Narratives of Judges and Saul

1. *Introduction to the monarchy: The imperial king and cultic loyalty*

With the suggestion at the end of Judges that a monarchy might provide the solution to Israel's rebellious and foreign nature, Dtr's narrative moves to the third part of its three-pronged pro-Davidic attack. Each part mimics colonial hegemony: Dtr casts Yhwh as the colonial suzerain to whom Israel owes absolute, and particularly cultic obedience; it portrays Israel as the disloyal client whose rebellious nature means that it must be colonized for its own good; and it presents the monarchy as the only institution with any success in this act of colonization. It is to this last point that we turn in this and the final chapters, and it is one that involves a reinscription of Mesopotamian colonial discourse, just like the presentation of Israel as the disloyal client. In promoting Yhwh's suzerainty in a subversion of imperial claims in Deuteronomy, Dtr carefully avoids assigning any specific powers to an Israelite human king, making Israel's covenant with Yhwh unmediated by any human power. In Judges, however, the narrative presents readers with historical evidence (as it would appear to at least sympathetic exilic readers) that Israel is precisely as foreign and evil as the Canaanites. The rule of the judges has not altered Israel's rebellious nature: Gideon and Jephthah are involved in activities Dtr associates with the Canaanite cult; by Samson's story neither nation nor judge has any interest even in freeing themselves from foreign rule; and by Judges 20–21 Israel does the חרם to itself that it had done in the past to the Canaanites. The repetition of Israel's failure and decline in Judges demonstrates that leadership by the judges will not serve to protect the nation from itself, and by 1 Samuel 8, as we shall see, the options of viable national leadership will have narrowed considerably. By the time of 1 Samuel 15, the *de jure* ending of Saul's leadership, readers will see that the mere existence of a monarchy is not a panacea, but they will also see that a monarchy that can lead the nation in cultic loyalty might be. Judges 17–21 and 1 Samuel 1–15 establish the necessity for a monarchy to civilize Israel, return it to loyalty to the suzerain, and rein in its natural tendency to act like the suzerain's foreign enemy. By the time readers reach 1 Samuel 15, they are clear as to how a monarchy should not lead,

for the stories of Saul show that Yhwh evaluates kings on the basis of their cultic leadership alone, just as Judges demonstrates that he evaluates Israel on the basis of their cultic actions alone. If Saul has failed at proper cultic leadership by this point in the narrative, however, Dtr does not offer readers any better leadership alternative than the monarchy. What Israel needs is leadership from a royal house, but one that pleases Yhwh more than the Saulides do.

If the portrayal of Israel as a foreign, chaotic, rebellious people is a reinscription of colonial discourse, so is the role of the king that Dtr begins to establish at the end of Judges. To return briefly to ideas we have already discussed, the Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians understood their kings to reign because the gods had chosen them. The kings defeat foreigners and relegate them to the sphere of the colonized because they are enemies of the gods.[1] The foreign enemy does not respect the gods' authority or cult, and is always wicked and evil, and is often said to be in rebellion against the treaty with the suzerain. As Mesopotamia's Other, the foreigner is part of a chaos that lies on the periphery of imperial order and control and needs to be civilized. Unlike the foreign enemy, the Other these texts describe, the king is consistently portrayed with positive traits, the benefactor of all conquered peoples who ends their evil and ignorance and leads them to proper service to the divine powers that control history.[2] Since Dtr is going to go on to

1. As we discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the Mesopotamian kings understand their rule as a divine mandate (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 25, 100-101, 203; Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* [VAB, 4; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1912], pp. 88-89, 94-97, 112-13, 120-23, 262-63) and victories over the colonies reflect divine will (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 3, 103, 299-300, 385) accomplished with divine aid (e.g., *ARI*, II, p. 134; *ARAB*, II, p. 11, 17, 77-78, 124, 265, 292, 333). See also Peter Machinist, 'Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C.', in *Anfänge politischen Denkens im Antiken: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (ed. Kurt Raaflaub; SHK, 24; Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 77-104 (84); Simo Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Concepts of Kingship and their Heritage in Mesopotamian Antiquity', in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger; HANEM, 11; Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), pp. 35-44 (36); Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1992), pp. 15-17; Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries* B.C.E. (SBLMS, 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 9-10.

2. Similarly, as we saw in Chapter 3, the Mesopotamian kings write of the foreign Other as having no respect for the gods or their cults; e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 22, 32, 33, 79, 125, 243, 301-302, 393. For Assyria and Babylon, one of the benefits the empire brings to the colonized is that they can teach these people to be like the Mesopotamians and to participate in service to the Mesopotamian gods; e.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-91, 94-95, 104-105, 124-25, 146-53; *ANET*, pp. 282, 284, 286; *ARAB*, II, p. 57.

argue that a monarchy—specifically, a Davidic one—is necessary to restore Israel's loyalty to Yhwh and wear his yoke (to paraphrase a Mesopotamian expression), we can note here that these descriptions of the Other apply to Israel in Dtr's narrative. Like the foreigner in the Mesopotamian inscriptions, Dtr presents Israel as a rebel and sinner, a nation who is not loyal to its suzerain. Dtr moves on in its narrative to present the monarchy as the institution with the ability to civilize the people and to bring their ignorance and evil to an end, turning them into the cultically loyal nation Yhwh wants them to be, leading them to properly serve the sovereign divine power.

And for Dtr, then, good kings are those who properly lead Israel by making them wear the yoke of Yhwh, forcing them to be loyal to their divine suzerain by colonizing them and ending their Otherness. Such kings, as we shall see in Chapters 6 and 7, are found only among the Davidides, and the best of these, in their loyalty to Yhwh, model the Self that the subalterns of Israel can only strive to imitate under the leadership of the royal yoke. So like the Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian kings, the good Davidides benefit the colonial subalterns,[3] for in forcing them into cultic loyalty they save the people from destruction. Like the kings of Mesopotamia, the good Davidides provide proper cultic leadership. Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony continually refers to the king's devotion to the gods in regard to his work in the repair of temples and divine images, the provisions for sacrifices, the performance of rituals, and so on.[4] If the good Davidides are not given priestly titles as the colonial rulers of Assyria and Babylon are,[5] Dtr

3. As we discussed in Chapter 3, Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian hegemony insists that the king benefits the colonized by imposing just laws upon them, restoring their towns, cultivating previously unproductive land, protecting them from enemies, and so on. For examples, see Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 82-83, 112-13, 124-25; *ARAB*, II, pp. 30, 33, 51, 60-66, 77, 213, 300-301, 350, 380.

4. The Neo-Assyrian records are full of royal commands in regard to such cultic activities and to requests from priests for royal leadership in such issues; see the correspondence in Steven W. Cole and Peter Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (SAA, 13; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998). And virtually every Neo-Babylonian royal inscription known to us emphasizes the king's devotion and constant attention to such matters; see the texts in Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*.

5. As we saw in Chapter 3, Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings bear priestly titles such as *šangû* and *išippu*; for the uses of such titles for kings, see M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967), pp. 109-10, 287-88; Peter Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria', in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), pp. 152-88 (153-54); Hanspeter Schaudig, 'Cult Centralization in the Ancient Near East? Conceptions of the Ideal Capital in the Ancient Near East', in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann;

will, nonetheless, portray them as in complete control of the cult. While Dtr does not always portray the Davidides positively when it comes to royal control of the people's worship, it is only fair to point out that it is written within an exilic context in which its intended audience may already be predisposed to see Davidic leadership as a failure, as we discussed in Chapter 1. As it argues that cultic failures are key to understanding Israel's history, it does what other ancient Near Eastern historiographies like the Weidner Chronicle, the Verse Account of Nabonidus, and the Cyrus Cylinder (among others) do: it contrasts past royal failures and successes in cultic leadership. The Weidner Chronicle shows how kings who properly follow the traditional instructions for maintaining the cult at Esagila prosper and receive power from Marduk, while those who do not are faced with rebellion and loss of empire (*ABC*, pp. 145-51). The Verse Account of Nabonidus and the Cyrus Cylinder describe how Nabonidus's abandonment of the *akītu* and all other traditional festivals leads to the end of the Babylonian empire, since Marduk must choose Cyrus to restore the divine images to their temples and reinstate the proper cultic rites (*ANET*, pp. 312-16). The argument of Dtr's narrative that we will explore in this and the following chapters will also juxtapose pictures of royal failure and royal success, but if the monarchy is a less than perfect office of leadership, it is the best of the options the narrative presents readers with. And as we shall see in Chapter 7 Dtr closes the narrative of 2 Kings with a blueprint for the Davidide in exile that shows him how to become perfect in cultic leadership, suggesting that he has ancestors whom he can imitate in restoring traditional cultic norms, a leadership success that will result in a return to and prosperity in the land, something that Dtr suggests is possible only under the Davidides.

2. *The monarchy in Judges and Saul's successes in 1 Samuel*

In Chapter 4, I pointed to royal leadership in the narrative of Judges as something indicative of foreignness, since all the kings there except for Abimelech are foreigners associated with enacting Yhwh's punishment on Israel (Judg. 3.8, 12; 4.2; 11.12). In a sense, the Law of the King of Deut. 17.14-20 describes the monarchy as an originally foreign institution as well, since it permits Israel to have a king 'like all the nations'. Yet while the narrative of Judges can use the motif of the foreign king as a way to influence readers' perceptions of Abimelech and his actions against Israel, Judges 17–21 suggests that this office of leadership need not be alien to the nation. The opening chapters of Saul's story actually allude to aspects of the story of Judges 17–21, contrasting an (originally) successful reign of Saul with

BZAW, 405; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 145-68 (157); Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, pp. 132-35.

the chaos of a leaderless Israel in Judges. And even though the story of Abimelech, the first Israelite king, is one of a ruler whose reign begins with a mass fratricide that Yhwh punishes, it can still be read as a pro-monarchic story that condemns the actions of a particular king and of subjects who are disloyal to the royal house.

Still, it is no cause for wonder that the scholars can view the story of Judges 9, and in particular Jotham's fable of 9.8-15, as an anti-monarchic lesson, given that Abimelech's narrative opens with the murder of his 70 brothers.[6] The case is not merely that the first Israelite king we come across in the narrative does nothing to confront or remove the Baalism established in Judg. 8.33 and slaughters his brothers, the other sons of Gideon/Jerubbaal, with the collusion of 'the lords of Shechem' to eliminate potential rivals to his rule over Shechem (9.1-5). His one surviving brother, Jotham, relates a fable[7] to the lords of Shechem immediately following the fratricide about the trees and their search for a king, a fable that appears to criticize the actions of the new king and his supporters. In the fable, the olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine each refuses the trees' offer of kingship, claiming that taking up the office would demand ceasing to produce their important fruits. The אטד, potentially a bramble or the much taller *Zizyphus spina-Christi*,[8] neither clearly accepts nor rejects the offer, but says instead that

6. E.g., Martin Buber, *The Kingship of God* (trans. Richard Scheimann; New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 75; Wolfgang Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* (BBB, 18; Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1963), p. 285; Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testamentes und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* (WMANT, 49; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), pp. 19-32; Uwe Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Richterbuch* (BZAW, 192; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 188-90; David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible II* (JSOTSup, 39; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 71-72; Moshe Weinfeld, 'Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia', in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism* (ed. Richard Elliott Friedman; HSS, 26; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 75-116 (86); Gregory T.K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup, 111; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), p. 209; Jacobus Marais, *Representation in Old Testament Narrative Texts* (BIS, 36; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 134-35.

7. The term 'fable' really has no agreed-upon meaning; see Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable: An Introduction* (trans. Christine Jackson-Holzberg; SAFPC; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 19-20. 9.8-15 has been called a fable, apologue, allegory, and parable; see Jan de Waard, 'Jotham's Fable: An Exercise in Clearing away the Unclear', in *Wissenschaft und Kirche: Festschrift für Eduard Lohse* (ed. Kurt Aland and Siegfried Meurer; TAB, 4; Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1989), pp. 362-70 (362 nn. 1-3) for a bibliography of the various ways in which these verses have been categorized.

8. For a list of translations by modern scholars of this word in the fable, see Silviu Tatu, 'Jotham's Fable and the *crux interpretum* in Judges ix', *VT* 56 (2006), pp. 105-24

if the offer is sincere the trees can 'take refuge in my shade', but if not, fire from the אטד will destroy the trees. For some scholars, the message of this fable is that kingship attracts only the worthless, those who, like the אטד and unlike the olive tree, fig tree, and the vine, produce nothing of value;[9] for those who see the אטד as a bramble, its call to take refuge in its shade is ridiculous, since such a bush would be so short as to be unable to cast a shadow for trees.[10]

Nonetheless, even if the אטד truly is a small bramble and not the tall *Z. spina-Christi*, the 'shade' to which the אטד of the fable refers can be read in the imperial language of the 'shade of the king', a reference to the protection and benefits that the king provides his subjects,[11] and which a Neo-Assyrian document refers to as 'gracious' and 'exceedingly pleasant'.[12] And once we pay attention to the fable and see how it fits into the narrative of Judges 9 as a whole, we can see that it and the entire story of Abimelech do not function to critique the monarchy. Jotham's application of the fable—its moral, we could say—in 9.16-20 does not critique the trees' desire or search for a king, but focuses solely on the אטד's warning concerning the sincerity of his future subjects' request. Jotham asks Shechem if they have dealt with his father and his father's house in true sincerity (9.16, 19). Israel approached Jerubbaal/Gideon in 8.22 with an offer of dynastic rule—'Rule over us', they demanded, 'you and your son and your grandson'—for

(111-13). The אטד is normally seen as the small bramble *Lycium europaeum*; so, e.g., John Gray, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 304; de Waard, 'Jotham's Fable', p. 369; F. Nigel Hepper, 'Plants of the Bible', in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld; 6 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), IV, pp. 536-46 (541); J. Ebach and U. Rüterswörden, 'Pointen in der Jothamfabel', *BN* 31 (1986), pp. 11-18, especially 16-18; Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand*, p. 21; Barnabas Lindars, 'Jotham's Fable—A New Form Critical Analysis', *JTS* 24 (1973), pp 355-66 (356 n. 2). For the identification of the אטד with the *Zizyphus spina-Christi*, which can reach up to ten meters in height, see Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible: A Complete Handbook to All the Plants* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 155-56; Tatu, 'Jotham's Fable', pp. 117-22; David Janzen, 'Gideon's House as the אטד: A Proposal for Reading Jotham's Fable', *CBQ* 74 (2012), pp. 465-75 (468-71).

9. E.g., Buber, *The Kingship of God*, p. 75; Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch*, p. 285; Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand*, pp. 19-32; Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, pp. 188-90; Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative II*, pp. 71-72; Weinfeld, 'Zion and Jerusalem', p. 86.

10. E.g., Lindars, 'Jotham's Fable', pp. 357, 361; de Waard, 'Jotham's Fable', p. 366; Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand*, p. 21; Wolfgang Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism: A Theological Reading of the Gideon-Abimelech Narrative* (JSOTSup, 329; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 220-21. And, as Tatu, 'Jotham's Fable', p. 117 points out, the *Lycium europaeum* casts only internal shade.

11. See Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand*, pp. 21-22.

12. Simo Parpola, *Letters from Babylonian Scholars* (SAA, 10; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993), p. 166.

Jerubbaal, as Jotham points out in 9.17, saved them from Midian. Since, as Jotham also points out in 9.18, Shechem colluded with Abimelech in the murder of Jerubbaal's 70 sons, it is difficult to see how Shechem has acted in sincerity toward Jerubbaal and his house. The fable and its moral, that is, do not criticize kingship, for Jotham's moral has no comment at all on the legitimacy of the trees' search for a king, and he clearly views his father's work on Israel's behalf highly, portraying him as Israel's *de facto* king in whose shade the nation took refuge from the Midianites. Shechem and Israel, like the fables' trees, asked someone to rule; Jerubbaal protected them in his shade; but his house was not treated in sincerity, since Shechem conspired to murder his sons. And while Jerubbaal is never called a king, he is offered dynastic rule, and the moral Jotham applies to his fable makes it clear enough that he views his father and his house as royal, even if Abimelech alone formally becomes king (9.6). The fable and its moral critique disloyal subjects who do not treat the house they asked to rule in sincerity, and who attack it instead; the fable and the moral are, in fact, strikingly pro-monarchic.[13]

Since Shechem has not acted in sincerity with Jeubbaal and his house, Abimelech and Shechem destroy each other, just as Jotham warns at the end of his moral (9.20). Most of the rest of Judges 9 contains the story of how Abimelech and Shechem destroy each other (9.34-55) in explicit accordance with the moral of Jotham's fable (9.56-57): 'the curse of Jotham son of Jerubbaal came upon them', and Abimelech even uses fire to destroy Shechem (9.49), the very metaphor of destruction Jotham employs at the end of his fable (9.20). Yhwh exhibits no interest in this story in punishing Israel for the Baalism that it has begun in 8.33; according to 9.23-24, Yhwh's goal is to punish Abimelech and Shechem for their treatment of Jerubbaal's house. Since Yhwh repays both Abimelech and Shechem according to Jotham's curse, Judges 9 appears to function not as another revolution in the cycle of apostasy but as Yhwh's support for Jotham's claims about the loyalty subjects must show to a royal house. By having the story largely ignore the existing apostasy in Israel and focus instead on the duties that Israel owes to the royal dynasty, we see a story of strong divine support for the monarchy. Yhwh is willing to punish those who attack a royal house (at least when this attack is without divine sanction), even though this particular house is

13. See Janzen, 'Gideon's House as the אטד'. For scholars who argue that 9.8-20 critique the way Abimelech became king rather than the monarchy itself, see, e.g., Gordon K. Oeste, *Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Right to Rule: Windows on Abimelech's Rise and Demise in Judges 9* (LHBOTS, 546; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2011), p. 113; Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History* (SBLDS, 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 130-32; Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS, 38; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 106-107.

responsible for instituting apostasy within Israel (8.27).[14] There is perhaps a lesson here in the story of the first Israelite king for exilic readers. As bad as they may have found Davidic leadership to be, unless Yhwh says otherwise, they must treat this royal house with sincerity or face punishment.

To turn now to Judges 17–21, the next section of Judges that refers to an Israelite monarchy, we have seen already that these chapters are not clearly pro-Judean. This conclusion to the book presents Israel at its nadir, at least up to this point in the narrative, and Judah is not exempted from the claim that 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'. By the time readers reach Judges 17–21, where they encounter stories of idolatry, gang-rape, and full-fledged Israelite civil war, the narrative repeatedly mentions that 'in those days there was no king in Israel' (17.6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25), a phrase that it twice places beside 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes' (17.6; 21.25). For scholars who see a pro-Judean and anti-Northern bias to Judges, the point of these linked phrases is to convince readers that only a monarchy can rescue Israel from its cycle of sin and punishment[15] (despite the earlier appearance in Judges of the monarchy as a foreign institution or, in the case of Abimelech, a political disaster),[16] and that only a monarchy

14. One could argue that Abimelech is a king whom Yhwh destroys along with Shechem, but the narrative in Judges 9 explicitly presents the fulfillment of the moral Jotham applies to his fable. Since this moral points specifically to punishment for the mistreatment of a royal house, then it is to this point specifically that the narrative leads readers.

15. Some scholars, that is to say, read the linked phrases 'in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes' in 17.6 and 21.25 as making an unambiguous argument that a monarchy will eliminate the civil and cultic anomism that prevails in the narrative of Judges. See, e.g., Yairah Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS, 25; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 100-102; Philip E. Satterthwaite, '"No king in Israel": Narrative Criticism and Judges 17–21', *TynBul* 44 (1993), pp. 75-88 (86); Gale A. Yee, 'Ideological Criticism: Judges 17–21 and the Dismembered Body', in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Gale A. Yee; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd edn, 2007), pp. 138-60 (151-52); Meir Sternberg, 'Time and Space in Biblical (Hi)story Telling: The Grand Chronology', in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory* (ed. Regina M. Schwartz; Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 81-145 (109); Marc Brettler, 'The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics', *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 395-418 (408-409); Buber, *Kingship of God*, pp. 77-80; Andrew D.H. Mayes, 'Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology in Judges 17–21', *BibInt* 9 (2001), pp. 241-58 (254-55); Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, pp. 264-66; E. Theodore Mullen, Jr, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 163-80; Keith W. Whitelam, *The Just King: Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup, 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1979), p. 33.

16. So Buber, for example, sees Judges 1–16 as so strongly opposed to the institution of kingship and Judges 17–21 as so firmly supportive of it that he writes of these sections of Judges as being two different books (*Kingship of God*, pp. 77-80). For discussions of

from Judah will be able to succeed in this. While there is no causative link between the two phrases—the narrative does not clearly state that everyone does what is right in their own eyes because there is no king—one cannot help but be sympathetic to readers who interpret the narrative this way. Yhwh never commands the judges to lead Israel in cultic loyalty, and they are portrayed most obviously as military leaders,[17] and yet the fact that they are said to judge Israel suggests a leadership role outside of a purely martial one, and one in which, given the portrayal of Israel we find in Judges, they have failed. Certainly Gideon, who institutes some kind of idolatry, and Jephthah, who employs Canaanite child sacrifice in the Yahwistic cult, are leadership failures by the narrative's standards.

And since Judges 17–21 clearly does not present a leaderless Israel as a viable option, why does the narrative not make an explicit and causative connection between the lack of a king and the people's insistence on doing what is right in their own eyes? There are really two answers to this question. First, we have not yet seen the full range of leadership offices available to Israel, for readers have yet to see many examples of priests and prophets in action, at least outside of Aaron's priestly failure in regard to the golden calf in Deuteronomy. By not rushing to judgment as to what kind of leadership Israel needs, the narrative appears more objective, and readers will have a chance to see the failures of judges, priests, and prophet as they move through the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, failures that point readers toward kingship as the only viable office of leadership. Second, and perhaps more obviously, the first king readers will encounter after the conclusion of Judges is Saul, and he is ultimately portrayed as a failure. Not just any kind of monarchy will do for Dtr, and readers are introduced to the potential drawbacks in a monarchy before they are introduced to David, the solution the narrative finally offers. In fact, an important aspect of Saul's narrative is

the negative attitude toward the monarchy in Judges, see Buber, *Kingship of God*, pp. 66-77; Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. Jane S. Doull; JSOTSup, 15; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981), p. 47; Pauline Deryn Guest, 'Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges', *SJOT* 11 (1997), pp. 241-69 (255-60); Marais, *Representation in Old Testament Narrative Texts*, pp. 134-35; J.G. McConville, 'King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History', in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup, 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 271-95 (271-72); William J. Dumbrell, "'In those days there were no kings in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes": The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered', *JSOT* 25 (1983), pp. 23-33 (27-28).

17. Timo Veijola, *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (STT, B/198; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1977), p. 29; Gerbrandt, *Kingship in the Deuteronomistic History*, p. 139.

to show readers what does and does not matter when it comes to royal leadership. Again, some of the ancient Near Eastern history writings to which we compared Dtr in Chapter 2, such as the Weidner Chronicle, the Esarhaddon Chronicle, the Akitu Chronicle, and the Cyrus Cylinder, describe royal cultic failures as well as royal cultic successes. Saul's story is ultimately one of failure. Nonetheless, as we shall see, Dtr maintains Yhwh's commitment to the monarchy itself even in the midst of the narrative of Saul's failure, just as the Weidner Chronicle *et alii* do not challenge the legitimacy of kingship, but simply point to the kinds of cultic actions kings should and should not carry out.

To begin with this second issue first, the failings of Saul in 1 Samuel have led some scholars to see Judges 19–21 as anti-Saulide, a preparation for readers that predisposes them to view Saul negatively. Yairah Amit provides the most thorough list of parallels between Judges 19–21 and the story of Saul, and she sees the chapters as anti-Saulide propaganda.[18] Amit writes of a 'hidden polemic' against Saul in Judges 19–21; the narrative here does not refer to him by name, but, she argues, it prepares readers to be ill-disposed toward him by the time they reach 1 Samuel 9, where he appears as a character for the first time. Among the damning parallels that shape readers' impressions of Saul in Judges 19–21, she feels, is the condemnation of Gibeah, Saul's hometown, in Judges 19 and of Benjamin, Saul's tribe, in Judges 20. Gibeah is portrayed as a town of rapists and Benjamin as a lawless tribe who protects the criminals of Gibeah. Judges 19–21 mentions the name 'Gibeah' 22 times, while it appears only eight more times in the rest of the Bible, and fully one quarter of the biblical references to 'Benjamin' as a tribal name appear in these three chapters. In the story of Judges 21, readers find that Jabesh-gilead, a city which Saul saves from destruction in 1 Samuel 11, refused to send soldiers to aid in the civil war against Benjamin that Israel launched to punish Gibeah. In fact, Saul's act of cutting his oxen into twelve pieces in 1 Sam. 11.7 to call Israel out to war to defend Jabesh-gilead is uncannily reminiscent of the Levite's act in Judg. 19.30 of

18. I will be referring to her findings in 'Literature in the Service of Politics: Studies in Judges 19–21', in *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman and Benjamin Uffenheimer; JSOTSup, 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 28-40 and in *Hidden Polemics*, pp. 179-86. For examples of other scholars who make the argument that Judges 19–21 is anti-Saulide, and who provide similar pieces of evidence, see Brettler, 'The Book of Judges', pp. 412-13; Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 112-13; Mayes, 'Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology', pp. 257-58; Buber, *Kingship of God*, p. 79; Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, pp. 264-66; Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 128.

cutting up the body of his concubine, whom the men of Gibeah had raped, in order to call Israel to consider the outrage. Besides these aspects of the story of Judges 19–21, there are many others that appear to serve no narrative purpose except to create parallels to the story of Saul and thus to cause readers, once they reach that story, to think back to the final three chapters of Judges. The city of Ramah, where Saul is anointed (1 Samuel 9–10), appears in Judg. 19.13; Mizpah, where Saul is publically recognized as king (1 Sam. 10.17-27), appears in Judg. 21.1-8; the Levite of Judges 19 walks with donkeys as Saul looks for donkeys in 1 Samuel 9; both encounter an old man from Ephraim (Judg. 19.16);[19] the people go out after Saul 'as one man' to save Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. 11.7) as Israel was assembled 'as one man' (Judg. 20.1) in response to the Levite's summons; and in Judg. 20.45-47 the 600 survivors of Benjamin take refuge at the Rock of Rimmon, which is where Saul goes with 600 men in 1 Sam. 14.2. These parallels between Judges 19–21 and Saul's story appear so obvious that Marc Brettler concludes that 'hidden' is perhaps not the most appropriate adjective to apply to this apparent polemic against Saul at the end of Judges.[20]

The parallels between Judges 19–21 and 1 Samuel 9–11 (where all but one of the parallels with Judges 19–21 appear) seem striking enough that it is certainly within the realm of possibility that, when readers reach the opening chapters of Saul's story, they will think back to the last story of Judges. It is much less clear, however, that they will think less of Saul upon comparing the state of Israel under his leadership in 1 Samuel 9–11 to that of a leaderless Israel engulfed in anomism and civil war in Judges 19–21. For example, in Judg. 21.1-14, Israel goes out to war and does חרם to Jabesh-gilead in order to take women from the city to give to the survivors of Benjamin, the tribe they have just annihilated. Even if one does interpret this act as justified based on the city's failure to send troops to fight Benjamin,[21] this does not change the fact that in 1 Samuel 11 there is no hint of wrongdoing in Jabesh-gilead. And Saul does not do חרם to an Israelite city; he saves it from a foreigner who not only wanted to capture the city but to 'gouge

19. The old man whom Saul meets in 1 Sam. 9.18 is, of course, Samuel. The narrator and Israel have already described Samuel as 'old' in 8.1, 4; for Samuel's Ephraimite descent see 1 Sam. 1.1.

20. Mark Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (OTR; London: Routledge, 2002), p. 89.

21. This is certainly a minority opinion, but it is maintained by some scholars. See, e.g., Amit, *The Book of Judges*, pp. 337-39; Susan Niditich, 'Judges, Kingship, and Political Ethics: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom', in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; LHBOTS, 502; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2009), pp. 59-70 (68-69); Robert G. Boling, 'In those days there was no king in Israel', in *A Light unto my Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers* (ed. Howard N. Bream, Ralph D. Heim and Carey A. Moore; GTS, 4; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 33-48 (43).

out every right eye, and I will make it a disgrace in all of Israel' (1 Sam. 11.2). Rather than annihilating the Israelite city, Saul saves it. Indeed, when given the opportunity following his salvation of Jabesh-gilead to kill Israelites who had previously opposed his anointing, Saul refuses to imitate the Israelite self-slaughter of Judges 20–21, saying, 'no one will die this day, because God has given salvation to Israel' (11.12-13). It is difficult to see here how the portrayal of the situation of Saul, Israel, and Jabesh-gilead in 1 Samuel 11 is not an improvement on the one that readers encountered of a leaderless Israel and the same city in Judges 21, where the story of Jabesh-gilead is part of a larger narrative of a wicked nation devouring itself.[22] And as Stuart Lasine notes, there is a real point to Saul's action of cutting his oxen into twelve pieces and sending them around Israel to call them to help him save Jabesh-gilead; in the message that accompanies the pieces, Saul states, 'whoever does not go out after Saul and after Samuel, thus it will be done to his oxen' (11.7). The act of cutting, that is, is a warning of punishment for failure to respond. Should readers, upon reaching this story, think back to the Levite's similar act of cutting up the body of his concubine into twelve pieces, it merely appears perverse in comparison, for his cutting up of his concubine does not symbolize punishment or anything else; it simply seems to be bodily mutilation for its own sake.[23]

As a result, readers who notice parallels with the last story of Judges once they reach 1 Samuel 9–11 could well conclude that the absence of a Saul-like figure in Judges—indeed, the absence of a king in general, to which Judg. 17.6; 18.1; 19.1; and 21.25 point—is what explains the disaster of Judges 17–21. There are many parallels between the stories of Judges 19–21 and Saul in 1 Samuel 9–11 that can draw readers of 1 Samuel to think back to the end of Judges, but in the only ones where Saul's presence makes an appreciable difference in Israel's state in comparison to its state in Judges 19–21, Saul appears to be an improvement. Besides the salvation of Jabesh-gilead (a sharp contrast with the destruction of it in Judges 20), due in part to his cutting up of his oxen (a sharp contrast with the Levite's mutilation of his concubine), the many other parallels with Judges in 1 Samuel 9–11—the donkeys, an old man from Ephraim, the references to Ramah and Mizpah, and so on—do not make Saul look either good or bad. At most, they might make readers think back to the situation of Israel in Judges 19–21, but in doing so, readers will only conclude that Israel is truly better off with a king, and with Saul in particular. Whereas Gibeah was once a town of rapists, it

22. So also Michael Avioz, 'The Role and Significance of Jebus in Judges 19', *BZ* 51 (2007), pp. 249-56; Stuart Lasine, 'Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World', *JSOT* 29 (1984), pp. 37-59 (42); Yee, 'Ideological Criticism', pp. 156-57; Walter Gross, *Richter* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2009), p. 821; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 111-13.

23. Lasine, 'Guest and Host', p. 43; see also Yee, 'Ideological Criticism', p. 155.

has now produced a king whom Yhwh uses to save Israel. As the parallels in 1 Samuel 9–11 cause readers to think back to the disastrous situation in Judges 19–21, it will be easy for them to conclude retrospectively that there is a causative relationship between the phrases 'in those days there was no king in Israel' and 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'—that is, that it was the lack of a king that caused everyone to do what was right in their own eyes—a relationship that Judg. 17.6 and 21.25 suggest, but do not explicitly make. Moreover, if readers think back to the Law of the King, they will see further that Saul fits the requirements there: he is not a foreigner; Yhwh chooses him; and he does not acquire many horses or wives or much wealth.[24] (Admittedly, of course, he does not have a copy of the law written for him as Deut. 17.18 demands.) Despite older scholarly claims that 1 Samuel 8–12 includes both pro- and anti-monarchical sources,[25] we can say that the presentation of Saul through 1 Samuel 11, at least, is overwhelmingly positive, a clear improvement on Israel's situation with no leadership at all in Judges 19–21. What is not immediately apparent, however, is why the narrative of 1 Samuel 9–11 is constructed with parallels to Judges 19–21 so as to suggest a causative relationship when the following chapters in 1 Samuel are going to present Saul as a failed king.

3. *The request for a king*

The answer to that question really lies in 1 Samuel 13–15, the part of Saul's narrative that presents his real failings as a king. Before we move to that answer, however, let us return to the first point that I made above in response to the question as to why Judges 17–21 does not explicitly state that a king would solve Israel's problem, namely, that Dtr presents readers with the failures of other leadership offices so as to present the monarchy as the only viable kind of rule. The final picture readers receive of judges in Dtr's narrative is overwhelmingly negative and, in fact, Israel's request for a king

24. Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 203-206.

25. While many scholars see a combination of pro- and anti-monarchical sources in 1 Samuel 8–12, there is no consensus explanation for the origins of the sources. For example, Julius Wellhausen sees an early pro-monarchical story combined by deuteronomistic redaction with a later anti-monarchical one (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* [Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 4th edn, 1963], pp. 240-46); Frank Crüsemann argues that the Deuteronomistic author of 1 Samuel 8–12 drew on earlier material that was anti-monarchical, while the pro-monarchical material here reflects the author's own position (*Der Widerstand*, pp. 54-66); Martin Noth, on the other hand, sees the anti-monarchical source as Deuteronomistic (*The Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 47-49); and Timo Veijola concludes that DtrG's original version of these chapters reflected that author's pro-kingship stance, while DtrN's redaction of them introduced anti-monarchic material (*Das Königtum*, pp. 115-23).

is prompted by the failure of Samuel's sons as judges in 8.1-3. Despite Samuel's positive leadership in Israel's repentance and cultic actions in 1 Samuel 7, actions that lead Yhwh to defeat the Philistines for Israel, his choice to elevate his sons to the office of judge is clearly a poor one. With 1 Samuel 7, the last cycle of apostasy comes to a close—the divine messenger says in Judg. 13.5 only that Samson 'will begin to save Israel' from the Philistines, but Samuel, in his role as judge (see 1 Sam. 7.15, which refers to him as such) actually saves Israel from them[26]—and the era of the monarchy begins. It is Samuel's own action of installing his sons as judges that prompts this new beginning; because Samuel's sons take bribes and pervert מִשְׁפָּט 'justice' (8.3), Israel is compelled to ask for a king לִשְׁפְּטֵנוּ 'to judge us' (8.5). The story is, in fact, drawing on the insistence of the law of Deut. 16.19 that judges not pervert justice or take bribes,[27] and certainly the use of the verb שָׁפַט in 8.5 suggests that the nation is specifically looking for a replacement for the judges.[28] Israel wants a king 'like all the nations' (8.5, 20), reflecting the language of Deut. 17.14, which permits the request for a king 'like all the nations', and the request in both 8.5 and 20 is connected with the verb 'to judge', a reflection of the lack of justice instituted by Samuel's sons. In 8.20, however, the request is also connected with an apparent need for a king who 'will go out before us and fight our battles', an astonishing failure on the part of the nation to grasp Yhwh's sovereignty, perhaps the key aspect of Dtr's worldview. Israel wins battles because Yhwh fights for them and loses them when Yhwh does not, a point that has been made consistently since the beginning of Dtr,[29] for he is the only power of consequence in the cosmos.

Samuel's response in 8.6 to Israel's initial request for a king in 8.5 is negative: 'the matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel'. The narrative does not directly explain why Samuel has this reaction, but Israel's reference to his sons in 8.5 as part of their request—'your sons do not walk in your ways'—provides the most obvious explanation. Yhwh, on the other hand,

26. David Jobling sees this final cycle as beginning in Judges 17—see his *1 Samuel* (BO; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 50—but this ignores the announcement of the divine messenger in Judges 13 and the fact that Samson, while winning impressive victories over the Philistines with divine aid, never defeats the enemy in battle, as had been the case with all of the previous judges and in 1 Samuel 7.

27. So Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 138-39.

28. See, e.g., Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* (trans. J.S. Boweden; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 72; Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (BLS, 10; Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1985), pp. 255-56.

29. See Deut. 1.41-44; 2.24-25, 31-33; 3.2-5; 20.13; Josh. 1.3-5; 6.2, 16; 7.10-12; 8.18; 10.8-13, 30, 32; 11.6, 8; 13.6; 23.6-13; Judg. 3.10, 28; 4.9, 14, 23; and so on.

tells Samuel three times to 'listen to their voice' and appoint a king (8.7, 9, 22). This positive divine reaction appears clear enough, but what Yhwh says in 8.7b-8 is more confusing, for he tells Samuel that (1) 'they have not rejected you, they have rejected me from being king over them', and (2) just as Israel has abandoned Yhwh in foreign worship since the time of the exodus, 'so they are doing to you'. The confusion here stems not only from the fact that the tone of this part of the response runs counter to the otherwise positive divine reaction to Israel's request (not to mention to the Law of the King, which permits the establishment of a monarchy 'like all the nations'), but also from the fact that the two points appear to contradict each other, for Yhwh says in point (1) that Israel has not rejected Samuel and in (2) that Israel is abandoning Samuel.[30] Since Yhwh does not object to the request for a king in either the law of Deuteronomy or here in 1 Samuel 8, then why does he suddenly appear to insist that the mere request is a rejection of his kingship? It seems easiest to make sense of this, and to resolve the apparent tension between points (1) and (2) in 8.7b-8, by seeing the insistence that Israel is rejecting Yhwh's and not Samuel's kingship (point 1 in 8.7b) as a gentle rebuke of Samuel, and not an indictment of the monarchy in and of itself. Samuel, it would seem, appears to think that he is, like Gideon, a king in everything but title, since he appointed his sons to succeed him, and it is Israel's explicit rejection of his sons and his nascent dynasty that appears to draw his ire.[31] Yhwh tells him in point 1 in 8.7b, then, that Israel's desire for a king is not a rejection of Samuel for he, unlike Yhwh, is not a king, and so he has no reason to be angry at the request since he has no right to establish a dynasty. Neither Israel nor Yhwh has chosen him. The very fact that Yhwh must twice repeat his command to listen to the people suggests that Samuel does not want to obey it;[32] even after Yhwh tells Samuel three times to listen to Israel's request, Samuel responds only by sending the people away (8.22).

30. See Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, p. 264; Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup, 143; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), pp. 187-88.

31. On these points see, e.g., Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 49; Barbara Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (JSOTSup, 365; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), p. 161; James S. Ackerman, 'Who Can Stand before Yhwh, this Holy God? A Reading of 1 Samuel 1–15', *Prooftexts* 11 (1991), pp. 1-24 (10); Roy L. Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy: The Character of Samuel and the Deuteronomistic Evaluation of Prophecy* (LHBOTS, 440; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2006), pp. 83-85, 112-13; Lyle Eslinger, *Into the Hands of the Living God* (JSOTSup, 84; BLS, 24; Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989), pp. 87-88.

32. See J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (4 vols.; SSN, 20, 23, 27, 31; Assen: van Gorcum, 1981–1993), IV, p. 324; Gilmour, *Representing the Past*, pp. 177-78.

In 1 Sam. 8.7b, that is, Yhwh is not objecting to the request for a king, for it would make little sense for him to do that and to insist that Samuel appoint one.[33] After Yhwh has rebuked Samuel by telling him that he is not a king, he becomes forthright in his criticism of Israel and Samuel in 8.8 (point 2 above): Israel is habitually rebellious, as Dtr has been insisting since Deuteronomy and has clearly demonstrated in Judges, and rejects Yhwh's authority through their apostasy; and this is what they are doing now to Samuel, rebelling against the rule of his family, whom he has set up as Israel's *de facto* suzerains. Yet 8.8 is also a critique of Samuel, for Israel's abandonment of Samuel is not a bad thing. It is the nation's constant rebellion that needs to be controlled and colonized, and Samuel's sons, whom Samuel establishes as rulers, have failed to promote justice and so they will only contribute to Israel's evil, not rein it in. That is, 8.7b-8 is most easily understood in context when we see it not as contradicting the Law of the King, which allows for a monarchy 'like all the nations', or as contradicting Yhwh's threefold command to Samuel to act on Israel's desire for a king, but rather as Yhwh's indictment of Samuel's attempt to establish a dynasty that is like a monarchy and an indictment of Israel's rebellious nature. Israel is not rejecting Samuel as a king because he and his sons are not, like Yhwh, kings in the first place. Israel is abandoning Samuel, as they have continually rebelled against Yhwh, but searching for a replacement for poor rulers is a move that Yhwh clearly supports.

Samuel's response to Yhwh's repetition in 8.9 of the command to listen to the people and the new command to inform them of משׁפט המלך 'the commandment/law of the king' is to list a series of economic measures in 8.11-18 that a king will take and that, he implies, Israel will not like. Saul is never depicted as undertaking any of the acts of which Samuel speaks in these verses,[34] and Samuel is, in fact, simply describing how any monarchy

33. The notion that Yhwh disapproves of a monarchy but relents out of exasperation or grace is a position held by some commentators; e.g., David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 243; Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Int; Lousiville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), pp. 62-63; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel: Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (trans. Johannes Klein; BWANT, 176; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), pp. 141-42; Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, p. 268. The difficulty with this argument, however, is that it ignores the fact that the request for the king in 8.5 draws directly on the language of Deuteronomy 17 which permits the request for a king 'like all the nations'. If Yhwh does not want a king here, then we are in the position of asking why he does not like the law that he himself gave to Israel, but it is easier to conclude that 8.7-8 deals with something besides divine disapproval with a request for a king that is perfectly in accord with the law, and that develops out of a desire to see justice done in Israel.

34. See Mark W. Hamilton, *The Body Royal: The Social Poetics of Kingship in Ancient Israel* (BIS, 78; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), p. 122; Jobling, *1 Samuel*, p. 67. Mark

in the ancient Near East would necessarily function: kings establish an army and conscript recruits for it; they take land and use forced labor; and they tax their subjects.[35] Yet a third time Yhwh tells Samuel to listen to the people's request, but Samuel sends them away (8.22), causing Yhwh to act in 1 Samuel 9 to bring Saul on to the scene as king.[36] By all accounts, this is not a monarchy that Yhwh opposes, or he would hardly act the way he does in 1 Samuel 8 and 9. Given his repeated insistence that Samuel listen to Israel's request, and given Samuel's hesitancy to do so, 8.7b-8 makes more sense in this context as a rebuke of Samuel rather than as a rebuke of the request for the king. Yhwh uses Samuel to anoint Saul (10.1) and publicly demonstrates his choice of king through lot to Israel (10.17-24). Yet in 1 Sam. 12.17-18, Samuel tells Israel that 'your evil is great in the eyes of Yhwh in requesting a king for yourselves', and that Yhwh will send thunder and rain upon the wheat harvest, which he does. There is something about the request itself that Yhwh appears to agree is evil, and, since Yhwh seems to have approved of the monarchy in and of itself by insisting to Samuel that he appoint a king and then providing one for him to appoint, the only aspect of the request of which it makes sense for him to disapprove in a Deuteronomistic context is Israel's belief that they need a king to fight their battles. Readers are never told that the office itself is sinful, but the rationale Israel gives for a king in 8.20 appears to deny Yhwh's power in history, as if Israel has already forgotten the victory Yhwh provided over the Philistines in 1 Samuel 7 that responded to the nation's repentance, not to mention all of the previous battles in Dtr Yhwh has won on the nation's behalf.[37]

Leuchter argues, in fact, that the acts of which Samuel speaks in these verses are not committed by any king in Dtr; see his 'A King like All the Nations: The Composition of I Sam 8,11-18', *ZAW* 117 (2005), pp. 543-58 (546-48).

35. See Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, p. 272; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 85-86; Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985), p. 68.

36. See Ackerman, 'Who Can Stand before Yhwh?', pp. 11-12; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 83-84; Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, p. 278. As Jonathan Jacobs argues, the story of 1 Samuel 9 appears to be constructed so that Saul is led to see that Yhwh has been acting behind the scenes all along in this chapter in order to bring him to Samuel's attention and to his anointing. See his 'The Role of Secondary Characters in the Story of the Anointing of Saul (I Samuel ix-x)', *VT* 58 (2008), pp. 495-509.

37. So also Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History*, p. 145; Steven L. McKenzie, 'The Trouble with Kingship', in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer; JSOTSup, 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 286-314 (308); Artur Weiser, *Samuel: Seine geschichtliche Aufgabe und religiöse Bedeutung. Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu 1. Samuel 7–12* (FRLANT, 81; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 90; Ralph Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC, 10; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2nd edn, 2008), p. 78.

One other point should be made about 1 Samuel 8. Samuel insists here that, when a king exercises economic dominion over Israel, the nation will become his עבדים 'slaves, servants' (8.17), and should the people then cry out to Yhwh, Yhwh will not listen to them (8.18). It is at least possible that Samuel's speech of 8.11-18 concerning the king's economic actions was not the משׁפט המלך 'commandment of the king' that Yhwh had in mind when he commanded Samuel in 8.9 to testify[38] to Israel concerning the king; the phrase might seem to refer more obviously to the Law of the King in Deuteronomy 17. Samuel might decide to focus on economic changes that result from the institution of royalty in order to make his sons' theft and abuses of power seem less odious.[39] Nonetheless, if readers are willing to trust Samuel's character enough to take his prediction of 8.11-18 at face value, then he has just told them that they are exchanging their freedom for a monarchy, and that no economic abuse on the king's part will rouse Yhwh to act to remove him, no matter how bitterly the nation cries out for help. As we saw at the beginning of Chapter 1, part of Samuel's first speech to Saul includes the assertion in 9.20 that all desirable things of Israel now belong to Saul and to his house. Mark Leuchter argues that 8.11-18 is really directed against the abuses of the colonial sovereigns of Mesopotamia,[40] but Samuel says here merely that the king will receive precisely the kinds of economic freedom associated with ancient Near Eastern kings in general, and that this is the price Israel will pay for having a monarch, since Yhwh will not intervene to remove a king on economic grounds. As we shall see in the following chapter, the narrative of Solomon particularly appears to validate the truth of Samuel's explanation of 'the commandment of the king', for Yhwh does not act on Israel's behalf because of their unhappiness with Solomon's economic policies. Monarchs can act as they choose in regard to the economic exploitation of their subjects, as Samuel presents the matter, and this is the price Israel must pay for Yhwh to give them a king.

In 1 Samuel 12, Samuel's final speech to Israel is clearly self-serving, for in 12.12 he misrepresents Israel's desire for a king, claiming that the

38. The verb עיד here can be read in the sense of a negative warning Samuel is to give to Israel, but it need not be understood in anything but the neutral sense of 'testify'. See, e.g., Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, p. 252; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB, 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), p. 157; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 82. If we were to understand 8.7b-8 as Yhwh's expression of anger at Israel's desire for a king, the more negative translation of 'warn' would make sense in 8.9; however, we have seen that, since Yhwh tells Samuel to appoint a king, and since Israel's request conforms to Deuteronomy 17, it makes most sense to read 8.7b-8 as a rebuke of Samuel and as a rebuke of Israel's rebellious nature rather than as a rebuke of the request for a monarchy in and of itself.

39. Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy*, pp. 89-93.

40. Leuchter, 'A King like All the Nations'.

request derived not from the economic and judicial abuses of his thwarted dynasty narrated in 8.1-3 but from Israel's reaction to the foreign invasion of 10.27–11.4 that threatened Jabesh-gilead. His appeals to his own innocence in the matter of theft and oppression in 12.1-5 simply direct attention away from those acts that his sons committed and that caused Israel to ask for a king.[41] Nonetheless, in this speech even he is willing to admit that Yhwh has established a king for Israel, and that the monarchy will succeed so long as rebellion is found neither in it nor in the people (12.14-15). So if exilic readers wish to blame the Davidides for the destruction of Judah and the exile, Dtr suggests that they cannot single out royal military failures, since Yhwh alone determines Israel's success in battle and that, no matter what Israel thinks, the point of a king is not military leadership. This would clearly support any claims on Jehoiachin's part for continued Davidic leadership, since he has already lost one military encounter with Babylon and is in no position to direct another. Israel's request to have a king to fight its battles not only cuts against Dtr's presentation of Yhwh's sole role in history and so arouses Yhwh's anger, it reflects a view of the monarchy promoted by Mesopotamian colonial hegemony that Dtr is clearly mocking. A Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian text that discusses the creation of humanity, and that presents the king as being the last and best human created, essentially presents the monarchy as providing leadership in two things: warfare and counsel.[42] Dtr mocks this conclusion, pointing out that to assume the king has any leadership in battle is to deny Yhwh's control of history. It is wrong, moreover, to assume that anything except Israel's cultic fidelity will ensure victory, and so it is no wonder that Yhwh vividly demonstrates his displeasure with the request itself in 12.17-18. As we shall see, the stories of Saul in the next chapters of 1 Samuel clearly demonstrate that the point of the monarchy is to rightly control Israel's cultic life, not to lead in warfare. Israel also cannot use the kind of theological outlook found in Amos in order to point to royal acts of economic injustice as the reason for national destruction, since, as Samuel claims in 1 Samuel 8 and as the story of Solomon will demonstrate, Yhwh will not act against the king for abuses of economic power. All that matters in terms of national success and failure according to 12.14-15 is the king and people's loyalty to Yhwh; Samuel emphasizes twice in these two verses that Israel must not

41. See, e.g., Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 73; Eslinger, *Into the Hands of the Living God*, pp. 87-88; Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy*, pp. 113-15; Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative II*, p. 65.

42. This Neo-Assyrian text, also copied in the Neo-Babylonian period, states that 'the great gods gave warfare (*tahaza*) to the king', as well as counsel, as they endow him with qualities that surpass those of other humans. See the text in Werner R. Mayer, 'Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs', *Or* 56 (1987), pp. 55-68.

rebel (מרה) against Yhwh, but Moses has already warned in Deuteronomy that rebellion against Yhwh is part of Israel's very nature,[43] something the nation proved beyond a shadow of a doubt in Judges. The question is now whether Saul is a good candidate to rein in Israel's disloyal tendencies and lead them in serving and obeying Yhwh, the actions that Samuel straightforwardly presents as the opposite of rebellion in 12.14-15. The following chapters make it clear that he is not, and in doing so these chapters are also quite specific as to just what kind of loyalty Yhwh expects kings to lead. Unsurprisingly, given the narrative of Judges, readers rediscover in Saul's narrative that it is cultic loyalty and the king's leadership of it that alone will matter to Yhwh.

4. *Saul's failures*

By 1 Samuel 11, Saul's success as a king appears to have validated the suggested pro-monarchical stance of Judges 17–21 and Israel's request for a king. Gibeah, once a city that, in Judges 19–21, was the paradigm of a place where people did what was right in their own eyes, has produced a king who saves Jabesh-gilead, the city that Israel had earlier destroyed. Saul neither acts nor speaks in 1 Samuel 12, but this chapter proves to be a pivot from a positive presentation of him in the previous three chapters to the beginning of a negative portrayal of him in 1 Samuel 13,[44] a portrayal that will cause readers to rethink any unambiguously pro-kingship conclusions at which they might have arrived through their reading of 1 Samuel 9–11. Samuel's speech in 1 Samuel 12 might be somewhat inaccurate and self-serving, but unlike his warning concerning the monarchy in 8.11-18, it does have the virtue of pointing to the key to Israel's history as far as Dtr is concerned: cultic loyalty. His recitation of salvation history in 12.6-12 points directly to the punishment for apostasy that Israel had earned during the period of the judges, and so when he warns in 12.14-15 that punishment will result if Israel and its king refuse to fear, serve, and listen to the commandment and voice of Yhwh, his point is clear. If the king cannot enforce cultic leadership, the lack of which has led to punishment, Israel should expect to suffer as it did during the time of the judges. His reference to Jerubbaal and Jephthah[45] from the period of the judges as figures of deliverance following

43. We discussed this issue in Chapter 3. Moses specifically uses the root מרה in reference to Israel in Deut. 1.26, 43; 9.7, 23, 24; 31.27.

44. On the shift in the presentation of Saul in 1 Samuel 13, see, e.g., Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel*, p. 84 and Miscall, *1 Samuel*, pp. 81-82.

45. There are two text critical problems in the list of past saviors that Samuel provides in 12.11, one of which is important to us here. In the MT Samuel makes reference to a 'Bedan' whom Yhwh sent to Israel, but this figure is unknown in Judges or any other

punishment for apostasy cannot help but lead readers to a comparison between Saul's successes and the earlier failures of Israel and its leaders in Judges,[46] especially because Saul has just delivered the nation as the judges used to, although the reference to two judges who made poor cultic decisions is perhaps somewhat disconcerting. And given Samuel's focus on apostasy in his salvation history in 1 Samuel 12, it might strike readers that, despite Saul's success so far, he has not yet dealt with any cultic issues.

The narrative then immediately turns to present Saul as a failure in 1 Samuel 13, and a failure in a matter that deals with cult. Samuel had told him as part of 'the word of God' that he was to go to Gilgal and wait seven days until Samuel would come to him and offer sacrifices (9.27-10.8). In 13.5-7, readers find Saul at Gilgal, facing a Philistine army while his troops desert him. 'He waited seven days, for the appointed time that Samuel had said, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal and the people began to scatter away from him' (13.8). As a result, Saul offers the sacrifices himself, only to be confronted with the immediate appearance of Samuel, who condemns his action. The narrative itself does not pass judgment on Saul, and he explains his offering of the sacrifices to Samuel:[47] 'the people were scattering away from me and you had not come at the appointed time…and I said, "Now the Philistines will come down to me at Gilgal and I have not entreated the favor of Yhwh'" (13.11-12). Samuel asserts that Saul has been foolish, and that because he has not kept a divine command Yhwh will not grant him a dynasty.[48]

Saul's error appears so minor, and the narrator and Samuel seemingly so unforthcoming as to why his act is so egregious that it merits the loss of a dynasty, that some scholars argue that it is just not clear what he has done wrong and that his punishment far outweighs his offence.[49] Such appar-

part of Dtr. For a list of attempts to identify Bedan with a figure known from Judges, see Serge Frolov, 'Bedan: A Riddle in Context', *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 164-67 (164) and the bibliographic references there. The LXX has altered this reading to the easier 'Barak', Deborah's general in Judges 4. In the original version of the story, then, Samuel makes reference to two judges who both provided poor cultic leadership from a Deuteronomistic standpoint, as well as to the otherwise unknown Bedan.

46. So Sam Dragga, 'In the Shadow of the Judges: The Failure of Saul', *JSOT* 38 (1987), pp. 39-46 (39-40).

47. For more detail on this point, see Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, II, p. 38 and Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, pp. 105-106.

48. Saul's loss of dynasty is normally the way that 13.13-14 is understood; Samuel tells Saul that 'Yhwh would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom will not arise'. See, e.g., L. Daniel Hawk, 'Saul's Altar', *CBQ* 72 (2010), pp. 678-87 (684); Klein, *1 Samuel*, p. 127; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, pp. 229-30; Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, p. 106.

49. E.g., David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup, 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 33-40; Sarah Nicholson, *Three*

ent ambiguity prompts some commentators to try to supply themselves the missing information that would explain why this offense is treated with such severity, for Samuel says only that Saul failed to keep a divine command. It may be that Saul has misunderstood the role of the king, and that the narrative is signaling that he is to have no role in cultic leadership; or that Saul has usurped Samuel's authority through taking control of the sacrifices; or even that he is attempting to usurp Yhwh's own authority.[50] But neither the narrator nor Samuel makes any one of these points, at least not directly; the only thing that readers can ascertain with relative certainty from the story is simply that, by the divine command of 9.27–10.8, Samuel and not Saul was to offer the sacrifices after the appointed time of seven days. While we might read this as a usurpation of Samuel's authority, this is not what Samuel talks about; he links Saul's punishment to his failure to keep 'the commandment of Yhwh your God that he commanded you' (13.13). Saul is not responsible for the full-blown apostasy Israel committed during the period of judges, to which Samuel has just referred in 1 Samuel 12, but he has failed to keep a divine command involving a cultic issue. This is apparently much more important than anything else Saul has done, for his successful military leadership in the salvation of Jabesh-gilead and avoidance of the economic injustice of which Samuel warns in 1 Samuel 8 are not even mentioned here. Readers who were convinced by 1 Samuel 9–11 that the mere existence of a monarchy would benefit Israel and lead to the people ceasing to do what is right in their own eyes, the causative link suggested but not explicitly made in Judges 17–21, must now grapple with Saul's failure. The severity of the punishment suggests that a royal failure to keep a divine command is dealt with harshly, and the fact that this touches upon a cultic issue, the continual cause of the punishments in Judges to which Samuel has just referred, may strike readers as significant. Readers discover in 1 Samuel 13 that Yhwh does not evaluate kings on their leadership in battle but on their complete adherence to cultic commands.[51] Were this

Faces of Saul: An Intertextual Approach to Biblical Tragedy (JSOTSup, 339; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), p. 57; Jobling, *1 Samuel*, pp. 81-82; J. Cheryl Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 27; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 129-31; Miscall, *1 Samuel*, p. 85.

50. These are the suggestions of, respectively, Miscall, *1 Samuel*, p. 87; Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel*, p. 189; and Bill T. Arnold, *1 and 2 Samuel: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), pp. 200-201.

51. On this, see Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 156-57; Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, II, pp. 40-42; Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?*, pp. 238-39; V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul* (SBLDS, 118; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 90-92. Mark Leuchter argues that the stories of 1 Samuel 9–11 repeat language and ideas from the stories of Gibeon/Jerubbaal and

not the case, we might expect that Saul's victory over the Ammonites in 1 Samuel 11 might mitigate the severity of his punishment, but that victory is not so much as mentioned here.

The narrative here is not critiquing the monarchy itself; Saul's failure in 1 Samuel 13 simply leads Samuel to say that Yhwh will appoint a different king (13.14), not abolish the office. This is a very different divine reaction than that of 1 Samuel 8, where Yhwh pushes for a change in leadership office to that of the monarchy. But Saul's failure in 1 Samuel 13 is directly linked to Israel's rationale in 8.20 that it needs a king to fight its battles, a rationale that ignores Yhwh's control of history. Saul's victory in 1 Samuel 11 was simply Yhwh's work, as Saul acknowledged (11.13), as Israel's victories have always been Yhwh's work in Dtr. In 1 Samuel 13, Saul seems to believe that he is responsible for the outcome of the battle, that it will be lost if the bulk of his army deserts. He says he must sacrifice to entreat Yhwh's favor before victory becomes impossible. Like Israel in 8.20, he seems completely unaware that victory in battle is entirely Yhwh's to decide, and is utterly independent of the number of soldiers in Israel's army. The cyclical narrative of Judges has clearly established that Israel can avoid defeat if it is cultically loyal. Israel needs a king who knows the importance of cultic loyalty and who can lead it, but Saul's act of cultic disobedience occurs because he is unaware of Yhwh's absolute control of history and of the point of sacrifice. The point of right cultic action is that it manifests loyalty to the suzerain and so demonstrates one's complete obedience. In the context of disobedience, sacrifice does not 'entreat the favor of Yhwh'; if it did, Saul's fate would have been different. Israel's loyalty and obedience are what cause Yhwh to fight for them, and if Saul cannot be a leader in this then he is ultimately not more worthy a leader than Jephthah (to whom Samuel refers in 1 Samuel 12) who sacrificed to Yhwh in a manner forbidden by law. As in Gideon's victory over Midian in Judges 7, the number of soldiers does not matter; the only thing of importance is Israel's loyalty to Yhwh as manifested through its absolute cultic obedience, and Saul has failed to lead this properly.

The point is reinforced in 1 Samuel 15, where Saul and the people, commanded by Yhwh to do חרם to Amalek—'do not spare them, but kill man and woman, child and nursing infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey'

Jephthah in order to present Saul as a superior warrior to them—see his 'Samuel, Saul, and the Deuteronomistic Categories of History', in *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honour of Brian Peckham* (ed. Joyce Rilett Wood, John E. Harvey and Mark Leuchter; LHBOTS, 455; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2006), pp. 101-10 (105-107)—but this repetition of language simply emphasizes the point that his military prowess does not matter at all when it comes to divine evaluation of his leadership, for his military success is not considered in Dtr's evaluation of him.

(15.3)—spare the Amalekite king and the best of the animals (15.8-9). Saul, with somewhat less support from the narrative than in 1 Samuel 13, which had assured readers as to the validity of Saul's explanation for his sacrifice there,[52] tells Samuel that he and the people had saved the best animals to sacrifice to Yhwh at Gilgal (and the LXX^{B} of 15.12-13 even claims that they had begun the sacrifice when Samuel meets the army there),[53] and actually says that he merely followed the people's lead in this (15.21, 24). The emphasis of the chapter is clearly on Saul's refusal (or honest inability) to listen to Yhwh's voice—the verb שׁמע appears eight times in the chapter, and the noun קול seven times, a parallel to Samuel's twofold warning in 12.14-15 that Israel and its king must listen (שׁמע) to Yhwh's voice (קול)[54]—and the narrative again turns to the matter of sacrifice. While the story of 1 Samuel 15 focuses on Saul's lack of obedience to Yhwh's voice, neither Samuel nor the narrator describes the taking of the animals as theft from the חרם as in the case of Achan in Joshua 7; hearing Saul's claim that he and the people planned to sacrifice the animals (and, according to at least the Codex Vaticanus, had even begun to do so), the explicit lesson that Samuel gives Saul in 15.22-23 about his wrongdoing deals not with theft but with sacrifice. Just like 1 Samuel 13, then, Saul's disobedience of a divine command is linked to a failure of cultic leadership. Samuel tells Saul that sacrifice does not outweigh obedience in Yhwh's eyes, and he compares Saul's 'rebellion' (מרי) and 'presumption' to 'divination' and 'teraphim'. Saul, as punishment, now loses the kingship personally (15.23). Once more, however, Samuel implicitly denies that the kingship itself is the problem, for he again says that Yhwh plans simply to replace Saul as king (15.28), not put an end to the office.

52. Saul's explanation for the sacrifice in 13.11-12 is that the people were scattering away from him, the truth of which the narrator confirms in 13.6-7. If we read with the MT of 15.12-13 (see below), then there is no independent confirmation from the narrator to support Saul's claim that he and the people had planned on sacrificing the Amalekite animals to Yhwh. In this case, readers merely have to take Saul's word for the truth of this. See Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 51-52.

53. Scholarship has, in general, regarded the plus in the LXX of 15.12-13 as a later addition to the original text because it appears as an easier reading, an attempt to make Saul's action of sacrificing in Gilgal right before the arrival of Samuel in 1 Samuel 15 correspond to the same circumstance in 1 Samuel 13. See the discussion in Stephen Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel: The Significant Pluses and Minuses in the Massoretic, LXX and Qumran Texts* (OBO, 57; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), pp. 204-207 and Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*, pp. 143-44. Some scholars accept the LXX plus that describes Saul and the people sacrificing at Gilgal, arguing that the omission of it in the MT is due to homoioteleuton (e.g., McCarter, *1 Samuel*, pp. 262-63; Klein, *1 Samuel*, p. 146).

54. For more detailed discussions of this point, see Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, II, pp. 86-87 and Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel*, p. 214.

The story of 1 Samuel 15 follows the same pattern as that of 1 Samuel 13: Saul sacrifices (or, in the MT of 1 Samuel 15, says that he intends to); Samuel appears; Saul greets him; Samuel confronts Saul; Saul explains his actions; and Samuel announces a punishment involving Saul's rule linked to a failure of cultic leadership.[55] And, just as in 1 Samuel 13, Saul's infraction appears minor; David Gunn, for example, argues that Saul and the people really see no difference between giving animals to Yhwh through חרם or through sacrifice.[56] Yet it is precisely the minor divergence in obedience in acts specifically linked to sacrifice that appears to be at issue here, particularly given Samuel's warning in 1 Samuel 12 that focused on apostasy and his recitation of salvation history that referred to Jerubbaal and Jephthah, two leaders who failed in cultic loyalty.

Dtr makes the point here that what might seem to be minor failings in royal cultic leadership are in fact egregious errors in Yhwh's eyes; this explains the quick and severe punishments Saul receives as he is stripped of his dynasty and then the kingship. Dtr signals to readers here that even minor royal failings in the cult render a dynasty unworthy to rule. Saul, moreover, claims that he has merely followed the people's lead in disobedience (15.21, 24): 'I feared the people and I listened to their voice', he tells Samuel, enunciating his failure to follow Samuel's earlier command to fear Yhwh and to listen to his voice (12.14). Saul is patently unable to control a nation that desperately needs control if it is to survive.

So these negative evaluations of Saul show readers that royal military successes do not matter at all when evaluating the success or failure of a king or dynasty. Nor is the simple fact that there is a king in Israel a guarantee that Israel will cease to do what is right in their own eyes; the king must rightly lead in issues surrounding cultic loyalty. The establishment of a monarchy in 1 Samuel 8–11 appeared to rectify the self-destruction Israel undergoes in Judges 17–21, but readers find that it is not the mere existence of a king that matters, and they also find that Israel's request in 8.20 for a king to fight their battles misunderstands the point of a king for Yhwh. 1 Samuel 14 particularly emphasizes Israel's failure in 8.20 to recognize Yhwh's control of history through battles when it portrays Jonathan relying entirely on Yhwh for victory (14.6-10, 12, 15, 23a), very much unlike his father in 13.8-12, who believes that the size of his army matters. Even after the victory Yhwh grants through Jonathan in 14.23a, Saul makes an oath that prohibits his army from eating 'so that I will be avenged on my enemies' (14.24), and the first person language he uses suggest that this has

55. See, e.g., Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 65-75; Miscall, *1 Samuel*, pp. 81-114; Hawk, 'Saul's Altar', p. 684; Nicholson, *Three Faces of Saul*, pp. 58-59.

56. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 41-56.

nothing to do with the battle Yhwh has already won.[57] There is an obvious parallel here with Jerubbaal, another judge Samuel mentions in 12.11, who used his army for a private act of vengeance after Yhwh had already provided Israel with victory. This similarity with a judge who established apostasy in Israel is not overly positive; moreover, Saul's selfish vow almost leads to the execution of his son after Jonathan unknowingly violates the oath and eats (14.24-45), and readers are once again reminded of an earlier failure in leadership when Jephthah also made a vow that resulted in vengeance against his enemies,[58] with the result that his child was unexpectedly put in the way of death because of it.[59] Clearly, a comparison with a judge who offered a Canaanite sacrifice is also not positive. And while we have seen that the parallels between Judges 17–21 and Saul's story almost all occur in the latter story in 1 Samuel 9–11, where Saul is presented without fault, the one parallel from Judges 17–21 that we see beyond 1 Samuel 11 appears in 14.2, where Saul is at Rimmon with 600 troops, precisely where the 600 survivors of Benjamin take refuge in Judg. 20.45-47.[60] A parallel with a defeated army that had fought on behalf of gang-rapists also hardly paints a positive picture of Saul. With this exception, it is not the parallels between Saul's narrative and that of Judges 19–21 that serve to paint a negative portrayal of him, but the similarities between his actions and those of previous leadership failures.

1 Samuel 13–15 as a whole, then, works to undermine Saul's success of 1 Samuel 11 and to emphasize Dtr's point that success in battle does not matter since it is Yhwh who provides it. Sacrifice cannot purchase it as Saul attempts to do in 1 Samuel 13; sacrifice is only the signal of cultic loyalty that a king should lead and, in 1 Samuel 15, even if readers wish to give Saul the benefit of the doubt in his explanation of events, the people are leading him in disobedience. What matters in the king is not prowess in warfare but strict obedience to all of the divine commands. A king who is unaware of Yhwh's autonomy and of the purpose of sacrifice, who lets the people lead in disobedience, and who leads his army to gain private vengeance, is not a good king. Saul, like Abimelech, Israel's first failure as a king, asks his armor bearer to kill him after being grievously wounded (Judg. 9.53-54; 1 Sam. 31.3-4), and by the end of his reign the foreign control of the nation is as bad as it is ever portrayed to be in Judges.[61] Despite all of the

57. See Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 135; Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?*, p. 244.

58. When Jephthah returns home in victory after his vow of Judg. 11.30-31, his daughter says to him that 'Yhwh has given you vengeance over your enemies' (11.36).

59. For the parallels between the stories see Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (VTSup, 63; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 294-95.

60. Amit, 'Literature in the Service of Politics', p. 33.

61. 1 Sam. 31.7 says that the Philistines occupied Israel even across the Jordan, which

initially positive parallels between Saul and the story of Judges 17–21, Saul turns out to be a failure. In this way, Dtr at once demonstrates that victory in battle will have no bearing on how a king is to be evaluated by Yhwh, and shows that Israel, in believing otherwise, does not even understand the point of a monarchy. 1 Samuel 13 and 15 point to leadership in cultic loyalty, however, the act of colonizing Israel and making the people into proper subalterns, as the only royal act that will matter. Like some Mesopotamian history writings, Dtr demonstrates to readers here what royal cultic failure looks like. If exilic readers wish to blame the Davidides for the destruction of Judah and the exile, then, they should not look to failures in military strategy, for Dtr is clear here, and will be in Kings, that this has nothing to do with Judah/Israel's success or failure. By the narrative of Kings, as we shall see in the following chapter, Dtr presents the whole point of the monarchy as leading cultic loyalty; and certainly, as we have seen, readers have been told that Yhwh will not remove kings merely for economic abuses. As Samuel seems to put it in 1 Sam. 8.11-18, when such abuses occur, that will simply be the price that Israel will pay in exchange for requesting a monarchy in the first place.

In terms of constructing a narrative about the origins of kingship in Israel for an exilic audience who might be suspicious of the office's recent failings, Dtr could hardly be more pro-monarchic. Israel itself requested the office, says the narrative, because of the failures of other kinds of leadership. Israel, moreover, simply cannot continue to exist without some kind of leadership to control its anti-Yahwistic impulses. Despite what some exiles might believe, the monarchy will never be judged by Yhwh on its success in battle, since success in battle is merely Yhwh's response to Israel's cultic fidelity that the monarchy needs to lead. The Davidide in exile, then, should not be judged on his surrender of Jerusalem to Babylon but by the cultic fidelity that he should go on to lead. This is certainly good news for the colonized elite—Jehoiachin and his coterie—since the Davidides cannot hope to successfully rebel against Babylon, while the end of 2 Kings, as we shall see in Chapter 7, presents Jehoiachin with Davidic role models whose cultic leadership the narrative suggests that he can still imitate and so be regarded by Yhwh as being as perfect as they. The conclusion of Dtr, that is, will suggest that Yhwh is still willing to see Jehoiachin as a legitimate

is to say that there was a total occupation of the land. The stories of Judges do not always state how much of the land is occupied by the foreign enemies whom Yhwh sends as punishment for disloyalty; the narrative generally makes it seem as if these occupations are total, since it continually refers to a general control of Israel by foreigners (Judg. 3.7; 4.3;13.1). Judg. 3.13 speaks of a very limited occupation, and 6.1-4 of a somewhat limited and intermittent one, while Judg. 10.8 specifies that the Ammonites occupied only Gilead, although the narrative makes it seem as if the Philistines, mentioned in 10.7, controlled the rest of Israel.

ruler who can lead the exiles back to the land, so long as he imitates his perfect royal predecessors in their cultic actions, actions that, unlike warfare, are within Jehoiachin's power to accomplish.

5. *The failures of priests and prophet in 1 Samuel*

While the judges may be a complete failure by 1 Samuel 8, they and Saul are not the only leadership figures in the narrative of 1 Samuel. Dtr has certainly demonstrated to readers what matters about royal leadership in Judges 17–1 Samuel 15, but does also present other offices of leadership in Israel; the point of these other leadership figures in the narrative, however, is largely to show readers that they are really unfit to rule. The only priests of note we have seen so far in the narrative are Aaron, who is indicted in permitting the worship of an idol much like those Jeroboam will produce (Deut. 9.20) and the descendant of Moses who leads the worship of Micah's (and then Dan's) teraphim in Judges 17–18. The Elides of the narrative of 1 Samuel 1–4, it is fair to say, are not much better. 'The sons of Eli were worthless and did not know Yhwh' (2.12), the narrator tells readers, for they stole from the sacrificial offerings (2.13), and so 'the sin of the young men was very great' (2.17). Yhwh seconds this conclusion and condemns Eli along with his sons, stating that Eli has honored them more than he has honored Yhwh (2.29), assumedly insofar as he has not acted forcefully enough in rebuking his sons,[62] and that the Elides will all die and be replaced by another priestly house that will serve a king (2.31-36). Robert Polzin has pointed out that Eli is presented as sitting on a כסא 'throne' in a היכל 'palace/temple' (1.9; 4.13, 18), royal language that he takes as suggesting that the Elides' fate will foreshadow that of the monarchy: both will fail to produce cultic loyalty and both will be destroyed.[63] This, however, extends the implications of the story too broadly. The language of the כסא does perhaps point to the Elides' leadership role, but Yhwh specifically says he will replace them with another priestly house, one that will 'go in and out before my anointed one forever' (2.35). Priestly leadership—and in 1 Sam. 4.4, the Elides do seem to play some kind of leadership role even outside of the cult as they bring the ark to the army—is to be replaced by royal leadership that priests will serve. In 1 Samuel 1–4 the priests are, Frank Spina

62. And in fact Eli's rebuke to his sons for their actions in 2.23-25 accurately reflects Deuteronomistic theology, although it is not overly strong. See Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy*, pp. 55-56. The narrator states that Eli's sons do not listen to his rebuke, although this is because Yhwh had already determined to kill them by this time.

63. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 44-49. See also Serge Frolov, *The Turn of the Cycle: 1 Samuel 1–8 in Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives* (BZAW, 342; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004), p. 159.

points out, merely one more example of a failed office of leadership, just like the judges.[64] Much like their predecessor Aaron, they do not appear to handle cultic leadership well when left unsupervised, and just as the narrative of Judges 17–21 points to the need for a king in the context of priestly leadership in idolatry and the failure of judges, the story of Eli and his sons points to the need for some other form of cultic leadership in Israel, one that can supervise priestly activities.

In the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, the most obvious candidate for their replacement as leaders in Israel, given the fact that the Elides' story intertwines with that of Samuel's, is Samuel in his role as prophet.[65] Yet the specific reference to a different office of leadership in the condemnation of Eli and his sons in 1 Samuel 2 is a monarchy; the fact that the new priestly house 'will go in and out before my anointed one forever' appears to link the two offices in some way.[66] Priestly failures so far—including the Levitical failure of Judges 17–18, since the priestly figure there was descended from Moses, not Aaron (18.30)—suggest that priests need some kind of supervision if they are to perform their work properly, and the monarchy might make a good candidate for just such supervision. While the law of Deut. 17.8-13 presents the Levites and not the king as the arbiters of legal issues,[67] it is at least possible that readers might wonder if that state of affairs should really continue. Eli and his sons die in the conflict with the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4, and the condemnation of the house is explicitly fulfilled in 1 Kgs 2.26-27, yet their replacement by the Zadokites in 1 Kings 1–2 is not something that the narrative emphasizes. It is the king, not the priests who go in and out before him, who will be important in the narrative.[68]

64. Frank Anthony Spina, 'Eli's Seat: The Transition from Priest to Prophet in 1 Samuel 1–4', *JSOT* 62 (1994), pp. 67-75.

65. Samuel is specifically portrayed as a judge in 7.15-17, but his appointment of his sons to succeed him in this office brings judgeship to an end, as we have seen. Samuel, however, is called 'man of God', 'seer', and 'prophet' in 9.8-9, 11, and is said to receive a divine message already in 1 Samuel 3.

66. See Ackerman, 'Who Can Stand before Yhwh?', p. 5.

67. See Stephen L. Cook, 'Those Stubborn Levites: Overcoming Levitical Disenfranchisement', in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* (ed. Mark A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton; SBLAIL, 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 155-70 (158).

68. See Richard D. Nelson, 'The Role of the Priesthood in the Deuteronomistic History', in *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 132-47 (136-39). In a similar way, Nelson points out, 1 Sam. 2.30 refers to Eli's 'father/ancestor', and while we might assume that this is Aaron, we cannot say with certainty, and the Zadokites are not given any kind of genealogy, Aaronide or otherwise (p. 135). 2 Sam. 8.17 refers to Zadok's father as Ahitub, and since Dtr refers to an Elide of that name (1 Sam. 22.20), it is not entirely clear if Zadok is being portrayed as an Elide or not. For a summary of the scholarly discussion on the subject, see

So given the reference to the king here, and the fact that, in 2.10, Hannah says that Yhwh 'will exalt the horn of his anointed', we should not conclude that the criticism of Eli's priestly dynasty (or that of Samuel's nascent dynasty of judges in 1 Samuel 8) are meant to be criticisms of the whole concept of dynasties and thus of the monarchy.[69] While the first punishment Saul receives for his cultic failure of 1 Samuel 13 is that his royal dynasty will not continue (13.13-14), David will receive a very different dynastic promise in 2 Samuel 7. Indeed, by the time readers reach David's song of 2 Samuel 22, a passage with many parallels to Hannah's prayer of 1 Samuel 2,[70] they will see that Yhwh has, just as Hannah predicted, exalted his anointed one. The problem in 1 Samuel 1–15 is not really with dynasties in and of themselves but whether or not a dynasty can properly serve the divine suzerain or not. Eli and his sons fail as priests in their leadership of the cult, Samuel's sons fail as judges in their leadership of Israel (and 4.18 tells us that Eli is also a judge), earlier judges practiced and led cultic disobedience, and Yhwh supports the replacement of the judges with a king, while he says that priestly work will continue only under royal supervision.

Yet what about the role of the prophet, embodied by Samuel both before and after his sons take his place as judge? Does Dtr suggest this as a viable leadership office? We have already noted that Samuel installs his sons as judges and appears to react angrily and negatively to Israel's demand to replace them, that he tries to change Israel's mind about replacing his sons with a monarchy as late as his speech in 1 Samuel 12, and that at first he even seems to ignore Yhwh's repeated command to 'listen to their voice' and appoint a king for Israel. While Saul does act contrary to divine command in 1 Samuel 13, the narrator also tells readers that before Saul offered his fateful sacrifices there, he 'waited seven days, the appointed time of which Samuel spoke, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal' (13.8). If the story condemns the notion, adopted there by Saul, that it is the king's responsibility and not Yhwh's to provide victory, and if it further condemns Saul for a cultic act that does not completely adhere to a divine command, the story also alludes to a fault on Samuel's part, as if he were hoping that Saul might

Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 63-70. Nonetheless, it would appear that the identity of the priests is not a matter of great importance in Dtr's narrative.

69. Although this has been argued by Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?*, pp. 110-13, 161 and Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 79.

70. See, e.g., the parallels pointed out by Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, III, p. 254; Paul Borgman, *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 194; Jürg Hutzli, *Die Erzählung von Hanna und Samuel: Textkritische- und literarische Analyse von 1. Samuel 1–2 unter Berücksichtigung des Kontextes* (AThANT, 89; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2007), pp. 162-63.

commit some kind of error.[71] By 1 Samuel 15 when Saul loses the kingship entirely, Samuel tells Saul that Yhwh does not נחם 'repent' (15.29), even though Yhwh has just told Samuel that 'I have repented (נחמתי) that I made Saul king' (15.11). As a result, when Samuel informs Saul that he will tell him what Yhwh spoke to him the previous night (15.16) and then provides Saul with a very different message than the one the narrative records (compare 15.11 and 15.17-18),[72] one might wonder if Samuel's whole goal is not to wrest power back for his family, no matter what the consequences might be in terms of delivering divine messages. Of course, Samuel might simply be a bad prophet who knows little of the divine will, given the fact that in 16.8-10 he reacts wrongly three times in regard to the characteristics Yhwh wants in a king, and that in 1 Samuel 3 he does not appear to know that Yhwh is speaking to him until Eli tells him so, even though Samuel is sleeping in Yhwh's temple.[73] We know that Samuel lies in 1 Sam. 12.12 when he misrepresents Israel's reason for asking for a king, linking it to the Ammonite invasion rather than to his own sons' perversion of justice, but in 1 Samuel 15 we see him lying to Saul about Yhwh and the divine word. Prophecy, as far as readers can tell from 1 Samuel 1–15, at least, is hardly a perfect office of leadership.

From Judges through 1 Samuel 15 readers walk through a series of stories, each of which demonstrates problems with Israel's leadership or with Israel. It is no coincidence that the stories of Samson, Micah and his idol, the Levite and his concubine, Samuel, and Saul all begin the same way—'there was a (certain) man' (Judg. 13.2; 17.1; 19.1; 1 Sam. 1.1; 9.1)—for as disparate as these stories are, they chronicle the failures of Israel, failures that cry out for good leadership, and the failures of its leaders. In Judges 13–16, Samson has no interest in leading salvation, nor Israel in being saved. In Judges 17–21, Israel has no leadership at all, and they destroy themselves as the foreigners they have become in חרם, just as they had previously destroyed the Canaanites, although the text suggests that a king might solve their problems. The priests certainly are unable to do so in 1 Samuel 1–4, and the prophet Samuel seems greedy for power, going so far as to distort the divine word. It is in Saul's story, particularly in the

71. On Saul's obedience in waiting seven days as instructed and the ambiguous instructions associated with Saul's sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13, see, e.g., Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 38-40; Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Commentary* (HBM, 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), p. 120; Jobling, *1 Samuel*, pp. 81-82; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 129-30; Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*, pp. 27-28; and Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy*, pp. 129-31.

72. See Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy*, p. 131.

73. See, e.g., Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, p. 150; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 50; Randall C. Bailey, 'The Redemption of Yhwh: A Literary Critical Function of the Songs of Hannah and David', *BibInt* 3 (1995), pp. 213-31 (221-24).

parallels it makes with Judges 17–21, that readers can see the key: a monarchy can work; but only if the monarchy strictly adheres to Yhwh's command, particularly in regard to its leadership in cultic activities. Any other royal accomplishment is of no worth, and a king is unnecessary for victory in battle since Yhwh provides that, although Israel shows itself to be ignorant of this important basis of Deuteronomistic historical logic. The judges have failed to enforce cultic loyalty, the priests have been reduced to a role that involves royal oversight, and prophecy appears suspect. Despite Saul's failures, readers can see in 13.14; 15.28; and 16.1 that Yhwh is fully committed to a kingship, for he simply announces he has chosen someone else to serve in the role. Jotham's fable and the story of Abimelech in Judges 9 actually demonstrate Yhwh will punish those who attack a royal house without divine sanction. By this point in the narrative, the monarchy is presented as a *de facto* necessity, something the people cannot do without and that they cannot remove except by Yhwh's will. Israel without leadership is doomed, and the narrative has presented no viable leadership alternative to the monarchy. A monarchy is not a panacea for Israel's ills, but if it can colonize Israel and make the nation into the subalterns Yhwh wishes them to be, then there is still a future for them. If we are to take Samuel at his word in 8.11-18, Yhwh will not even respond to the people when the king begins to exercise standard royal control of the economy; this is simply the price Israel must pay for being a rebellious people. Abimelech's story in Judges 9 insists, in fact, that the people must treat the royal house well. In Dtr's narrative, there is a real logic to this: Israel needs leadership; the narrative of Judges has demonstrated that Yhwh appears to judge Israel based on its cultic disloyalty alone, while 1 Samuel 8–15 makes the same point in terms of Yhwh's evaluation of kings; the narrative points to no other viable leadership office; and so all that will matter about royal leadership is that it enforce cultic loyalty. By this point in the narrative, social and economic injustice hardly seem like things that would concern Yhwh. And as we shall see in the next chapter, this logic is extremely clear in the evaluations of the monarchs in Kings, who are judged by their cultic leadership alone.

Chapter 6

Royal Cultic Leadership and Yhwh's Choice of David

1. *Royal cultic leadership in Mesopotamia and Dtr*

If the story of Saul points readers to the idea that the only thing that matters about a good king is that he enforce cultic loyalty to Yhwh, the divine suzerain, the narrative of Kings makes this idea explicit. The evaluations of Judean and Israelite kings there constantly return readers to the notion that royal success is judged by cultic leadership alone. Based on our examination of the imperial discourse from Mesopotamia, we have already seen that Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings are understood to be priests and in charge of the cult. The concept of an eternal dynasty in Assyria and Babylon could be linked to the royal duty to restore temples and provide for the cult.[1] Colonial conquests can also be linked to this royal cultic duty. Nebuchadnezzar describes himself as 'the ruler of humanity' and claims that Marduk has given him sovereignty over the peoples in order to draw Marduk's yoke, a claim Nebuchadnezzar then links to his ability to provide sacrifices and refurbish the temples, since he can use his imperial conquests to do so.[2] Such colonial discourse is present as well in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, in which kings link their divinely mandated authority to rule over the earth to the resources of their colonists that they can draw on to serve the cults of Ashur and the great gods of Mesopotamia. Ashurbanipal, for example, refers to his victory, accomplished with divine aid, over rebels in his colonies, on whom he then replaces the 'yoke of Ashur, which they

1. Antti Laato, 'Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Ideology', *CBQ* 59 (1997), pp. 244-69. In the ancient Near East, temples were mainly, but not always, said to have originally been divine constructions, with royal activity then limited to their restoration. See Hanspeter Schaudig, 'Cult Centralization in the Ancient Near East? Conceptions of the Ideal Capital in the Ancient Near East', in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; BZAW, 405; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 145-68 (147-51).

2. See, e.g., Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB, 4; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1912), pp. 88-95, 112-15, 146-49; *ANET*, p. 307. Also see the discussion in David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM, 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 36-40.

had cast off', forcing them to provide for the cult of Ashur (*ARAB*, II, p. 305; for similar examples, see pp. 160-61, 166, 226-27, 273-74).

We discussed in Chapter 4 the Mesopotamian colonial hegemony that portrays what lies beyond the periphery of the empire as chaotic uncivilization, as areas that will benefit from a colonial power's ability to farm long-abandoned land and repopulate abandoned cities. This hegemony, we saw, can even draw upon the vocabulary and imagery of the *Enūma elish* in order to contrast the imperial king, representing creation and civilization, with the chaos and anti-creation impulses of the foreign enemy. For Dtr, of course, the Israelites themselves are the foreign enemy, the rebellious subalterns who need the kings to civilize them so they can draw Yhwh's yoke, a matter about which the evaluations of the monarchs in Kings is clear, since the monarchs are judged on their success or failure in this. We have noted already in Chapters 2 and 5 that a Mesopotamian tradition, one that stretches from the Curse of Agade through the Weidner Chronicle to the Neo-Babylonian Chronicles and the Cyrus Cylinder, links royal obedience in cultic matters to success and the opposite to destruction. This interpretation of history is clearly present in Kings, most obviously so in the evaluations of the individual monarchs and royal dynasties. To begin with the situation in the North that Dtr portrays, the evaluations of the Northern monarchs and the five Northern dynasties[3] link royal cultic failure to the kings' and dynasties' loss of power and to the destruction of the North. Jeroboam, the first Northern king, acts like Aaron and Israel in Deuteronomy 9 in creating a cult centered on the worship of golden calves (1 Kgs 12.26-33), calves that both Jeroboam and Yhwh refer to as 'gods' (13.28; 14.9); his control over the cultic life of the North means that he compels the ten Northern tribes to worship in this new cult, something Dtr's narrative describes as causing Israel to sin, using the verb חטא in the hiphil (1 Kgs 14.16); and because no king in the North who follows him is ever said to remove these cultic apparatuses, they are also condemned by the narrative as imitating 'the sin(s) of Jeroboam' and causing Israel to sin.[4] As a result,

3. By 'dynasty' I refer here to any royal house that has more than one member who acts as king. In the North, only five houses achieve this: Jeroboam's (1 Kgs 12.20–14.20; 15.25-26); Baasha's (1 Kgs 15.27–16.14); Omri's (1 Kgs 16.21–22.40; 1 Kgs 22.51–2 Kgs 8.15); Jehu's (2 Kgs 9.1–10.36; 13.1-25; 14.23-29; 15.8-12); and Menahem's (2 Kgs 15.17-26).

4. חטא appears in the hiphil in the evaluation of each of the 19 kings of the North with only two exceptions; see the evaluations of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 14.16); Nadab (15.30); Baasha (15.34; 16.2); Elah (16.13); Zimri (16.19); Omri (16.26); Ahab (21.22); Ahaziah (22.52); Jehoram (2 Kgs 3.3); Jehu (10.29, 31); Jehoahaz (13.2); Jehoash (13.11); Jeroboam II (14.24); Zechariah (15.9); Menahem (15.18); Pekahiah (15.24); and Pekah (15.28). Dtr refers to 'the sin(s) of Jeroboam' in the evaluations of 14 of the 19 Northern kings: those of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 14.16); Nadab (15.30); Baasha (15.34); Omri (16.26);

the narrative consistently refers to 'the sin(s) of Jeroboam' and uses חטא in the hiphil in its explanations for the removal of the Northern kings and dynasties from power.[5] Jeroboam's apostasy is imitated by all of the kings who follow him in the North in Dtr, and so all of them are evaluated negatively. The kings may lead the apostasy, but the people participate in it, as the constant repetition of חטא in the hiphil in the royal evaluations emphasizes, and so the whole nation is ultimately destroyed and removed from the land in 2 Kings 17.[6] Since the kings are in charge of the national cult there is a logic to this, for the people can only follow the royal cultic lead, and despite the universal failure of the Northern kings the narrative never states that the situation should be otherwise. Indeed, after Judges readers are well aware that a leaderless Israel would be no better, and, given that we saw in Judges as well that the North is portrayed even more negatively than Judah, this point is particularly true for the people of the North. The evaluations of the Northern kings and dynasties in Dtr make absolutely clear the conclusion to which the stories of Saul in 1 Samuel 8–15 lead readers: Yhwh appears to care about no aspect of royal rule except for its success in leading the people in cultic loyalty.

Carl Evans sees in Jeroboam a reflection of the way Mesopotamian tradition portrays Naram-Sin as an *Unheilsherrscher*, the archetypal king whose disobedience to the gods leads to national disaster.[7] Naram-Sin is the protagonist of the Curse of Agade whose cultic disobedience leads to the destruction of his kingdom; from the time of that composition on he is,

Ahab (16.31); Jehoram (2 Kgs 3.3); Jehu (10.29, 31); Jehoahaz (13.2); Jehoash (13.11); Jeroboam II (14.24); Zechariah (15.9); Menahem (15.18); Pekahiah (15.24); and Pekah (15.28). See the discussion in David Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25.27-30', *JSOT* 33 (2008), pp. 39-58 (44-46).

5. These two rationales are linked to the removal of kings and dynasties from power in 1 Kgs 14.8-11; 15.26-30; 16.1-4, 12-13, 18-19; 21.20-22, and to the destruction of Samaria and the North in 2 Kgs 17.21-23.

6. Dtr's emphasis on the king's role in causing the people to sin, something obvious in its repeated use of the verb חטא in the hiphil, shows that redactional arguments for Kings cannot be based on whether or not the kings or the people are said to be the subject responsible for the sin. See, e.g., Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 140-43; Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pp. 19-20; Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 206-207.

7. Carl D. Evans, 'Naram-Sin and Jeroboam: The Archetypal *Unheilsherrscher* in Mesopotamian and Biblical Historiography', in *Scripture in Context*. II. *More Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo G. Purdue; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 97-125.

as Mario Liverani points out, contrasted with Sargon, who is generally portrayed in Mesopotamian literature as the prototypically good king who is to be emulated by later monarchs.[8] And while Dtr does indeed consistently refer to 'the sin(s) of Jeroboam' in its regnal evaluations, the narrative saves its worst censure for the Omrides, the third of the five Northern dynasties. Dtr always refers to this dynasty as 'the house of Ahab', for the narrative tells readers that Ahab, the second ruler of the line, actually adds to Jeroboam's sin, reintroducing Canaanite Baal worship, an act that the narrative links to the rebuilding of Jericho (1 Kgs 16.31-34). In the narration of the latter act, Dtr explicitly returns readers to Joshua's destruction of it, and we are led to see that Ahab is rebuilding the Canaanite cult for which Israel was originally responsible for destroying in חרם.[9] Perhaps Dtr sees a need to deprecate this house in particular because it was the best known of the dynasties in the North—the Assyrians refer to Israel as 'the house of Omri' until the destruction of Samaria, more than a century after the end of the Omride dynasty (*ANET*, pp. 283-84)—and so renames the dynasty 'the house of Ahab' (it is always 'the house of Omri' in Assyrian sources, a term Dtr never uses)[10] to connect it in readers' minds to sin and destruction rather than to enduring political success, just as the North in general is portrayed as somewhat more evil than Judah in Judges. This can only help the later claim that Dtr makes for the right of the Davidides to control the North, as we will discuss below.[11]

The portrayal of the effects of the Northern kings' failure in cult in Dtr, then, conforms to the portrayal of the cultic failures known from Mesopotamian colonial discourse. Not all the Northern kings attain the same level of evil, but the act of causing the people to sin, an act for which every Northern

8. Mario Liverani, 'Model and Actualization: The Kings of Akkad in the Historical Tradition', in *Akkad: The First World Empire. Structure, Ideology, Traditions* (ed. Mario Liverani; HANES, 5; Padua: Sargon, 1993), pp. 41-67.

9. See Marvin A. Sweeney, 'On the Literary Function of the Notice Concerning Hiel's Re-establishment of Jericho in 1 Kings 16.34', in *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs: The Art of Exegesis. Studies in Honour of Antony F. Campbell, SJ for his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Mark A. O'Brien and Howard N. Wallace; JSOTSup, 415; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 104-15; Charles Conroy, 'Hiel between Ahab and Elijah-Elisha: 1 Kgs 16,34 in its Immediate Literary Context', *Bib* 77 (1996), pp. 210-18.

10. See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, pp. 99, 106, 334-35.

11. Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman suggest that the denigration of the North evolves out of a late eighth century attempt to integrate Northern refugees into Judean society; see their 'Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology', *JSOT* 30 (2006), pp. 259-85 (269-74). This may be so—after all, Micah also refers to 'the house of Ahab' (6.16) at that time—but in the context of the narrative of Dtr, produced in the exile, the denigration of the Omrides and the Northern kings as a whole also supports the Davidide claim to the North that the narrative makes, as we shall see at the end of this chapter.

king is culpable, means that not one of them is acceptable by Yhwh's standards. The first three dynasties receive practically identical divine judgments: Yhwh decrees the destruction of every single male within the royal house (1 Kgs 14.10-11; 16.3-4; 21.21-22), a decree that is explicitly fulfilled in the narrative (1 Kgs 15.29-30; 16.12-13; 2 Kgs 9–10). Jehu is rewarded for wiping out the Baalism of the house of Ahab with the fourth Northern dynasty, one that lasts five generations and then is removed from power (2 Kgs 10.28-31)[12]—although it is spared the massacre of all the males who belong to the house—since its kings also cause Israel to sin with Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 10.28-31; 14.8-12). The final Northern dynasty, that of Menahem (2 Kgs 15.17-26), is removed from power with no word as to whether or not the males of the house survive its overthrow, although Israel is destroyed and removed from the land only 29 years later, which means that the house did not rule again. Part of the curse realized by the first three dynasties in the North—dogs will eat the bodies of the slaughtered members of the royal house (1 Kgs 14.11; 16.3-4; 21.24)—reflects imperial treaty language (see *VTE* ¶ 47),[13] for the kings have ultimately failed in enforcing the loyalty of their people to their true suzerain, and so they suffer the fate of disloyal client rulers. The houses receive their judgments of destruction during the reign of the first king who causes the people to sin,[14] suggesting that only one king needs to provide such cultic misleading in order to doom the whole house. If the removal of these dynasties can be seen as punishment for causing Israel to commit apostasy, it also has the benefit of ensuring that apostate houses will not come to power again.[15] As in the story of Saul, we see that no royal action outside of proper leadership in cult is ultimately of any worth in earning a positive Deuteronomistic evaluation for a king.

12. The narrator is even willing to refer to one of his sons as a 'savior' of Israel like those of the time of the judges (2 Kgs 13.3-5); see Walter Brueggemann, 'Stereotype and Nuance: The Dynasty of Jehu', *CBQ* 70 (2008), pp. 16-28 (18-21, 27-28). Note also that Dtr uses imperial language as it accounts for the five generation dynasty of Jehu as a reward for his removal of Ahab's addition of Canaanite apostasy to that established by Jeroboam; see David T. Lamb, 'The Non-Eternal Dynastic Promise of Jehu of Israel and Esarhaddon of Assyria', *VT* 60 (2010), pp. 337-44 (338-40). See also Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA, 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), p. 10.

13. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 131.

14. For the Omrides, it is actually Ahab, the second king of the house, who receives this judgment (1 Kgs 21.21-22), but, as we have seen, Dtr treats Ahab as the *de facto* founder of the house and always refers to the dynasty as 'the house of Ahab'. Otherwise, the promise of the annihilation and/or permanent removal from power is always found in the reign of the first king of the dynasty who causes the people to sin; see 1 Kgs 14.7-11; 16.1-4; and 2 Kgs 10.29-30.

15. For more discussion of this issue, see Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 44-49.

Although we will have more to say in the following chapter about the portrayal of the prophets in Kings, we should point out here that the narrative of 'the house of Ahab', the worst of the Northern houses according to Dtr, is dominated by stories of prophets rather than of kings. The narrative of Ahab in 1 Kings 17–22 is really more of a narrative of Ahab and the prophets, especially Elijah, rather than a narrative of Ahab as sole protagonist, while 2 Kings 1–8 has much more to say about prophetic acts, particularly those of Elisha, than about the acts of the last Omrides.[16] When royal leadership fails in the North, prophetic leadership appears to take its place. In 1 Kings 18 it is Elijah and not the king who leads Israel in cultic loyalty at Mount Carmel. Far more impressive than the story of any Omride succeeding his father on the throne is that of Elisha succeeding Elijah as prophet in 1 Kings 2, a chapter that is arranged concentrically: Elijah goes from Gilgal (2.1) and then to Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan (2.2-7a); after Elisha succeeds him (2.7b-14), he goes from the Jordan to Jericho, Bethel (2.15-24), and finally Mount Carmel (2.25), the site of Elijah's great victory in reestablishing the Yahwistic cult in Israel.[17] In a sense, as Elisha repeats Elijah's travels in reverse, crossing the Jordan and moving to Jericho just as Joshua did after he succeeded Moses, he enacts a kind of religious reconquest of the North which the house of Ahab had returned to Canaanite worship,[18] effecting a series of blessings upon the land that follow those promised in Deuteronomy.[19] Elisha provides life-giving miracles to Israel, contrasting

16. See Jerome T. Walsh, 'The Organization of 2 Kings 3–11', *CBQ* 72 (2010), pp. 238-54 (245).

17. See, e.g., Walsh, 'The Organization of 2 Kings 3–11', p. 244; Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings* (BO; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 10-11; Jesse Long, Jr, *1 and 2 Kings* (CPNIV; Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002), p. 288. For further discussion, as well as a chart of this chiasm, one that includes 1 Kings 1 as well, see Paul J. Kissling, *Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha* (JSOTSup, 224; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 155-60.

18. Philip E. Satterthwaite, 'The Elisha Narratives and the Coherence of 2 Kings 2–8', *TynBul* 49 (1998), pp. 1-28 (8-13); Sweeney, 'On the Literary Function', pp. 109-11; T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC, 13; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), pp. 19-24; Volkmar Fritz, *1 and 2 Kings* (trans. Anselm Hagedorn; CCOT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 234.

19. Brian Aucker argues that just as the narrative of Deuteronomy 7–8 moves from the destruction of foreign gods to blessing in the land, so Elijah's confrontation with Baal worship is followed by a promise of good land in 2 Kgs 2.19-22 as Elisha heals the water of Jericho (cf. Deut. 8.6-9), by the provision of water to the armies of Israel and Judah in 2 Kings 3 (cf. Deut. 8.7), the provision of food to the people in 2 Kgs 6.24–7.20 (cf. Deut. 7.13; 8.8) as well as in 4.42-44 (cf. Deut. 8.9), and the provision of oil in 2 Kgs 4.1-7 (cf. Deut. 7.13) and iron in 2 Kgs 6.1-7 (cf. Deut. 8.9). See his 'A Prophet in King's Clothes: Kingly and Divine Re-Presentation in 2 Kings 4 and 5', in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*

him with the kings of the house of Ahab who cannot provide food (2 Kgs 6.25-27) and who steal land (1 Kgs 21). He is the only non-royal figure in Kings before whom people bow to the ground (2 Kgs 2.15; 4.37),[20] and the prophetic replacement of kings by prophets, at least during the narrative of the house of Ahab, emphasizes the failure of the kings to do their job, emphasizes, in fact, that the house is returning Israel to the same state in which it existed in the narrative of Judges. The same point is made in 2 Kgs 8.16-27 and 11.1-20. 8.16-18 claims that the Davidide Jehoram intermarries with the house of Ahab, and this act causes him to act 'just as the house of Ahab did…and he did evil in the eyes of Yhwh' (8.18), and causes his son Ahaziah to do 'evil in the eyes of Yhwh like the house of Ahab' (8.27).[21] Intermarriage with Israelites who act like Canaanites is dangerous for the same reason that intermarriage with Canaanites is: it leads to apostasy. And so just as the house of Ahab is removed from power and all of its males are assassinated in 2 Kings 9–10, just like the previous two Northern dynasties, in 11.1-20 all the male Davidides (save one) are assassinated, and the dynasty is removed from the throne (although only for six years).[22]

So all of the Northern dynasties and kings are complete failures in Dtr's ultimate evaluations of them; the house of Ahab, in its reinstitution of the Canaanite cult, is merely the worst example. Having a king who will not lead cultic loyalty, who in fact simply replicates the apostasy that the people would be committing without him, does not make Israel's situation any better, and it does not control the people's apostate nature. The repetitive or cyclical failure of the Northern kings simply replicates the repetitive or cyclical failure of Israel in Judges, with 2 Kgs 13.2-5 actually reusing the formulaic language that consistently appears in the cycle of Israel's failures in Judges.[23] 2 Kgs 17.7-23, which summarizes the sin of the North and links it to the sin of Jeroboam that he and all of the rest of the Northern kings caused Israel to commit (17.21-23), also explicitly points forward to the coming sin and destruction of Judah (17.19-20), and implicitly does so by referring in 17.7-23 to sins that Dtr's narrative documents as occurring

(ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim and Brian Aucker; VTSup, 113; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), pp. 1-25 (22-23).

20. Aucker, 'A Prophet in King's Clothes', pp. 4-7, 9-10.

21. Dtr never actually says that either of these kings causes the people to sin, and so differentiates them in this way from the kings in the North. See Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 52-54 and 53 n. 36.

22. See Walsh, 'The Organization of 2 Kings 3–11', and Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 53-54.

23. So David Jobling, 'The Salvation of Israel in "The Book of the Divided Kingdoms", or Was There Any "Fall of the Northern Kingdom"?', in *Redirected Travel: Alternative Journeys and Places in Biblical Studies* (ed. Roland Boer and Edgar W. Conrad; JSOTSup, 382; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), pp. 50-61 (56-58).

in Judah but not the North, or at least more frequently in Judah than in the North.[24] The Davidides' regnal evaluations in Kings are also all based on cultic leadership, further evidence that Dtr sees no other royal role that matters. The narrative provides the Davidides with roughly an equal number of positive and negative evaluations,[25] which is certainly much better than the kings of the North, all of whom are Deuteronomistic failures, but Manasseh causes Judah to commit sin even worse than that of the Canaanites (2 Kgs 21.9, 11), and not only is he the only Davidic king in whose narrative חטא in the hiphil appears (21.11, 16), his misleading makes Judah even worse than Dtr ever accuses the North of being, since the narrative charges the North with being like, but not worse than, the Canaanites (17.8, 11, 15). Despite the more negative portrayal of the North in Judges, under Manasseh's leadership Judah exceeds Israel in cultic disloyalty. And just as Dtr blames the destruction of the North on Jeroboam's sin that causes Israel to sin, the narrative links Judah's destruction to Manasseh's sin (2 Kgs 21.10-16; 23.26-27; 24.3-4).

So while Dtr does not claim that that Davidic leadership is perfect, a claim that exilic readers would have difficulty believing, since they and their parents witnessed the destruction of Judah under Davidic leadership, the Davidides are also not the universal failures the Northern kings are in the narrative. Of course, the Davidides also have an eternal covenant with Yhwh, something given to no Northern dynasty. When Solomon creates apostate high places for his wives (1 Kgs 11.1-8) he does not cause Israel to sin as Manasseh and all of the kings of the North do, but he does activate the punishment that accompanies the grant of an eternal covenant to the house (see 2 Sam. 7.14)—Yhwh punishes him by stripping the North from Davidide control, and so the Davidides lose 'the throne of Israel',[26] retaining

24. For example, the worship of the host of heaven (17.16) is attributed in Dtr only to the Judean cult (see 2 Kgs 21.3, 5), as is the practice of passing children through fire (17.17; see 2 Kgs 16.3; 21.6), while worship at high places and pillars (17.9-11) is a sin that the narrative more often portrays as occurring in Judah rather than the North (1 Kgs 11.7; 12.31-32; 13.2, 32; 14.23; 15.14; 22.43; 2 Kgs 12.3; 14.4; 15.4, 35; 16.4; 21.3). See Pauline Viviano, '2 Kings 17: A Rhetorical and Form-Critical Analysis', *CBQ* 49 (1987), pp. 548-59; Marc Zvi Brettler, 'Ideology, History and Theology in 2 Kings xvii 7-23', *VT* 39 (1989), pp. 268-82; Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies* (2 vols.; HSM, 52-53; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994), II, p. 297; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, pp. 206-14.

25. See Steven L. McKenzie, 'The Divided Kingdom in the Deuteronomistic History and in Scholarship on It', in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL, 147; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2000), pp. 135-45 (142-43).

26. Solomon is said to sit on 'the throne of Israel' in 1 Kgs 1.46 and 10.9 but, when Yhwh gives the ten tribes to Jeroboam, then Jeroboam is called 'king over (all) Israel' (11.37; 12.20), and after Solomon's time the term 'throne of Israel' is used only for Northern kings (2 Kgs 10.30; 15.12).

only Judah as a נִיר 'fief'.[27] Dtr, however, does not present this punishment as an abrogation of the eternal covenant. 1 Kgs 2.3-4; 8.25; and 9.4-5 might appear like conditional rather than unconditional statements of the promise to David, but their references to the potential loss of 'the throne of Israel' are in fact simply warnings of the punishment Solomon's sin receives, the possibility of which was announced in 2 Samuel 7 during Yhwh's gift of the unconditional promise to David. Solomon's sin may lose the Davidides 'the throne of Israel', but not the throne of Judah.[28] In Dtr's logic, the throne of Israel is not irrevocably taken from the Davidides— Yhwh says in 11.39 that 'I will punish David's seed for this, but not forever'—for a reversal of Solomon's sin can still restore all of Israel to the Davidides, as we shall discuss below.

Given what we have seen of the evaluations of kings and dynasties in Dtr, we might expect that Yhwh's eternal promise to David, never revoked in the narrative, might suggest that David wins it as a reward for particular assiduousness in leading cultic loyalty to Yhwh and in adhering to the law of Moses, as might the fact that the Davidic kings who follow him are continually compared to him positively when they are evaluated well and negatively when they are not.[29] In the narrative of Kings, David appears as a paradigm of righteous leadership, particularly in cultic matters, since this is how monarchs are evaluated in Kings. As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, however, this seems odd given the very imperfect portrayal of David in 1 and 2 Samuel, where the narrative says almost nothing about his cultic activities. Before we turn to that discussion, we should also point out here that the evaluations of both Davidic and Northern kings do not reflect the Law of the King in Deuteronomy 17,[30] or really any law of

27. Ehud Ben Zvi has pointed out that the word נִיר means 'cultivated land' in Mishnaic Hebrew, and since this meaning fits the word when it appears in non-Deuteronomistic passages, 'fief' is the most likely translation here. See his 'Once the Lamp Has Been Kindled…: A Reconsideration of the MT *Nîr* in 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19 and 2 Chr 21:17', *ABR* 39 (1991), pp. 19-30.

28. In these three places we read of the potential loss of 'the throne of Israel' and, of course, that is what happens when the North is given to Jeroboam in 11.29-38. For 2.3-4; 8.25; and 9.4-5 as the activation of the punishment of 2 Samuel 7 and not a contradiction of the eternal promise to David, see Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 99-105; Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), pp. 157-74.

29. The comparisons appear in 1 Kgs 3.3; 11.4-6, 33; 15.3, 11; 2 Kgs 14.3; 16.2; 18.3; 22.2. For a full discussion of these and other comparisons with David, see Amos Frisch, 'Comparison with David as a Means of Evaluating Character in the Book of Kings', *JHS* 11/7 (2011), pp. 1-20.

30. See Gary N. Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', *ZAW* 108 (1996), pp. 329-46 (336-37).

Deuteronomy, except for Deuteronomy's insistence on absolute loyalty to Yhwh. This is an important reason why some scholars see the Law of the King, if not all of Deut. 16.18-18.22, as the work of a later editor, one who was not responsible for the regnal evaluations in Kings.[31] These evaluations that deal only with cult and that make cultic leadership the only aspect of royal rule that matters,[32] however, have a real point in regard to Dtr's mimicry of colonial discourse, as does the privileging of David. Judges 17–1 Samuel 15 has led readers to the conclusion that a king is necessary for Israel's survival, but that a king who acts like Saul will not help Israel survive. The evaluations of the monarchs in Kings repetitively make the same point. Samuel tells Israel in 1 Sam. 8.11-18, as we have seen, that Yhwh will not come to Israel's aid if the kings take economic advantage of the nation; if what is important is the survival of Israel, that they become loyal subalterns to their divine suzerain, then, Dtr's logic appears to run, royal actions that have nothing to do with the cult should largely not matter. And as we shall see in the next section of this chapter, for David this means that Yhwh is largely willing to give the Davidides *carte blanche* when

31. Bernard M. Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah', *VT* 51 (2001), pp. 511-34 (524-25); Gary N. Knoppers, 'Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings', *CBQ* 63 (2001), pp. 393-415 (412-14); Knoppers, *Two Nations under God*, II, pp. 122-24; Andrew D.H. Mayes, 'Deuteronomistic Ideology and the Theology of the Old Testament', *JSOT* 82 (1999), pp. 57-82 (68-71); Christoph Bultmann, *Der Fremde in antiken Juda: Eine Untersuchung zum sozialen Typenbegriff* 'ger' *und seinem Bedeutungswandel in der alttestamentlichen Gesetzgebung* (FRLANT, 153; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), pp. 145-57; Udo Rüterswörden, *Von der politischen Gemeinschaft zur Gemeinde: Studien zu Dt 16,18–18,22* (BBB, 65; Frankfurt am Main: Athanäum, 1987), pp. 94-111; Norbert Lohfink, 'Distribution of the Functions of Power: The Laws Concerning Public Offices in Deuteronomy 16.18–18.22', in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. Duane L. Christensen; SBTS, 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993), pp. 336-52 (347); Eben Scheffler, 'Criticism of Government: Deuteronomy 17:14-20 between (and beyond) Synchrony and Diachrony', in *South African Perspectives on the Pentateuch between Synchrony and Diachrony* (ed. Jurie le Roux and Eckart Otto; LHBOTS, 463; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), pp. 124-37 (133-34); Eckart Otto, 'Von der Gerichtsordnung zum Verfassungswerf: Deuteronomische Gestaltung und deuteronomistische Interpretation im "Ämtergesetz" Dtn 16,18–18,22', in *Wer ist wie du, Herr, unter den Göttern? Studien zur Theologie und Religionsgeschichte Israels für Otto Kaiser zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper *et al.*; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), pp. 142-55 (152-55).

32. Robert Cohn describes the evaluative work of the narrative in Kings as 'heavy', 'flattening out whatever individuality may have emerged from the account of the king's reign'. See his 'Characterization in Kings', in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern; VTSup, 129; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), pp. 89-105 (91).

it comes to their actions outside of the cult that exists so that Israel can express their loyalty to their divine suzerain. What I am suggesting here is that Dtr engages in a kind of surreptitious bait-and-switch with exilic readers, originally presenting the monarchy in Deuteronomy 17 as an innocuous, optional office of leadership with no stated powers of authority, only to then go on and present Israel as an utterly depraved nation of foreigners who cannot remain loyal to their divine suzerain and who desperately need a monarchy to survive. If Yhwh appears to give the Davidides in particular more authority than the Law of the King ascribes to the monarchy and refuses to judge them by the standards of Deuteronomic Law, then this is the price the people must pay for their rebellion and the foreign Otherness to which they naturally tend.

Before we turn to the narrative's presentation of David, we can show, even in the case of Ahab, the worst of the Northern kings, that Dtr cares about virtually no aspect of his rule except for his cultic failures, demonstrating Yhwh's lack of concern in judging him for a non-cultic crime. Yhwh implicates Ahab in the murder of Naboth and the appropriation of his land, and has Elijah announce, as punishment for this crime, 'In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, the dogs will also lick up your blood' (1 Kgs 21.19). Furthermore, because of the sin of Jeroboam that Ahab continues, Elijah immediately goes on to announce that his dynasty will also receive exactly the same punishment of the complete annihilation of all males within the house that the houses of Jeroboam and Baasha received (21.21-22; cf. 14.7-11; 15.27-30; 16.1-4, 8-13). The punishment of the annihilation of Ahab's house is fulfilled by Jehu (2 Kgs 9–10), but that for his involvement in the murder of and theft from Naboth, a non-cultic crime, never quite is. The story of Ahab's death portrays dogs licking up Ahab's blood in Samaria (22.37-38), while Naboth very clearly dies in Jezreel (21.1-14). The narrative seems to draw attention to this discrepancy in 2 Kgs 9.25-26 when Jehu kills Ahab's son Joram, who succeeds Ahab as king. Jehu states that he heard an oracle against Ahab for Naboth's murder that said, 'For the blood of Naboth and for the blood of his children that I saw yesterday—an oracle of Yhwh—I will repay you on this field.' Assuming that Jehu truly did hear such an oracle—the narrative does not confirm that a prophet truly did provide it[33]—it points only to the fulfillment of it

33. Some commentators argue that Jehu refers here to the oracle of 1 Kgs 21.19—e.g., Cohn, *2 Kings*, pp. 68-69; Marvin A. Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2007), pp. 334-35; Fritz, *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 285; Peter D. Miscall, 'Elijah, Ahab and Jehu: A Prophecy Fulfilled', *Prooftexts* 9 (1989), pp. 73-83 (79). The difficulty with this argument, though, is that Jehu appears to be quoting the oracle here, since he has Yhwh speak in the first person, and this is simply not the prophecy that Elijah announces in 1 Kgs 21.19. Nor is there any indication in 1 Kings 21 that Jehu is present in order to hear that oracle. Indeed, neither the

against Ahab's children, not Ahab himself, for the prophecy he quotes refers to Naboth's children and Jehu has just killed one of Ahab's. This new oracle reminds readers that the original condemnation of Ahab was not precisely fulfilled, reminds them that Yhwh forgot about the punishment of Ahab for the murder of Naboth, or at the very least did not care to clearly fulfill it.[34] One wonders if Yhwh would even have bothered to provide the oracle to which Jehu refers (and again, it is not entirely clear that Yhwh did provide it) if its punishment did not happen to coincide with that of the destruction of the house of Ahab for leading cultic disloyalty, the only royal action that seems to cause Yhwh much concern.

2. *David as sinner and royal paradigm*

If the third part of Dtr's threefold argument for the monarchy is one that makes enforcing cultic loyalty the sole relevant aspect of royal rule, it also involves a presentation of the Davidides as a dynasty specifically favored by Yhwh. Yhwh says that, while he felt free to remove his steadfast love from Saul, he will not do the same in regard to David's descendant or David's kingdom (2 Sam. 7.15-16). Dtr presents no evaluation of David based on his cultic activities, and yet the narrative of Kings establishes David as a paradigm of exemplary royal behavior against which his descendants on the throne of Judah are measured (1 Kgs 3.3; 11.4-6, 33; 15.3, 11; 2 Kgs 14.3; 16.2; 18.3; 22.2), and readers of Kings are told numerous times that Yhwh forbears to punish Judah and the Davidides, or at least limits divine punishment, specifically for David's sake (1 Kgs 11.12-13, 32-36; 15.4-5; 2 Kgs 8.19). Such a portrayal of David appears odd precisely because 1-2 Samuel

story nor prophecy concerning Naboth in 1 Kings 21 refers to his children as the oracle that Jehu quotes in 2 Kings 9 does. For a full list of the differences between 1 Kgs 21.19 and 2 Kgs 9.25-26, see Patrick T. Cronauer, *The Stories about Naboth the Jezreelite: A Source, Composition, and Redaction Investigation of 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 9* (LHBOTS, 424; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), pp. 13-19. However, Jehu is speaking in 9.25-26 to Bidkar, and Jehu says that both he and Bidkar heard the oracle, and so readers might assume that Bidkar would raise some sort of objection if he did not recall this divine word. See Lissa M. Wray Beal, *The Deuteronomist's Prophet: Narrative Control of Approval and Disapproval in the Story of Jehu (2 Kings 9 and 10)* (LHBOTS, 478; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), pp. 86-87.

34. One might wonder why Yhwh has Ahab killed in 1 Kings 22 if not specifically to punish him for Naboth's murder, but Yhwh gives no reason in 22.20 for desiring the king's death, and Ahab's death does not, as we have seen, clearly fulfill the prophecy of punishment in 21.19 for the murder. An easier explanation for Ahab's death is that it is punishment for apostasy; like the other Northern kings who die violently, he has caused Israel to sin. See 1 Kgs 15.26-27; 16.8-9, 15-18; 2 Kgs 9.23-24; 15.10, 14, 25, 30, where the violent deaths of Northern kings are often linked to their continuation of Jeroboam's sin and never linked to social crimes.

presents David as a sinner who even seems to challenge Yhwh's authority. While readers sympathetic to David might be able to explain away some of David's questionable actions, this is not possible when it comes to the narrative of Bathsheba and Uriah. Dtr uses this story, however, to claim that Yhwh disapproves of David's adultery and murder not because they are crimes against the king's subjects but because, in these actions, David 'despised' Yhwh, subverted Yhwh's role as David's suzerain and so acted in disloyalty. It is for this, not adultery and murder, that Yhwh punishes David. This story, like the narrative of Solomon, which portrays Yhwh as overlooking and even actively supporting violations of the Law of the King, indicates that Yhwh largely does not care to enforce the Law of Moses when it comes to the Davidides; the Bathsheba and Uriah story demonstrates as well how committed Yhwh is to the Davidides, refusing to revoke David's eternal covenant as he did with Eli's, even though the Elides, like David, 'despise' Yhwh in their disloyalty. In David's narrative, Dtr suggests that Yhwh simply has an unexplained favoritism for David that is not based on his cultic actions—David is never evaluated cultically during his reign—and this means that Yhwh largely overlooks his flaws. By presenting David both as sinner and as a royal paradigm, Dtr creates a pro-Davidic narrative that gives exilic readers a reason to continue to recognize Davidic authority: Yhwh did not establish his eternal covenant with David on cultic grounds, so Davidic cultic failure does not result in its abrogation, even while it does result in punishment; and the fact that Yhwh can overlook David's faults sets a precedent for his evaluation of later Davidides, including the one in exile. And as we shall see in Chapter 7, the end of Dtr provides the Davidide in exile with Davidic models that provide him with a blueprint to end the punishment and lead the people out of exile.

The figure of David in Samuel is often not overtly negative; parts of his narrative are often read by scholars as an apologia that works to obscure the wrongdoings of the king.[35] So, for example, some attempts to construct a historical David, often done with reference to such documents as the so-called Succession Narrative/Court History and the History of David's Rise, assumed to have been inserted into Dtr's narrative in 1–2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1–2, note the number of stories in which political rivals of David die or are assassinated—Saul, Ishbaal, Abner, and so on—while David himself is explicitly said to be innocent.[36] In these kinds of readings,

35. For a discussion, see David A. Bosworth, 'Evaluating King David: Old Problems and Recent Scholarship', *CBQ* 68 (2006), pp. 191-210 (192-93).

36. E.g., Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (BAW; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 77-94; Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 117-27; Pamela Tamarkin Reis, 'Killing the Messenger: David's Policy or Politics?', *JSOT* 31 (2006), pp. 167-91 (177-81).

David's public laments for his dead rivals (see 2 Sam. 1.19-27 for his lament over Saul and Jonathan and 3.33-34 for his lament over Abner), can appear merely as political moves designed to present the readers of these pre-Deuteronomistic documents with a blameless picture of David.[37] These kinds of analyses argue that the sources Dtr uses obscure the true picture of the historical David, who was a calculating ancient Near Eastern power broker who assassinated his rivals when they stood in his way. And so, for example, in 1 Samuel 25, when David approaches Nabal for payment for having guarded, or at least not actively harmed, his flocks while they were in pasture, it appears as if he and his men run an extortion racket,[38] and yet the text is clear that David does not kill Nabal, whose death the narrative attributes to divine intervention (25.38), and avoids accusing him of any crime at all.

But even sympathetic exilic readers who are willing to give Dtr's narrative of David the benefit of the doubt, to believe that David is innocent, as the narrative claims, of all of the deaths of his political rivals, cannot believe that David does not at least have wrongfully murderous intentions in the case of Nabal, for when Abigail encounters David on his way to kill Nabal and all of his men and convinces him not to carry out his plan, he admits to her that her intervention in the matter 'has kept me this day from bloodguilt' (25.33). That is, he himself admits at the end of the story that he had planned to commit a crime. Nor is this the only story of David in Dtr that raises troubling questions concerning his character and actions. David is clearly interested in gaining and holding power, a matter evident almost as soon as he is introduced by the narrative. When David hears that Saul is offering entrance by marriage into the royal family for the man who kills Goliath, David immediately asks for that information to be repeated (1 Sam. 17.25-26), which provides some context for his brother Eliab's response to David's presence in the camp of the Israelite army: 'I know your

37. E.g., Tod Linafelt, 'Private Poetry and Public Eloquence in 2 Samuel 1:17-27: Hearing and Overhearing David's Lament for Jonathan and Saul', *JRel* 88 (2008), pp. 497-526 (502-504); Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 36; K.L. Noll, *The Faces of David* (JSOTSup, 242; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 57; Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (BZAW, 142; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1977), p. 73.

38. E.g., David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup, 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 96-100; McKenzie, *King David*, p. 97; Mary Shields, 'A Feast Fit for a King: Food and Drink in the Abigail Story', in *The Fate of King David: The Past and Present of a Biblical Icon* (ed. Tod Linafelt, Claudia V. Camp and Timothy Beal; LHBOTS, 500; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2010), pp. 38-54 (38-39).

presumption and the evil of your heart' (17.28).[39] David promises both Jonathan and Saul that he will spare their descendants when he becomes king (20.14-17, 42; 24.22-23 [21-22]), and while he does bring Mephibosheth, a surviving son of Jonathan, to the royal court to eat at the king's table (2 Sam. 9), this kindness appears self-serving, as it allows David to have a potential rival close at hand and under watch at court. Should readers see this move as kindness rather than political opportunism on David's part, David's refusal in 2 Sam. 19.25-31 [24-30] to believe that Mephibosheth supported him during Absalom's rebellion, and his refusal even to investigate Mephibosheth's defense that his servant Ziba sabotaged his plan to flee Jerusalem with David, suggest that David has viewed him with suspicion all along.[40]

In a similar way, David's repeated insistence that he will not harm Saul because Saul is 'Yhwh's anointed (24.7, 11 [6, 10]; 26.9, 11) can sound to a reader sympathetic to David like a pious recognition of the king Yhwh has chosen, or at least a recognition of an Israelite taboo against regicide,[41] but there is no such law or ethical norm expressed by anyone but David in Dtr. Of course, David is Yhwh's anointed, just as Saul is. David's first act following Saul's death is to misrepresent the words of the Amalekite who

39. See Keith Bodner, *David Observed: A King in the Eyes of His Court* (HBM, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), pp. 10-11, 17-22; Lyle M. Eslinger, 'A Change of Heart: 1 Samuel 16', in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle M. Eslinger and Glen Taylor; JSOTSup, 67; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), pp. 341-61 (357); Marti J. Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power* (SPOT; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p. 54. I say that David's immediate interest in the political reward for defeating Goliath provides context for Eliab's statement about David's heart, since Eliab links David's evil heart to his younger brother's abandonment of his family duties at home because of a desire to see bloodshed. Readers, however, have been led to the suggestion that David's evil might be found in a rather different direction: his desire for power.

40. So D.M. Gunn, *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978), p. 97; Michael A. Eschelbach, *Has Joab Foiled David? A Literary Study of the Importance of Joab's Character in Relation to David* (StBL, 76; New York: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 43-44; Noll, *The Faces of David*, p. 62; Leo G. Purdue, "'Is there anyone left of the House of Saul…?": Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative', *JSOT* 30 (1984), pp. 67-84 (75); James S. Ackerman, 'Knowing Good and Evil: A Literary Analysis of the Court History of 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2', *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 41-60.

41. E.g., J.P. Fokkelman, 'A Lie, Born of Truth, too Weak to Contain It: A Structural Reading of 2 Sam 1:1-16', in *Prophets, Worship, and Theodicy: Studies in Prophetism, Biblical Theology, and Structural Rhetorical Analysis, and on the Place of Music in Worship* (ed. J. Barton *et al.*; OTS, 23; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), pp. 39-55 (49); Charles Mabee, 'David's Judicial Exoneration', *ZAW* 92 (1980), pp. 89-107 (95); P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB, 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), p. 61.

comes to him to take credit for Saul's death in battle, for while David says he will execute him for having said, 'I have killed Yhwh's anointed' (2 Sam. 1.16), the Amalekite says no such thing in his speech with David.[42] David does not even pretend to investigate the Amalekite's claim; had he done so, he may have discovered that he was lying, since Saul committed suicide (1 Sam. 31.4). The rule against killing 'Yhwh's anointed' appears to be David's, and in his killing of the innocent Amalekite he demonstrates the seriousness of his intent to maintain his position. Even sympathetic readers might begin to suspect that David will say or do what he needs to in order to protect his rule, including using the execution of an innocent man (albeit a liar) to gratify his desire for power.[43]

David also acts as a judge and distributes justice, and although this is not one of the powers that Deut. 16.18–18.22 delegates to the king, perhaps we can read these chapters as at least leaving some unwritten role for a king,[44] since nothing in Deuteronomy directly forbids the king from acting in some kind of capacity as judge. David, nonetheless, does not act as a competent one. He allows his love for Amnon to stop him from punishing his son for rape (2 Sam. 13.21);[45] after Absalom acts to kill Amnon for his crime, David eventually allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem but does not—at least at first—allow him to come to court (2 Sam. 14), which suggests that he believes that he might have acted wrongly not to punish him for murder, or at least that he cannot make up his mind what kind of penalty Absalom should receive.[46] So when Absalom is able to steal the hearts of

42. See the discussion in Hugh S. Pyper, *David as Reader: 2 Samuel 12:1-15 and the Poetics of Fatherhood* (BIS, 23; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 14-27.

43. Reis, 'Killing the Messenger', pp. 176-77; Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), pp. 197-98; Steussy, *David*, p. 56; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 210.

44. Deut. 16.18 provides for local judges, and 17.8-13 for what sounds like a kind of high court of appeals made up of Levitical priests. Alexander Rofé argues, however, that 17.8-13 really is not an appellate court, but the place for a local judge to go if the truth of a case יִפָּלֵא 'is hidden' from him (17.8). If someone wishes to appeal a decision made by a local court then, in this scenario, they can approach the king, although this is a matter that Deuteronomy 16–18 does not directly comment on. See Rofé's 'The Organization of the Judiciary in Deuteronomy (Deut. 16.18-20; 17.8-13; 19.15; 21.22-23; 24.16; 15.1-3)', in *The World of the Arameans*. I. *Biblical Studies in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P.M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers and Michael Weigel; JSOTSup, 324; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 92-112 (100).

45. The explanation for David's failure to punish Amnon in 13.21—'and he would not punish his son Amnon because he loved him because he was his firstborn'—is present in the LXX and 4QSam[a] but not in the MT, which has omitted it due to homoioarchton. The scribe's eye skipped from the ולוא that begins this section to the same word that begins 13.22. See McCarter, *II Samuel*, pp. 319-20.

46. So, e.g., see Gershon Brin, *Studies in Biblical Law: From the Hebrew Bible to*

Israel by commiserating with them in the lack of justice they receive from David (15.1-6), it appears that David's lack of action in distributing justice might be more widespread than just the failures that we see in his treatment of his own sons.[47] Amnon's rape of Tamar and his murder by Absalom, in fact, appear to imitate David's adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, as if to suggest that the father's character flaws are inherited by his sons,[48] and readers might well wonder why Yhwh has made an eternal covenant with this house in the first place. Readers might also begin to draw comparisons between David's house and Eli's, for Eli's house, like David's, received an eternal covenant (1 Sam. 2.30); Eli, like David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, 'despised' Yhwh (1 Sam. 2.31; 2 Sam. 12.9);[49] and Eli, like David, appears to be unable to control his sons.[50] Since Yhwh revokes the eternal covenant with Eli's house (1 Sam. 2.30), some readers might expect that he will be inclined to do the same with David's; perhaps, they might surmise, part of the lesson of the exile is that Yhwh has brought the Davidic covenant to an end.

The connections between David, the father of a royal house, and Eli, the father of a priestly house that fails to lead and demonstrate cultic loyalty in Israel, is only heightened by David's insistence on moving the ark in 2 Samuel 6, an act replete with parallels to the previous story of

the Dead Sea Scrolls (trans. Jonathan Chipman; JSOTSup, 176; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), p. 160; Peter R. Ackroyd, *The Second Book of Samuel* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 134; Shimon Bar-Efart, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (trans. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson; JSOTSup, 70; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), p. 83.

47. So, e.g., Gunn, *The Story of David*, p. 101; Steussy, *David*, p. 79.

48. So, e.g., Gillian Keys, *The Wages of Sin: A Reappraisal of the 'Succession Narrative'* (JSOTSup, 221; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 116, 144-46; Noll, *The Faces of David*, p. 65; Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, I, pp. 99, 106; Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, p. 322; Richard G. Smith, *The Fate of Justice and Righteousness during David's Reign: Rereading the Court History and its Ethics according to 2 Samuel 8:15b–20:26* (LHBOTS, 508; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2009), pp. 148-51.

49. The MT and most versions of 2 Sam. 12.9 have 'despised the word of Yhwh', but LXX^{L} and Theodotion have simply 'despised Yhwh'. The דבר has been inserted, however, in order to soften the charge against David, and LXX^{L} and Theodotion have the more difficult and the shorter reading. See Dominque Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (4 vols.; OBO, 50; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982–2005), I, p. 262.

50. For other parallels between David and Eli, see John Van Seters, 'The Court History and DtrH: Conflicting Perspectives on the House of David', in *Die sogennante Thronfolgegeschichte Davids: Neue Einsichten und Anfragen* (ed. Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer; OBO, 176; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2000), pp. 70-93 (75-76); John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 319; Graeme Auld, 'From King to Prophet in Samuel and Kings', in *Samuel at the Threshold: Selected Works of Graeme Auld* (ed. Graeme Auld; SOTSM; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 173-83 (173).

the movement of the ark in 1 Samuel 4 under Elide leadership.[51] Certainly Yhwh in neither case commands that the ark be moved; that he disapproves of the act in 1 Samuel 4 is evident in Israel's defeat at the hands of the Philistines, and his disapproval of the movement of the ark in 2 Samuel 6 manifests itself in the death of Uzzah as he touches the ark to steady it when the oxen shake it while it is being moved in a cart. Yhwh פרץ 'burst forth' against Uzzah (6.8), just as in the previous chapter he 'burst forth' against the Philistines in defeating them for David (5.20). Since Israelites had just handled the ark to put it in the cart (6.3) and will handle it again soon afterward (6.13) without dying, it is difficult to see why Yhwh kills Uzzah, who is simply trying to stop the ark from falling, if not to express anger at the very movement of the ark, and in doing so he has begun treating Israel like the Philistines.[52] The fact that the household outside of Jerusalem where the ark is placed flourishes (6.11) could perhaps be read as an indication that Yhwh prefers it where it is, yet David sees this as a sign to move the ark into Jerusalem, where he wishes to put it in a temple (6.12-13; 7.1-3), a request to which Yhwh reacts quickly and negatively (7.4-11).[53] It is at least possible to read David's actions here as an attempt to gain some kind of control over the deity;[54] notably, his decision to move the ark occurs after he realizes that Yhwh has made him ruler over Israel (5.12), and after Yhwh twice gives him victory over the Philistines, each time with more specific instructions (5.18-25), as if to demonstrate that he and not David is the ultimate power in Israel.[55]

Yet in none of these cases—David's treatment of Mephibosheth, his failure to enact justice in the cases of his sons, his movement of the ark—does the narrator or Yhwh charge David with wrongdoing. David appears quite active in areas of Israelite life about which Deuteronomy 17 grants the king no explicit powers, such as administering justice (2 Sam. 8.15) and controlling the army (e.g., 2 Sam. 5.7, 17, 25; 8.1, 3, 6, 12, 28, etc.), and he involves himself in cultic leadership by moving the ark and by offering sacrifices (6.13, 17). If David seems to overstep the bounds allotted to the king in Deuteronomy 17, perhaps that is because the command of Deut.

51. For a chart listing the similarities between the two stories of the movement of the ark in 1 Samuel 4–6 and 2 Samuel 5–7, see Steussy, *David*, p. 59.

52. Donald F. Murray, *Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension: Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David* (JSOTSup, 264; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 125-27.

53. Murray, *Divine Prerogative*, pp. 165-67; Lyle Eslinger, *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7* (JSOTSup, 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 24-35.

54. Eslinger, *House of God or House of David*, pp. 14, 23-24; Murray, *Divine Prerogative*, pp. 86-88.

55. Murray, *Divine Prerogative*, pp. 98-111.

17.19-20 that the king should do, and not merely observe, the commandments means that he should act to dispense justice to Israel, properly control their cultic actions, and so on[56] (although we never do see David meditating on the law as Deut. 17 commands). Readers sympathetic to David can still read these stories in ways that allow them to render a positive verdict on David's character, if only because neither the narrator nor Yhwh has explicitly condemned him. But even for these readers this is not possible in 2 Samuel 11–12, where Yhwh directly charges David with wrongdoing in the case involving his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. When we recall that the narrative of Kings presents David as a royal paradigm, and repeatedly states that he kept all of the law (1 Kgs 11.4, 6, 33, 38; 14.8; 15.3; 2 Kgs 18.3; 22.2), 'except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite', as the narrative once reminds readers (1 Kgs 15.5), we might wonder why Dtr includes a 50 verse story (2 Sam. 11.1–12.23) of adultery, murder, and the punishment of the paradigmatic king. It is no wonder, then, that we find suggestions that these chapters are a post-Dtr insertion[57] or, given the other ethically problematic actions of David that we sampled, that all of 2 Samuel 9–20 is.[58]

It is certainly possible, however, to see all of these questionable portrayals of David's character, including and especially the story of Bathsheba and Uriah, as part of Dtr's pro-Davidic argument. Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of 2 Samuel 11–12 is that Uriah is one of the foreigners whom Dtr presents positively and sympathetically, and he clearly functions in the story as a foil for David, an Israelite king who acts worse than a Hittite. 2 Samuel 11–12 does not attempt in any way to obscure David's wrongdoing, and yet, although David's sins of adultery and murder each demand the death penalty,[59] Yhwh does not impose it, or even withdraw

56. This is the argument of Karl William Weyde, 'The Narrative of King Solomon and the Law of the King: On the Relationship between 1 Kings 3–11 and Deut 17:14-20', in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N.D. Mettinger* (ed. Göran Eidevall and Blaženka Scheurer; ConBOT, 58; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), pp. 75-91 (77-79).

57. Steven L. McKenzie, '*Ledavid* (for David)! "Except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite"', in *For and against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel* (ed. A. Graeme Auld and Erik Eynikel; BETL, 232; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), pp. 103-13; Steven L. McKenzie, 'The So-Called Succession Narrative in the Deuteronomistic History', in *Die sogenannte Thronfolgegeschichte Davids: Neue Einsichten und Anfragen* (ed. Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer; OBO, 176; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2000), pp. 123-35 (132-35).

58. John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 277-91; John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David*, pp. 94-95, 355-58.

59. It is unambiguously clear in biblical law that intentional homicide receives the death penalty; see, e.g., Exod. 21.12; Num. 35.31-34. The lawcodes also state unambiguously that both partners involved in adultery are to be put to death (Lev. 20.10; Deut.

the eternal covenant from David as he did from Eli, although in this act David 'despised' Yhwh as Eli did. In fact, the judgment against David in 12.1-14 does not even mention the adultery with Bathsheba, although it is possible to see the punishment of 12.11—someone will have sex with David's wives—as an allusion to this.[60] In fact, Nathan's 'juridical parable' of 12.1-4[61] suggests that Yhwh is not interested in charging David with the crimes of adultery and murder. The prophet presents David with the story of a poor man, whose possessions consist only of a lamb that he treats 'like a daughter', and a rich man who owns 'very many sheep and cattle'. When a traveler arrives, the rich man 'spared taking from his own sheep and his own cattle', but 'he took the lamb of the poor man'. Upon hearing this story, 'David was very angry with the man, and he said to Nathan, "As Yhwh lives, the man who did this deserves to die,[62] and he will repay the lamb fourfold'" (12.5-6).[63] Nathan then responds, 'You are the man' (12.7). Although not all scholars agree that the parable means to indicate David

22.22). It is possible that in actual practice in ancient Israel the husband had the right to mitigate the death penalty in such a case; Prov. 6.32-35 might suggest this, and this was the case in ancient Near Eastern law (e.g., *Code of Hammurapi* 129; *Middle Assyrian Lawcode* 15; see *ANET*, pp. 171, 181). On this point see Robert Gordis, 'On Adultery in Biblical and Babylonian Law—A Note', *Judaism* 33 (1984), pp. 210-11; Henry McKeating, 'Sanctions against Adultery in Ancient Israelite Society, with Some Reflections on Methodology in the Study of Old Testament Ethics', *JSOT* 11 (1979), pp. 57-72 (62-65); Bernard S. Jackson, 'Reflections on Biblical Criminal Law', *JJS* 24 (1973), pp. 8-38 (33-34). In David's case, however, this would be a moot point, since he killed the husband.

60. So, e.g., Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, p. 314; Gwilym H. Jones, *The Nathan Narratives* (JSOTSup, 80; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), p. 102; and Larry Lyke, *King David with the Wise Woman of Tekoa: The Resonance of Tradition in Parabolic Narrative* (JSOTSup, 255; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 154-55.

61. The phrase is Uriel Simon's, who applies it to 12.1-4 and other texts. See his 'The Poor Man's Ewe Lamb: An Example of a Juridical Parable', *Bib* 48 (1967), pp. 207-42.

62. The words בן־מות in this phrase have the sense of at least one who deserves to die, if not someone who is already under a death sentence. This is clearly the sense of בן־מות when Saul uses it in reference to David in 1 Sam. 20.31; Jonathan says to him in response, 'Why should he die?' (20.32). This is also the sense of בני־מות when David accuses Abner and others of not properly guarding 'Yhwh's anointed' in 1 Sam. 26.16. The phrase בני־תמותה in Pss 79.11 and 102.21 [20] also has the sense of 'ones condemned to die'. These are better comparisons than בן בליעל, which McCarter offers in his translation of בן־מות here as 'fiend of hell' (*II Samuel*, p. 299) or בני שׁאון and בני מרי, which refer to people responsible for crimes, that Pyper offers as comparisons (*David as Reader*, pp. 158-60).

63. MT and most of the versions read 'fourfold' here, while LXX reads 'sevenfold'. I see no clear way to choose among these readings, and the issue is not overly important to my argument, so I have presented the majority reading. See Pyper, *David as Reader*, p. 156 n. 1 for a brief summary of the alternative arguments.

as corresponding to the rich man,[64] 'the man' to whom Nathan refers most obviously indicates the one about whom David has just spoken, 'the man who did this', and this can only be the rich man. The result, of course, is that in condemning himself, David has condemned himself as a thief rather than as an adulterer and murderer.

The reason why this is important in terms of Dtr's presentation of David is not because it avoids David's adultery and murder but because it shows that Yhwh is not overly concerned about them. What Nathan foregrounds in his juridical parable and what Yhwh emphasizes in the announcement of punishment that follows in 12.7-14 is not what David has done to his subjects but what he has done to Yhwh. It is not adultery and murder that are at issue in the parable or in Yhwh's announcement of punishment, but taking. The first part of the oracle of punishment begins with 'Thus says Yhwh', and runs from v. 7 to v. 10 before that same introductory phrase opens the next section of the oracle. 12.7-10 begins with a litany of what Yhwh has given to David: kingship, Saul's house, Saul's wives, and Israel and Judah. But it goes on to condemn David by saying that he despised Yhwh because, like the rich man of the parable, he took, and he should have waited for Yhwh to give. Yhwh in fact implies in 12.8 that he would have been happy to have given Bathsheba to David had David asked rather than taken: if all of Yhwh's previous gifts 'were too little, I would have added more and more'. The reference to the murder of Uriah and the taking of Bathsheba in 12.9 is seen as an act of despising Yhwh: 'Why did you despise Yhwh[65] to do evil in his eyes? Uriah the Hittite you struck with the sword, and his wife you took for yourself as a wife' (12.9). And the punishment David receives in 12.10 at the end of this first part of the oracle refers once more to David's

64. Lienhard Delekat argues that David is the traveler and that Yhwh is the rich man who took the lamb (Uriah, in his reading) from the poor man (Bathsheba). This matches the lamb's death to Uriah's (although the parable does not explicitly say that the lamb dies), and it also makes Yhwh the transgressor; after all, writes Delekat, he could have intervened to prevent David's crimes. See his 'Tendenz und Theologie der David-Solomo-Erzählung', in *Das Ferne und nahe Wort: Festschrift Leonhard Rost zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebenjahres am 30. November 1966* (ed. Fritz Maass; BZAW, 105; Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1967), pp. 26-36 (33). The difficulty with this argument, however, is that it is David and not Yhwh who is condemned in 12.7-14 (see Keys, *The Wages of Sin*, p. 130; Pyper, *David as Reader*, p. 99). Robert Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist*, pp. 122-26) and Larry Lyke (*King David with the Wise Woman of Tekoa*, pp. 155-56) see the parable as pointing, in different ways, to David as rich man, poor man, and traveler. This, however, ignores the clear indication of which man David is speaking in 12.5-6, the man with whom Nathan identifies him in 12.7a.

65. As I discussed above, the MT and most versions of 12.9 have 'despised the word of Yhwh', but LXX^{L} and Theodotion have simply 'despised Yhwh'. The דבר has been inserted, however, in order to soften the charge against David, and LXX^{L} and Theodotion have the more difficult and the shorter reading.

despising of Yhwh, and is linked precisely to the main point of 12.7-10, that David has taken someone who was only Yhwh's to give to him, but not his to take: 'you despised me and then/so you took (בזתני ותקח) the wife of Uriah to be a wife for yourself'. As is usual, I am reading a verb in the perfect followed by one in the imperfect with the *waw* consecutive as expressing a logical or temporal connection.[66] David's act of despising Yhwh has resulted in the taking of Bathsheba,[67] and it is this that 12.7-10 focuses on, not the killing of Uriah, which Yhwh discusses simply as a means to an undesirable end. David, that is, is like the rich man of the parable who takes when he should not, and so it is no wonder that Nathan's parable is focused on a rich man who takes rather than one who murders.[68] What appears to matter to Yhwh in 12.7-10 about this illegitimate taking is that it resulted from David's despising of Yhwh. He has usurped Yhwh's position in their relationship and refused to wait for Yhwh to give. The first part of the oracle, then, makes David's real crime disloyalty to Yhwh, a subversion of his role and authority.

'Thus says Yhwh' marks off the beginning of the second part of the oracle in 12.11-12, and while the punishment in this section of someone else sleeping with David's wives might seem to allude to David's adultery with Bathsheba, the adultery is not explicitly referred to here or in any part of 12.1-14. Here again, as in 12.7-10, the oracle refers to taking: Yhwh will take David's wives openly because David took 'in secret'. While 12.7-10 focuses specifically on the taking, 12.11-12 focuses on the fact that David took 'in secret', as if he believed that he could fool Yhwh in his attempt to usurp Yhwh's place in their relationship.[69] When David admits his guilt in 12.13a, then, he says 'I have sinned against Yhwh', and says nothing about sinning against Bathsheba and Uriah because they are really not the injured parties of whom Yhwh has been speaking. Nathan tells him that he

66. 'The *imperfect* with *wāw consecutive* serves to express actions, events, or states, which are to be regarded as the temporal or logical sequence of actions, events, or states mentioned immediately before… As a rule the narrative is introduced by a perfect, and then continued by means of imperfects with *wāw consecutives*' (*GKC*, p. 326; emphasis in original). For a more extensive explanation, see *IBHS*, pp. 547-49.

67. So Nathan's reference in 12.9 to despising Yhwh ('Why did you despise Yhwh, to do evil in his eyes? Uriah the Hittite you struck with the sword and his wife you took for yourself as a wife, and you killed him with the sword of the Ammonites') is clarified in 12.10b, which tells us that the despising has led to the taking. While one could read 12.9 in isolation as saying that the despising is equivalent to the killing of Uriah and the taking of Bathsheba, 12.10b shows us that the despising was prior to the taking. We thus cannot equate the despising with David's killing of Uriah or with the taking of Bathsheba.

68. See David Janzen, 'The Condemnation of David's "Taking" in 2 Samuel 12:1-14', *JBL* 131 (2012), pp. 209-20 (213-14).

69. So Janzen, 'The Condemnation of David's "Taking"', pp. 215-16.

has 'utterly scorned Yhwh',[70] but assures him that his child with Bathsheba and not he will die (12.13b-14). So 12.1-14 emphasizes that David, like the rich man of Nathan's parable, has taken what was not his to take, and so has sinned against Yhwh, who would have given David whatever he would have asked for, perhaps even Bathsheba. David has despised and scorned Yhwh, believing that he could take in secret without Yhwh's knowledge. Yet David is never charged with murder or adultery, and he certainly is not punished with the death penalty as such crimes demand.[71] So the one place in Dtr's narrative where Yhwh specifically charges David with wrongdoing is one where the true crime Yhwh identifies is the king's attempt to subvert the authority of the divine suzerain, to act in disloyalty to him. David's abuse of royal power and his treatment of his subjects is not what is at issue here, just as Samuel said such things would not be in 1 Sam. 8.11-18. It is clear enough to readers here that Yhwh does not apply Torah to David when judging his actions, let alone annul the eternal covenant with him. And if Yhwh punishes David here for something other than a cultic error, it is for actions that, like cultic crimes, express disloyalty to his suzerain. Kings who lead apostasy abandon Yhwh as suzerain; David has 'despised' Yhwh, but is not punished for his treatment of his subjects. 12.1-14 views David's

70. The MT and most of the versions read 'you utterly scorned the enemies of Yhwh', but 4QSam[a] has 'you utterly scorned the word of Yhwh'. It would seem that, as in 12.9, a euphemism has been introduced to the text, in this case to avoid having David show disrespect to Yhwh directly. We find a similar situation in the MT of 1 Sam. 25.22, where 'enemies of' has been inserted into the text as a euphemism, while the LXX of that passage omits it and is likely original. In the case of 12.14, the difference between the versions suggests that the euphemism is not original. 4QSam[a] itself is likely expansionistic, and follows the lead of 12.9 by having David scorn 'the word of Yhwh'; as in 12.9, this is a euphemism that avoids a direct charge against David with having 'utterly scorned Yhwh', which is most likely the original reading. See Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle*, I, pp. 262-63; McCarter, *II Samuel*, p. 296. To try to preserve the MT's reading here by translating נאץ in the piel as 'cause to scorn', in the sense of 'you have caused the enemies of Yhwh to utterly scorn/blaspheme' (so Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, pp. 314-15) demands reading the verb with a causative sense that it has nowhere else.

71. The notion that the child's death substitutes for David's and that the child receives the death penalty that David deserves is suggested by Nathan's assertion that Yhwh העביר חטאתך, which some scholars translate as 'transferred your sin', arguing that the child will die because he now bears David's sin. See, e.g., Hélène Nutkowicz, 'Propos autour de la mort d'un enfant: 2 Samuel xi,2–xii,24', *VT* 54 (2004), pp. 104-18; Noll, *The Faces of David*, p. 67; McCarter, *II Samuel*, p. 301; Jones, *The Nathan Narratives*, p. 103; Gillis Gerleman, 'Schuld und Sühne: Erwägungen zu 2. Samuel 12', in *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Herbert Donner *et al.*; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 132-39 (133). This, however, is not how Dtr's narrative seems to see it; otherwise, we would expect העביר to be followed by ל- plus the object to which transfer is being made, as is the case in Lev. 18.21; 2 Kgs 23.10; Jer. 32.35; Ezek. 16.21; 23.37.

crime as a much different matter than Ahab's role in Naboth's murder, for David has despised Yhwh while Ahab acted only to kill one of his subjects. As a result, the punishments Nathan announces in 12.7-14 for David's treatment of Yhwh are clearly fulfilled,[72] unlike the punishment announced for Ahab's treatment of Naboth.

It is not that Yhwh approves of David in 2 Samuel 11–12, but he also rejects the law of Moses as a standard by which to judge him. Readers of Dtr are forced to ask here why Yhwh keeps David in power and maintains the eternal covenant with him. David appears hungry for power, and the narrative even suggests that he believes he can control the deity's power by manipulating the ark. If he works as a judge in Israel, he does not seem to hold his family to the standard of justice that the law would seem to demand, yet the same might be said of Yhwh in his relationship with David. Yhwh actually grants David's house an eternal covenant and impressive military victories (2 Sam. 7–8) immediately after David's movement of the ark, which Yhwh does not command and appears to view negatively, and which can be read as an attempt to control divine power. If we wish to argue that 2 Samuel 11–12, if not all of 2 Samuel 9–20, is a later addition to Dtr's narrative because these chapters portray David in a negative light, then we will have to make the argument that they also portray Yhwh in a negative light, for he appears to ignore the law in his treatment of David and to arbitrarily hold him to a much different standard than that by which he judges Eli, who also 'despised' Yhwh but who lost his eternal covenant. And, to be consistent, we would also have to argue that 1 Kings 1–11, or at least parts of this narrative of Solomon, are late additions as well. While 1 Kgs 11.1-13 indicts Solomon for the Deuteronomistic crimes of intermarriage and apostasy and the foreign high places he constructs, these are not the only places where the narrative presents him as a lawbreaker, for we see him in violation of the Law of the King at numerous points. In 1 Kings 9–11 particularly, we see Solomon multiply wealth (10.14-27), acquire horses from Egypt (10.28-29), and, of course, marry many wives (11.1-2), all of which Deut. 17.14-20 forbids.[73] And we can hardly say that Dtr's narrative of Sol-

72. Nathan announces that 'the sword will never turn aside from your house' (12.10), and the rebellions of Absalom (2 Sam. 15–18) and Sheba (2 Sam. 20) are obvious examples of this. Nathan announces further that someone else will sleep with David's wives (12.11), which Absalom does in 2 Sam. 16.20-22, and that David's child will die (12.14), which happens immediately in the narrative (12.15b-19).

73. For these and other sins of Solomon in these chapters, see, e.g., Marc Brettler, 'The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 49 (1991), pp. 87-97; Kim Ian Parker, 'Repetition as a Structuring Device in 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 42 (1988), pp. 19-27; Kim Ian Parker, 'Solomon as Philosopher King? The Nexus of Law and Wisdom in 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 53 (1992), pp. 75-91; David S. Williams, 'Once again: The Structure of the Narrative of Solomon's Reign', *JSOT* 86 (1999), pp. 49-66; John W. Olley, 'Pharaoh's

omon's reign before 1 Kings 9 is entirely positive, for in 1 Kgs 3.3 Solomon still worships at high places, having not yet built the temple,[74] and in 3.31 the narrative uses the verb חתן in the hithpael to describe Solomon's marriage to the Pharaoh's daughter, a verb that is always used in pejorative contexts elsewhere in the Bible to describe foreign marriages.[75] Of all of Solomon's sins, the narrative critiques only his intermarriage with foreign women (11.2) and Yhwh is angry only with his worship of foreign gods that is the result (11.9-10). These, however, are really violations of Deut. 7.1-6 rather than 17.14-20, since the Law of the King only forbids that the king take many wives, and says nothing about their national origin, whereas Deuteronomy 7 specifically forbids intermarriage with foreign women as this leads to apostasy.[76] His actions that directly violate Deuteronomy 17 come under no criticism; indeed, Yhwh is actually responsible for his great wealth (3.13), despite the fact that Deuteronomy 17 insists that the king must not be wealthy.[77]

I would prefer not to precipitously excise text through hypothesizing the presence of redactional insertions if I can avoid doing so, and I believe we can make sense of material such as 2 Samuel 11–12, not to mention all of 2 Samuel 9–20, in light of Dtr's reinscription of colonial discourse. Given what we have seen of Dtr's presentation of Israel's history, in which the monarchy becomes the only office of leadership that appears to have a hope of properly colonizing Israel and making them into subservient subalterns, one conclusion readers can come to after the narratives of Saul, David, and Solomon is that Yhwh is exempting the kings from virtually all laws except for the ones dealing with cultic leadership. This is really only an extension of Samuel's claim in 1 Sam. 8.11-18 that royal economic exploitation of the people is something that Yhwh will not intervene to end. In 1 Kings 4–5, in

Daughter, Solomon's Palace, and the Temple: Another Look at the Structure of 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 27 (2003), pp. 355-69; Scheffler, 'Criticism of Government', pp. 133-34; Weyde, 'The Narrative of King Solomon', pp. 82-83; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9* (WBC, 6A; Waco, TX: Word Books, 2nd edn, 2001), pp. 382-84; Cogan, *1 Kings*, p. 329; Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, p. 149.

74. Eslinger, *Into the Hands of the Living God*, pp. 131-33.

75. Jerome T. Walsh, 'The Characterization of Solomon in First Kings 1–5', *CBQ* 57 (1995), pp. 471-93 (486).

76. Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', p. 343. As Knoppers points out here, what Dtr criticizes is not that Solomon has many wives, which is what Deut. 17.17 prohibits, but that his foreign wives have exercised cultic influence on him (1 Kgs 11.9, 11-13), which is the concern of Deut. 7.1-6.

77. Knoppers, 'The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King', pp. 337-39; J.G. McConville, 'King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History', in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup, 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 271-95 (272-73).

fact, Solomon acts much as Samuel warned kings would, taxing Israel and creating a royal court of vast luxury, while conscripting forced labor from Israel.[78] And while 1 Kgs 12.1-19 specifically draws attention to the heavy economic burden Solomon places on Israel, a burden the Northern tribes see as social and economic injustice, the narrative here makes it clear to readers that this has nothing to do with the division of the kingdom, which occurs to punish the Davidides for Solomon's cultic sin (12.15). What matters to Yhwh here is not that Solomon has despised his subjects but that he has despised Yhwh, precisely the focus of Yhwh's punishment of David in 2 Sam. 12.1-14. Solomon's and David's non-cultic violations of the law go unpunished (although David is punished for a non-cultic crime that, like cultic ones, expresses disloyalty to Yhwh) so that readers can see that, outside of actions that concern expressions of loyalty to Yhwh, Yhwh largely does not care what the kings do. Given the cyclical narrative of Judges 2–16, in which Yhwh repetitively punishes Israel for cultic disloyalty and only for cultic disloyalty, this makes sense by Dtr's logic. So David is not punished even for adultery and murder; he is punished for taking, a matter that Yhwh interprets as usurping the suzerain's place in the relationship he has with David. The kings, it would seem, can largely operate with *carte blanche* when their actions do not involve reining in Israel's tendency to act like foreigners who reject the colonial-like leadership that the kings can provide. Dtr's narrative shows readers that they need a king because they are a rebellious people who cannot be cultically loyal to Yhwh, and Yhwh generally seems willing to exempt the kings from the law so long as they can force the people to act as loyal subjects to the true suzerain.

Neither the narrator nor Yhwh ever clearly states that the Law of the King is to be set aside, and yet Yhwh is obviously doing just this in his treatment of David and Solomon. But when we consider the larger scope of Dtr's narrative, in which Israel is portrayed as the rebellious foreign subaltern or Other of colonial discourse who cannot hope to survive destruction at the hand of their suzerain unless they are properly colonized and civilized, and in which the narrative offers no real hope of leadership except through the monarchy, we can see a narrative argument to exilic readers. When all that matters is how Israel acts cultically, then all that matters in royal leadership is the cult the kings enforce, and so Yhwh simply appears willing to waive the Law of the King and other aspects of Deuteronomic Law when it comes to the monarchy, which the narrative presents as Israel's only hope of survival. Yhwh allows the kings to treat their subjects as they see fit, just as

78. J. Daniel Hays, 'Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1–11', *JSOT* 23 (2003), pp. 149-74 (165). See the references to taxes in 1 Kgs 4.7; 5.2-3, 7-8 [4.22-23, 27-28], the luxury of his court in 5.2-3 [4.22-23], and his conscription of forced labor in 5.27 [5.13].

Samuel said he would, and this, the narrative suggests, is something that the people simply need to endure since Israel's sinful, foreign nature means that the monarchy is a necessity if the nation is to survive. Again, this is the kind of approach we might expect in a pro-monarchic narrative directed to an audience who might blame royal leadership for the destruction of Judah and the exile: once the need for the office is established, more and more power is given to it.

This explanation, however, which makes sense of the portrayals of David and Solomon within Dtr's narrative, does not entirely account for Yhwh's support for David, for while readers are never told that David errs in a cultic matter, it is also true that the narrative never explicitly evaluates him for his cultic leadership.[79] Since the monarchs in Kings are universally evaluated on their cultic actions, how can we explain Yhwh's favorable view of David in Dtr? Yhwh does appear to prefer David to Saul; he has Samuel anoint Saul as a king 'for them' (1 Sam. 8.22) while he describes David as 'a king for me' (16.1);[80] in 1 Sam. 13.14, Samuel describes David as the man whom Yhwh will choose as king (בקש יהוה לו איש כלבבו),[81] but Saul is never described like this. The narrative tells us that Yhwh is with David on numerous occasions (1 Sam. 16.13; 18.14; 2 Sam. 5.10), and Yhwh says the same (2 Sam. 7.9). If we include prophetic oracles, Yhwh speaks to David more than any other character in 1–2 Samuel, including Samuel.[82] The narrative is clear that Yhwh's spirit departs from Saul when David is anointed, and Saul receives in its place an evil spirit that tortures him (16.13-14), as if to suggest that Yhwh is not content with simply removing Saul once another king has been anointed, but wishes to slowly destroy him.[83] If this divine intervention into Saul's life appears to threaten David's, since the evil spirit prompts Saul to try to kill him (1 Sam. 18.10-11), perhaps this is so Yhwh can show his support for his king by repeatedly saving him from Saul (19.18-24; 20.5; 23.12) and providing him with victory (23.1-5;

79. Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David*, pp. 290-91.

80. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 124-26; V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (SBLDS, 118; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), p. 93.

81. A fairly literal translation of this phrase—for example, 'Yhwh has sought out for himself a man like his heart'—does not quite capture the sense of the Hebrew, where כלבבו is really a reference to Yhwh's choice. The Babylonian Chronicle describing Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem in 598/7 uses a phrase much like this; there, Nebuchadnezzar is said to replace the king of Jerusalem with *šarra ša libbišu* 'a king of his choice' (*ABC*, p. 102), reflecting a common use of the Akkadian *libbu* to express choice or desire, as in the expressions *šumma libbika* 'if it pleases you' and *anāku kī libbia epuš* 'I will act according to my wish'. See *CAD*, IX, pp. 170-72.

82. See Steussy, *David*, p. 87.

83. So Sarah Nicholson, *Three Faces of Saul: An Intertextual Approach to Biblical Tragedy* (JSOTSup, 339; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 77-78.

30.23), while clearly demonstrating to David and to readers that he will remove all barriers to the kingship for him. This is clearest in 1 Samuel 24–26, where David's confrontation with Nabal is bracketed by his two refusals to kill Saul, 'Yhwh's anointed'. We have already seen that, in 1 Samuel 25, Abigail stops David from carrying out his plan to kill Nabal for refusal to provide him with payment/extortion money, and in doing so she says that 'if anyone should arise to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord will be bound in the bundle of the living with Yhwh your God, and the life of your enemies he will sling away in the hollow of the sling' (25.29). This is indeed what happens—in 25.38-39, Nabal, David's enemy of the moment, is struck down by Yhwh (ויגף יהוה את־נבל)—and so in 26.10, David seems justified in applying Abigail's lesson to Saul, who pursues him: יהוה יגפנו 'Yhwh will strike him down'.[84] More than one scholar has pointed to the figure of Nabal in these chapters as reflecting Saul in some way,[85] and perhaps the most obvious way in which this is so is in the portrayals of Nabal and Saul as being Yhwh's enemies because they are David's enemies, and so who are struck down by Yhwh. It does not matter that David himself admits that he is not justified in his plan to kill Nabal and his men, which suggests that he is not justified in asking Nabal for payment in the first place; it does not matter that David's kingship is full of flaws and of failures to keep the law. What matters, apparently, is that he is Yhwh's choice.

And he is Yhwh's choice in a way that Saul is not. In 2 Samuel 7, when Yhwh promises David an eternal dynasty, he also promises never to remove his 'steadfast love' from David's house as he removed it from Saul (7.15). Perhaps this is why Saul is stripped of the kingship after taking spoil from the Amalekites while David does the same and claims that the booty is Yhwh's gift (1 Sam. 30.20-24). There is an important lesson for readers to learn from this contrast, writes David Gunn:

> The arbitrary disparity in God's treatment of the two figures is nowhere more manifest than here at the very culmination of the story. The thematic statement is plain. Good and evil come from God. He makes smooth the path of some; the path of others he strews with obstacles. He has his favourites; he has his victims. The reasons, if reasons exist, lie hidden in the obscurity of God's own being. Saul is one of God's victims.[86]

The contrast between Yhwh's treatment of Saul and David is important for Dtr precisely because it points to the favoritism Yhwh shows to David, a favoritism that cannot be explained through David's leadership in cultic

84. See Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 102-103.

85. E.g., Jobling, *1 Samuel*, pp. 92-93; McKenzie, *King David*, pp. 96-97; Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?*, p. 392; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 206.

86. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, pp. 109-111. Quote from p. 111.

actions, about which, outside of the movement of the ark, an action that appears to offend Yhwh, and a desire to build a temple, which Yhwh rejects, the narrative says virtually nothing. Even though David is the first figure whom Yhwh accuses of despising him since Eli, Yhwh does not abrogate David's eternal covenant as he did Eli's. After David moves the ark in 2 Samuel 6, apparently in the face of Yhwh's disapproval and in what might be an attempt to control divine power, Yhwh immediately responds with an eternal covenant in 2 Samuel 7, and follows this by granting David victories over nations all around Israel (8.1-12; see 8.6, 14 for the assertion that all of these victories are Yhwh's doing). All of David's previous battles are really ones he has fought defensively, to protect himself and his nascent kingdom; in 2 Samuel 8 for the first time, and again in 2 Samuel 10, we see Yhwh giving him land and client rulers under his control (8.6, 14).[87] David even seizes Edomite land with Yhwh's help (8.13-14),[88] although Yhwh had expressly told Israel in Deut. 2.4-5 that he would not give them any Edomite land. The conquests of 8.1-14 are geographically arranged precisely in the way that the Assyrian kings listed their conquests in the context of proclaiming themselves 'king of the four quarters (of the world)',[89] portraying David as the equal of the great Mesopotamian colonial suzerains. It seems as well that these conquests create complete 'rest' for Israel, the 'rest' of which the end of the conquest in Joshua merely foreshadows.[90] By 2 Samuel

87. Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup, 143; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), pp. 76-77.

88. Reading אדום in 8.12, 13 with the LXX and 1 Chr. 18.12; the MT of 8.14, however, also discusses David's victories in Edom. See S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1913), pp. 282-83; McCarter, *II Samuel*, pp. 245-46; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Das Zweite Buch Samuel: Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (trans. Johannes Klein; BWANT, 181; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008), p. 87; John Mauchline, *1 and 2 Samuel* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 236.

89. The list of conquests in 2 Samuel 8 is not chronological but geographical, moving from west to east and then north to south. This follows the Neo-Assyrian pattern of listing conquests in royal inscriptions. See Cynthia Edenburg, 'David, the Great King, King of the Four Quarters: Structure and Signification in the Catalog of David's Conquests (2 Samuel 8:1-14, 1 Chronicles 18:1-13)', in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (ed. K.L. Noll and Brooks Schramm; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), pp. 159-75.

90. Israel has rest (נוח) at the end of the conquest (Josh. 21.44-45; 23.1), but this appears to be only preliminary to the full rest that Yhwh gives Israel through David's conquests (see 2 Sam. 7.11; 1 Kgs 8.56). See Rainer Albertz, 'Intentionen und Träger des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk', in *Geschichte und Theologie: Studien zur Exegese des Alten Testaments und zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (ed. Rainer Albertz; BZAW, 326; Berlin: Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 257-77 (263-70); Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, pp. 44-45.

9, David is in control of his old rival's house, placing Saul's remaining son Mephibosheth in Jerusalem under the watchful eye of the court, while Yhwh has promised that David's own son will also be Yhwh's son (7.14), a claim to divine parentage for the Davidides that reflects that of the kings of the colonial powers of Mesopotamia.[91]

Dtr's argument is not that David is perfect; indeed, his imperfection appears to be part of the point. The message to readers here is that Yhwh is not overly concerned with any of David's faults, unless they suggest that David is acting in disloyalty to his suzerain, as he does in 2 Samuel 11–12, when he takes what is only Yhwh's to give, and yet even at this point, where David despises Yhwh as Eli had before him, his eternal covenant is not withdrawn as Eli's was. Yhwh does not treat him the way he treats Eli and his house, or Saul and his house, a fact that Yhwh makes explicit in 2 Sam. 7.15. As I suggested in Chapter 1, exilic readers cannot help but be skeptical as to the benefits of at least recent Davidic rule, and might well question why it should continue, given its apparent failure in the collapse of Judah and the exile. While even Dtr is willing to admit that rule of the Davidides is not without flaws—this will be the focus of the following chapter—it also shows readers that Yhwh prefers David to other rulers and is willing to overlook particular types of flaws in a way that he will not in other rulers. David is never evaluated on the basis of his cultic actions, and so the favoritism Yhwh extends to him and his house has nothing to do with this, and this fact suggests that Manasseh's cultic failure will not be the death-blow to the dynasty that similar cultic misleading was for the Northern houses. So regardless of what kind of abuse the Davidides might choose to inflict on their subjects, this will be a small price to pay if it means that Yhwh's unexplained fidelity to the house will result in a return to the land for the exilic community—again, a matter that we will discuss in the next chapter—even after some of the Davidides have led Judah in cultic disloyalty. Dtr's narrative is clear, however, that Yhwh's favoritism of David is not the only reason why the Davidides can do virtually whatever they want to their subjects—even Ahab does not really appear to be punished for his implicit involvement in the murder of and theft from Naboth, as we have seen. The monarchy in general is not being held to the standards of the law, except for cultic law. But an important aspect of Dtr's argument to exilic

91. For discussions of the claim of Neo-Assyrian kings to a divine parent, see Peter Machinist, 'Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria', in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), pp. 152-88 (166-69); Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA, 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), pp. xxxvi-xxxviii. And Nebuchadnezzar, just like the Assyrian kings, can talk about the gods creating (*banû*) him. See Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 142-43, 178-79 and *CAD*, II, pp. 87-88.

readers is that Yhwh, for no clear reason, favors David and his descendants and so has made an eternal covenant with them. Even in the face of Davidic cultic imperfections, the narrative insists that Yhwh maintains his fidelity to the house and to Judah for David's sake (1 Kgs 11.13, 32-36; 15.1-5; 2 Kgs 8.19).[92]

So 2 Samuel 11–12, and 2 Samuel 9–20 as a whole, do not contradict Dtr's view of the monarchy or David, but demonstrate to readers an important aspect of Yhwh's preference for David and his descendants. The narrative never provides readers with an explanation for Yhwh's choice of David and his house, and so it appears simply capricious. When David says, in the song of 2 Samuel 22, that, in delivering him from Saul (22.1), Yhwh repaid him according to his righteousness (22.21-25), the reader sympathetic to David could argue that this is true in the sense that David can be seen as righteous during the time Saul is alive. Yet David's similar claim in his 'last words' of 23.1-7, that his eternal covenant is a reward for his just rule (23.2-5), is more difficult for even the reader who is sympathetic to him to believe, since he has failed to act justly in 2 Samuel 11; 13; and 15, to choose just the most obvious examples of his sins and of his failings as a judge.[93] Yet when David, in his 'last words', praises the just ruler (23.3-4) and says, 'Is not my house like this with God?' (23.5), he only points to the truth of what the narrative shows: Yhwh treats David as if he had been just, regardless of the facts. David's conclusions as to his righteousness and justice end up being no different than those of the narrator and of Yhwh, who claim that David 'completely followed Yhwh' (1 Kgs 11.6) and 'walked in my ways, doing what is right in my eyes' (11.33) and 'kept my commandments and walked after me with all his heart, doing only what is right in my eyes' (14.8) and 'did not turn aside from anything [Yhwh] commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite' (15.5). David's perspective on his own righteousness at the conclusion of 2 Samuel is validated by the narrative of Kings. The fact that his sins can be almost entirely erased in the narrative is good news for the Davidide in exile, since it is possible for his sins to be overlooked as well, as we will see

92. For a discussion of this issue, see Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 49-54.

93. 2 Samuel 11 is the story of Bathsheba and Uriah; 2 Samuel 13 recounts David's failure to punish Amnon for rape; and 2 Samuel 15 demonstrates David's failure to deal justly with Israel, as we discussed above. Antony F. Campbell describes David's claim of innocence in 22.24-25 as something that 'would be embarrassing to any Davidic chronicler', and his claim in 23.5 that his house is wholly just as something that 'would rightly bring a blush to the Davidic cheek'. See his '2 Samuel 21–24: The Enigma Factor', in *For and Against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel* (ed. A. Graeme Auld and Erik Eynikel; BETL, 232; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), pp. 347-58 (353-54). See also Walter Brueggemann, '2 Samuel 21–24: An Appendix of Deconstruction?', *CBQ* 50 (1988), pp. 383-97 (388-89).

in the following chapter. And, since Yhwh's eternal covenant with David is originally granted without any reference to David's cultic actions, even the punishment for Manasseh's sin may not mean the end of the house's rule, since the choice was based on favoritism, not cultic action.

If justice is determined by the law of Moses, this largely does not seem to apply to the Davidides. And as we have already seen, the treatment of the people is not the basis of the evaluation of any royal house, Davidide or otherwise. Dtr manages to give the monarchy almost complete freedom to act as kings will, so long as they lead cultic loyalty. The cycle of apostasy in Judges shows exilic readers that they cannot hope to maintain cultic loyalty themselves, and so the Davidides are, like colonizers from the Mesopotamian center, essential to making the exiles loyal subalterns to the true suzerain, forcing them to adopt the identity of the nation Moses urges Israel to become in Deuteronomy.[94] The poems of 2 Samuel 22–23 draw readers' attention back to David's sin and then baldly state that this does not matter. Yhwh will judge David's house as if it did act righteously toward the people, even when that is not the case. In part this is because Yhwh is willing to overlook non-cultic crimes for all kings, and in part it is because Yhwh especially likes the Davidides, for no clearly expressed reason. The narrative of Dtr works to convince exilic readers, as the imperial discourse of the Mesopotamian powers works to convince their colonies, that this expansion of royal power at the expense of the people is ultimately to their benefit. Yhwh may not have an eternal covenant with Israel, but he does have one with David, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, this may be what saves the exiles from Babylon.

And besides pointing to Davidic leadership as the necessary component for Judah's return to the land, Dtr suggests other ways in which Yhwh's unexplained preference for this house has benefitted the people. When Yhwh, for no reason, at least no reason that the narrative provides, is angry with Israel (2 Sam. 24.1) and enacts punishment on them, it is David who alone appears capable of stopping the plague with which Yhwh punishes them (24.17). Yhwh uses David to expand Israel's borders in 2 Samuel 8 and provide the nation with the rest with which they were promised when they entered the land. Yhwh gives Solomon wealth, and while 1 Kgs 4.20–5.8 [4.20-28] describes how Solomon has personally benefitted from this divine largesse, these verses also note that Israel and Judah also partake of the economic boom (4.20; 5.5 [4.25]). While K.L. Noll, pointing to the many capricious acts of Yhwh in Dtr's stories of 1–2 Samuel, argues that

94. See also Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 44-47; Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, p. 45; Knoppers, *Two Nations under God*, II, pp. 248-54.

there is no lesson about Yhwh to be learned here,[95] this is not really true. The exilic readers can learn that Yhwh capriciously favors David and his descendants, and while this allows these kings to take advantage of the populace, this is still a price worth paying. The dangerous deity, who needs no reason to punish in 2 Samuel 24, is willing to allow the Davidic kings to act outside of the law, and all that matters is that they lead cultic loyalty. Even royal adultery and murder do not appear to be of importance to Yhwh, unless he can construe them as 'despising' him in an expression of disloyalty. Even Ahab's complicity in Naboth's death is ultimately not punished, for kings have only one job to do, and Yhwh appears to be willing to allow the Davidides to continue to lead even when some of the members of the house fail to enforce cultic loyalty in Judah, as we shall see in the following chapter.

And as if this were not enough of a pro-Davidic message, Dtr suggests to the exiles that when they return home under Davidic leadership they will return to a kingdom much larger than the one Nebuchadnezzar destroyed. As we saw in Chapter 1, some archaeologists argue that the united monarchy Dtr describes never existed, although this does not mean that both the author and the readers were not convinced of its historical reality, and it is certainly a reality in Dtr's narrative. Dtr also claims that the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom were removed by Assyria and replaced by foreigners who continue to practice a syncretistic and unacceptable Yahwism (2 Kgs 17.24-34a). While the wholesale removal of the North's population 2 Kings 17 describes is not supported by archaeological evidence,[96] the larger point of 2 Kings 17 is that the foreigners who replace the Israelites are not any more acceptable in their religious practices. Indeed, while 17.24-34a discusses the cultic failures of the new settlers, ending with the conclusion that 'to this day they continue to practice their former customs', 17.34b-40 appears to address the Northerners whom the Assyrians removed from

95. K.L. Noll, 'Is there a Text in this Tradition? Readers' Response and the Taming of Samuel's God', *JSOT* 83 (1999), pp. 31-51 (33-39).

96. See, e.g., Adam Zertal, 'The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age (Iron Age III)', in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschitz and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 377-412 (385); Gary N. Knoppers, 'In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom', in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup, 406; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), pp. 150-80; Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001), p. 221; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), p. 125; Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), p. 307.

the land, and begins by stating that 'they do not worship Yhwh'.[97] But this movement from one group to the other is not entirely clear until 17.35, where Dtr states that 'Yhwh made a covenant with them', showing readers that the narrative has moved on from discussing the new settlers the Assyrians have moved into Samerina to discussing the exiled Northerners.[98] But for Dtr's narrative, this blurring of boundaries between the Northerners and foreigners is precisely the point, for when Israel lives in cultic disloyalty there is no difference between them and the foreigners. It begins to seem, in fact, as if the North had not been exiled at all, for the foreigners who replace them are the same in every fashion relevant to Dtr.[99] Yet Josiah, as part of his reform, destroys Solomon's high places (23.13-14) that caused the Davidides' loss of the North in the first place, and so reestablishes the Davidides' right to rule in the North as well as Judah.[100] Of course, this will matter only if the exiles can leave Babylon in the first place and reestablish the united monarchy, something only possible, as 2 Kings 18–25 argues, under Davidic leadership.

97. See, e.g., Mordechai Cogan, 'Israel in Exile: The View of a Josianic Historian', *JBL* 97 (1978), pp. 40-44; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, pp. 204-207; Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 112-34; Jerome T. Walsh, '2 Kings 17: The Deuteronomist and the Samaritans', in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Herrie F. Van Hooy; OTS, 44; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 315-23.

98. 17.34a uses only one verb—עשׂה—and it is a plural participle, with no subject explicitly named. 17.34b continues the use of participial forms for the human subjects that it discusses, again naming no subject of those participles. So the most obvious assumption on a reader's part—at least before reaching 17.35—is that the human subject of 17.34b is the same as that of 17.34a (i.e., the new settlers).

99. So Jobling, 'The Salvation of Israel', pp. 59-60.

100. So, e.g., Knoppers, *Two Nations under God*, II, p. 195; Sweeney, 'The Critique of Solomon', p. 621. Uriah Kim's argument that Josiah's actions were not meant to establish control over the North is a historical argument rather than an attempt to understand the point the narrative is making; see his *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History* (BMW, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), pp. 222-41. I am not concerned here with what Josiah actually did or intended with his actions, however, but with what Dtr is communicating.

Chapter 7

The End, or the New Beginning: Davidic Leadership as Solution to the Exile

1. *The problem of the end of 2 Kings*

Dtr, as we discussed in Chapter 3, does not mimic the claims of Neo-Assyrian hegemony that the victories of the colonial powers are a result of the gods of the defeated foreign enemies abandoning their people because of their sin and leaving for Mesopotamia to praise Ashur.[1] If the absence of this divine abandonment motif in Dtr's explanation of the exile[2] is in part a rejection of colonial hegemony's insistence that the gods of the colonized recognize the superiority of Ashur and Marduk, it also points to the fact that Dtr sees the exiles' future as oriented to a return to the land, not endless diaspora.[3] Solomon insists in 1 Kgs 8.46-53 that the exiles must repent and

1. For centuries before the exile, Judah was exposed to the Neo-Assyrian idea that imperial victory is a capitulation of foreign, non-Assyrian gods, who are angry with their people's sin, and who wish to leave their homelands to go to Assyria and praise Ashur. See, e.g., Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries* B.C.E. (SBLMS, 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 9-21; Patrick D. Miller and J.J.M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the 'Ark Narrative' of 1 Samuel* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 10; Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur is King! Aššur is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), pp. 54, 145. For example, Esarhaddon's building inscriptions in Babylon that describe Sennacherib's destruction of the city refer to Marduk's anger with the Babylonians' mendacity and cultic failure, which led to the divine abandonment of the city and its consequent destruction; see Barbara Nevling Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics: Figurative Aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian Policy* (MAPS, 208; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993), pp. 95-102.

2. Dtr does use it in 1 Samuel 4–5, where the ark is taken by the Philistines in battle, but, as the image of Dagan falls on its face before the ark, these chapters make it clear that Yhwh and not Dagan exercises true sovereignty; see Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, pp. 42-44.

3. Insofar as this chapter argues this point, it stands as a response to claims that the end of 2 Kings prepares readers for life in diaspora. See, e.g., Donald F. Murray, 'Of All the Years the Hopes—or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30)', *JBL* 120 (2001), pp. 245-65; Thomas C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History:*

pray toward the temple, which is where Yhwh's name remains.[4] We might almost see the end of Dtr in 2 Kings 18–25 as directed to Jehoiachin specifically, providing him with Davidic models of leadership to imitate (and one in particular to avoid) that will allow him to return the people to the land and lead them in prosperity there. Yet there is a message here for non-royal exilic readers as well: the only future for Judah/Israel is one under Davidic leadership.

If Dtr rejects divine abandonment as an explanation for the exile, it nonetheless mimics other aspects of ancient Near Eastern hegemony in explaining national defeat, most notably that the cultic failures of people and king have led to divine anger and destruction. As we have already discussed, the Curse of Agade claims that it is Naram-Sin's attempt to repair Enlil's temple that leads to the destruction of his kingdom,[5] the Weidner Chronicle makes the argument that royal failures to fulfill cultic obligations result in national disaster (*ABC*, pp. 145-51), Esarhaddon refers to the Babylonians' robbing of temple treasuries and failure to maintain regular offerings as part of the explanation for Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon (*ARAB*, II, pp. 245, 249-50), the Nabonidus Chronicle (*ABC*, pp. 106-108), the Verse Account of Nabonidus (*ANET*, pp. 313-14), and the Cyrus Cylinder (*ANET*, pp. 315-16) all point to Nabonidus's cultic failures as the explanation for the fall of Babylon to Persia, and so on. These texts, like Dtr, ultimately see the king as in charge of the nation's cultic life, and so his failures become national ones. Dtr, of course, is written from the standpoint of the losers—or at least from the standpoint of the colonized elite who have lost to Babylon—and thus portrays the fall of Judah as Yhwh's will and not Babylon's or Marduk's, making Babylon only the tool of Yhwh's anger,[6] a mockery

A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), pp. 177-78; Meik Gerhards, 'Die Begnadigung Jojachins—Überlegungen zu 2 Kön. 25,27-30 (mit einem Anhang zu den Nennungen Jojachins auf Zuteilungslisten aus Babylon)', *BN 94* (1998), pp. 52-67.

4. On Dtr's Name theology and its significance in this regard, see Ronald E. Clements, 'The Deuteronomic Law of Centralisation and the Catastrophe of 587 B.C.', in John Barton and David J. Reimer (eds.), *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), pp. 5-25 (16-18).

5. Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 54-61. Divine abandonment of a destroyed city is not, as we have seen, an idea unique in the ancient Near East to the Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians; we can trace the idea as early as the Curse of Agade and the Sumerian city laments. See the texts discussed in Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (MC, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989); Cooper, *The Curse of Agade*; Daniel I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2nd edn, 2000), pp. 115-20.

6. Kari Latvus, 'Decolonizing Yahweh: A Postcolonial Reading of 2 Kings 24–25',

of Babylonian imperial claims to Marduk's universal authority that insist he has delivered the world into the hands of the Babylonian kings.[7] The Davidides have failed to keep Judah cultically loyal, and while royal leadership in cultic disloyalty has led to the permanent removals of the Northern dynasties from power in Dtr, this does not seem to be the case for the Davidides, for, as we shall see, 2 Kings 18–25, the final chapters of Dtr, provide instructions for how the Davidide in exile can lead a return to the land and ensure prosperity there. At the end of Dtr, the Davidides are still the only leadership solution with which the narrative presents readers, for the eternal covenant with Yhwh has not been annulled and Jehoiachin need look only to Josiah and Hezekiah as the royal models whom he must imitate to ensure an end to exile. After Dtr has mimicked colonial hegemony to present Yhwh as Israel's true suzerain, Israel as the rebellious foreign Other who needs to be colonized, and the Davidides as the only royal house that has any success in doing so, Dtr concludes by showing that there are perfect royal models for Jehoiachin to follow, and even that, if Jehoiachin truly imitates Hezekiah and Josiah, Yhwh will recognize him as a legitimate leader of the exiles, perhaps even recognize him as a leader as perfect as Josiah. Dtr is not merely pro-Davidic, it is also pro-Jehoiachin.

We cannot really examine 2 Kings 18–25 without some discussion of Frank Cross's theory of redaction, a matter that, in Chapter 2, I said that I would leave for this chapter. This theory of a double redaction of Dtr sees the bulk of the work produced during the reign of Josiah with the material of 2 Kgs 23.25b–25.30, as well as some other insertions, added during the exile. Evidence offered by Cross and his followers tends to focus on the claim that there are logical discontinuities in the narrative from the story of Manasseh through the end of 2 Kings 25, discontinuities that are particularly obvious in the contrast between the stories of Josiah and Manasseh and between the story of Josiah and the narrative that follows that of his reign. Pointing to these apparent contradictions and inconsistencies from 2 Kings 21 through 25, this school of redactional theory thus sees an important break in the narrative at the end of Josiah's reign and an important interruption into an original narrative of Manasseh, a break and interruption that the school explains through positing an original Josianic history with an exilic redaction.[8] There are certainly strong arguments to be made

in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 186-92 (188-89).

7. See, e.g., Stephen Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB, 4; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1912), pp. 88-89, 94-97, 112-13, 120-25, 140-41, 144-47, 172-75.

8. While scholars who follow Rudolf Smend's theory of redaction of the Deuteronomistic History may see redactional activity in the last chapters of Kings, they do not argue for a radical redactional break at the end of the story of Josiah as the Cross school does. See, e.g., Rudolph Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*

for this claim, for the narrative of Josiah's repentance and consequent cultic reforms describes them as undertaken 'with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all of the law of Moses' (2 Kgs 23.25), an unparalleled positive description of an action in Dtr, and the only one in the whole narrative that completely fulfills the command of Moses in Deut. 6.5.[9] Nonetheless, the narrative immediately goes on to claim in 23.26-27 that Yhwh refuses to repent of his anger in regard to the sins of Manasseh and of the destruction of Jerusalem that he had earlier announced through the prophets (cf. 21.10-16). From the standpoint of the Cross school of redaction, it appears to make little sense that the narrative would devote almost two chapters to Josiah's humility, repentance, and cultic reforms, only to claim that they had been preordained to be futile because of his grandfather's sins.[10] This seems particularly to be the case when we note that Josiah's reforms in 23.4-24 specifically undo all of the cultic sins that Manasseh introduces in 21.3-7.[11] And the seeming inconsistency between the perfection of Josiah's cultic reform and its futility is only highlighted by the fact that Yhwh has refused to destroy Judah and the Davidides during the reigns of even evil kings (1 Kgs 11.34-36, 39; 15.4-5; 2 Kgs 8.19), a refusal that reflects the eternal promise to the Davidides in 2 Samuel 7, and so it seems difficult to explain why Josiah's perfection is met ultimately with an assertion of divine punishment that is enacted in the last two

(TW, 1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2nd edn, 1981), p. 113; Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT, 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), p. 143.

9. See Richard E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works* (HSM, 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), p. 7.

10. So, e.g., Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), p. 120; Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies* (2 vols.; HSM, 52-53; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994), I, p. 52; Gottfried Vanoni, 'Beobachtungen zur deuteronomistischen Terminologie in 2 Kön 23,25–25,30', in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. Norbert Lohfink; BETL, 68; Leuven: University Press, 1985), pp. 357-62 (361-62); Baruch Halpern and David S. Vanderhooft, 'The Editions of Kings in the 7th–6th Centuries B.C.E.', *HUCA* 62 (1991), pp. 179-244 (239); Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 45.

11. For a chart that lists the sins of Manasseh in 21.3-7 that Josiah undoes in 23.4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 24, see Halpern and Vanderhooft, 'The Editions of Kings', pp. 240-41. See also, e.g., Richard E. Friedman, 'From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr^{1} to Dtr^{2}', in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 167-92 (176-78); Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup, 42; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), p. 126.

chapters of the work. It was, in fact, this apparent incompatibility between judgment in Kings' final chapters and grace in the promise to David earlier in the narrative that first led Cross to suggest an edition of Kings produced during the reign of Josiah, an edition that, he argues, emphasizes grace and promise for Judah and the Davidides, but that was brought up to date in an exilic redaction that abandons hope in the Davidic covenant and points only to doom and judgment.[12]

As if these apparently obvious disruptions of the coherence of the narrative in the final chapters of Kings were not enough, the perfection of Josiah is further enhanced through the narrative's explicit comparison of him to David (22.2) and implicit comparisons of him to both Moses and Joshua, making him appear not just as the best king but as the best leader in general of Israel.[13] The futility of his actions, as a result, can seem even more surprising. And beyond these seeming inconsistencies in the final chapters, members of the Cross school can argue for a Josianic edition of Kings with exilic redaction by using Huldah's oracle as evidence, for in the part of the oracle that Huldah addresses to Josiah (22.18-20) Yhwh states that 'I will gather you to your ancestors and you will be gathered to your grave in peace', a statement that appears to contradict Josiah's violent death in 23.29-30, and which thus suggests that this oracle was included in a work written before the king died.[14] Members of the Cross school can point as

12. See Frank Moore Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History', in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (ed. Frank Moore Cross; HSM, 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 274-87 (274-78). For arguments concerning the climax of the hopeful theme of the promise to David in the narrative about Josiah and making the point that the destruction of Jerusalem contradicts this promise, see Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings', pp. 279-87; Friedman, 'From Egypt to Egypt', pp. 168-70; Jon D. Levenson, 'From Temple to Synagogue: 1 Kings 8', in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 143-66 (147); McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 122-23; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, p. 10; Richard Nelson, 'The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case Is Still Compelling', *JSOT* 29 (2005), pp. 319-37 (326-28).

13. See Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 31, 38-39, and Sweeney, 'The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History', *JBL* 114 (1995), pp. 607-22. For the narrative's presentation of Josiah as repeating the actions of Moses and Joshua, see Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, pp. 7-10; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 129-30; Richard D. Nelson, 'Josiah in the Book of Joshua', *JBL* 100 (1981), pp. 531-40.

14. So, e.g., Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings', pp. 285-87; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 111-12; Mark A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO, 92; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 244-45; Knoppers, *Two Nations under God*, II, pp. 150-51; Nelson, 'The Double Redaction', pp. 329-30.

well to what appear to be stylistic and theological differences in the narrative that follows the story of Josiah. There is, they argue, no theological explanation for the destruction of Jerusalem as there was for Samaria and the North in 2 Kgs 17.7-23;[15] they can see 'a rigid, rubber-stamp adherence to a formula' in the evaluations of the four kings who follow Josiah in the Kings narrative, something that seems largely incompatible with the variation among the many regnal evaluations in the narrative before Josiah's reign;[16] they argue that the punishment of Judah in the final chapters of the book really condemns the failings of the people, not of the kings as had been the case before the narrative of Manasseh;[17] and, in general, they see the optimism and hope of the narrative that precedes the end of Josiah's reign (not including, of course, the exilic interpolation in the narrative of Manasseh) as replaced by a pessimistic future in the narrative that follows.[18]

These are hardly inconsequential arguments, but I will show here that there is at least one reading of 2 Kings 21–25—really, my reading will focus on 2 Kings 18–25—that makes sense of these chapters as they stand, as a unified whole: they show readers why Jehoiachin failed in his cultic leadership when he was in power; how this failure resulted from his misinterpretation of historical events, particularly Josiah's death; and how he can still be counted as a successful and even a perfect king, so long as he models his actions after those of Hezekiah and Josiah, who were once sinners like himself. When we see 2 Kings 18–25 as providing a blueprint for Davidic leadership that will return the people to the land, its supposed tensions and contradictions turn out to be scholarly inventions. When we read

15. So, e.g., Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings', p. 288; Friedman, 'From Egypt to Egypt', p. 171; Nelson, 'The Double Redaction', pp. 330-31.

16. The quote concerning the final four regnal evaluations is from Nelson, *The Double Redaction*, p. 38; for further arguments concerning the style of these evaluations as appearing to point to the work of a redactor, see, e.g., Friedman, 'From Egypt to Egypt', pp. 174, 188; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, p. 127; Helga Weippert, 'Die "deuteronomistischen" Beurteilungen der Könige von Israel und Juda und das Problem der Redaktion der Königsbücher', *Bib* 53 (1972), pp. 301-39 (333).

17. So Friedman, *Exile and Biblical Literature*, pp. 32-33 and 'From Egypt to Egypt', pp. 176-78. Others have extended this point, arguing that we can distinguish different redactions throughout Kings based on whether the narrative blames monarchs or people for sin and judgment: see, e.g., McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 140-43; Morton Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 206-207; Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pp. 19-20.

18. Cross, 'The Themes of the Book of Kings', p. 288; Nelson, *The Double Redaction*, pp. 119-23; Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, p. 37; McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, p. 127; Enzo Cortese, *Deuteronomistic Work* (trans. Silas Musholt; SBF, 47; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1999), pp. 118-19.

these chapters as instructions for the Davidide in terms of what to believe and how to act, we can also see that they broadcast to exilic readers Dtr's larger argument that Judah/Israel needs Davidic leadership in order to survive, and that all that really matters when it comes to royal action is cultic leadership. Exilic readers may have many reasons not to support the continuation of Davidic rule, but Dtr's argument up to this point is that royal leadership is necessary because the people cannot maintain cultic loyalty to Yhwh without kings, and Yhwh favors one royal house above all others. The Davidides as a whole have not been perfect, but Dtr argues that their lack of perfection has nothing to do with any kind of military or political failing; it is the result of poor leadership in cult. At the end of the narrative, Dtr does not excuse Davidic failings, and even blames the Davidides, as one imagines many exiles did, for the destruction the readers have experienced. But at least one Davidide has been perfect in his cultic leadership, since Josiah 'repented to Yhwh with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might' (23.25), becoming the only character in all of Dtr who completely acts toward Yhwh as Moses had instructed (Deut. 6.5). Josiah's cultic actions model a Self that can only truly be seen in the context of Israel's Alterity that the narrative has emphasized since Deuteronomy; Josiah's perfection, that is, is understood in terms of what Israel has failed to do and who they have failed to be. And this portrayal of the perfect Davidide, a portrayal that mimics and reinscribes colonial hegemony in regard to royal leadership in the cult, is not merely something Jehoiachin can imitate, it culminates in an evaluation that focuses on repentance, precisely what Jehoiachin must lead to end the exile, a point made by Moses in Deuteronomy 30. In its refusal to annul the eternal covenant with the Davidides, Dtr maintains that Yhwh favors David and his descendants, and by providing instructions and examples here for the Davidide to follow, the narrative conveys to readers that their hope for return to and future prosperity in Judah still depends on Davidic leadership. Insofar as Jehoiachin still has the opportunity to embody the Self that Josiah enacted, that which Israel is not, he is the exiles' only hope of return. Their salvation from exile depends on his perfect cultic actions.

2. *Jehoiachin's first lesson: The sins of Josiah and Hezekiah*

It may initially appear that the most counter-intuitive of the lessons that 2 Kings 18–25 puts to Jehoiachin is the assertion that Josiah was once a sinner like he is, for the narrative says Jehoiachin 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh' (24.9). Surely 2 Kings 22–23 is unequivocal in this regard: it states that Josiah 'did what was right in the eyes of Yhwh, and he walked in all of the way of David his ancestor and did not turn aside to the right or to the left' (22.2); it claims, as we have seen, that 'there was no king like him

before him who repented to Yhwh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might according to all of the law of Moses, and after him none arose like him' (23.25). And, for that matter, 2 Kings 18–20 does not charge Hezekiah with any sin; on the contrary, besides attributing positive cultic actions to him (18.4), the narrative states that 'he did what was right in the eyes of Yhwh like all that David his ancestor did' (18.3) and claims that 'he trusted in Yhwh the God of Israel, and after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor was there before him' (18.5). As in the case of Josiah, the narrative never directly charges Hezekiah with any wrongdoing, and although some see Isaiah's prophecy of the exile in 20.16-18 as a rebuke of Hezekiah's action of showing the Babylonian envoys his treasury in 20.12-15,[19] this is not a connection that the narrative itself explicitly draws.

Nonetheless, to turn to the sin of Josiah in 2 Kings, it is helpful to compare the narrative's timing of his cultic reformation with that of Hezekiah's. After providing Hezekiah with a positive comparison with David in 18.3, the narrative briefly relates his cultic actions in 18.4. As far as readers are concerned, Hezekiah undertakes these actions right away, as soon as he becomes king. The narrative certainly does not guarantee that this is so, but the notice that Josiah did not undertake his reforms until the eighteenth year of his reign (22.3) is markedly different in this regard. In fact, statements about royal cultic reforms in Kings, whether the narrator approves of these changes or not, almost always appear at the beginning of the king's narrative and without any reference as to when in the king's reign these actions were undertaken, thus making it seem as if they occurred as soon as he took the throne.[20] As a result, the story of Solomon in 1 Kings 1–11, which does not charge him with any cultic wrongdoing until his old age in 11.1-8, is the exception in Kings, not the rule, and provides somewhat of an excuse for Solomon's foreign high places, since the narrative could be read as suggesting that his foreign wives are able to take advantage of a king approaching senility.[21] We have already mentioned that the narrative of 2 Kings 23 takes pains to show a detailed reversal of Manasseh's sin by Josiah, but this means, of course, that Josiah continued this sin for the first 17 years of his reign, having no other cultic role models except for his father and

19. E.g., Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, p. 262; Christopher T. Begg, '2 Kings 20:12-19 as an Element of the Deuteronomistic History', *CBQ* 48 (1986), pp. 27-38 (33).

20. This is the case in 1 Kgs 12.26-33; 15.12-13; 16.1-32; 2 Kgs 3.2; 16.3-4; 18.4; and 21.2-7.

21. 11.4 states that 'in the time of the old age of Solomon, his wives inclined his heart after other gods'. It is reminiscent of the opening of 1 Kings, which begins by saying that 'King David was old' (1.1), and then goes on to relate how his wife Bathsheba convinces him that he had sworn that Solomon would succeed him, despite the fact that the narrative includes no such vow.

grandfather (by the chronology of 2 Kgs 21–22, Josiah is six years old when Manasseh dies).[22] While one assumes that the historical Josiah had a regent as the young Joash did in Jehoiada (2 Kgs 12.3 [2]), the narrative provides none for him. Although Dtr does not explicitly make the point, Josiah, in the first 17 years of his reign, is as culpable for the sin of Manasseh as his father Amon is. Amon, who reigns only two years, 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh as his father Manasseh did' (22.20); had Josiah died before the eighteenth year of his reign, the narrative would have had to have said the same thing about him. The narrative does not try to explain away Josiah's guilt by referring to the misleading of a regent or to his youth when he takes the throne as 1 Kings 11 refers to Solomon's old age, yet neither does it temper the incomparable evaluation of Josiah in 23.25. By saying nothing at all about his guilt in any explicit way, in fact, the narrative suggests that, because of the repentance that Josiah performs so perfectly, Yhwh decides to overlook his previous leadership in sin from the ages of eight to 26, as if this had never happened. It is simply erased from the evaluative record that the narrative provides.

In Hezekiah's case, his sin does not stem from his cultic actions, of which the narrative approves and presents as if he had undertaken them immediately, but from his lack of trust. Hezekiah's trust is the central aspect of his narrative in Kings; his Josiah-like cultic reforms are related in one verse (2 Chr. 29–31, in contrast, devotes three chapters to his cultic actions), but his trust, in which the narrative claims in 18.5 that he is incomparable among the kings, dominates the narrative of 2 Kings 18–19. From 18.13 to 19.37, the story of the Assyrian invasion, the verb בטח 'trust' is used seven times and the verb נצל 'deliver' ten times.[23] The Rabshakeh and Sennacherib deride trusting in Yhwh to deliver Jerusalem, but Hezekiah trusts and Yhwh delivers.[24] One could argue that a Josianic version

22. Ehud Ben Zvi also points to the dating of the reforms in Josiah's eighteenth year, and raises the question as to what this says about Josiah's culpability in leading Judah's sin for his first 17 years in power; see his 'Imagining Josiah's Book and the Implications of Imagining it in Early Persian Yehud', in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt and Jakob Wöhrle; AOAT, 350; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), pp. 193-212 (198). Ben Zvi never explicitly answers this question that he has raised, but he provides an implicit answer to it on the very next page, where he writes that '[t]he narrative in 2 Kgs 22–23 is about the king, and only he calls the shots' (199 n. 29).

23. בטח occurs nine times in 2 Kings 18–19 as a whole, and nowhere else in Kings, while נצל appears eleven times in 2 Kings 18–20 as a whole, and only twice elsewhere in Kings. See Paul S. Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* (VTSup, 125; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), pp. 117-18.

24. See Danna Nolan Fewell, 'Sennacherib's Defeat: Words at War in 2 Kings 18.13–19.37', *JSOT* 34 (1986), pp. 79-90 (85-86).

of Kings has downplayed Hezekiah's reforms so that Josiah's might look more impressive,[25] but the point of Hezekiah's narrative as it stands is to have readers focus on his incomparable trust.[26] The narrative really does not completely divorce Hezekiah's cultic action from his trust in Yhwh, for the incomparability statement concerning his trust in 18.5 is bracketed by the reference to his cultic reforms in 18.4 and the statement that 'he kept his [Yhwh's] commandments that Yhwh commanded Moses' (18.6), assumedly the commandments that guide his cultic reforms, just as 'the book of the law/covenant' guides Josiah's (22.8; 23.2). The Rabshakeh, moreover, says that trust in Yhwh's deliverance is futile specifically because Hezekiah undertook his reforms (18.22), his point here and in 18.25 being that Yhwh did not approve of them and so had sent the Assyrians to punish the nation for the king's cultic action. For the narrative, on the other hand, Hezekiah has reason to trust in Yhwh to deliver precisely because he carries out the kinds of cultic actions of which Yhwh approves. There could not be a greater contrast between Hezekiah, who carries out proper cultic reforms, and the kings in the North who do the opposite, a fact to which Dtr specifically returns readers in 18.9-12; as a result, Jerusalem under Hezekiah's leadership survives an Assyrian invasion while the North, in 17.1-23, does not.

Not every action that Hezekiah undertakes in this narrative, however, displays the incomparable trust with which he is credited in 18.5. When Sennacherib invades Judah in 18.13, Hezekiah tells him that 'I have sinned', and removes silver and gold from the temple and his own treasury to send to him (18.14-16). This is not the act of someone who trusts Yhwh to save; it continues a trope found in earlier stories in Kings of the temple being looted by foreign armies or by Judean monarchs who pay to have the invaders remove their armies from Judah, and in such stories no reference is made to divine action in the salvation of the country (see 1 Kgs 14.25-26; 15.16-21; 2 Kgs 12.18-19 [17-18]; and 14.8-14). Given that Esarhaddon describes

25. So, e.g., Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Hezekiah's Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition', *HTR* 72 (1979), pp. 23-43 (35-36, 41-42); Nadav Na'aman, 'The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research', *ZAW* 107 (1995), pp. 179-95 (179); McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, pp. 109-10 n. 9.

26. See David Bostock, *A Portrayal of Trust: The Theme of Faith in the Hezekiah Narratives* (PBM; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), pp. 29-30 and Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History* (SBLDS, 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 76. The case here is not that the story questions the causation between right cultic leadership by the Davidide and salvation—contra J.G. McConville, 'Narrative and Meaning in Kings', *Bib* 70 (1989), pp. 31-48 (42-43)—instead, the narrative of Hezekiah places great emphasis on the notion of deliverance. We can read 2 Kings 18–19 as a story of the conditions necessary for Yhwh to save and the role of royal leadership in creating such conditions.

the Babylonians' despoliations of the treasury of Esagila as a main cause of Marduk's anger against Babylon (*ARAB*, II, pp. 245, 249-50), it is easiest to see the despoliations of the temple as actions that, from Dtr's standpoint, would anger Yhwh.[27] Hezekiah here cares more for his own safety than of maintaining the sanctity of Yhwh's house, although his attempted bribe of Sennacherib fails to have any effect, and an Assyrian army soon arrives outside Jerusalem. The very fact that the Rabshakeh refers to the futility of trust in the power of Egypt to deliver in 18.21-24 suggests that Hezekiah was depending on Egypt's help in order to rescue Judah, and that he refused to rely solely on divine power to save, no matter how perfect his cultic actions had been. Moreover, in 20.12-15, which takes place during the Assyrian advance on Jerusalem (see 20.12), Hezekiah displays his royal treasury to envoys from Babylon, which suggests the king was assuring a foreign power that he had the resources to pay for their aid in driving the Assyrians out of Judah.[28] So just as Josiah is the inimitable king in regard to repentance, the narrative presents Hezekiah as the king without peer in

27. Although the narrative never describes these despoliations of the temple as punishment, Theodore Mullen argues that we should read them this way, since they are the results of foreign invasions, which Dtr characteristically presents as divine punishment; see his 'Crime and Punishment: The Sin of the Kings and the Despoliation of the Treasuries', *CBQ* 54 (1992), pp. 231-48. Shishak's invasion of Judah and theft of materials from the temple (1 Kgs 14.25-26) could be read as a punishment for Judah's apostasy (14.22-24), and it is certainly possible that the removal of the temple materials during the reigns of Asa, Joash, and Amaziah, who are all given positive regnal evaluations, are punishments for their failure to remove the high places (1 Kgs 15.14; 2 Kgs 12.4 [3]; 14.4), but the narrative never explicitly makes this connection. Mullen's argument becomes most difficult to make in the case of Hezekiah, for the narrative's report of his cultic activities is unqualifiedly positive. We could perhaps understand the despoliations as foreshadowings of the final despoliations of the temple by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 24.13; 25.13-17)—so Begg, '2 Kings 20:12-19', pp. 31-32—which is the result of royal leadership that does not pay enough attention to the importance of maintaining the purity of the temple cult.

28. So, e.g., Gerbrandt, *Kingship in the Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 86-87; Begg, '2 Kings 20:12-19', pp. 32-33; Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings* (BO; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 144; Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige* (2 vols.; ATD, 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984–1985), II, p. 437. Historically, this story may well reflect an attempt to make an alliance with Babylon against Sargon in 705—see J.A. Brinkman, 'Merodach-Baladan II', in *Studies from the Workshop of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (ed. Robert D. Biggs and J.A. Brinkman; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 6-53 (22-27); Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Hezekiah and the Babylonian Delegation: A Critical Reading of Isaiah 39:1-8', in *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (ed. Yairah Amit *et al.*; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 107-22 (115-17)—but the narrative here connects it to Sennacherib's invasion.

regard to trust,[29] but as is the case with Josiah, the narrative's evaluation of Hezekiah makes no explicit mention of the sin that preceded his perfection. Before Hezekiah 'trusted in Yhwh the God of Israel' to a greater extent than any other king, he appears to have trusted in Egypt, Babylon, and the ability of his own wealth to pay for the deliverance of Judah. Hezekiah's apparent lack of trust is simply ignored by the narrative's evaluation of him in 18.5, though, overwritten and erased the way Josiah's original cultic sin is. Like Josiah's incomparable repentance, the incomparability of Hezekiah's eventual trust rewrites his history so that, in his evaluation, it appears as if he had never sinned at all.

The first important lesson that exilic readers, including Jehoiachin, can draw from a reading of these sins of Hezekiah and Josiah that the narrative evaluations of the kings have overwritten is that the story of Jehoiachin is not over. While he 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh' in his three months on the throne, the same evaluation would have applied to Josiah in his first three months as king. As far as the narrative of Dtr is concerned, Solomon is right: 'there is no mortal who does not sin' (1 Kgs 8.46), not even Josiah or Hezekiah. Nonetheless, in these stories the narrative shows that it is possible for a king to reverse previous actions and perform so perfectly that his sin is ignored, so that he can be said to have done 'what is right in the eyes of Yhwh' and to have 'walked in all the way of David his ancestor' as the narrative ultimately evaluates Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Kgs 18.2; 22.2). And as we saw in the previous chapter, Yhwh has also overlooked David's sins in providing him with the eternal dynasty of which Jehoiachin is a part. If Yhwh wishes to maintain his eternal covenant with this house—and Dtr does not say otherwise—then this is a necessary act, since 'there is no mortal who does not sin'. Since Yhwh is so insistent that kings must lead rightly in cult, however, Davidides who fail in this role will have to alter their behavior if they wish to achieve a positive evaluation. And in these portrayals of kings whose change in behavior meets with a divine response, portrayals that are used as a lesson for a later monarch, Dtr again mimics colonial hegemony. To return to some of the texts that we discussed briefly in Chapter 2, the Weidner Chronicle includes the example of Sargon I as a king who, at first, is careful to follow traditional cultic instructions, only to fail later in his reign to properly honor Marduk at Esagila, a failure Marduk punishes by causing his subjects to revolt (*ABC*, pp. 118-19). Or, to take

29. This is why, of course, the incomparability sayings of 2 Kgs 18.5 and 23.25 do not contradict each other: Josiah is being praised for his repentance, Hezekiah for his trust. See, e.g., Klaus D. Fricke, *Das zweite Buch von den Königen* (BAT, 12/2; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1972), p. 335; Gerbrandt, *Kingship in the Deuteronomistic History*, p. 53; Gary N. Knoppers, "'There was none like him": Incomparability in the Book of Kings', *CBQ* 54 (1992), pp. 411-31.

one more example, the Verse Account of Nabonidus (*ANET*, pp. 312-15) claims that Nabonidus was once the '[favorite of the g]ods', but that he then entirely abandons the celebration of *akītu* and all traditional festivals, and so is replaced by Cyrus who restores the traditional Babylonian cult.

In Dtr's case, of course, one message that the story of Josiah communicates is that positive change is possible, that kings can become perfect cultic leaders. Simply because Jehoiachin failed in his cultic leadership does not mean that he cannot correct course and be recognized by Yhwh as a perfect king who is the legitimate ruler of Judah/Israel. The picture of a king who acts perfectly in the cult is itself a reinscription of colonial hegemony, for the Neo-Assyrian and -Babylonian kings continually broadcast the perfection of their cultic leadership.[30] Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar, for example, describe themselves as kings who faithfully provide the sacrifices for the gods,[31] and as the ones who restore the divine sanctuaries.[32] A text written for Ashurbanipal states that the gods designated him alone to provide for the shrines,[33] and Esarhaddon describes himself as the one who 'constantly established appropriate procedures in the great cult places'.[34] Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar insist that they never cease to bring great gifts to Marduk's temple,[35] and Esarhaddon and Nabonidus state that they supply all of the sanctuaries with abundance.[36] The gods have appointed the kings as priests[37] precisely so they can provide this perfect cultic leadership. And as faithfully as the Mesopotamian kings serve the gods, they make the people they have colonized participate in this service. The Neo-Assyrian kings emphasize that the foreigners they have conquered now participate in Ashur's cult (e.g., *ARAB*, II, pp. 161, 166, 227, 274, 305). Nebuchadnezzar refers on numerous occasions to the rulership over the peoples that Marduk has given him, peoples who can now participate in Nebuchadnezzar's work of restoring temples and supplying the cults of Marduk and the other great

30. For a helpful overview of royal leadership in the cult according to Mesopotamian texts, see M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967), pp. 20-22.

31. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 176-77; *ARAB*, II, pp. 225, 227, 258, 280.

32. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 78-79, and cf. pp. 207-208 where Nabonidus makes the same claim; *ARAB*, II, pp. 225, 242-64, 281.

33. Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA, 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), p. 99.

34. Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)* (RINAP, 4; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), p. 262.

35. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 102-103, 144-45, 214-15.

36. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 234-35; *ARAB*, II, pp. 253, 258.

37. This is the claim of many Assyrian kings; see Seux, *Epithètes royales*, p. 287.

gods.[38] This is why he can claim that he makes the peoples subservient to Marduk 'for their salvation' and that 'in his [Marduk's] eternal shade I gathered all the peoples for good'.[39]

Jehoiachin, like Josiah, can do for Israel what the perfect king should do, what the imperial kings of Mesopotamia claim to do for their colonists. Like Josiah (or Nebuchadnezzar), he can still rightly colonize the people, make them into loyal subjects of God for their salvation. Jehoiachin can change and become the perfect cultic leader and lead in repentance as Josiah did. Jehoiachin has been freed from prison in the last verses of 2 Kings; the narrative suggests that the possibility is open for him to act to change the evaluation with which he has been supplied. One way to understand the long narratives of Hezekiah (95 verses) and Josiah (50 verses) are as examples for Jehoiachin of ideal kings: Yhwh will save the nation when the king delivers positive cultic leadership and leads the people in repentance. If Jehoiachin can trust Yhwh in the face of foreign oppression as Hezekiah did, and can lead the nation in perfect repentance as Josiah did, then he can expect to see a divine deliverance of Judah, can expect his own evaluation to change from 'did what was evil' to 'did what was right', and expect a consequent act of deliverance for the exiles. If he can continue this cultic leadership upon return to Judah and Israel, the exiles can expect to flourish there. And the non-royal exilic readers of Dtr can also see, then, that Yhwh could still see Jehoiachin as an acceptable leader, and that he is not disqualified from his royal post merely because of his cultic failure. Should he change his ways as Josiah did, Yhwh will ignore his past evil and view him as a perfect king, one whom the exiles should follow, since Yhwh delivers in response to such cultic leadership and trust. As the work of the Cross school on these chapters has pointed out, however, the obvious difficulty with claiming this as another lesson for Jehoiachin and the exiles to learn from the final chapters of Kings is that Josiah's repentance does not appear to lead to salvation at all, and so, to make the argument that these chapters present Jehoiachin with royal models to follow in order to bring an end to the exile, we will need to examine what messages are communicated through the content and order of the stories of Manasseh and Josiah at the end of Dtr.

3. *Jehoiachin's second and third lessons: rejecting Manasseh and imitating Josiah*

There is no more obvious lesson for Jehoiachin to learn from the end of Kings than not to imitate Manasseh. Despite what some members of the

38. E.g., Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 88-91, 94-95, 146-49, 178-79.

39. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 172-73.

double redaction school argue, the narrative of Kings does provide a theological rationale for the destruction and exile of Judah: the sins of Manasseh. The issue is so important that not only is this the focus of the story about Manasseh (21.2-16), but the narrative returns to this rationale two more times (23.26-27; 24.2-4). And not only is this explanation longer than the one Dtr provides for the destruction and exile of the North in 17.7-23 (if we include all three references to the sins of Manasseh), but it provides exactly the same rationale, giving Jehoiachin clear examples of the kind of cultic leadership that culminates in disaster. As we saw in the previous chapter, the narrative directly charges Manasseh alone among the Davidides with causing Judah to sin (2 Kgs 21.10, 16), and under his influence Judah does 'more evil than the nations whom Yhwh destroyed from before the Israelites' (21.9). In one fell swoop, the sin of Judah has exceeded that of the North—even though the narrative of Judges portrayed the North as worse than Judah, and even though the kings of the North led Israel in sin that equaled that of the Canaanites (17.8, 11, 15)—and even of the Canaanites, and it is for this gross sin that Manasseh causes that Yhwh will punish Judah (21.10-15). The exilic readers, in short, should harbor no illusions as to how rebellious Yhwh regards Judah to be.

As part of Jehoiachin's lesson not to imitate Manasseh's sin, the narrative enhances the severity of the apostasy he forces Judah to commit and emphasizes the absolute folly of imitating such sinful leadership by having it precede Josiah's unparalleled repentance.[40] If the North cannot survive when they act like the Canaanites, Dtr's paradigm of evil, how can Judah expect to remain in the land when their actions are even worse? It is precisely because Dtr blames a predecessor rather than a successor of Josiah for the exile that we can argue that Jehoiachin and exilic readers are meant to learn as part of this second lesson of the final chapters that even perfect repentance cannot stave off punishment for national sin that is worse than that of the Canaanites. It must not, as a result, ever be repeated. So there is, in fact, a perfectly clear and logical reason why the sin of Manasseh precedes the repentance of Josiah. Moreover, while the narrative points to Jehoiachin's past cultic failure, it also avoids blaming him for the exile. Dtr here follows the pattern that we observed in Chapter 6 in regard to the Northern dynasties, in which a dynasty is indicted and slated for punishment during the reign of the first king who causes the people to sin. While we will see below that Dtr suggests that Jehoiachin also caused the people

40. This is precisely the conclusion of Percy S.F. van Keulen, *Manasseh through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists: The Manasseh Account (2 Kings 21:1-18) and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History* (OTS, 38; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 191-207.

to sin, it avoids using this language to describe his rule, and avoids blaming him for destruction and exile.

The failure of Josiah's reforms to cause Yhwh to repent of the punishment he announced for Judah's sins under Manasseh might, at first, seem to give us little reason to argue that, as a third lesson in the final chapters for Jehoiachin, the narrative is urging him to imitate Josiah's repentance and to imitate the reformed Josianic cult upon return to the land.[41] Yet it is Josiah's repentance that Jehoiachin must first imitate; Dtr's final evaluation of Josiah, which surpasses that of any other character in the entire narrative, is that 'he repented to Yhwh' (23.25). As early as Deuteronomy, Moses prophesies that exile followed by repentance will lead to return (Deut. 30.1-10), and Solomon alludes to the same sequence of events in 1 Kgs 8.46-53.[42] Since both of these passages point to the efficacy of repentance in exile, exilic readers can see that hope for them exists once the punishment for the nation's sins under Manasseh (and Amon, and Josiah, for the first 17 years of his reign) is over, should they engage in repentance. Of course, 2 Kings 21–25 does not repeat the connection between repentance and return, and for this reason there is no scholarly consensus as to what hope, if any, these chapters extend to exilic readers.[43] Moses's assurance in Deuteronomy 30, however, means that we cannot say that the narrative offers no hope to Jehoiachin that repentance will lead to return. Kings does not annul the promise to David,[44] and the story of Joash and Athaliah also holds out

41. I am certainly not the only one to argue that the narrative really does present Josiah's reforms as something to be imitated; see also, e.g., Perlice Tagliacarne, *'Keiner war wie er': Untersuchung zur Struktur von 2 Könige 22–23* (ATSAT, 31; St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1989), pp. 411-21; Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (AThANT, 66; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), pp. 269-70.

42. Solomon does not explicitly say that repentance will lead to return, but it is possible to read the narrative as alluding to such a connection here. See Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 287.

43. Scholarship on the end of Kings from the time of Martin Noth on has come to a number of conclusions as to the hope or lack of it that the end of the book expresses. Noth saw no hope at all in the closing of Kings; see his *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. Jane S. Doull; JSOTSup, 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 97-99. Gerhard von Rad saw the ending as hopeful; see his *Studies in Deuteronomy* (trans. David Stalker; SBT, 9; London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 90-91. Hans Walter Wolff saw it as pointing to the hope of return contingent on repentance in exile; see his 'The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work', in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (ed. Walter Brueggemann; trans. Frederick C. Prussner; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), pp. 83-100. For a list of the supporters of each of these positions, see Murray, 'Of All the Years', pp. 246-47 nn. 4-8.

44. See, e.g., Steven L. McKenzie, 'The Divided Kingdom in the Deuteronomistic

hope to Jehoiachin that his leadership in cultic reform can result in return. Just before readers reach the story of Athaliah, two Davidides marry into the house of Ahab and 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh' (2 Kgs 8.18, 27).[45] The Omride Athaliah then usurps the Judean throne for seven years, killing off all of the male Davidides except for the infant Joash (11.1-3), actions that fall only slightly short of the complete annihilation of all males and permanent removal from power suffered by the first three Northern dynasties.[46] But when the priest Jehoiada renews the covenant with the people and removes the cultic apparatus for Baal, a Davidide once again takes the throne (11.17-20). Moreover, Yhwh makes his eternal covenant with David not as a reward for David's proper cultic actions—as we discussed in the previous chapter, Yhwh appears to react negatively to David's movement of the ark in 2 Samuel 6 and to David's desire to build a temple in 2 Samuel 7—but simply because he seems to like David. While Manasseh's gross cultic sin does not go unpunished, just as Solomon's construction of high places for other gods does not, the eternal covenant with the house is founded on Yhwh's unexplained favoring of David, not on cultic actions, and so there is reason to believe that it might not be withdrawn because of cultic sin. So one conclusion that an exilic reader of Kings could come to is that the final picture of a Davidide alive in exile at the very end of the narrative points to a potential repetition of the Athaliah story, where repentance through covenant renewal will precede the restoration of the Davidide to the throne.[47] And once Jehoiachin can lead the exiles in the

History and in Scholarship on It', in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL, 147; Leuven: University Press, 2000), pp. 135-45 (141); Halpern, *The First Historians*, p. 158.

45. The intermarriage with the worst of the Northern dynasties and Dtr's evaluation of the kings suggest that they led Judah in apostasy, although the narrative does not actually accuse them of this. Jehoram 'walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did' (8.18) and Ahaziah 'walked in the way of the house of Ahab' (8.27), evaluations that sound much like the repeated accusation that Northern kings 'walked in the way of Jeroboam', which is almost always linked to the sin Jeroboam caused Israel to commit (1 Kgs 15.26, 34; 16.19, 26, 31; 22.51; 2 Kgs 13.2). See David Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25.27-30', *JSOT* 33 (2008), pp. 39-58 (53-54). The narrative thus presents a situation here that allows readers to draw a parallel with the sin Manasseh caused Judah to commit. Nonetheless, the narrative does not directly say that Jehoram and Ahaziah caused Judah to sin (and certainly does not say that they caused Judah to sin worse than the Canaanites, which is the charge leveled against Manasseh), and so maintains the pattern that we discussed in Chapter 6, wherein Yhwh pronounces punishment during the reign of the first king of a dynasty who is said to cause the people to sin. This strategy emphasizes the severity of Manasseh's sin, which is so egregious Josiah's perfect reform is not enough to cause Yhwh to revoke the punishment for it.

46. Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 53-54.

47. So, e.g., McKenzie, 'The Divided Kingdom', pp. 139-43; Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2*

repentance that returns them to the land, he can continue his proper cultic leadership with the program established in the narration of Josiah's reforms. (Because Yhwh does not abandon the temple in Dtr's narrative, Jehoiachin cannot lead a Josianic-like cult before the reestablishment of the temple upon return. He must lead repentance while in exile; only on return to the land will he be able to manifest this repentance following Josiah's example in regard to temple worship.)

And while 2 Kings 21–25 offers exilic readers and Jehoiachin no explicit guarantee that an imitation of Josiah's repentance will lead to return and prosperity in the land, the narrative of Hezekiah, which immediately precedes these chapters, provides exiles with a story where deliverance follows Josiah-like cultic reforms. The narrative of Hezekiah is about twice the length of Josiah's story, and more closely resembles the historical situation of the exiles than the story of Josiah, for almost all of 2 Kings 18–20 takes place during the Assyrian advance on Jerusalem. The exiles have experienced what was only threatened during the narrative of Hezekiah—siege, destruction, and exile[48]—but the Hezekiah narrative claims that, when a king carries out the kind of cultic reform like that detailed in 2 Kings 23 and summarized in 18.4, the people can trust in Yhwh to save them. Despite the assertions of the Rabshakeh and Sennacherib that Yhwh will not deliver, and thus that trust in him is futile (18.22, 25, 28-35; 19.10-13), Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance (19.15-19) is answered (19.20-37). In this story, in which the nation's sin has not exceeded that of the Canaanites, and where the king enacts proper cult reform, Yhwh delivers. This suggests to exilic readers that, if Jehoiachin imitates what Hezekiah and Josiah do cultically, Yhwh will deliver when Judah's punishment for exceeding the Canaanites in sin is over and will protect the people upon their return.

Yet while the story of Athaliah and Joash offers one possible template for the future, so does the story of Mephibosheth. Like Jehoiachin, he is the scion of a defeated house who is fed at the king's table, but his dynasty does not return to power.[49] The end of Kings is at least as sobering as it is hope-

Kings (OTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 90-93; Peter J. Leithart, 'Counterfeit Davids: Davidic Restoration and the Architecture of 1–2 Kings', *TynBul* 56 (2005), pp. 19-33 (32-33).

48. The Assyrians do not actually besiege Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18–19, but the Rabshakeh approaches the city 'with a great army' (18.17) and implies that resistance will be met with a siege when he warns the inhabitants will 'eat their dung and drink their urine' (18.27), something that he says they can avoid if they submit to exile (18.32).

49. For others who point to this connection, see, e.g., Jeremy Schipper, '"Significant Resonances" with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25:27-30: A Response to Donald F. Murray', *JBL* 124 (2005), pp. 521-29; Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 103-106; Jan Jaynes Granowski, 'Jehoiachin at the King's

ful; hope can only come through repentance that Jehoiachin leads. If the narrative here points the exilic readers to hope for proper leadership from Jehoiachin, it certainly does nothing to help them imagine life in the land apart from Davidic rule; all that 2 Kings 18–25 does is provide readers with examples of kings who fail to lead cultic loyalty and others who succeed at it, and the consequences of both. Proper cultic leadership is met with deliverance, but a failure of Davidic leadership in repentance and cultic loyalty might lead to an eternal exile.

According to Dtr's presentation of the monarchy, its role in leading and maintaining cultic loyalty to Yhwh is its only necessary task. Josiah's leadership in reform is an especially important example of this Deuteronomistic principle, for he undertakes it in the knowledge that it will not spare Jerusalem from destruction. This is, in fact, one of the important points the narrative makes with Huldah's oracle, for in it Yhwh assures Josiah of the destruction of Judah (22.15-17) while also rewarding him, for the humility he has already expressed, with death before this destruction takes place (22.18-20). This prophecy raises the intriguing question as to why Josiah, having heard that the nation will be destroyed, and having already received a reward for the humility he has expressed even before the prophetess delivers the oracle, decides to enact his cultic reform anyway. If an author is trying to create a believable and logical story, what sense does it make to have Josiah carry out his perfect repentance with the knowledge that it will make no ultimate difference to the nation's fate?[50] Baruch Halpern has suggested that a prophetic oracle like Huldah's urges reform, leaving open the possibility that repentance enacted by king and people could turn away divine punishment (as, e.g., in Jer. 26.16-19).[51] But Josiah undertakes his reforms with no assurance that divine anger will be averted,[52] and, of course, it is not. Readers learn, however, that such royal leadership in cultic action is always right, no matter what historical context a king might face; this is what characterizes an ideal king. The narrative does not say

Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings', in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; LCBI; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 173-88 (183-84); Janzen, 'An Ambiguous Ending', pp. 55-56.

50. Sweeney and Cogan and Tadmor, for example, see this question as unanswerable in a logical manner, and so point to Huldah's oracle as evidence for an original Josianic history that has been redacted (Sweeney, *King Josiah*, p. 46; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, p. 295).

51. Baruch Halpern, 'Why Mannaseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition', *VT* 48 (1998), pp. 473-514 (494-96); see also Halpern and Vanderhooft, 'The Editions of Kings', pp. 221-30.

52. For the argument that the oracle actually points to Josiah's violent death, see Percy S.F. van Keulen, 'The Meaning of the Phrase *wn'špt 'l-qbrytk bšlwm* in 2 Kings xxii 20', *VT* 46 (1996), pp. 256-60.

that Josiah 'did what was right in the eyes of Yhwh' because his reforms convince Yhwh to revoke Judah's punishment; it evaluates him in this way because he 'repented to Yhwh' and carried out the reforms even after he had been told that they would make no difference in his lifetime. Had Josiah gone no further than tearing his clothes (22.11), the act of humility that permits him to die before the destruction of Judah begins (22.18-20), he would merely have been imitating Ahab (1 Kgs 21.27), whose similar action permitted him to die before the annihilation of his house (1 Kgs 21.29), even though he 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh more than all who were before him' (1 Kgs 16.30). If Jehoiachin wishes a future historian to ultimately see him as having done what is right in the eyes of Yhwh, to be an ideal king like Hezekiah and Josiah, he must imitate Josiah's repentance, if only because this is what ideal kings do. This is the only option for return that Dtr's conclusion so much as suggests, and it leads exilic readers to hope that the Davidide will lead them in repentance and imitate the ideals Hezekiah and Josiah present him with.

4. *Jehoiachin's fourth lesson: The true meaning of Josiah's death*

Josiah dies at a young age—39, according to 22.1—at the hands of the Egyptian Neco (23.29). Jehoahaz, his successor, is removed by Neco after only three months on the throne, and Egypt replaces him with Jehoiakim and levies a heavy tax on Judah (23.31-35). The narrative is clearly signaling that Judah is now a client state, controlled and oppressed by Egypt. (Historically speaking, Josiah is likely to have been an Egyptian client also,[53] but the narrative makes no reference to this. It insists, in fact, that 'the people of the land' rather than Neco put Jehoahaz on the throne [23.30], thus making Egypt's oppression of Judah begin after Josiah's death.) This is an inauspicious end to the career of a king who receives an unparalleled evaluation in the narrative, particularly when compared to the peaceful end of Manasseh's story, where the arch-sinner dies at the age of 67 after 55 years on the throne (21.1). The narrative of Kings, of course, interprets Josiah's death through Huldah's oracle—Josiah will die and be buried in peace because of his humility—and presents the prophecy as fulfilled by the fact that the Egyptian Neco, who kills him, is not yet at war with Judah,

53. See, e.g., Nadav Na'aman, 'Josiah and the Kingdom of Judah', in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393; ESHM, 5; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), pp. 189-247 (211-17); Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup, 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 766-67; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), pp. 388-90.

meaning that Josiah dies at a time of peace,[54] for the narrative makes a point of saying that Neco is fighting against Assyria, not Judah (23.29).[55] The statement that Josiah went to Megiddo 'to meet him [Neco]' hardly makes it appear as if Egypt and Judah are at war; Neco 'killed him in Megiddo', and while the narrative does not explain why, it also avoids language that suggests Egypt and Judah fought each other.[56] The narrative, then, uses Hul-

54. This is Halpern's conclusion; he points to 1 Kgs 2.4-5 as a parallel, where Joab is said to act in a warlike fashion against people with whom he was supposedly בשלום ('Why Manasseh is Blamed', p. 502). Yhwh tells Josiah through Huldah that 'I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace' (22.19). As some scholars argue, given Josiah's violent death, we can read this part of the oracle in two sections, and see the 'peace' as referring to Josiah's burial, not his actual death; e.g., Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte*, pp. 57-58; Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, pp. 181-89; A.D.H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 129-30; Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW, 172; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1988), p. 149; Michael Pietsch, 'Prophetess of Doom: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Huldah Oracle (2 Kings 22)', in *Soundings in Kings: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship* (ed. Mark Leuchter and Klaus-Peter Adam; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), pp. 71-80 (76-77). As Percy van Keulen points out, the appearance of the phrase 'you will be gathered to your grave' in the oracle is actually a reference to the violence of Josiah's death; see his 'The Meaning of the Phrase', pp. 256-60. Even in this reading, however, Josiah's burial can be said to be in peace because the oppression of Judah by foreign powers does not begin until 23.33. Matthew Suriano points out that the phrase 'to be gathered to/lie with the ancestors' in Kings is used only for the deaths of kings whose sons succeed them on the throne; see his *The Politics of Dead Kings: Dynastic Ancestors in the Book of Kings and Ancient Israel* (FAT, 2/48; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), pp. 71-97. As a result, he argues, the use of the formula in regard to Josiah has nothing to do with the nature of his death, but with continued Davidic rule after it (pp. 40-41, 89-92, 96).

55. As R.J. Coggins has pointed out, because modern scholars are aware that by 609 Egypt and Assyria were allies against Babylon, על־מלך אשור in 23.29 is frequently translated as 'to the king of Assyria', even though the preposition in this kind of context almost always expresses opposition, and thus should be read as 'against the king of Assyria'; see his '2 Kings 23,29: A Problem of Method in Translation', in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress Leuven 1989* (ed. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust; BETL, 94; Leuven: University Press, 1990), pp. 277-81; see also *GKC*, pp. 383-84.

56. Perhaps under the influence of 2 Chr. 35.20-21, many scholars argue that Josiah did in fact lead his forces against Neco's at Megiddo. Michael Avioz's argument that the use of הלך…לקראת in 23.29 to describe Josiah's action points to a military encounter—'What Happened at Megiddo? Josiah's Death as Described in the Book of Kings', *BN* 142 (2009), pp. 5-11 (7-8)—needs to be balanced by Zipora Talshir's observation that the phrase is normally used for meetings in general, as it is, for example, when Ahaz goes to meet Tiglath-pileser, which clearly was not done in the context of a battle; see her 'The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical

dah's oracle to portray Josiah's death in the final form of Kings as a reward, a mercy killing, for he does not live to see the punishment of Judah through the progressive oppression and destruction of Judah by Egypt (23.33-35) and Babylon (24.1-4, 10-17; 25.1-26), which begins as soon as he dies.[57] We can see now why the narrative takes pains in 23.30-35 to show that Judah's client status in regard to Egypt does not begin until after Jehoahaz is on the throne, for the narrative portrays it as part of the oppression and destruction of Judah that punishes the nation for the sins Manasseh causes the people to commit. Huldah's oracle is thus fulfilled as Josiah dies and is buried at a time of peace, a peace that comes to an end immediately afterward. And, in fact, the accounts of the reigns of the last four kings, outside of standard accession, evaluation, and death formulae, speak of nothing else than the on-going destruction of the nation that begins after Josiah.[58]

It would be possible, however, for one of Josiah's successors to arrive at a different interpretation of his death and the consequent foreign oppression. A text from the time of Esarhaddon claims that his father, Sennacherib, blames the death of Sargon, Sennacherib's father, in battle on Sargon's failure to properly honor the Babylonian gods. Sennacherib calls this 'the sin of Sargon, my father'. In the same text Sennacherib says that Assyrian scribes prevented him from restoring Marduk's statue, and so shortened his life.[59] While Josiah does not die in battle according to Dtr, it is certainly possible, for example, that the Davidides who follow Josiah could conclude in retrospect that Josiah's cultic reforms do not entirely seem like a good idea, just as Sennacherib, in Esarhaddon's text, says that Sargon's fate alerted him to the folly of his cultic practices. This is particularly so since Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim could remember the previous cultic regime enacted by Josiah's grandfather, who reigned in peace for 55 years, and would know that Judah lived in peace before Josiah's great cultic change.[60] When contrasted with the peace of Manasseh's lengthy reign (and, likely, its prosperity,[61] although

Historiography (2 Kings xxiii 29-30; 2 Chronicles xxxv 20-5; 1 Esdras i 23-31)', *VT* 46 (1996), pp. 213-36 (215-18).

57. So also Suriano, *The Politics of Dead Kings*, p. 91; van Keulen, 'The Meaning of the Phrase', p. 258.

58. For the last four kings, we find standard Deuteronomistic accession, evaluation, and death formulae in 23.31-32, 36-37; 24.5-6, 8-9, 18-19. Every other verse from 23.31 to 25.21 deals with foreign invasion, oppression, and destruction.

59. Hayim Tadmor, Benno Landsberger and Simo Parpola, 'The Sin of Sargon and Sennacherib's Last Will', *SAAB* 3 (1989), pp. 3-51 (9-17); see pp. 50-51 for the dating of this text.

60. The narrative says that Jehoahaz was 23 when he began to rule (23.31) and that Jehoiakim was 25 (23.36), which means that Josiah instituted his cultic reforms when they were ten and twelve years old, respectively, since he dies 13 years after instituting them (22.1).

61. So, e.g., Ernst A. Knauf, 'The Glorious Days of Manasseh', in *Good Kings and*

the narrative does not mention this), Josiah's early death is the central issue of theodicy with which the narrative must grapple[62] in its message to Jehoiachin and the exiles. An obvious historical conclusion for Josiah's successors to draw, given this contrast, is that Manasseh's reforms are the success, since they are accompanied by peace, security and a long reign, and Josiah's the failure, since they are followed by the early death of the king and foreign oppression;[63] the narrative itself suggests this as an (incorrect) interpretation for the destruction of Jerusalem in the speech of the Rabshakeh at a point in the narrative when it appears as if the Assyrians might destroy the city. When Assyria approaches Jerusalem during Hezekiah's reign, the Rabshakeh says, 'If you say to me, "We trust in Yhwh our God", is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has turned aside, for he said to Judah and to Jerusalem, "Before this altar you will worship in Jerusalem"?' (18.22). The Rabshakeh, perhaps like the last four kings of Judah, believes that cultic reforms like the ones Hezekiah and Josiah carry out lead to Judah's destruction and the removal or death of the king, but 2 Kings 18–25 tells Jehoiachin and exilic readers that this conclusion as to the meaning of Josiah's death is not the right one to draw. Jehoiachin must interpret it through Huldah's oracle and trust, as Hezekiah does, that Yhwh meets good cultic reform with deliverance, and will deliver once the period of punishment for the sins Manasseh caused is over and repentance has begun. In the end, it is this true interpretation of Josiah's death that Jehoiachin must learn first. If he cannot see that Manasseh's and not Josiah's reforms are responsible for the exile, then he will not learn to imitate Josiah rather than Manasseh, and he will not learn to trust, as Hezekiah eventually does, that such Josianic repentance and reforms are met with deliverance. And, for Dtr's author, all exilic readers need to absorb the same point, or else they would see no need to follow Jehoiachin's (reformed) cultic lead

Bad Kings (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393; ESHM, 5; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), pp. 164-88 (165-73); Israel Finkelstein, 'The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh', in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 169-87; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), p. 201.

62. See particularly the comments in Antti Laato, 'Theodicy in the Deuteronomistic History', in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (ed. Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 183-235 (225-35).

63. Knauf actually comes to this conclusion in his historical survey of the period of Manasseh, albeit in reference to political rather than religious policy; he describes the narrative's claim that Manasseh is responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem as 'utter ideological nonsense' ('The Glorious Days of Manasseh', p. 176). Josiah's four successors appear to have shared this impression of Deuteronomistic theology, at least according to Dtr.

or otherwise recognize his authority as a king whose rule Yhwh is still willing to approve of.

There would appear, then, to be a theological point to the virtually identical final four regnal evaluations. If the narrative provides any hint as to why Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim each 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh like all that his ancestors did' (23.32, 37),[64] and Jehoiachin 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh like all that his father [Jehoiakim] did', and Zedekiah 'did evil in the eyes of Yhwh like all that Jehoiakim did' (24.9, 19)—suggesting that they imitated all of the evil their ancestors performed, assumedly including Manasseh's act of causing Judah to commit apostasy—it is that they unanimously share the Rabshakeh's interpretation of the kind of cultic reforms Hezekiah and Josiah carry out. The similarity of the evaluations stresses the unanimity of this incorrect conclusion, the fact that all of these kings are unable to see Manasseh, not Josiah, as the failure. Until Jehoiachin can learn this lesson and imitate Josiah's repentance, the exiles will remain in Babylon, and he will be, as far as the narrative is concerned, a failure as a king. And there is a lesson here as well for non-royal exilic readers, whose attention is being concentrated on royal cultic leadership, something that Jehoiachin is in the position to change, rather than, say, the king's military leadership. As we saw in the previous chapter, Dtr is clear that Yhwh does not evaluate kings based on their military successes or failures; being clear at the end of the narrative that Jehoiachin needs to change his cultic leadership makes return seem a possibility for readers, who might not believe (and rightly so) that Jehoiachin is in a position to win a battle against Babylon.

The last chapters of Kings, then, offer a logical and coherent message oriented particularly to the future behavior of Jehoiachin: his story as a leader of Israel is not over; his evil can be overwritten like Josiah's and Hezekiah's; he still has the chance to be an ideal king as they were. He and other exilic readers can learn from the last chapters of Kings that, when a monarch causes the people to sin and become even worse than the Canaanites as Manasseh did, not even a perfect act of repentance will save the nation from destruction. However, since the narrative never annuls the

64. Note that the Hebrew here reads ועשׂ הרע בעיני יהוה בכל אשׁר־עשׂו אבתיו, which does not suggest that these two kings imitated every single one of their ancestors, but that they imitated the evil that their ancestors as a group committed. As a result, we do not need to read 23.32, 37 as condemning Josiah as an evil king along with all of the other Davidides, contra, e.g., Weippert, 'Die "deuteronomistischen" Beurteilungen', pp. 333-34, 339; Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative*, p. 7; Nelson, 'The Double Redaction', pp. 328-29; Erik Eynikel, *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (OTS, 33; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 119. Since Josiah was a sinner of Manasseh's magnitude for the first 17 years of his reign, it would not be illogical for Dtr to condemn him here, but the narrative steers away from direct reference to Josiah's sin, as we have seen.

eternal promise to David, and since it has provided a parallel in the story of Athaliah and Joash, a hopeful future is still a possibility if Jehoiachin can become an ideal king. If Jehoiachin leads repentance like Josiah and trusts in Yhwh to deliver in the context of this repentance like Hezekiah, then the sins that his current evaluation in 2 Kgs 24.9 reflect can be overwritten, as Josiah's and Hezekiah's were. Josiah in particular began a reign that was as evil as that of Manasseh's, since he originally followed his grandfather's cultic lead, having no other cultic example before the law was discovered. The narrative tells exilic readers, then, that there is no reason to abandon Davidic leadership, and that Yhwh will even accept Jehoiachin as a legitimate leader if he can change as Hezekiah and Josiah did. Once Jehoiachin sees that Josiah's early death was a mercy killing, then he will be able to trust, as Hezekiah did, that Yhwh will deliver when proper cultic leadership is enacted, and so lead repentance as Josiah did, repentance that will return the people to the land.

Once Dtr presents Israel as a people foreign and rebellious by nature through Moses's descriptions of them in Deuteronomy and through repetitively demonstrating their failures in Judges, the narrative makes it clear that the only leadership option that seems to be able to colonize the people and make them into proper subalterns for their divine suzerain is the monarchy, and only the Davidides have any success at that. Despite the failures of some of their members, not once does the house receive an oracle that ends or even limits their rule, unlike the cases of the Northern dynasties.[65] Even in the context of Manasseh's sin, which is even worse than that of the Northern dynasties, this makes sense in the narrative, for David was neither granted an eternal covenant nor evaluated based on his cultic actions. References to him in the evaluations of monarchs in Kings show that Yhwh has overlooked the sins he did commit, just as Yhwh overlooked Josiah's and Hezekiah's. Dtr's argument for the Davidides does not claim that they are perfect, since such a claim regarding Judean leadership would be difficult for any exile to take seriously, but it instead promotes two recent Davidides as models for the one in exile to imitate; it demonstrates to readers, in short, that Davidic leadership works so long as it is done properly. Yhwh's unexplained preference for David has resulted in a covenant that still appears to be in force, and so the Davidides are still the solution, so long as Jehoiachin and his successors can follow the Deuteronomistic model for success, a model that focuses on nothing other than cultic leadership and so allows the kings to otherwise treat the people however they like. The narrative suggests no alternative here to Davidic leadership; should exilic readers choose

65. See the discussion in Rainer Albertz, 'Deuteronomistic History and the Heritage of the Prophets', in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. Martti Nissinen; VTSup, 148; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012), pp. 343-67 (352).

not to follow Jehoiachin's lead in the repentance to which Dtr points, the narrative proposes no other option as an end to exile. As Dtr makes the case at the end of Kings, the exiles can either follow and support Davidic leadership in the repentance Jehoiachin should lead or remain in Babylon. The king from the house Yhwh favors and with which he has not annulled his eternal covenant is the key to return to and prosperity in the land. Nor need we construe anything in these final chapters as limiting the vastly expanded power and authority surreptitiously arrogated to the monarchy over the course of Dtr's narrative. The return that the narrative allows readers to envision does not suggest that the king's prerogative to treat his subjects as he pleases—outside of how he leads them in the cult, at any rate—will be diminished in any way.

5. *The non-solution of priests and prophets*

Yet is it really true that, by the end of Kings, the Davidides are the only solution that Dtr offers to its exilic readers? We have seen that, in the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, the narrative presents priestly and prophetic failures along with Saul's royal failures, but the Elides and Samuel are not the only priests and prophets in Dtr. We have seen, of course, that the single story in Dtr that features Aaron portrays him as culpable in an idolatry with strong parallels to that of Jeroboam's. The Elides are replaced with a new priestly house, one which, Yhwh specifies, is to serve a king. It is not entirely clear that the Zadokites are even descended from Aaron,[66] and we read very little about them, suggesting that Dtr has little interest in priestly leadership, or at least little interest in discussing successful priestly leadership. Readers encounter much more about priestly failures than successes in Dtr, and the Elides are not the only priestly group indicted by the narrative. The most egregious priestly failure in Dtr is that of Jeroboam's priests, who are not Levites (1 Kgs 12.31), and who are killed by Josiah (2 Kgs 23.20), and whose priestly work is an integral part of the sin of Jeroboam that causes Israel to sin and that Dtr uses to explain Samaria's destruction. The apostate cult founded by Micah and adopted by Dan in Judges 17–18 is led by a descendant of Moses[67] (Judg. 18.30), and the story of this cult

66. See Richard D. Nelson, 'The Role of the Priesthood in the Deuteronomistic History', in *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 132-47 (135); J.G. McConville, 'Priesthood in Joshua to Kings', *VT* 49 (1999), pp. 73-87 (81); Serge Frolov, *The Turn of the Cycle: 1 Samuel 1–8 in Synchronic and Diachronic Perspective* (BZAW, 342; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 168-69.

67. The LXX and other textual witnesses support 'son of Moses' rather than 'son of Manasseh' as the reading in 18.30. For a more detailed examination of the issue of the suspended *nun* in 18.30, see Steve Weitzman, 'Reopening the Case of the Suspiciously Suspended Nun in Judges 18:30', *CBQ* 61 (1999), pp. 448-60.

alludes to Jeroboam's, since, like one of Jeroboam's idols, it is housed in Dan (Judg. 18.29-30; 1 Kgs 12.30), and the story of Dan's idol concludes by referring to 'the day of the exile of the land' (18.30), which is the exact result of the sin of Jeroboam.[68]

The story of Judges 17–18, of course, is set within chapters that suggest that a monarchy might prevent the people from doing what is right in their own eyes, while the stories of Jeroboam and the Northern kings point out that some kings will actually cause the people to do what is evil in the eyes of Yhwh. Priests need proper royal guidance, the kind that the Davidides supply some of the time. The story 2 Kgs 16.10-16, in which the Davidide Ahaz commands the priest Uriah to create a replica of a Syrian altar for the temple in Jerusalem, demonstrates that the Davidides can also provide bad leadership for the priests, and this particular case of poor leadership would appear to be partially responsible for the negative evaluation Ahaz receives (16.2-4).[69] Dtr implicitly reduces priestly responsibilities as the narrative progresses; while David regularly relies on divine communication by means of the ephod borne by Abiathar (e.g., 1 Sam. 23.6, 9-10; 30.7-8; 2 Sam. 2.1; 5.19, 23-24), neither Zadok nor his successors is ever said to bear the ephod.[70] Dtr presents a limiting of the scope of priestly activity, perhaps in part because the narrative's presentation of them suggests they are not

68. See, e.g., Jason S. Bray, *Sacred Dan: Religious Tradition and Cultic Practice in Judges 17–18* (LHBOTS, 449; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2006), pp. 64-73; Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; BIS, 38; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 114-15, 318; Gale A. Yee, 'Ideological Criticism: Judges 17–21 and the Dismembered Body', in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Gale A. Yee; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd edn, 2007), pp. 138-60 (151); Mark Leuchter, 'The Cult at Kiriath Yearim: Implications from the Biblical Record', *VT* 58 (2008), pp. 526-43 (532); Baruch Halpern, 'Levitic Participation in the Reform Cult of Jeroboam I', *JBL* 95 (1976), pp. 36-37.

69. 16.3 states that 'he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel', an evaluation found elsewhere only in 2 Kgs 8.18, and pointing to some kind of parallel to the sin of Jeroboam. Indeed, like Jeroboam, Ahaz appears to alter the cult in Jerusalem for political considerations—compare 1 Kgs 12.26-27 and 2 Kgs 16.18. See Klaas A.D. Smelik, 'The New Altar of King Ahaz (2 Kings 16): Deuteronomistic Re-Interpretation of a Cult Reform', in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BETL, 133; Leuven: University Press, 1997), pp. 263-78 (277-78).

70. On this point, see Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 71; P.R. Davies, 'Ark or Ephod in I Sam xiv.18?', *JTS* 26 (1975), pp. 82-87 (86); and cf. Aelred Cody, *A History of the Old Testament Priesthood* (AnBib, 35; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), pp. 114-20. We should note as well that in some of the later references to David enquiring by means of the ephod cited above, Abiathar is not even mentioned, a narrative device that marginalizes the priests' role in divine communication even further.

worthy to act as divine intermediaries. One obvious exception to Dtr's focus on priestly failures is the story of Jehoiada's leadership in proper cultic reform: he renews the covenant with the people, who then tear down the house of Baal and kill Baal's priest (2 Kgs 11.17-18). The evaluations of the two previous Davidides compares them to Northern kings (8.16-27), and as a result the house of David is punished almost like the Northern dynasties, as all of the males of the house are killed, save for the infant Joash (11.1-3), and the Davidides are removed from the throne, although only for the seven years of Athaliah's rule. This reform is followed by the restoration of the Davidide to the throne of Judah, a story that, as we discussed above, points to a potentially positive outcome of the exile, so long as the Davidide leads rightly. Jehoiada continues his positive leadership by instructing the young Joash how to show proper loyalty to Yhwh (12.3 [2]), so that it is the king who can then instruct the priests to repair the temple (12.5-6 [4-5]).[71] Yet even this positive picture of priestly leadership is immediately tempered by the priests' failure to properly carry out the repairs Joash orders, and the king must upbraid Jehoiada (12.7-9 [6-8]). The narrative even suggests in 12.8-11 [7-10] that the priests cannot be trusted with the money dedicated to temple repairs, for they make no progress on the repair of the temple, and so are disbarred from receiving money directly from the people, a task that is now overseen by the highpriest and a royal scribe. In contrast, the narrative emphasizes the honesty of the workmen, who need no oversight in their handling of the funds (12.16 [15]).[72]

Similarly, it is Josiah who orders the priests to carry out the temple repairs in 2 Kings 22, and it is he who directs the priests to carry out the reforms (23.4), and his very next act is to remove the priests dedicated to non-Yahwistic cults (23.5).[73] Throughout, Josiah is in charge of reading the law, leading the people in covenant and Passover (23.2-3, 21-23), and carrying out the reforms (23.6-20); much of 23.1-24 makes it appear as if he is

71. As Patricia Dutcher-Walls points out, Joash is not the subject of an active verb before 11.19, where he takes the throne, and only by 12.5 [4] do we see him act in some other capacity; see her *Narrative Art, Political Rhetoric: The Case of Athaliah and Joash* (JSOTSup, 209; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 61-62. It is only at this point where he becomes the main character of the narrative (p. 50), and Jehoiada then acts on his orders (p. 122).

72. See, e.g., Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC; Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 1995), pp. 223-24; Cohn, *2 Kings*, p. 82.

73. For the association of the כמרים, whom Josiah deposes in 23.5, with the Aramean cult of the moon god, see Christoph Uehlinger, 'Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah? The Case for a Well-Grounded Minimum', in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHBOTS, 393; ESHM, 5; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 279-316 (303-305); Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit* (FRLANT, 129; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), p. 85.

the sole actor in these reforms,[74] and the priesthood merely an extension of his righteous royal rule.[75] 'The priests do not watch over the king', points out Jon Levenson, arguing that this appears a jarring contrast with Deut. 17.18's command that the king have a copy of the law written in the presence of the priests; 'he watches over them'. While Levenson advances the portrayal of Josiah in 2 Kings 23 as an argument for the lawcode as a later insertion to Dtr,[76] we can note that the priests in Dtr's narrative are hardly paradigms of righteous actors. The narrative's presentation of the priesthood has focused so forcefully on their failures that it is clear that someone needs to control them, and Dtr suggests that a royal descendant of David who acts perfectly is the best choice to do so. If this is contrary to the Law of the King, this is also in accord with Dtr's presentation of Torah as something to which the monarchy is not bound given the rebellious state of Israel and, in the passages we have been examining, of its priests. And so it is that the most important cultic reform in Dtr is accomplished by a king, is sparked by a repair of the temple that the king commands priests to carry out (22.3-7), a command that refers to the honesty of the workmen who carry out that repair (22.7), a marked contrast with the potential dishonesty of the priests charged with carrying out the repairs during Joash's reign (12.8 [7]).

Dtr closely associates priests and Levites through its repetitive use of the phrase הכהנים הלוים 'the Levitical priests' in Deuteronomy, and it is even possible to see Dtr as conflating Levites and priests, particularly in places

74. For commentary on Josiah as the main—practically sole—actor in the religious reforms of 2 Kings 23, see Marius Terblanche, 'No Need for a Prophet like Jeremiah: The Absence of the Prophet Jeremiah in Kings', in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Harry F. van Rooy; OTS, 44; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), pp. 306-14 (312); Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 40-51; Norbert Lohfink, 'The Cult Reform of King Josiah of Judah: 2 Kings 22–23 as a Source for the History of Israelite Religion', in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr, Paul D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 459-75 (464).

75. And, in fact, it is possible to read 23.9 as specifically pointing to priestly support for Josiah's reform and for the secondary role that they play in Judah's religious leadership. Stephen Cook adopts Mark Leuchter's translation of 23.9, reading, 'they [the priests] didn't go up [to Jerusalem] until they ate unleavened bread among their kin'; see his 'Those Stubborn Levites: Overcoming Levitical Disenfranchisement', in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* (ed. Mark A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton; SBLAIL, 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 155-70 (164). If this translation is correct, then it points to priestly participation in Josiah's Passover rather than to their own leadership of the festival of Unleavened Bread in their hometowns (pp. 164-67).

76. Jon D. Levenson, 'Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?', *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 203-33 (228).

such as Josh. 8.33, where 'the Levitical priests' fulfill the command given by Moses to 'the Levites' in Deut. 27.14, or in Deut. 31.25, where Moses addresses 'the Levites' who carry the ark, even though in 31.9 it is 'the priests' who are carrying it.[77] While it is also possible to simply see Dtr as emphasizing the priests as a subset of the Levites,[78] the fact of the matter is that Deuteronomy closely associates priests with the Levites, whom the book consistently links with the poor and marginalized, as we discussed in Chapter 4, and also avoids any discussion of priestly leadership in the cult,[79] the area of life that truly matters in Dtr's narrative. And by associating priests with the Levites, whose poverty Dtr emphasizes, the narrative points to an economic marginalization that accompanies their religious marginalization in the law's refusal to provide them with any leadership role in the cult.[80] If this religious and economic marginalization appears to be mitigated by the legal power wielded by the priests, whom Deut. 17.8-9 appoints as the heads of a high court in Jerusalem,[81] the narrative has created an obvious problem with this office. 'The Levitical priests' of this court (17.9) receive their income through charity,[82] and for judges charity can easily become bribery. It is bad polity, and a system of justice with a king at its head—a system that we have certainly observed in operation in the stories of David—who at the very least oversees justice dispensed by these priests, is preferable. And, of course, when it comes to what is most important for Dtr, the administration of the cult, Dtr simply mimics the claims of the colonial powers in regard to the leadership of the king in cultic issues, as

77. See J.G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (JSOTSup, 33; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 137-40.

78. So Nelson, 'The Role of the Priesthood', p. 133. Mark Leuchter suggests that Deut. 18.1-5 offers Levites the choice between living off the welfare of their own towns or going to Jerusalem, and that it is the group that makes this latter choice to which Deuteronomy refers as 'Levitical priests'. See his *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response* (HBM, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 40-41.

79. See McConville, *Law and Theology*, p. 147; Mark Leuchter, "'The Levite in your gates": The Deuteronomic Redefinition of Levitical Authority', *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 417-36 (418).

80. For a similar discussion, see Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 151-53, 162-63; McConville, *Law and Theology*, p. 141.

81. And potentially the Levites in Deuteronomy are 'the scribes and officials' of 16.18, who are appointed to administrate justice; see Leuchter, 'The Levite in your gates', pp. 419-25.

82. Deuteronomy and Joshua consistently emphasize the Levites' lack of property (Deut. 10.9; 12.12, 18; 14.27, 29; 18.1; Josh. 13.14, 33; 14.3-4) and link them with groups who receive charity (Deut. 12.18; 14.29; 16.11, 14; 26.11-13). See McConville, *Law and Theology*, p. 141; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, pp. 151-53.

we discussed in Chapters 3 and 6. Dtr never presents the priests as a group who can curb Israel's natural tendency to cultic disloyalty.

Nor does Dtr seriously offer the prophets as an appropriate leadership office for Israel. We have seen how Dtr's narrative emphasizes their work during the reign of the house of Ahab, as if to suggest that they can lead when the monarchy fails. Given the narrative's criticism of all Northern dynasties and kings for continuing Jeroboam's sin, we can hardly see Dtr as undercutting prophetic authority at places like 1 Kgs 14.1-16; 16.2-4; 21.21-22; or 2 Kgs 9.6-10, where prophets condemn the various dynasties' leadership in apostasy and prophesy their destruction. As much as Dtr condemns all but Davidic rule over the North, prophecy as a divine tool directed against Northern (or any) apostasy has to be seen as a legitimate and helpful office within the narrative. Yet we can also see Dtr mimicking the colonial powers' suspicion of prophecy. We saw in Chapter 3 that Deuteronomy 13 reinscribes the imperial concern with prophecy as a potential source of rebellion, a concern that is present in *VTE* ¶ 10[83] and in a letter from the time of Esarhaddon that warns the king of a rebellion that has received prophetic support.[84] In ancient Near Eastern sources prophecy can criticize kings, but, unlike the case of the stories of the Northern royal houses in Dtr, almost never goes so far as to declare the end of a ruling dynasty.[85] It is not a coincidence that such prophecies in Dtr's narrative are limited to the North, of course, since the eternal promise to the Davidides is never annulled in Dtr—this is, after all, the ruling dynasty that the narrative appears to be most heavily invested in. The prophecies of the destructions of the Northern dynasties are obviously fulfilled, and this is the sort of thing that leads some scholars to define Dtr's concept of history as the forum in which prophetic words are realized.[86]

Yet Dtr's narrative casts doubt on the efficacy of prophecy at the same time as it uses it to condemn the behavior of the Northern kings, who cause their people to sin, and to condemn Manasseh's sin, which has the same

83. See also J. Blake Couey, 'Amos vii 10-17 and Royal Attitudes toward Prophecy in the Ancient Near East', *VT* 58 (2008), pp. 300-14 (306-307).

84. Martti Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (SAAS, 7; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), pp. 110-11, 121.

85. Martti Nissinen, 'Biblical Prophecy from a Near Eastern Perspective: The Cases of Kingship and Divine Possession', in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007* (ed. André Lemaire; VTSup, 133; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), pp. 441-68 (453). Of course, we would generally expect that prophecies of a coming fall of a ruling king would be destroyed; see Nissinen, *References to Prophecy*, pp. 166-67.

86. E.g., Albertz, 'Deuteronomistic History and the Heritage of the Prophets', p. 345; H.-D. Preuss, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991–1992), I, pp. 226-27; II, pp. 284-85; Claus Westermann, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (ATD Ergängzungsreihe, 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), p. 186; Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte*, pp. 107-108.

effect on Judah (2 Kgs 21.10; 24.2). A good example of the fine line that Dtr tries to walk between prophecy's efficacy and danger comes in 1 Kings 13, where, in 13.1-10, a man of God prophesies to Jeroboam in Bethel that Josiah will destroy his apostate altar and priests, a prophecy that is fulfilled in 2 Kgs 23.15-20. This story is immediately followed by one that involves another prophet, who lies to the man of God with a false word from Yhwh as the man of God is making his way back to Judah. The man of God states that Yhwh has told him not to eat or drink until he returns to Judah (13.8-9, 16-17), but the prophet tells the man of God that he has received a word from Yhwh countermanding that original order; however, the narrator tells us, 'he lied to him' (13.18). When the man of God eats with the prophet, he is condemned to death by Yhwh for disobeying the original divine command, and he dies before reaching Judah (13.20-24). It is not clear whether the subject of the narrator's comment 'he lied to him' is the prophet or Yhwh himself,[87] but that hardly matters for the man of God or for readers, for whom the larger point is that if Yhwh and/or prophets can lie, then one can never know precisely when to trust a prophetic word.[88] Even when narrating a story of prophecy that shows Yhwh's utter rejection of the sin of Jeroboam and support for Josiah's reforms, Dtr does not hesitate to question the validity of the institution of prophecy itself, casting it in doubt for its readers. Readers encounter a similar situation in 1 Kings 22, where it is clear that Yhwh can lie through the prophets, for he does just this (22.19-23), and in 22.15 the prophet Micaiah, who knows Yhwh has lied to Ahab's prophets, lies to conceal Yhwh's lie.[89]

87. See Roland Boer, 'National Allegory in the Hebrew Bible', *JSOT* 74 (1997), pp. 95-116 (109).

88. See, e.g., the discussions in James L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect upon Israelite Religion* (BZAW, 124; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1971), pp. 47-48; Paul J. Kissling, *Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha* (JSOTSup, 224; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 125-27; David Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible* (BJS, 301; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 67-91.

89. See J.J.M. Roberts, 'Does God Lie? Divine Deceit as a Theological Problem in Israelite Prophetic Literature', in *Congress Volume Jerusalem 1986* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup, 40; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 211-20. It does not help here to argue that Yhwh remains truthful since it is the lying spirit who is responsible for giving Ahab's prophets the deceitful message—for this argument, see, e.g., P.J. Williams, 'Lying Spirits Sent by God? The Case of Micaiah's Prophecy', in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 58-66 (65-66). This ignores the fact that Yhwh is the one who approves the lying spirit's mission and guarantees it success (22.22) and the fact that Micaiah himself understands Yhwh as responsible for the lying spirit's work (22.23).

The case is not exactly that 1 Kings 22 or 1 Kings 13 completely undermines trust in prophecy in Dtr's narrative;[90] after all, Micaiah reveals the workings of the divine assembly and his version of events does come to pass and Ahab, the apostate king, is killed, while the man of God in 1 Kings 13 correctly prophesies that Josiah will destroy Jeroboam's apostate cult. These stories do uphold prophecy as a legitimate form of communication with the divine, while they simultaneously warn that a prophetic word cannot simply be taken on face value, and that people should not immediately act upon it. In this way, Dtr's narrative can use prophecy to emphasize the absolute necessity of cultic loyalty led by the king—it is prophets in Dtr, after all, who condemn the Northern royal houses and correctly prophesy their destruction—while communicating to the readers in exile that they should not act on prophetic words that they themselves might hear. And in this way, Dtr preserves the primacy of the Davidide as the exiles' sole leadership office. In a sense, nothing communicates this idea better than the Law of the Prophet in Deut. 18.15-22, which states that the only way one can tell if a prophetic word is valid is if it comes to pass. This is precisely the fine line that Dtr wishes to draw with the prophetic office: prophets are divine intermediaries whose word supports the argument the narrative makes; but current readers should not give prophets their allegiance, since only prophetic words from the past that have been proven true by historical events can be trusted with absolute certainty. The Law of the Prophet simultaneously approves of prophecy and throws it into doubt. Given the limited comments in regard to the king's power in Deut. 17.14-20, it might appear that Deut. 16.18–18.22 as a whole restricts royal power in favor of extending that of the prophets,[91] but important parts of Dtr's narrative serve to highlight the real shortcomings of prophets that we see in 18.15-22,[92] as Dtr as a whole vastly expands the monarchy's scope of power. The prophets' words function as

90. Contra, e.g., K.L. Noll, 'The Deconstruction of Deuteronomism in the Former Prophets: Micaiah ben Imlah as Example', in *Far from Minimal: Celebrating the Work and Influence of Philip R. Davies* (ed. Duncan Burns and J.W. Rogerson; LHBOTS, 484; London: T. & T. Clark, 2012), pp. 325-34.

91. So, e.g., Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, *Josua und Salomo: Eine Studie zu Autorität und Legitimität des Nachfolgers im Alten Testament* (VTSup, 58; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 103-106.

92. For some discussions concerning the failure of the Law of the Prophet to provide practical guidance in the discernment of the validity of a prophetic word, see Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 186; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p. 177; Hans M. Barstad, 'The Understanding of the Prophets in Deuteronomy', *SJOT* 8 (1994), pp. 236-51 (245-46, 249); Roy L. Heller, *Power, Politics and Prophecy: The Character of Samuel and the Deuteronomistic Evaluation of Prophecy* (LHBOTS, 440; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2006), p. 32.

historical proof for Dtr's argument but the prophets do not work as contemporary leaders for the exiles, and so readers' hopes should be linked to royal rather than prophetic leadership.

In Dtr, Yhwh can use prophets to demonstrate his control of history, as he does in prophetic condemnations of royal leadership in Northern apostasy. We see this in the narrative even in some cases in stories of the Davidides, as Nathan confronts David in 2 Samuel 12 and Ahijah, in his speech to Jeroboam, condemns Solomon's apostate high places in 1 Kgs 11.33. But since we never see a prophet annulling Yhwh's eternal promise to David, readers are also shown that they should indeed be suspicious of any contemporary prophet who does so, since both Yhwh and history have apparently proven that this will not happen. Should a prophet in exile announce that Yhwh has permanently ended Davidic rule, a sympathetic reader of Dtr might conclude that the prophet is like Samuel, who, as we saw in Chapter 5, appears self-interested in a manner that influences his actions and that throws aspects of his prophecy into doubt. Prophets are not an alternative to Davidic leadership in Dtr precisely because one can never know if what they say is actually a true divine word and not simply due to prophetic self-interest or lies.[93]

Even Elijah and Elisha, characters who dominate in the narrative of the house of Ahab from 1 Kings 17–2 Kings 8, are less than perfect figures. Despite Elijah's success in 1 Kings 18 combating Israel's apostasy to Baal, apostasy that Ahab and Jezebel have re-introduced to the people, he is hardly a perfect mediator between Israel and Yhwh. Elijah appears to take his own rather than divine initiative on many occasions; for example, while 'the word of Yhwh' comes to Elijah twice in 1 Kgs 21.17, 28, in 21.23 Elijah announces a word different than that which Yhwh has just spoken to him. Only in 1 Kgs 17.13-14 and 2 Kgs 1.3-7 does Elijah precisely relay a message that Yhwh has given him.[94] Elijah, like other prophets, lies—he claims that he alone is left of Yhwh's prophets (18.22; 19.10, 14), even though both he and readers know that not to be true (see 18.3-4, 13)[95]—while the word that Yhwh gives him in 19.15-18 is not entirely fulfilled, for Elijah never does anoint Hazael or Jehu or Elisha as ordered.[96] Nor is

93. For a somewhat similar conclusion, see David Jobling, 'A Bettered Woman: Elisha and the Shunamite in the Deuteronomic Work', in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions; SBLSS, 36; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), pp. 177-92 (186-88).

94. These observations are from John Olley, 'Yhwh and His Zealous Prophet: The Presentation of Elijah in 1 and 2 Kings', *JSOT* 80 (1998), pp. 25-51 (33-36, 45).

95. Kissling, *Reliable Characters*, pp. 119-20.

96. See David Jobling, 'The Syrians in *The Book of the Divided Kingdoms*: A Literary/Theological Approach', *BibInt* 11 (2003), pp. 531-41 (538); Kissling, *Reliable Characters*, pp. 144-45.

Elisha's prophecy to the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom in 2 Kgs 3.15-19 entirely fulfilled, for Yhwh does not hand over Moab to this coalition of kings as Elisha says he will in 3.18. In fact, while Elisha prophesies to the three kings that 'you will strike (הכיתם) every fortified city' (3.19), the only city that the coalition actually strikes is Kir-hareseth (3.25 is the only place in the chapter after Elisha's prophecy that uses the verb נכה to refer to what the coalition does to a Moabite city), and this is precisely the city they fail to capture (3.26-27).[97] Unlike Elijah, Elisha never confronts the Baalism that continues in the North during his tenure; in fact, he has generally positive relationships with the kings who sanction it, and he never challenges unethical royal actions.[98] In 2 Kgs 8.10, Elisha commands Hazael to lie concerning the word he has received from Yhwh;[99] in 2.23-25, he abuses his prophetic power by having bears attack boys who mock him.[100]

By 2 Kgs 13.14-19, as Elisha disappears from the scene, no other prophet will appear again in the narrative of the Northern Kingdom, with the exception of a passing reference to Jonah in 14.25. As Elisha is dying in these verses, Joash, a Jehuide, goes to him, and under the prophet's direction the king performs a series of actions that, Elisha tells him, symbolizes Yhwh's victory over Aram on Israel's behalf (13.15-17). In 13.15-18a, Elisha gives the king five commands that he obeys exactly, and the verbs that describe Joash's actions are precisely the same as those in the imperative in Elisha's commands to him, demonstrating the king's complete obedience to prophetic command.[101] The first four of these actions, culminating with Joash shooting an arrow out the eastern window, results in the prophecy of victory over Aram in 13.17: 'the arrow of the salvation of Yhwh and the arrow of salvation against Aram; you will strike Aram in Aphek until you have

97. See Jesse C. Long, Jr, 'Elisha's Deceptive Prophecy in 2 Kings 3: A Response to Raymond Westbrook', *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 168-71.

98. See Wesley J. Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism* (JSOTSup, 286; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 44-45; Wesley J. Bergen, 'The Prophetic Alternative: Elisha and the Israelite Monarchy', in *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective* (ed. Robert B. Coote; SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 127-37 (135).

99. The *qere* of 8.10 reads, 'Go say to him (לו), "You will surely live", but Yhwh has shown me that he will surely die'. The *ketib* has לא instead of לו (and so reads, 'Go say, "You will surely not live"') and so avoids having Elisha lie; as a result, the *qere* is the more difficult and so original reading. See, e.g., Charles Fox Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 293; Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, p. 315.

100. See the discussion in Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, pp. 43-65.

101. 'Then Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and arrows", and he took for himself a bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, "Draw your hand upon the bow", and he drew his hand… And he said, "Open the eastern window", and he opened. And Elisha said, "Shoot!", and he shot… And he said, "Take the arrows", and he took.'

put an end [to them].' The fifth command in 13.18a—'Take the arrow'—which Joash obeys, is followed by a sixth in 13.18b, which also appears to meet with royal obedience: '"Strike the ground", and he struck three times and he stopped.' Because of this long series of prophetic commands followed by the precise obedience of the king, Elisha's angry response in 13.19 to Joash's threefold striking of the ground seems surprising,[102] and the prophet goes on to tell the king that had he struck the ground five or six times he would have defeated Aram that many times, 'until you put an end [to them]'. Elisha's chastisement of the king makes little sense, not only because of Joash's string of obedient actions, but also because in 13.17 the prophet had already promised him that he would destroy Aram; in 13.18, then, readers might expect Joash merely to strike once, not even three times, even if he had somehow foreseen what this action was to signify. Elisha could simply have told him to strike the ground a certain number of times to achieve a certain number of victories rather than become angry when the king does not perform the action in a specific way, especially as the king remained in complete ignorance of the prophet's wishes. Arguments that Joash exhibits 'timidity' and 'lack of faith' in his action with the arrows,[103] or that it is a test for him[104] simply gloss over Elisha's bizarre anger and failure in this case.[105] Nor is this Elisha's only failure here. Joash could have struck the ground a thousand times and utterly wiped Aram from the face of the earth, but this would ultimately accomplish nothing as far as Dtr's narrative is concerned. What matters is not a single or even complete victory over Aram; what matters is vassal loyalty expressed through cultic reform, something that Joash does not carry out and that Elisha does not tell him or any of the other three Northern kings who ruled during his period as prophet to do. The stories of Elisha, argues Wesley Bergen, ultimately provide 'a negative judgment on prophetism' and reject prophecy as an alternative form of leadership to that of the monarchy.[106]

102. So, e.g., Bergen: 'As I read through this narrative, I am likely to think well of the king, who is doing precisely as he is told. He does not vacillate or ask for explanation' (*Elisha and the End of Prophetism*, p. 168). See also Kissling, *Reliable Characters*, p. 181.

103. So T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC, 13; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), pp. 165, 170.

104. So Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings* (2 vols.; NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), II, p. 503; Terrence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings* (Int; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999), p. 183.

105. Commentators in general tend to believe that Elisha is right to be angry at Joash; see, e.g., A. Graeme Auld, *I and II Kings* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 200; Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings* (Int; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), p. 218; John Gray, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), p. 599.

106. Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism*, pp. 11, 42-44. Quote from p. 11.

Josiah, Jehoiachin's great cultic example, acts alone in his cultic leadership, as we have seen, the prophetess Huldah serving merely to condemn and announce punishment for Judah's apostasy (2 Kgs 22.16-17) and praise and announce a divine reward for the king (22.18-20), and there are no other references to prophets during the time of Josiah. The narrative of Dtr makes no references to prophets such as Amos, Hosea, and Micah, perhaps because, as Christopher Begg suggests, Amos condemns the house of Jehu (Amos 7.10-17) and Hosea sees Jehu's slaughter of the previous royal house as meriting divine punishment (Hos. 1.4) while for Dtr this action is one of the important reasons why Yhwh praises Jehu and grants him a five-generation dynasty (2 Kgs 10.28-30).[107] And since Jer. 26.18-19 links Micah's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem to Hezekiah's cultic reforms (Mic. 3.9-12), perhaps, writes Begg, Dtr omits it so as to emphasize Josiah's reforms.[108] An even more obvious prophetic omission is that of Jeremiah, who appears oddly silenced by Dtr's narrative. Anonymous prophets announce Jerusalem's destruction in 2 Kgs 21.10, despite the fact that the exiles would have known of, and some might have been personally acquainted with, Jeremiah.[109] There are some obvious points of disagreement between Jeremiah and Dtr. Jer. 32.1-15; 39.14; and 40.2-6 suggest that Jeremiah believes that Yhwh favors those who remain in the land, while Deut. 4.25-31; 30.1-10; 1 Kgs 8.46-50; and 2 Kgs 25.21 show that Dtr obviously understands Israel/Judah to be those who are in exile;[110] Jeremiah appears to see Zedekiah's descendants rather than Jehoiachin as the future of the Davidides (Jer. 22.24-30), whereas Dtr ends with Jehoiachin in exile and so points to him as the true heir of David.[111] Indeed, a passage like Jer.

107. Christopher Begg, 'The Non-Mention of Amos, Hosea and Micah in the Deuteronomistic History', *BN* 32 (1986), pp. 41-53 (46-50).

108. Begg, 'The Non-Mention of Amos, Hosea and Micah', pp. 51-53.

109. So Klaus Koch, 'Das Profetenschweigen des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk', in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), pp. 115-28 (118).

110. So, e.g., Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (trans. David Green; SBLSBL, 3; Atlanta; Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 282-85; Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, 'Erwägungen zum Schlusskapitel des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes: Oder, warum wird Jeremia in 2 Kön 22–25 nicht erwähnt?', in *Textgemäss: Aufsätze und Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments. Festschrift für Ernst Würthwein zum 70 Geburtsgtag* (ed. Otto Kaiser; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 94-109 (108); Terblanche, 'No Need for a Prophet like Jeremiah', p. 307.

111. Terblanche, 'No Need for a Prophet like Jeremiah', p. 307; H. Cazelles, '587 ou 586?', in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. Carol L. Myers and M. O'Connor; ASOR, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 427-35 (430); Juha Pakkala,

22.24-30, if original to the prophet,[112] can even be understood as prophesying the end of Davidic rule,[113] a stance completely at odds with Dtr's presentation of this royal house.

The overall effect of limiting the number of prophets readers encounter in the narrative is to reduce their importance and to draw attention elsewhere. It is one thing to include stories of a prophet like Elijah, who is portrayed in Dtr as the staunch enemy of the worst of the Northern dynasties, or of a prophet like Micaiah, whose story shows Dtr's readers why they must be extremely wary of trusting the prophets of their day. Such stories do not threaten the legitimacy of the Davidides nor displace the primacy of the Davidic kings in the narrative. As much as Jeremiah's message against apostasy might fit Dtr's emphasis on cultic loyalty, the narrative of Dtr makes no effort to draw undue attention to the prophets who lived close to the time of the readers. To do so detracts from the emphasis placed on Davidic leadership. The narrative ignores altogether prophets who were well-known enough to eventually have books devoted to their prophecies—prophets like Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Zephaniah, whose books may have begun to develop in exile[114]—even when, in the cases of Hosea and Zephaniah, the prophecy would have fit well into Dtr's emphasis on cultic loyalty, and even when, as in the cases of Amos and Hosea, the prophecy was directed against the North rather than Judah and the Davidides. Outside of the period of the Omrides, Dtr largely relegates prophecy to the margins of the narrative, where it is at once a legitimate means of divine communication and a dangerous source of misdirection. The only prophet with a book devoted to his prophecy who appears in Dtr is, of course, Isaiah, whose role in the narrative of Hezekiah helps provide an important lesson

'Zedekiah's Fate and the Dynastic Succession', *JBL* 125 (2006), pp. 443-52 (448-52). As Pakkala points out, Jer. 32.1-5 prophesies Zedekiah's imprisonment in Babylon but not the death of his sons nor his blinding, and Jer. 34.1-22 prophesies that Zedekiah will die in peace (pp. 445-48).

112. For a discussion of the difficulties associated with this passage, see John Brian Job, *Jeremiah's Kings: A Study of the Monarchy in Jeremiah* (SOTSM; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 86-90.

113. For this interpretation, see Albertz, 'Deuteronomistic History and the Heritage of the Prophets', p. 356. But regardless as to whether these words or even general anti-Jehoiachin stance can be attributed to the prophet himself, it is certainly fair to say that we have no knowledge of the prophet's support for or belief in an eternal covenant with the Davidides.

114. See James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 217; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), pp. 278-80; James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 218; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), pp. 274-75; Aaron Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neuarbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (BZAW, 260; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 156-223; Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, pp. 204-37.

for Jehoiachin, a lesson truly rooted in the Zion Theology and its claim of Yhwh's support for the Davidides that is at the root of Isaiah's own prophecy.[115] Jehoiachin and exilic readers can learn from the story of Hezekiah and Isaiah that Yhwh always defends Jerusalem, at least, according to Dtr, when the Davidic king enforces cultic loyalty. Yet nowhere in Dtr do we find a prophet who directs a Davidide to enact cultic reforms, not even in the stories of Isaiah and Hezekiah or Huldah and Josiah. For Dtr, this is a matter that is left to the king alone, and Jehoiachin himself must act, without any prophetic interference or claims to leadership.

115. For Isaiah's use of Zion Theology, particularly in terms of its proclamation of divine support for the Davidides, see J.J.M. Roberts, 'Yahweh's Foundation in Zion (Isaiah 28:16)', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (ed. J.J.M. Roberts; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), pp. 292-310 (304-10); J.J.M. Roberts, 'Zion in the Theology of the Davidic–Solomonic Empire', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (ed. J.J.M. Roberts; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), pp. 331-47; J.J.M. Roberts, 'The Divine King and the Human Community in Isaiah's Vision of the Future', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (ed. J.J.M. Roberts; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), pp. 348-57; Ben C. Ollenburger, *Zion the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (JSOTSup, 41; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 59-66, 107-29.

Chapter 8

Conclusion: The Reinscription of Colonial Hegemony in Dtr's Discourse on the Davidides

I wrote in Chapter 1 that the focus of this work is on Dtr's mimicry, mockery, and reinscription of imperial discourse, not on the liberative aspects of the narrative. Having completed our examination of it, I want to suggest here that it is possible to argue that virtually nothing in Dtr is useful for struggles for liberation within a postcolonial setting, at least when read in the context of the whole narrative. Of course, no one is under any obligation to read a particular passage from Dtr within such a context, but if we wish to consider what Dtr as a whole has to say about the monarchy, the colonized elite, then our most basic observation must be that, if the narrative introduces the monarchy in Deuteronomy 17 as an innocuous office subject to Israel's approval for its very existence, then by the end of Dtr it has become the exiles' only hope of salvation. Along the way, it has been invested with the same kinds of powers and privileges—a prominent role in the justice system, control of the cult, a legal standing that exempts it from the laws that apply to the rest of society, a freedom to exploit the people economically—allotted to the monarchies of Judah's colonial masters. The narrative has accomplished this move through a threefold strategy of portraying Yhwh as a Mesopotamian suzerain to whom absolute loyalty is due, presenting the people of Israel/Judah as rebellious and evil by nature, and presenting the monarchy alone as the only viable leadership office that has the ability, even if some kings do not always wield it, of keeping this people cultically loyal to their divine suzerain. Colonial hegemony is thus mimicked and mocked in the first part of this strategy, allowing it to be reinscribed in the last two parts, as the people are portrayed as the foreign Other of Mesopotamian imperial discourse who need a powerful king to colonize and civilize them for their own good. The subalterns in Dtr truly cannot speak, for they are trapped within a discourse that constructs them absolutely as naturally rebellious, wicked, and impious, a people who can never attain the Self that Moses puts on display for them in Deuteronomy and that the Davidide Josiah models in his repentance and reforms. This is as true for the exiles in Babylonia as it is for the Judeans who remain in the land, a virtually invisible group by the end of the narrative, and for the

inhabitants of the old Assyrian province of Samerina, which the narrative of Dtr presents, following Josiah's removal of Solomon's high places, as legitimately Judean territory that may be again ruled by the Davidides. Dtr is pro-monarchic, and really pro-Davidic, since no Northern dynasty is presented as ruling properly, while Yhwh has made an eternal covenant with the Davidides.

Dtr is also pro-Jehoiachin, since its conclusion informs readers that Yhwh is still willing to recognize him as a legitimate ruler so long as he leads repentance in exile and reestablishes a proper Yahwistic cult upon return. Jehoiachin is not disqualified from ruling because of his surrender of Jerusalem in 598/7, for Dtr is very clear that kings are not to be judged on their military success and failure, for these are simply a result of the people's loyalty to Yhwh or lack of it. Even Jehoiachin's past cultic failures are not a barrier to a future of his continued rule, since he has the opportunity to alter his views and actions and so to have his ultimate evaluation changed to one as perfect as that which Josiah receives, as we have seen. Dtr presents no possibility for a future return to the land outside of one led by the Davidides, the colonized elite. Only after painstakingly presenting Israel as the Other can the importance of the Self embodied by Josiah, hopefully also to be embodied by Jehoiachin, be clearly seen: since it is what Judah/Israel is not, it is the only hope of salvation for the exiles. The importance of the leadership Jehoiachin can provide is only clear once the exilic readers understand who Israel is, who they are. Davidic leadership, Davidic colonization of Israel, is their only hope of salvation from exile.

As we discussed in Chapter 1, the disasters the exiles have survived suggest that it would be simple enough for them to place the blame on the Davidides themselves. It is understandable, then, why Dtr does not open with a full-throated defense of the monarchy, which many of the exilic readers could easily dismiss as a fanciful delusion. The narrative focuses first on the faults of the people, repetitively emphasizing in the cyclical narrative of Judges their inability to remain loyal to Yhwh. By making the covenant with Yhwh and cultic loyalty the criteria on which Israel/Judah's fortunes hinge, rather than on the kings' geopolitical policy and military strategy, it is possible to make the people themselves the root of the problem. If individual Davidides have failed in Dtr, their failure bears no relation to poor political or military decisions but to the same failure for which the people would have been culpable even without royal leadership. Indeed, the most obvious mockery of colonial discourse in Dtr is Deuteronomy's mimicry of aspects of the Neo-Assryian treaty format, but the creation of a divine suzerain is the first step in making cultic loyalty, not geopolitical strategizing, the narrative's key to survival. Were this not the case, Jehoiachin could hardly be presented as a legitimate leader of the future, since he had already failed militarily and was in no position in exile to fight Babylon. As we saw

in our discussion of the narrative of Saul in Chapter 5, Israel's belief that it needs a king 'to fight our battles' flies in the face of the narrative's claims that Yhwh alone is responsible for Israel/Judah's victory and defeat, and that victory and defeat directly reflect the people's cultic loyalty or lack of it as led by the king. And because of the clear favoritism that Yhwh exhibits toward David and his house, the failure of some Davidides in cultic leadership does not disqualify the dynasty from ruling again, as was the case with the Northern houses that are all removed from power and that do not have eternal covenants. The covenant was not based on cultic actions, and Yhwh seems perfectly willing to overlook David's sin because he likes him, just as he seems willing to overlook Hezekiah's and Josiah's sins when they alter their behavior. But Dtr is clear as well that Josiah acts perfectly in his leadership of cultic loyalty, and that Jehoiachin can as well. The meaning of Josiah's evaluation, 'he repented to Yhwh with all of his heart, all of his soul, and all of his might', is only clear once readers can contrast this evaluation with Israel's consistent failure throughout the narrative. The Davidides are necessary because they can act like the Self that Moses says Israel must adopt and which Israel, whose very nature is Other, cannot. And as for those exiles who continue to blame the Davidides for the destruction and exile and disparage their leadership, the narrative warns in the story of Abimelech, the first Israelite king, and Jotham's fable of Judges 9 that Israelites who attack the royal house without divine sanction will be punished.

There certainly are aspects of Dtr that, read in isolation, appear to challenge imperial hegemony. Deuteronomy 16–18, for example, points to an idealized nation in which no foreign king has power and in which even the Israelite king is portrayed as no more and no less than an ideal commoner, subject to Yhwh's law like everyone else. What we have seen, however, suggests that the Law of the King is really a bait-and-switch; that is, sympathetic exilic readers might accept the concept of a limited monarchy presented in Deuteronomy 17 only to conclude, once they continue in the narrative, that Israel simply needs a king to take up all of the powers and the perquisites of power on which the Law of the King remains silent or specifically denies to the monarchy. The fable of Jotham has been taken as antimonarchic, but as we saw in Chapter 5 it actually condemns those who do not treat the royal house well, and so is really pro-monarchic. We can read Samuel's speech of 1 Sam. 8.11-18 as a warning of the economic exploitation that was a standard feature of ancient Near Eastern monarchies, yet Samuel concludes by stating that Yhwh will not respond to Israel's cries for social justice when their kings act in this manner. Yhwh certainly is not concerned even with David's adultery and murder, except insofar as it reflects David's belief that he can act in disloyalty and usurp Yhwh's authority to provide him with power and women. Yhwh even gives Solomon great wealth, in direct violation of the Law of the King, and Dtr is clear

in 1 Kings 12 that Solomon's cultic faults, not his acts of social injustice, lead to the Davidides' loss of the North. Even Yhwh's judgment on Ahab for the murder of Naboth goes largely unfulfilled. Dtr does not offer an explicit explanation as to why the monarchy should largely be exempt from the law and wield so much more power than the Law of the King assigns to it. This gradual reinscription of colonial discourse that arrogates power to the monarchy simply creeps unannounced bit by bit into the narrative. Once Dtr has made the case for Israel's natural state as rebellious subaltern and presented the monarchy as the only institution that can properly colonize it in loyalty to the divine suzerain, it can then add powers to the advantage of the kings. The narrative does this by constructing a logic in which cultic loyalty becomes the sole set of actions on which the people's fate depends and so on which the kings and dynasties are to be judged. That is, the more the narrative focuses on cultic loyalty alone as determining Israel's fate, the less emphasis the narrative needs to place on royal actions outside of the cult. And since it is clear enough by Judges that Yhwh reacts to little except Israel's cultic life, this becomes the only important issue for the monarchy to deal with, and so the sole criterion on which it is evaluated. By this logic, if kings are not to be held responsible for non-cultic activities, then they can largely do what they please to the people and still be seen as their benefactors so long as they enforce cultic loyalty. The monarchy and its increased powers and privileges simply end up being the price that Judah/Israel must pay for being the rebellious subalterns they are.

And while it might seem that prophecy acts as a hedge on royal power in Dtr, more often than not it appears to simply aggregate power to the king. In 1 Samuel 8, Samuel promises the people that Yhwh will not listen to them if they cry out because the king has abused his economic power; in 2 Samuel 12, Nathan's condemnation of David completely ignores his violations of law, and finds his only true fault to be an attempt to usurp Yhwh's role in their relationship; Elijah's condemnation of Ahab's role in Naboth's murder ultimately goes unfulfilled; while Elisha almost never confronts the sinful kings who reign during his prophecy concerning any aspect of their leadership. Dtr throws prophecy itself into suspicion, signaling to readers that they should remain subject to royal rather than prophetic leadership. Prophecy is useful in Dtr as a lesson in history, demonstrating Yhwh's implacable opposition to the Northern dynasties that lead their people in cultic disloyalty, but Dtr is clear enough that exilic readers must remain suspicious of the prophetic messages they encounter in their own time. Prophecy's main role in Dtr is to demonstrate the illegitimacy of all Northern dynasties; when this prophetic condemnation of the Northern monarchy is read with Josiah's actions to remove Solomon's and Jeroboam's cultic apparatuses, it becomes part of Dtr's claim that the North will be part of a restored Davidic rule.

None of this pro-Davidic rhetoric is possible, however, without entrapping the subaltern within the colonial discourse of the foreign Other. Dtr uses the Canaanites as a mirror to hold up to Israel to make their own Alterity plain, and so to ultimately contrast them with the Self the Davidides are able to enact. חרם is used against the Canaanites to separate them out (annihilate them, in less polite language), to draw a boundary between what is the true Self and the Other.[1] But חרם is also something that, the narrative warns, Israel can and should experience (Deut. 7.25-26; 13.13-17 [12-16]; Josh. 7.1-12; Judg. 9.45, 49; 20.35-36; 21.10-11) for, according to Dtr, Israel becomes the foreign and evil enemy in the land that it was to replace. In Judges, it might seem as if Israel is the colonizer, besieged by the colonized groups,[2] but for Dtr there really is not any difference at this point between Israel and the Canaanite 'natives'. The problem that the cycle of apostasy emphasizes in Judges is Israel's tendency to 'go native', a tendency that, Moses is clear in Deuteronomy, the nation has always exhibited. As we discussed in Chapter 4, Dtr exhibits little distress in regard to the presence of foreigners within Israel, except for the Canaanites. And even in some individual cases, Canaanites can appear to more closely mirror the Self that Israel should exhibit than Israelites do. Rahab, for example, may appear as a collaborator with a foreign foe,[3] but in the narrative this is a positive development, for she is a better example of the Self, a Self that Israel cannot attain in Dtr, than Joshua is who replicates the exodus generation's failed spying attempt in Joshua 2. She leaves the Otherness of her Canaanite identity behind as Israel moves in the narrative to adopt that very identity, something that Joshua's spying mission already points toward. Uriah the Hittite also functions as a figure whose goodness throws the shortcoming of an Israelite leader into relief. Indeed, outside of its overall presentation of the Canaanites, Dtr really does not mimic Mesopotamian colonial discourse that demonizes foreigners.[4] Even Uriah Kim notes that David makes

1. On this point, cf. Mark G. Brett, 'Genocide in Deuteronomy: Postcolonial Variations on Mimetic Desire', in *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs: The Art of Exegesis* (ed. Mark A. O'Brien and Howard N. Wallace; JSOTSup, 415; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 75-89 (82-84).

2. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld suggests this as a reading of Judges 4–5 in 'Whose Text is It?', *JBL* 127 (2008), pp. 5-18 (14).

3. So Musa W. Dube, 'Rahab Says Hello to Judith: A Decolonizing Feminist Reading', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 142-58 (155-56); Laura E. Donaldson, 'The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth through Native Eyes', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp.159-70 (166).

4. On this kind of imperial discourse, see Susanne Paulus, 'Foreigners under Foreign Rule: The Case of Kassite Babylonia (2nd Half of the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.)', in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient*

alliances with many foreigners,[5] and all of these features of Dtr's narrative seem to work against Kim's claim that the narrative has difficulty dealing with hybrid characters, 'interstitial/non Israelites' like Uriah.[6]

As understood in postcolonial analysis, hybridity results from the interaction between colonial and colonized cultures, and emphasizes 'mixed cultural legacies and fruitful cross-pollination of cultures'.[7] It is a recognition that no culture, not even the colonial Culture that claims otherwise, is pure and original, and so hybridity challenges and resists such fictitious notions[8] and 'disrupt[s] the categories that authorize the very exercise of power: patriarchal, social, national, or cosmological'.[9] Hybridity is not, however, an issue that Dtr has much of an interest in coming to terms with. For some scholars, the story of Othniel, an Edomite[10] who fights Canaanites with Israel (Josh. 15.13-17; Judg. 1.11-13) and later becomes Israel's judge (Judg. 3.7-11), is a story that subverts colonial hegemony in hybridity. That is, they can see the binary notion that distinguishes between 'them' and 'us' disrupted in a story where a non-Israelite becomes an important leader in Israel.[11] If we read the passages about Othniel in isolation from the rest of Dtr's narrative, there is a point to this interpretation, but since we have seen that Dtr as a whole does not

Near East (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; BZAR, 16; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2011), pp. 1-15 (2); Zainab Bahrani, 'Race and Ethnicity in Mesopotamian Antiquity', *World Archaeology* 38 (2006), pp. 48-59 (54-56); Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 30-32; Doris Prechel, 'Fremde in Mesopotamien', in *Aussenseiter und Randgruppen: Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orients* (ed. Volkert Haas; Xenia, 32; Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1992), pp. 173-85 (173-76).

5. Uriah Y. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty in the David Story: A Postcolonial Reading* (HBM, 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), pp. 159-67, 175-77.

6. Kim, *Identity and Loyalty*, p. 185.

7. R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), p. 109.

8. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations*, p. 109.

9. Mayra Rivera, 'God at the Crossroads: A Postcolonial Reading of Sophia', in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 238-53 (240).

10. Othniel is Caleb's nephew (Josh. 15.1; Judg. 1.13) and, as we discussed in Chapter 4, Caleb is an Edomite. Josh. 14.6, 14 describe Caleb's father as a Kenizzite, a group understood to be an Edomite clan (see Gen. 36.11, 14; cf. 1 Chr. 1.36).

11. E.g., David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (OBS; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 162-63; Danna Nolan Fewell, 'Deconstructive Criticism: Achsah and the (E)razed City of Writing', in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Gale A. Yee; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd edn, 2007), pp. 115-37 (132); Johnny Miles, *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and the USA* (BMW, 32; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), pp. 98-104; K. Lawson Younger, Jr, *Judges and Ruth* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), p. 69.

promote a positive portrayal of Israel, the Othniel passages in this larger context suggest that we have yet another example of a foreigner whose story casts Israel in a negative light. Unlike most of the major judges who follow him, Othniel is portrayed without flaws in 3.7-11; Othniel is to the rest of the major judges what Uriah is to David, an example of a foreigner whose goodness throws Israelite evil into relief. And, as we discussed in Chapter 4, Dtr suggests in Deuteronomy 2 that other nations, including Edom, have land given to them by Yhwh. Dtr's message does not focus on Yhwh's enmity towards other nations (with the exception of the Canaanites, the Other in the narrative who Israel quickly becomes) but on Israel's disloyalty to Yhwh, something that stories of non-Israelites often work to highlight.

In the end, as we have seen, Dtr promotes the necessity of a colonized elite, the Davidide king who alone has the power to stop the Israelite subalterns from destroying themselves. Foreigners appear in the narrative as the Canaanites who are the evildoers whom Israel must destroy, and as the nations in Judges who are Yhwh's tools in the punishment of Israel, and as mirrors of positive action that reflect Israel's wickedness. Dtr really has no interest in hybridity because Israel, the subaltern of the story, is almost entirely disloyal and impious. Hybridity in the narrative would merely muddy the pure waters of colonial hegemony that Dtr is reinscribing in its portrayal of Israel. And the narrative mimics and reinscribes colonial language in regard to the Davidides, as well, so that they can be portrayed to some degree as the Self of colonial hegemony whose very nature is visible because of the presence of the Other who needs to be colonized. The king may not be the special creation of the gods that the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings are said to be, but he is still a divine child (2 Sam. 7.14) as the colonial kings were understood to be and, like them, a kind of *māliku amēlu* 'counselor man' who is a necessary and superior figure who must rule if Israel is to survive.[12] So rather than rejecting colonial hegemony as the concept of hybridity would, Dtr simply reinscribes it to promote the status and privileges of the colonized elite. Exilic readers must accept this and acknowledge their own status as wicked subalterns who need Davidic rule if they wish to return to and prosper in the land.

12. As we discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, a Neo-Assyrian story of the creation of humanity, which was also copied in the Neo-Babylonian period, describes the king as created after the rest of the humans, a superior person meant to serve as *māliku amēlu* 'counselor man'. See the text in Werner R. Mayer, 'Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs', *Or* 56 (1987), pp. 55-68, and see the discussions of it in Karen Radner, 'Assyrian and Non-Assyrian Kingship in the First Millennium BC', in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger; HANEM, 11; Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), pp. 25-34 (26-27) and John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 61-62.

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