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A critical study
of the 'settlement narratives'
in Judges 1-5
using insights from Postcolonial Studies,
to consider the relevance of these texts
for the peoples of Israel/Palestine today

by

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M.A., M. Ed., B.D., M.Th.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Kent

2017

Abstract

The fundamental issue addressed in this thesis is use of the Hebrew Bible to assert right of possession of the whole land of Israel/Palestine. It is structured in four parts, as follows.

PART I INTRODUCTORY CONCERNS.

A Preface outlines key terms and basic issues in contemporary Israel/Palestine. It includes important dates and critical historical events that still affect the peoples of the land today.

Chapter 1– General Introduction: this summarises use of the Bible to warrant possession of the ‘land of Israel’; it then outlines insights from postcolonial studies relevant to the study of the Bible and to contemporary Israel/Palestine. Postcolonial study of the Bible considers its development over many centuries within the context of a series of empires.

PART II QUESTIONS OF INTERPRETATION

Chapter 2– General Interpretative Approaches: discussion of Archaeology and History.

Chapter 3– Biblical Interpretation: Dating of the Bible and Historical Critical approaches.

PART III STUDY OF JUDGES chapters 1-5

Chapter 4– General Introduction to Judges: this includes discussion of Judg. ch. 1 and the Book of Joshua; ANE Texts; Dating and Context of Judges; Possible Sources of Judges.

Chapter 5– Major Themes in Judges 1:1-36: Socio-political Background to Judg. ch.1; study of Judah’s conquests in southern Canaan and limited successes of the northern tribes.

Chapter 6– Major Themes in Judges 2:1-5: close study of the Hebrew text examines issues such as the Exodus traditions; YHWH’s promise of the land; ideologies of the Canaanites.

Chapter 7– Israel in the days of the Judges (Judges 2:6-5:31). This is in two sections: Key themes in 2:6-3:6 include apostasy and judgement; the judges; enemies all around. Major Themes in 3:7-5:31 include the significance of the Kenizzites and Kenites; origins and development of Yahwism; Israel’s responses to oppression; women in Judges 1-5.

PART IV CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Two major issues that emerged in our textual studies and are reflected in Israel/Palestine today are discussed: Naming/renaming (in *Chapter 8*); and Terror/terrorism (in *Chapter 9*).

Both issues open a wide range of significant areas for scrutiny. First, relevant biblical references are summarised; this is followed by discussion of similar contemporary issues.

In conclusion, *Chapter 10 Reflections* considers various ways in which concerns that were expressed in the opening chapters have been addressed during the course of this study.

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Abbreviations

1. Books and Journals

AA	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
AAAG	<i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i>
AAAPSS	<i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
AJS	<i>Association for Jewish Studies</i>
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed. by J.B. Pritchard. 3rd edn. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969
<i>Ant</i>	<i>Antipode</i>
AQ	<i>Anthropological Quarterly</i>
ARA	<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>
ARC	<i>Archaeological Review from Cambridge</i>
ARIEL	<i>A Review of International English Literature</i>
ARS	<i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
ASRev	<i>Asian Studies Review</i>
AWG	<i>Arab World Geographer</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BI	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Bible and Interpretation</i>
BibRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BDB	F. Brown S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CH	<i>Current History</i>
Con	<i>Constellations</i>
CP	<i>Comparative Politics</i>
CSSAAME	<i>Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
DDD	Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible (1999, 2nd ed.) K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, P.W. van der Horst (eds.) (Leiden: Brill; Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans).
EI	<i>Electronic Intifada</i>
EJS	<i>European Journal of Sociology</i>
ERS	<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>
EQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
Exp	<i>Expedition</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
FP	<i>Foreign Policy</i>
FR	<i>Feminist Review</i>
Fut	<i>Futures</i>
GD	<i>Global Dialogue</i>

<i>Geo</i>	<i>Geopolitics</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>Grand Street</i>
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
<i>HBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
<i>HLS</i>	<i>Holy Land Studies</i>
<i>HM</i>	<i>History and Memory</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>The History Teacher</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>Israel Affairs</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IPCRI</i>	<i>Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information</i>
<i>IRel</i>	<i>International Relations</i>
<i>IS</i>	<i>Israel Studies</i>
<i>IVP</i>	<i>Inter-Varsity Press</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAMT</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i>
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JHG</i>	<i>Journal of Historical Geography,</i>
<i>JME</i>	<i>Journal of Moral Education</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JPS</i>	<i>Journal of Palestine Studies</i>
<i>JQ</i>	<i>Jerusalem Quarterly</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSA</i>	<i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement</i>
<i>JSSMJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
<i>LBC</i>	<i>The Layman's Bible Commentaries</i>
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Levant</i>
<i>LMDE</i>	<i>Le Monde diplomatique, English edition</i>
<i>Log</i>	<i>Logos Journal</i>
<i>MEQ</i>	<i>Middle East Quarterly</i>
<i>MER</i>	<i>Middle East Review of International Affairs</i>
<i>MJ</i>	<i>Modern Judaism</i>
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>NEB</i>	<i>The New English Bible: Oxford & Cambridge: OUP & CUP 1970</i>
<i>Neb</i>	<i>Nebula Press</i>
<i>NES</i>	<i>Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>NGC</i>	<i>New German Critique</i>
<i>NI</i>	<i>National Identities</i>

NLR	<i>New Left Review</i>
NJPS	Tanakh: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text: Jewish Publication Society 1985
NLH	<i>New Literary History</i>
NN	<i>Nations and Nationalism</i>
NPE	<i>New Political Economy</i>
NRO	<i>New Republic Online</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version, Anglicized Edition, OUP 1995
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTMS	H.H. Rowley (ed.), <i>The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research</i> , OUP: 1951
OS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PA	<i>Public Archaeology</i>
PG	<i>Political Geography</i>
PHG	<i>Progress in Human Geography</i>
PHRMG	<i>Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group</i>
PIJ	<i>Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture</i>
PiP	<i>Progress in Planning</i>
PP	<i>Philosophical Psychology</i>
RANT	<i>Res Antiquae</i>
Rar	<i>Raritan</i>
R&C	<i>Race & Class</i>
RE	<i>Religious Education</i>
Rep	<i>Representations</i>
RHR	<i>Radical History Review</i>
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScM	<i>Science Magazine</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SLS	<i>Social & Legal Studies</i>
SocT	<i>Social Text</i>
SPE	<i>Studies in Philosophy and Education</i>
SQ	<i>Sociological Quarterly</i>
SR	<i>Social Research</i>
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TCS	<i>Theory, Culture and Society</i>
TE	<i>Theory & Event</i>
TIL	<i>Theoretical Inquiries in Law</i>
TIR	<i>The Independent Review</i>
TT	<i>Theology Today</i>
Transeu	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TWQ	<i>Third World Quarterly</i>
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WA	<i>World Archaeology</i>

ZAW *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
 ZDPV *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

2. Miscellaneous

ANE	Ancient Near East(ern)
ch. (chs.)	chapter(s)
Dtn	Deuteronomic (history; writer)
Dtr	Deuteronomistic (history; writer); Deuteronomist
ed. (eds)	edited by, editor(s)
edn	edition
[ET]	English text
ET	English translation
LXX	Septuagint
LXX ^A	LXX (Codex Alexandrinus)
LXX ^B	LXX (Codex Vaticanus)
ms. (mss.)	manuscript (manuscripts)
MT	Massoretic text
New edn	New edition
n(n).	note(s)
np	no page numbering
NS	New Series
p. (pp.)	page(s)
rev.	revised, revision
rev. edn	Revised edition
tr.	translated, translation, translator(s)
v. (vv.)	verse(s)

Chronological Tables

The Tables are based on data in Michael D. Coogan (ed.) *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford: OUP, 1998; paperback edn. 2001): 447-452;

J. Maxwell Millar and John H. Hayes *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: SCM Press; Second Edition, 2006): see particularly Charts 1, 13, 17, 18, 19;

Gershon Galil *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden: E.J. Brill; 1996).

Since the mid-1990s, there has been vigorous debate over the ‘Low Chronology’ (LC) thesis, advanced in particular by Israel Finkelstein (1996a). This thesis dates most of the archaeological finds and events of the Iron I and Iron IIa periods about a century later than the dating in conventional chronology (CC). Finkelstein (2003b: 111 n. 2) stresses that the chronology debate specifically encompasses the eleventh-ninth centuries archaeological strata, and that there is no dispute over the eighth century material. As our present study will be concerned particularly with issues that arose in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the eighth-early seventh centuries, this study will not enter into the chronology debate. For a useful summary of this debate, see Lester L. Grabbe (2007: 12-16).

TABLE 1

Archaeological Periods (All dates are approximate.)

Early Bronze Age (I-IV)	3500-2000 BCE
Middle Bronze Age (I-II)	2000-1550 BCE
Late Bronze Age (I-II)	1550-1200 BCE
Iron Age (I, II,-III)	1200-539 BCE
Iron I	1200-1025 BCE
Iron IIA	1025-928 BCE
Iron IIB	928-722 BCE
Iron IIC	722-586 BCE
Iron III/Neo-Babylonian	586-539 BCE
Persian	539-332 BCE
Hellenistic	332-63 BCE

TABLE 2

This table gives approximate dating for key figures in the period discussed in this study. For the kings of Judah and Israel, it follows mainly the chronology of Gershon Galil (1996); * indicates possible coregencies, which some scholars believe to have been a regular feature of the monarchy in Judah, though this is disputed by others.

JUDAH	Prophets	ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
Amaziah* 805-776		Joash/Jehoash 805-790	Adad-nirari III 811-783
Uzziah/Azariah* 788-736	<i>Amos:</i> <i>ca. 760/750</i>	Jeroboam II 790-750	
Jotham* 758-742	<i>Hosea:</i> <i>ca. 755-722</i>	Zechariah (six months) Shallum (one month)	
Ahaz 742-726	<i>Micah:</i> <i>ca. 740-700</i>	Menahem 749-738 Pekahiah 738-736	Tiglath-pileser III 745-727
Hezekiah 726-697	<i>Isaiah:</i> <i>ca. 736-697</i>	Hoshea 732-722	Shalmanezzer V 727-722
<i>Siege of Jerusalem 701</i>		<i>Fall of Samaria 722/721</i>	Sargon II 722-705
Manasseh 697-642			Sennacherib 705-681
Amon 642-640			Esar-haddon 681-669
Josiah 640-609	<i>Zephaniah: ca. 630</i> <i>Jeremiah:</i> <i>ca. 626-580</i>		Ashur-banipal 669-627
<i>Fall of Jerusalem 586</i>			<i>Rise of Babylon</i> <i>Fall of Nineveh 612</i>

PART I – INTRODUCTORY CONCERNS

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Preface: Background Information

Outlined below are key terms and basic concerns of particular relevance to the present-day situation in Israel/Palestine, including references to important dates and critical events in the history of this land. Clearly, such brief definitions cannot convey the great complexities of the situation; they are intended simply to identify significant factors discussed in relevant contexts during the course of this study.¹

PALESTINE is a name used since Roman times² for the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Jordan, from the river Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. Located at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe, throughout history it has been the meeting-place of merchants, adventurers and travellers, and the battleground of great powers. This name was not generally used by Jews, to whom it was *Eretz Israel* ('The Land of Israel').

The use of the name 'Palestine' varies considerably. It is used as a 'geographic' term for the area that includes modern Israel and the Palestinian territories, with parts of modern Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. It may refer more precisely to the area within the boundaries of the former **British Mandate of Palestine** west of the River Jordan (cf. note 9 below).

Today the term 'Palestine' may refer to the Palestinian State (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip), as proposed in the so-called 'Two-State Solution' to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³ The composite form **Israel/Palestine** (or '**Palestine/Israel**') is commonly used to refer jointly to the State of Israel and the proposed State of Palestine.

Many biblical scholars use the term 'Palestine' for the 'biblical' land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, Dan to Beersheba throughout the 'Old Testament' period; others opt to use the name 'Canaan' until the period of the Israelite settlement in the land, thereafter referring to 'Palestine'. For the purposes of this study it seems to me reasonable to follow the last approach: to use 'Canaan' for the earlier period, 'Palestine' as a 'geographic' reference for the later period.

¹ Berry and Philo (2006) provide a concise introduction to the principal events, key personalities, and contending viewpoints of the different 'sides' in the current situation; the authors indicate those they consider to be based on the most reliable historical evidence. See also Philo and Berry 2004: 1-90.

² For a brief summary of the history of the name 'Palestine', see E.M. Meyers 2006: 260.

³ The historic development of this proposal is summarised in Berry and Philo *op. cit.* 72-74.

PALESTINIANS are also referred to as ‘Arabs’,⁴ ‘Palestinian Arabs’ or (in the case of those who are citizens of the State of Israel) as ‘Israeli Arabs’. They speak a distinct dialect of Levantine Arabic. The rich diversity of their culture reflects an ancestry drawn from the great variety of peoples who settled in the land of Palestine over many centuries.

They are predominantly **Sunni Muslims**. Sunni Islam is by far the larger of the two main branches of Islam (c. 680 million adherents worldwide); Sunnis hold that the prophet Mohammed passed the succession to his companion Abu Bakr in the 7th century CE. **Shi’ites** (c. 85 million adherents worldwide) believe the true successor was Ali, the fourth caliph; they are found mainly in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain. There is bitter rivalry between the two sects in beliefs and practices.

A diminishing minority are **Christians**. They constitute below 2% of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; in Israel and West Jerusalem they number ca. 5%. Christians have a long history in the land: Palestinian Christians trace their spiritual ancestry to the first generation of the Church.⁵ By the 4th century CE the majority of the indigenous Semites were Christians; they intermingled with Arabs to the south and east, some of whom were also Christians. In the 7th century, Arab Muslims swept through the Middle East⁶ and within a short time, ‘arabized’ the indigenous peoples. Although Islam became dominant, many Christians adhered to their faith.

ZIONISM refers linguistically to the biblical connection between the Jewish people and *Eretz Israel*. ‘Zion’ was the Jebusite stronghold in Jerusalem where King David established his capital, and was the mountain on which the first temple was built; the name ‘Zion’ became symbolic of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel.

The modern terms *Zionism/Zionist* were coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum. In 1896, Theodor Herzl founded the Zionist movement, as a secular political movement. It has

⁴ “Arab” is a cultural-linguistic term referring to Arabic-speaking people. It excludes Iranians, but includes Arabic-speaking Jews whose ancestral background is in the Arab world: see the brief description of *Mizrahi/Mizrahim* below.

⁵ For personal reflections on indigenous Palestinian Christianity, as recounted by leading figures in today’s Palestinian church, see Naim Ateek 1995: 69-71, and Mitri Raheb 1995: 3-14.

⁶ The term ‘Middle East’ is a modern political designation for the region that extends eastwards from present-day Turkey to Iran and southwards to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. The various terms used to designate this region are discussed further in §1.2.2, n. 15.

developed into numerous branches (secular, political, religious) that may hold widely opposing views on many issues.⁷

Zionism's basic tenets are: that the sole hope for survival of the Jewish people is a Jewish homeland in *Eretz Israel*, and that Jews from any part of the world and those of recognised Jewish ancestry are entitled to settle in Israel and to claim citizenship. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the Israel Defence Forces.

Reflecting the wide dispersal of their people in the Jewish diaspora over many centuries, in modern Israel there are Jews from three distinct historical backgrounds:

Ashkenazim who came mainly from Germany, Eastern Europe and Russia;

Sephardim who originally migrated from Spain and Portugal;

Mizrahim, whose ancestors settled in Arab countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa: they are sometimes referred to as 'Arab Jews'.⁸

Since the founding of the modern State of Israel, there has been a series of wars between Israel and its neighbours, and between Israelis and Palestinians. The situation is complex; the probable causes and continuing outcomes of these wars are summarised below.

The **1948/9 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR** (to Israelis the **WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**, but known to Palestinians as *AL-NAKBA* 'the Catastrophe') broke out after Israel proclaimed Statehood on 14th May 1948. An Arab coalition including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan (now Jordan) and Egypt launched an attack. The UN Partition Agreement of 29th November 1947 had allotted 55% of **Mandatory Palestine**⁹ to Israel, and decreed that

⁷ The various forms of Zionism are outlined in Ruether and Ruether 2002: 39-67; Cook 2008: 139-151.

⁸ The word *Ashkenazi* (plural, *Ashkenazim*) is derived from the Hebrew word for 'German', *Sephardi* from the Hebrew for 'Spain', and *Mizrahi* from the Hebrew for 'eastern'.

⁹ In 1918, at the end of World War I, Britain occupied Palestine (which had been administered by the Ottoman Turks as part of the Ottoman province of Greater Syria); in 1920 Britain was granted a League of Nations Mandate to administer it. The political borders of Mandatory Palestine were agreed in 1922, and (among other long-term consequences for Palestinians and Jews) this enabled Zionists to define in geographical terms the *Eretz Israel* in which their envisioned Jewish state would be realised. The British Mandate ended in 1948.

45% be reserved for a Palestinian Arab state. As a consequence of the war, Jordan had annexed Jerusalem and the West Bank; Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip; and Israel had seized ca. 78% of Mandatory Palestine. The Palestinians were left without a homeland.

In the **1967 ‘SIX-DAY WAR’**, Israel (claiming to be threatened with economic suffocation) attacked Jordan, Egypt and Syria. It occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, jointly referred to by the UN as the **‘Occupied Palestinian Territories’ (OPT)**, and seized the Golan Heights from Syria. The causes of this war are complex and disputed, but its ramifications for the Palestinians are still largely unresolved, despite numerous ‘peace efforts’¹⁰.

The **1973 YOM KIPPUR WAR** broke out when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel to regain lands lost in 1967. After three weeks of fighting, there was no clear victory for either side, but Israel’s aura of invincibility had been broken.¹¹

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE to the continuing Israeli occupation has led twice (at the time of writing) to popular uprisings known by the Arabic term *INTIFADA* (literally, ‘a shaking-off’).

The **First Intifada** took place 1987-1993, the **Second Intifada** 2000-2005.¹² The Second Intifada is also called the **Al-Aqsa Intifada**, as it broke out on 28 September 2000 when a dominant Israeli leader, Ariel Sharon, accompanied by 1,000 armed police, made a highly provocative visit to the **Temple Mount** area of Jerusalem (known to Muslims as *Haram al-Sharif*, the ‘Noble Sanctuary’), which includes the Al-Aqsa Mosque (cf. Philo and Berry 2011: 103-104).

¹⁰ For a concise summary of the causes and effects of this war, see Phyllis Bennis 2007:159-163.

¹¹ The causes and consequences of this war are outlined in Berry and Philo 2006: 59-67.

¹² Concerning the First Intifada, see Philo and Berry 2011: 77-89; on the Second Intifada, *ibid.* 103-118.

Chapter 1 - General Introduction

The purpose of this general introduction is to summarise key issues addressed in this dissertation. It highlights first the use of texts in the Hebrew Bible to warrant possession of the ‘land of Israel’ today; it then outlines basic insights from postcolonial studies that I consider relevant to the study of the Bible and to contemporary Israel/Palestine. The concepts raised in the introduction provide the background to a detailed study of the ‘settlement narratives’ in Judges 1-5; finally, we will consider its contemporary relevance for the peoples who claim this land as ‘home’.

1.1 Setting the Scene

The impetus for this research came from personal experiences and friendships forged with Israelis and Palestinians over many visits to Israel/Palestine. An issue coming increasingly to the fore is the use of the Hebrew Bible¹, particularly by those we might term ‘right-wing’ Zionists (Jewish and Christian), to justify policies such as the seizure of Palestinian land.² This interpretation has brought Palestinian Christians into a conflictive relationship with the Old Testament, leading many to reject it as part of the Christian Scriptures.

In a book published two years after the outbreak of the First Intifada, Naim Ateek (Canon of St. George’s Cathedral in Jerusalem and a leading Palestinian theologian) summed up the feelings and reactions of Palestinian Christians in these words:

Before the creation of the State [of Israel], the Old Testament was considered to be an essential part of Christian Scripture, pointing and witnessing to Jesus. Since the creation of the State, some Jewish and Christian interpreters have read the Old Testament largely as a Zionist text to such an extent that it has become almost repugnant to Palestinian Christians. As a result, the Old Testament has generally fallen into disuse among both clergy and laity, and the Church has been unable to come to terms with its ambiguities, questions, and paradoxes—especially with its direct application to the twentieth-century events in Palestine (Ateek 1989: 77).

¹ In this study, the term ‘Hebrew Bible’ will generally be used in the discussions that follow; the term ‘Old Testament’ will be restricted to specifically Christian contexts. Jewish writers frequently refer to it simply as ‘the Bible’. Jews also commonly call it the ‘TaNaKh’, after the initial letters of its three principal parts: *Torah* (‘Instruction’), *Nevi'im* (‘Prophets’: i.e. the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (‘Writings’). Jews also use various other terms, summarised in Rosenberg 1992: 33.

² This land-seizure is declared illegal by the United Nations; Israel, however, refutes this judgement.

In a deeply personal reflection, Mitri Raheb (a Lutheran pastor and theologian who ministers in his native city of Bethlehem) describes how he struggled through a painful process of alienation from the Old Testament, when he saw how the violence and oppression suffered by his people were justified in the name of the Bible. ‘The Bible I had heretofore considered to be “for us” had suddenly become “against us”. It was no longer a consoling and encouraging message to me but a frightening word...The issue was my land...in which I no longer had a right to live unless it was as a “stranger”. The God I had known since my childhood as love had suddenly become a God who confiscated land, waged “holy wars” and destroyed whole peoples’ (Raheb 1999: 56).

In the traditions of Judaism, the place of the Bible for faith and life was different to that accorded it in Christianity. Baruch Kimmerling (2001: 192) observes that it had a marginal place in rabbinical culture and theology, its relevance to Jewish life being minimal; any use made of it usually consisted of tales from the Pentateuch, mainly as a textbook for boys at the *heder*.³ However, in the late nineteenth century, Zionists of the Jewish settler society in Palestine (the *Yishuv*) adopted the Bible as a constitutive text, considering it a national history and their title to the land. They emphasised the Books of Joshua, Isaiah, and Amos: Joshua provided the ‘muscular and militaristic dimension of conquest and the annihilation of the Canaanites and other peoples populating the “Promised Land”...while Isaiah and Amos [preached] social justice and equality’ (ibid. 90-93, 102-104, 191). Kimmerling argues that Joshua remained central in the discourse of ‘secular civil religion’ until the late 1960s and thereafter to the theology of the national religious movement (ibid. 17).

Jacobus Schoneveld (1976) shows how the foundations of Zionist reading of the Bible were set down in an educational curriculum formulated in 1892. Bible teaching was to commence not with Genesis but with Joshua, and the teaching of the Latter Prophets with Deutero-Isaiah: that is, with the occupation of the land by the Israelites, followed with the return to the land after the Babylonian exile. He traces from this early curriculum the development of Bible teaching in Israeli education up to 1955. Uri Ram (1995: 9) maintains that the Bible was explicitly appropriated for secular national education as a means of inspiring the creation of a ‘new Hebrew’ on the idealized archetype of the original ‘old Hebrew’ who had been corrupted into the type of the *galut*⁴ Jew. In an essay

³ The *heder* is a traditional elementary school for boys aged 5-8 years, mainly teaching the basics of the Hebrew alphabet and the moral stories of the Chumash, or Pentateuch.

⁴ *Galut* is the Hebrew term used in the Bible to denote ‘exile’ or captivity’. It has developed pejorative overtones, implying a timorous ‘ghetto’ mentality.

focussing on the role of the Bible in forming Israeli identity, Anita Shapira (2004:11) maintains that, after almost a century as the ‘identity-defining text of the Jewish society emerging in the land of Israel’, since the 1970s ‘the Bible has been losing ground as the ultimate identity text’. She argues that ‘*religious-nationalism’s* appropriation of the Bible [my emphasis]’ was a crucial factor in the declining interest of non-religious Israelis in the Bible, and that to a large extent ‘the Bible’s role in Israeli identity has been supplanted by the Holocaust as a source of identification with the Jewish people, contemporary Jewry, and the lessons of Jewish martyrology’ (ibid. 35-36, 41).

After the 1967 Six-Day War, a theology that focussed on the *Holocaust* (Hebrew: *Shoah*) in Europe under the Nazis began to be elaborated: a theology which implied that if the War in 1967 had been won by the Arabs, this would have resulted in another Shoah. Israel’s overwhelming victory over powerful enemies and the conquest (regarded in this theology as the ‘liberation’) of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza led Shoah theologians to see an interconnection between the Shoah and *Jewish empowerment*, as a way of answering the Shoah of the *past* and preventing a new Shoah in the *future*. Many Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora have expressed great dismay that ‘the Shoah has become a theological pillar of the modern Jewish identity’; they see this as ‘one of the Jewish people’s greatest challenges in modern times’ (A. Burg 2008: 13).⁵ In personal conversation many Jews have voiced feelings of confusion about their religious traditions.

The painful perplexity in the minds of many thoughtful Israeli Jews is well summarised in a personal letter I received at Christmas 2008, written by an Israeli woman:

This year I visited Bethlehem [in the West Bank]. I was warned that it would be dangerous for a Jew to visit a town in occupied Palestine, that the Arabs were my enemies, and that the Wall⁶ surrounding Bethlehem was there to prevent suicide bombers. That did not deter me. I had to find out for myself. What I learnt in Bethlehem is that the Palestinians live in a ghetto, like the Jews once did in Europe, and that the Jewish state occupies their land, and destroys their hopes and futures. The Wall is not there to prevent suicide bombers, but to deny Palestinians freedom of movement. As a Jew, brought up to believe that our people were chosen to be ‘a light unto nations’, I could only see and despair at the destruction of a Jewish sensibility.

⁵ See Ellis 1990: 1-31 for a brief analysis of Holocaust theology, and Ellis 2002: 53-93 on Holocaust theology, Jewish empowerment and Israeli/Jewish identity, and its determinant role in present State Policy.

⁶ The Wall (officially called the ‘Security Barrier, or Fence’) has been erected by the Israeli government to enclose the entire West Bank. Some stretches of the barrier consist of electric fences and trenches with prominent gun emplacements. Around towns and cities like Bethlehem, it is constructed of 30-foot high concrete blocks, with regular watchtowers and checkpoints controlled by the Israeli military.

Uncertainty about the meaning and relevance of the Hebrew Bible for modern life and faith is a critical issue for many Jews and Palestinian Christians in Israel/Palestine; as indicated above, the present study seeks to address this problem by engaging in a critical study of some of the ‘settlement’ narratives in the book of Judges. We noted the emphasis on the book of *Joshua* in the Zionist appropriation of the Bible for defining Israeliness; state ideology in Israel today bases its claim to all of ‘biblical Israel’⁷ on these same texts. But *Judges* seems to convey a different impression of the Israelite settlement in Canaan to the conquest scenario of Joshua. I propose to consider the implications of these alternative pictures and whether this may serve as a pointer towards seeing the relevance of the Hebrew Bible for all the peoples of Israel/Palestine today.

This paper focuses on Judges 1-5, as themes in these chapters are particularly relevant to my present concerns. One distinctive feature of these chapters is the frequent references to ‘Canaanites/Canaan’. ‘Canaanites’ dominate Judges ch. 1, the term occurring fourteen times (more than in any other chapter of the Hebrew bible); the only other occurrences in Judges are in 3:3 and 3:5. The name ‘Canaan’ appears six times in chs. 3-5, and elsewhere in Judges only in 21:12; in the books that follow Judges in the Bible, the terms ‘Canaanite’ and ‘Canaan’ each occurs only six times. The emphasis on ‘Canaanites/Canaan’ suggests that the compilers/redactors of Judges 1-5 may have used the term as a kind of cipher familiar to their readers/hearers. (This suggestion is considered in §6.3.3.)

The question of the Canaanites and Canaan has arisen in modern times. For example, in the 1940s an ideological trend known as Hebrew Canaanism (also referred to as the Young Hebrews or the Canaanite Movement) developed among Jewish intellectuals in Israel, who rejected Judaism and Zionism and sought to return to the ‘original’ Hebrew cultures, mores and rituals that they believed to be rooted in the very land of Canaan — both Judaism and Zionism, in their view, being ‘foreign’ to the land (Evron 1995; Schoneveld 1976: 114-122; Shapira 2004: 29-33; Silberstein 1999: 67-88). Some Palestinian archaeologists and narrative-builders claim that the Palestinians have prior claim over the land of Canaan, because they are direct descendants of the Canaanites whose presence in the land preceded that of the invading Israelites (Marcus 2000: 86-94; Ra’ad 2002; Yahya 2005: 67-68; E. Meyers 2006: 255-256, 260-262; Brett 2008: 75-78).

⁷ The common Israeli view of the land as ‘biblical Israel’ is seen, for example, in the fact that the official Israeli name for the West Bank is ‘Judea and Samaria’.

1.2 Insights from Postcolonial Studies

Before outlining insights from postcolonial⁸ studies that I consider relevant for this study, it is important to define imperialism and colonialism. These terms are often used interchangeably, but should be differentiated (Segovia 2000: 134). The *imperialism* practised by European powers from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries is an ideology that legitimises one nation's military, political and economic control of another. *Colonialism* (which entails the settling of populations from the imperial power in occupied territory) is one manifestation of imperialism (McLeod 2000: 5-10). In a practice that has been termed 'imperial exploitative-colonialism', distant lands were conquered primarily to exploit their natural and human resources for the benefit of the homeland. (R.J.C. Young 2001: 15-19). After World War II, European imperial powers progressively 'decolonised', but anti-colonial struggles continue to the present, as formerly colonised peoples strive to establish their own identity.

I understand **postcolonialism** to mean reflection on the discourse⁹ and practice of imperialism and colonialism, from the perspective of a situation in which western imperial/colonial power has ended formally, but effectively continues in various manifestations. Derek Gregory, an eminent geographer, uses the term 'the colonial present' in his book of that title (2004); in using this term, he does not imply that nothing has changed since the nineteenth century, but that 'constellations of power, knowledge, and geography...continue to colonize lives all over the world' (ibid. xv). He argues that the 'war on terror' declared by President George W. Bush after September 11, 2001 unleashed what Gregory deems 'a triumphal show of colonialism' in Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories and Iraq, particularly by the USA and Britain, with their long histories of involvement in the Middle East. 'What else is the war on terror than the violent return of

⁸ In the early development of postcolonial studies, there was considerable debate about the use of a hyphen; without the hyphen, 'postcolonialism' indicated the new field of discourse, and the hyphenated post-colonial was understood to have a chronological reference to the period after the end of colonial rule. For useful summaries of this debate (no longer prominent in postcolonial studies) see Ashcroft *et al.* 2007: 168-173; Moore 2006: 3-5; Segovia 2000: 133-135. The distinction has not usually been made in biblical studies, where the non-hyphenated 'postcolonial/postcolonialism' has been generally used. A comprehensive introduction to postcolonialism is found in McLeod 2000.

⁹ Postcolonial theorists borrowed the term 'discourse' from Michel Foucault. It refers to 'a system of statements within which the world can be known... It is in such a discourse that speakers and hearers, writers and readers, come to an understanding of themselves, their relationship with each other and their place in the world' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2007:62-63).

the colonial past, with its split geographies of “us” and “them,” “civilization” and “barbarism,” “Good” and Evil”? (ibid. 10-11)’.

Settler-colonialism is currently debated, especially regarding Israel (cf. §8.2–§ 8.3). There are various forms: e.g. settlers in states like South Africa are not subject to ‘imperial parent-states’ and make the new territory ‘home’. Some include Israel in this category; but for two millennia Jews ‘remembered’ as their ancestral home the territory now known as Israel/Palestine. However, all forms of settler-colonialism share certain common features,¹⁰ notably pervasive inequities between settler and indigenous populations: e.g. economic and political privileges are reserved for the settler-population, including rights to own land and to be subject only to their own justice code (cf. C. Elkins and S. Pedersen 2005: 2-4).

1.2.1 Concerns of Postcolonialism

Postcolonial theory arose out of experiences and insights that developed as colonised peoples began to resist western rule and cultural dominance during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is no *one* definition of postcolonialism and postcolonial theory does not offer a *single* set of ideas or practices. Indeed, its central concern is not with theoretical analysis, but with how ideas and practices may relate to one another in living contexts: in relationships of harmony or conflict, in relations between different people and their cultures. Postcolonialism scrutinises people’s historical and continuing experience of many inter-related factors such as cultural identity and ethnicity, gender and class, the varying fortunes of those who ‘belong’ and those who do not, immigration and emigration, settlers and refugees, oppression or suppression and resistance. None of these issues is peculiarly postcolonial, but they are variously interwoven to create the complex tapestry of postcolonial discourse, which holds that the tendency of one people to subjugate another obligates us to develop alternate reading practices that will facilitate social transformation. It is essential not only to observe and raise questions, but also to seek ways of fostering creative, new dynamics that may be discerned even within the most challenging situations.

A particular aim in postcolonial studies is to give a vocabulary and a voice to those whose history and knowledge have hitherto been hidden or discounted. Distinct issues that coincidentally were explored separately in Subaltern Studies¹¹ during the 1980s are in tune

¹⁰ For a survey of settler-colonialism, see C. Elkins and S. Pedersen (eds.) (2005). They define the nature of settler colonialism in the Middle East in general and Israel/Palestine in particular.

¹¹ The term ‘subaltern’ refers to any person or group considered to be of inferior station, because of factors such as race, class, gender, or religion (Ashcroft *et al.* 2007: 198-201). This approach was pioneered by the

with the concern of postcolonialism for those whose voice has been ‘silenced’. The primary aim of Subaltern Studies was to investigate ‘history from below’—uncovering what happens in history among those at the base levels of society, rather than focussing on what takes place among the elite (as history traditionally has done). The focus on the significant role of ‘subalterns’ is now associated with postcolonialism. In a stimulating example, R.J.C. Young (2003) seeks to explain postcolonialism ‘not from a top-down perspective but from below’. Most sections begin with actual situations (e.g. Palestinian refugees in Gaza; children at a school in Bethlehem recently destroyed by Israeli shells); it then develops ideas that emerge from the perspective of the subalterns, affirming ‘the worth of ordinary people and their cultures’ (Young *ibid.* 6-8).

As noted above, a fundamental postcolonial concern is the question of *identity*, whether the identity that the coloniser projects on the colonised, or various means whereby the colonised seek to preserve their identity and freedom. The elements which construct an identity include shared goals, ideas, narratives, myths, societal or public beliefs, collective memories, holy days, rituals and commemorations. Where there are competing territorial claims (as in Israel/Palestine), different national identities may collide over their respective goals and over other basic elements of their identities—each being convinced that their identity is threatened by the very *existence* of the other. A central element of identity over which there are often competing claims is the factor of *memory*, particularly collective memory. Postcolonialism may be regarded as in part an act of remembrance, for it revisits the past, seeking to reveal the impositions and inequities of colonialism that remain active, in order to examine, disavow and seek to dispel them (Gregory 2004: 9)

Another key concern in postcolonial discourse is the issue of *binarism* (Ashcroft *et al.* 2007: 18-21). Western knowledge has been organised philosophically through binary oppositions such as good/evil, black/white, master/slave, coloniser/colonised, civilised/uncivilised — one consequence being denigration of that which has come to be termed *the Other* (cf. Young 2009:13-18). The concept of ‘otherness’ is integral to the understanding of *identity*: people construct distinct personae for themselves in order to distinguish themselves from ‘others’. The process of ‘othering’, with its concept of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, is an essential element in imperial nation-building, as practices of inclusion and exclusion create and sustain *boundaries* between the dominant and the subordinate.

Subaltern Studies Group of South Asia scholars, but the term is now applied more broadly to others who share concerns similar to those articulated by this group (cf. Spivak 1995; Chakrabarty 2005).

Barbara Bush (2006: 27) has pointed out that '[a] belief in the irreconcilable difference or "otherness" of subordinated peoples' is a common feature of empires across the centuries and 'essential to the superior identities of the powerful'.

In its analysis of the dynamics in the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate, postcolonialism uses the concept of *hegemony*, which may be defined as the power of the 'taken-for-granted worldview'¹² that respective communities have come to share, and that controls human behaviour in each community (R. Williams 1977: 108-114). Kimmerling (1999: 340) describes the main characteristic of the Israeli social order as '*Zionist hegemony*', expressed in 'the taken-for-grantedness of the equivalence between the Jewish religion and nation'. A characteristic of a hegemonic situation is the ideological and intellectual dominance of the existing order: its 'self-evidence', accepted and 'comfortable' to those within the *boundaries* of the hegemony. Only those outside it (in Israel's case, its Arab citizens) 'can palpably sense the meaning, consequences, and results of this hegemony'. Domination may be exerted by force or more subtly by power over the economy and state apparatus, so that the subordinate unconsciously assimilate the worldview of the dominant. *Resistance* to dominant hegemonies and their ideology develops as *counter-ideologies of liberation* surface among subordinate groups which begin to form *counter-hegemonies* (cf. Williams *ibid.* 110-114; Bush *ibid.* 33-41).

Postcolonialism seeks to break down the tyranny of imperial structures and binarisms (such as those noted above) which endeavour to dominate the subject. Recognising that it is not possible to return to some ideal essentialised pre-colonial state (which the very act of colonisation has fundamentally breached), postcolonialism insists that *it is possible to imagine* a reconciled present and future, even in Palestine (cf. Ahluwalia 2002:188-190). While imperial binaries imply a unilinear movement from coloniser to colonised, postcolonialism opens up the possibility of movements in both direction. It seeks to make these movements possible by exploring what Bhabha (1995: 2009) termed the 'third space of enunciation'. This 'third space' arises out of the *interdependence* of coloniser and colonised, and holds out the possibility of creating new *transcultural* forms; Bhabha used the term *hybridity* to describe such new forms (cf. Young 2003:69-92). Mary Louise Pratt (1991) used the term 'contact zone' in an influential essay entitled 'Arts of the Contact Zone'. Her 'contact zone' is similar to Bhabha's 'Third Space', but her explication of the

¹² A *worldview* may be defined as a frame of reference that helps us to construct a global picture, enabling us to comprehend as many elements of our experience as possible (Aerts *et al.* 2007:8-9).

contact zone lays greater emphasis on *difference* and acknowledges the *diverse forms* of negotiation that may take place within the contact zone (see further in §5.2.2.3).

Laurence Silberstein (1999: 186-187) highlights ‘the hybridity of Israeli identity’, and the particular problems that arise because ‘the Arab and Middle Eastern elements in Israeli identity construction are commonly concealed or ignored.’ He observes that the dominant Israeli view, which rejects the Arab (‘Araviut’) dimension of Jewish culture, ‘always positions Arabs and Arab culture as “Other”’. But Silberstein emphasises that the Palestinian Arab is not the only victim of the dominant Eurocentric Israeli cultural discourse, which also marginalises and excludes Mizrahim.¹³ Henriette Dahan-Kalev (2003: 168-170) writes about her identity conflict when her Mizrahi parents brought her as a child from Morocco to an immigrant camp in Israel. Because she ‘looked’ Ashkenazi, people assumed she *was* Ashkenazi (clearly considered a ‘superior’ identity): ‘Little by little I constructed a desirable identity for myself ... [milking] my parents [who studied at a French colonial school in Morocco] for bits of information ... which I incorporated into the identity that I was constructing for myself.’ Silberstein (1994:13) remarks that ‘Ashkenazic Jews...from European countries, having achieved cultural hegemony, relate to the Sephardim as “outsiders” who must be integrated or assimilated into the dominant (Ashkenazic) Israeli culture.’

1.2.2 Postcolonialism and the Hebrew Bible¹⁴

There seems to be a widespread assumption in extra-biblical postcolonial literature that imperialism and colonialism belong to the era of modernity, as a phenomenon that began in the sixteenth century CE with European colonisation of the non-European world. However, although imperial ambition and colonisation attained an unprecedented reach and efficacy in the modern period, it seems evident that empires in the Ancient Near East (ANE)¹⁵ engaged in what might be described as colonial practices. It has been suggested that use of the term ‘empire’ should be restricted to the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid empires which developed clear imperialistic ideology with a conception of

¹³ Re. Ashkenazim, Mizrahim and Sephardim, see Background Information.

¹⁴ For recent surveys of the use of postcolonialism in biblical studies, see Crowell 2009: 217-244 concerning postcolonialism and the Hebrew Bible, and Moore 2006: 3-23 on postcolonialism and the New Testament.

¹⁵ Most scholars use the term ‘Ancient Near East’ to designate (in pre-modern times) the general region that in modern times is designated the ‘Middle East’. The terms Near East, Middle East and Far East are legacies of European imperial/colonial involvement in these regions: they reflect the world as seen from the perspective of Europe. In an attempt to escape from this legacy, some archaeologists use perceived neutral terms such as ‘Western Asia’ or ‘South Western Asia’. On this issue, see the discussion in Porter 2010: 51-52.

universal domination (Liverani 2005: 228-230). In earlier periods, however, powerful states like Egypt and the Aramaean kingdom of Damascus exercised regional hegemony over weaker neighbours (e.g. exacting tribute and controlling trade routes) that may be designated 'proto-colonisation'. From ca. 1550-1200 BCE¹⁶ Canaan was dominated by Egypt; ca. 922-732 the threat came mainly from Damascus; this area was overwhelmed by Assyria (ca. 900-612), Babylonia (612-539), Persia (539-332) and Macedonia (332-63).

The domination of these hegemonic powers had profound and lasting effects on the peoples subjected to their rule, and it is certain that the presence and almost unceasing threat of much more powerful neighbours was a major factor in the socio-political milieu out of which the Hebrew Bible emerged. While forms of oppression and resistance change in different historic circumstances, their fundamental characteristics remain the same throughout the common history of resistance to foreign domination, and the insights of postcolonialism may be appropriately engaged in the study of ancient oppressive regimes. Whatever terms we use to designate these regimes, we must recognise the potential problem of 'translation': i.e. importing into ancient societies concepts and judgements derived from modern social sciences (Carroll R., 2000; Moore, 2006: 8-11; Grabbe, 2007: 4-5). Paucity of data about ancient societies requires us to recognise the limitations of any attempt to investigate and explain a world so distant from ours (in time, geography and culture) that it is far removed from the possibility of direct corroboration or refutation. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to presuppose sufficient continuity in human experience to justify circumspect use of insights from modern disciplines such as postcolonial studies.

Another key factor underlining the relevance of postcolonialism to biblical studies is the wide range of concerns *shared* by both disciplines. We noted that, woven into the tapestry of postcolonial discourse, there are basic human issues such as identity, gender and class, subalterns, oppression and resistance, relationships of harmony or conflict. These and other basic human concerns of postcolonialism are significant also in biblical studies, both for examining the world out of which the Bible emerged and for considering its contemporary relevance. Allied to the above observations is the emphasis of postcolonialism on the *subjective experience* of those who undergo the historical processes that are the object of scholarly analysis. Postcolonialism seeks to understand and articulate ways in which these processes impact upon the rhythms of life for ordinary people: it starts from the world as

¹⁶ Dates are approximate.

people encounter it (cf. Young 2009:16-18). I believe that this aspect of postcolonial discourse should be integral also to biblical studies.

In biblical studies, postcolonialism is related most closely to liberation theology which began in Latin America during the 1960s. This was an attempt to speak on behalf of oppressed minorities, both in former colonial situations and wherever groups are presently located as minorities within major cultures; its goal was to articulate a universal theology of liberation.¹⁷ Liberation theology used the Exodus story as its key narrative of liberation: but herein lay a major weakness that became a point of separation between Liberation and Postcolonial hermeneutics, as a biblical paradigm that is liberative and life-giving from some perspectives may appear oppressive and destructive from the standpoint of others. Postcolonial readings of the Exodus narrative criticise the failure of liberation readings to recognise the *consequences* of Israel's Exodus from Egypt for the indigenous peoples of Canaan, which the Israelites claimed as a divine gift, and proceeded to subdue or even to exterminate the Canaanites. A postcolonial standpoint recognises that there are traditions within the Bible that lend themselves to oppressive interpretations, and it challenges interpreters to interrogate the biblical narratives, and even to criticise the ideology of the biblical writers (cf. Sugirtharajah 2001: 250-259).

In an influential essay first published in 1989, Robert Allen Warrior (a member of the Osage Nation of American Indians) powerfully addressed such issues (see Warrior 2001). He reads the Exodus from the perspective of the dispossessed Canaanites; he perceives parallels between the devastated people of biblical times and his own people in the colonial history of America, and highlights implications for hermeneutical reflection and political response. Also published in 1989 was the first major statement by the Palestinian theologian Naim Ateek on what he terms 'A Palestinian Theology of Liberation', which he began to articulate during graduate studies at Berkeley, California, in the early 1980s. He protests against the use of the Exodus/Settlement narratives as a paradigm for the establishment of the State of Israel (1989: 86-89). The very name 'Israel' is painful for Palestinians to whom it invokes the territorial claims, military incursions and constant oppression of the modern Israeli State (*ibid.* 76). In his critique of the biblical text, he attributes the Pentateuch to the 'most elementary and primitive forms of the concept of God ... betraying a narrow, exclusive concept of a tribal god' (*ibid.* 101). He contrasts this

¹⁷ For a brief account of Liberation Theology, see Boff and Boff 1987; concerning the relationship between Liberation Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism, see especially Sugirtharajah 2001: 259-265; also Moore and Segovia 2005: 5-7; Moore 2006:14-17.

concept of God with ‘the universalist understanding of God’ that arose outside Canaan during the Babylonian Exile, and he urges Israelis and Palestinians to look to the Second Exodus (portrayed in Ezekiel 47:21-23) as the paradigm for the future of both peoples.

F.F. Segovia (2000: 125-131) and R.S. Sugirtharajah (2001: 251-257), leading proponents of the use of postcolonialism in biblical studies, both argue that we must investigate and analyse three different and equally important ‘worlds’: the world of the *text*, the world of *modernity*, and the world of *today*. Firstly, a postcolonial optic for the study of the Hebrew Bible involves an analysis of the texts that seriously considers their socio-cultural context in light of the socio-political reality of a succession of empires, of imperialism and colonialism as variously exercised over the long period in question. The context of empire raises important questions, such as: How does the *centre* regard and treat the *margins* in a ‘world’ dominated by the reality of empire? In such a ‘world’, how is the ‘Other’ represented? What are the conceptions of justice and oppression? The dynamics operating between the dominant centre and subordinate periphery undoubtedly influenced the processes behind the production of the biblical texts. To gain some comprehension of these dynamics at such a distance in time, postcolonial readers must interact with the insights of other relevant disciplines: for example archaeology and historiography (this is discussed in Chapter 2).

The second world is *modernity* which until recently dominated biblical interpretation. Postcolonial readers observe how the Bible went hand-in-hand with the advance of Western imperialism. The Exodus/Settlement account was considered to warrant the West’s invasion and colonisation of other nations as the working out of God’s will for redemption of the world; seizure of land from indigenous peoples was justified as its having been given to them by God (Said 1986; Boyarin 1992). J. Clinton McCann’s Commentary on Judges cites an example of the (mis)use of this book by Puritan preachers in colonial North America to justify violence against Native Americans: ‘the indigenous peoples were to be viewed as Canaanites while the Christian English settlers were the successors of the Israelites—God’s New Israel. Appealing to the book of Judges, the Puritan preachers concluded that the land of the indigenous peoples was to be appropriated, and the natives were to be either converted or wiped out’ (McCann 2002: 17).

An important issue that postcolonial scholars among others are beginning to address is the fact that the development of critical biblical scholarship in Europe coincided with the era of unprecedented European imperialism/colonisation, in the eighteenth–early twentieth

centuries: the period of the Enlightenment. Some discussion of this issue is found in F.F. Segovia (2000: 119-125) and S.D Moore (2006:10-11). Peter Machinist (2009: 469-470) highlights the desire to find in ‘the strange wonders of the East’ cultural origins for themselves, predating even the civilizations of Greece and Rome. When the Bible became involved in this quest, it played a complicated role: while it encouraged recovery of the ANE to provide a backdrop to ‘biblical history’, it also ‘retarded a sensitive appreciation of the non-Biblical cultures of the region’. Invidious contrasts between the non-Biblical world and ‘Biblical Israel’ were constructed: an issue that arises later in this study regarding the ‘Canaanites’ (cf. §§6.3.3.2; 6.3.3.3). The complex task of identifying and analysing correlations between critical biblical scholarship and imperial ideology is beyond the scope of this study, but apparent connections between traditional interpretations of the Judges texts and the world of imperialism will be discussed where relevant in context.

Thirdly, we must consider *today’s world*. By analysing how people engage with the Bible, we may put the Bible in the context of contemporary life and challenge readers to recognise the dynamics *of their own worldviews* as they interpret the Bible. In contrast to the modernist insistence on ‘objective interpretation’, many postcolonial readers reveal *themselves* in their reading of texts; consequently, the eyes through which they scrutinize the text often perceive a very different picture to that which traditional western eyes have seen. For early examples, see the essays in Sugirtharajah (ed.) 1995 and Donaldson (ed.) 1996. A postcolonial optic looks for protesting or oppositional voices: this may result in readings that subvert the traditional historical-critical ‘meaning’ of the text.

We noted that European settlers used texts such as Judges to justify seizure of lands from indigenous peoples, claiming that the land was covenanted to them by God. This reading of the biblical text is not only of historic interest regarding colonisation in past generations; it is a contemporary issue. A collection of essays edited by Richard Horsley (2008) argues that most twenty-first century Americans hold the worldview of the Pilgrim Fathers, seeing the ‘New World’ as the ‘new Promised Land’ and themselves as the new ‘Chosen People’. They challenge Americans to see that their confidence in American exceptionalism is closely analogous to the imperial powers opposed by the early Church, and to read the Bible through the eyes of oppressed people today.

Mitri Raheb (2014:39) observes that American theologians have begun to study empire with relation to the Bible, seeing lessons for the American Empire in the Roman Empire. Raheb also observes that while the essayists write about how biblical Israel faced various

empires, they do not connect the modern state of Israel and the Palestinians with biblical Israel. Only Norman Gottwald (2008:24) refers briefly to ‘Palestinians of the West Bank ...and the “Canaanite” state of Israel’. In PART IV of this paper, the situation that faces Palestinians in the present-day State of Israel will be considered carefully.

1.2.3 Postcolonialism and Israel/Palestine

We noted above that *identity* is a major concern of postcolonialism. Identity is of critical importance in Israel/Palestine, as reflected in a special double issue of the influential *Palestine-Israel Journal* focussing on *National Identity* and addressing some of the most acute challenges faced by Palestinians and Israelis alike.¹⁸ One article discusses significant historical and ideological forces that have shaped Palestinian identity, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the Second (Al-Aqsa) Intifada,¹⁹ while another considers problems of identity experienced by many older Israeli Jews as a result of being required to substitute the term ‘Israeli culture’ for that of ‘Hebrew culture’, the accepted term of Jewish identity during the pre-State period.²⁰ Seeking to further the often painful search for mutual understanding, there is an exploration of how profound traumas and experiences of victimisation which *both* peoples have known (especially the Jewish *Shoah*/Holocaust and the Palestinian *Nakba*/Disaster) may suggest ways of building bridges between them.²¹ However, it is notable that these informative articles are all concerned largely with the *modern* history of Palestinians and Jews in Israel/Palestine; a postcolonial approach insists that this troubled land must be seen in its wider historical and geopolitical context.

We observed that the world of the Hebrew Bible was a world of empires. Palestine continued to be ruled by a succession of empires and overlords: Roman (63 BCE-636 CE), Arab (636-1200), Crusader (1099-1291), Ayubi (1187-1253), Mamluk (1253-1516), Ottoman (1517-1917), and Mandatory (1917-1947).²² Recent research by Israeli and Palestinian archaeologists and historians, using long-neglected primary sources, has shed

¹⁸ The Table of Contents is available online at <http://www.pij.org/current.php?id=16>. This provides links for accessing a series of articles written by Palestinian and Israeli scholars (women and men).

¹⁹ Hassassian (2002) on historical dynamics shaping Palestinian national identity

²⁰ Schweid (2002) on Jewishness and Israeliness

²¹ Lonni (2002) on parallel strategies in Israeli and Palestinian experience; cf. Gur-Ze’ev 2001.

²² Re. Mandatory Palestine, see Background Information.

light on life in Palestine as far back as the Crusader, Ayubi, and Mamluk periods, and especially on the record of social and economic life among merchants and peasants ('subalterns') as well as 'notables' during the Ottoman period.²³ This new research is enabling Palestinians to 'rediscover Palestine' and find their own historic place in it, thus undergirding and strengthening their sense of *identity*.

Critical issues of national identity that affect the Middle East today are an imperial/colonial legacy that may be traced largely to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. Most present Middle Eastern states resulted from dismemberment of that empire, when the imperial powers active in the region (principally Britain and France) carved up the former empire, with little concern for the indigenous peoples, geography or history. The new states were given artificial boundaries, resulting in unstable borders and an internal lack of common identity in countries whose populace now included ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic minorities. P.R. Kumaraswamy (2006) has written a wide-ranging historical and analytical account of the identity crisis in the Middle East, as people throughout the region increasingly seek answers to the question: Who am I?

Some countries such as Egypt and Syria with an ancient history, a proud heritage and a strong sense of identity, bitterly resented losing territory which they considered part of their ancestral lands. In effect the stronger, more dominant countries followed in the footsteps of the imperial powers, engaging in expansionist policies and seeking to establish hegemony over smaller, less powerful neighbours. The unresolved problems arising from the break-up of the Ottoman Empire were greatly exacerbated by UN Resolution 181 (1947) for the Partition of Palestine: a decision dominated by the 'Great Powers', again with little concern for indigenous peoples, geography or history. There was no consultation with the Palestinians who comprised more than two-thirds of the total population in Palestine and were a majority in all but one of the sixteen sub-districts in Mandatory Palestine (White 2009: 21-22).

Complex regional issues are part of the imperial/colonial legacy inherited by Jews and Palestinians in Israel/Palestine, unavoidably caught up in the wider hegemonic struggles throughout the Middle East. The problems both peoples face regarding identity are part of this legacy, the partitioning of Palestine having been a decision imposed by those nations who had power to exert hegemony in the region, in the service of their own national

²³ E.g. Doumani 1992, 1995; Gerber 2003

interests rather than in the interests of the indigenous peoples in the region. Adding to the complexities of the situation is the fact that both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are influenced by the desire for hegemony. Israelis often deny the multicultural character of the 'Holy Land', fearing that an admission of that would eradicate the Jewish nature of the state of Israel, while Palestinians in general refuse to recognize Jewish heritage in Palestine, fearing that such recognition would lead to further appropriation of their land by the Israeli state (Yahya 2005: 67-68).

We must now consider the contentious issue of whether the state of Israel is a colonising state. We observed above that it is appropriate to speak of empires in the ANE engaging in *colonial practices*, since *colonisation processes* differ according to *context*: they are not a manifestation only of expansionist European imperialism in the modern era. The same principle of context applies in the case of Israel. Rafael Reuveny (2005: 110) comments that 'unlike the typical colonialist, the Zionists practised colonization without colonialism'. Gershon Shafir (1999: 81-96) argues that although the *mode* of Jewish settlement in Palestine altered over the years, constantly adapting itself to the changing political and economic realities, from the outset the *character* of the settlement was always colonialist. Reuveny (2008: 326-333) describes this process as 'creeping colonialism [that] matured into a more advanced stage: settler-colonialism.'

It is important to remember that Zionism emerged in 'the age of empire', and when Theodor Herzl (the 'founding father' of political Zionism) published his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* in 1896, setting out his belief that the only answer to European anti-semitism was for Jews to have their own country, he realised that support of an imperial power would be vital. Initial contacts with Britain (which was to play a key role throughout the ensuing events until 1948) led to discussions about possible locations in Africa and South America for colonisation, but they eventually agreed on Palestine — described by Herzl as 'our ever-memorable historic home'. He declared that he envisioned a Jewish state in Palestine that would be 'a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism' (Herzl [ET] 1988: 15). In the common worldview of western imperialism, the civilisation/barbarism binarism has invariably defined the status of *Arabs* as inferior Others ('Orientals'), as demonstrated in the Mandate system operated by the League of Nations: a system that entrusted to 'advanced nations...the tutelage of peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world' (Gregory 2004: 79-80).

This western/imperial worldview of Arabs is widely held by Israelis today. An Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, says: ‘[The] aim of the Zionist project has always been to construct and then defend a “white” (Western) fortress in a “black” (Arab) world’ (2006: 248-256). In an interview reported in *The Guardian* newspaper, Pappé recounts an experience when he was a nineteen year old conscript in the Israeli army, serving on the Golan Heights facing the Syrians in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. He recalls: ‘I remember the sergeant major telling us that we should kill Arabs young or they’ll grow up to kill us.’ Applying this experience to the present day he adds: ‘That attitude is widespread. That’s why tank drivers, F16 pilots or artillery commanders will kill [Palestinian] civilians without hesitation. They’ve been taught to de-humanise them all their lives.’²⁴

In an echo of Herzl’s vision of Israel as a ‘rampart, an outpost of civilization’, Lucy Ash of the BBC described a visit to Katzir, an Israeli town in northern Israel, in these terms:

Katzir is a gated suburban paradise, perched on a hilltop. It was set up in 1982 by the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency as a *bulwark* [my emphasis] against the surrounding Israeli Arab villages in the valley below. Resident Gila Levy takes me on a tour of the tidy streets and immaculate gardens filled with brightly coloured flowers...[She] shows me dozens of new houses built by [recent Jewish immigrant] families from as far afield as Argentina and the former Soviet Union.²⁵

In the valley below Katzir, Adel Kaadan, an Israeli Arab who speaks fluent Hebrew, took the reporter on a tour of his town, Baqa al-Gharbiyah, where there are puddles of sewage in the potholed roads, the local school roof is stuffed with asbestos, and Israel’s Separation Barrier (which in Baqa al-Gharbiyah is a concrete wall topped with barbed wire) cuts the town in half, leaving it with an air of desolation and hopelessness. He is head nurse at a nearby hospital; many of his patients are from Katzir and he has known them for years. When Katzir advertised in a Hebrew language newspaper for new residents, Mr Kaadan applied to purchase a plot of land there to build a house for his family; but he met great hostility from Katzir council, even from those who knew him well from the hospital; his application was refused on the ground that he was ‘socially unsuitable’.

In Lucy Ash’s report, Dana Alexander of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel says Mr Kaadan’s unsuccessful battle to move to Katzir is ‘a result of the collective discrimination that has been going on for decades against Arab municipalities and villages.’ After a twelve-year battle through Israeli courts, in December 2010 the Kaadan

²⁴ Pappé 2009

²⁵ Ash 2004

family moved into their new home in Katzir. However, the Israeli parliament has since enshrined in law the right of what they have designated ‘co-operative associations’ (such as the community of Katzir) to continue excluding Arab citizens. Both supporters and opponents of this new legislation view it as a rear-guard action to prevent the possibility that other Arab citizens might want to follow the example of the Kaadans.

The practice of inclusion and exclusion is illustrated also in a *Washington Post* article by Scott Wilson. Headed ‘For Israel’s Arab Citizens, Isolation and Exclusion’ it recounts the experience of Fatina and Ahmad Zubeidat, Arab citizens of Israel. They live in rented accommodation while trying to build up a new business in the Galilee; but they had hoped to live nearer to their business, in the small town of Rakefet where about 150 Jewish families live on state land. After months of interviews, the town’s admission committee rejected the Arab couple on the grounds of “social incompatibility.” The article comments that the Zubeidats are ‘players in a wider ethnic clash unfolding in the Galilee’, a region where Arabs (those who remained in Israel after its creation in 1948, and their descendants) outnumber Jews. Israel’s policies, it says, have deepened the gulf between Arab and Jewish citizens, ‘through concrete walls, laws that favor Jews, and political proposals that place the Arabs outside national life.’²⁶ We may note that practices of inclusion and exclusion, which create and sustain boundaries between the dominant and the subordinate, are essential elements in imperial nation-building.

Wilson observes that the process of separation even within Israel’s original boundaries ‘mirrors in many ways the broader one taking place between Israelis and Palestinians in the occupied territories.’ There is considerable evidence to support the contention that the particular structure of privilege that Israel exercises towards the Palestinians in the OPT is the structure that defines settler-colonialism.²⁷ Defying international opprobrium, Israel continues to expand its settler-colonies and their infrastructure on land that has been owned by Palestinian families for many generations, although land seizures in occupied territory are considered illegal under international law (though Israel disputes this). In the OPT, Israeli military authorities control the economy, access to medical facilities, to educational institutions, to employment, and all movement between the ‘Palestinian Autonomous Areas’. The situation is exacerbated by the route of the Separation Barrier/Wall which

²⁶ Wilson 2007

²⁷ For a summary of the common features of settler-colonialism, see §1.2.

further encroaches on Palestinian-owned land, and denies to thousands of farmers access to their fields and olive-groves.

In December 2010, *Time Magazine* published an article which observed that:

Israelis credit [the Separation Wall] with reducing terrorist attacks to almost nil since construction began [in 2003]...But [it] has done more than keep out suicide bombers. No less important, it has created *a separation of the mind*. Israelis say they simply think much less about Palestinians. And a generation of Palestinians is coming of age without even knowing what Israelis look like, much less the land both sides claim as their own [*my italics*].²⁸

Kimmerling (1999: 341) describes Israel as a settler-immigrant society which, in ‘the political culture of the postcolonial world order’, is plagued by the problem of existential legitimacy, repeatedly having to ‘explain to itself and to the international community why it chose Palestine, the land retitled “The Land of Israel,” as its target-territory for settlement’. The situation is undoubtedly complex and grave, but (as indicated in §1.2.1) the relevance and challenge of postcolonialism lies not only in its analysis of the complex tapestry of postcolonial discourse in the past and as it continues in the present, but also its focus on seeking ways to foster creative, new dynamics that may be discerned in even the most challenging situations and may offer new hope for the future. This study aims to explore the possibility of uncovering a new dynamic for the peoples of Israel/Palestine by engaging relevant insights from postcolonialism in a study of Judges 1-5.

²⁸ *Time*, December 20, 2010, p. 31 (print edition)

PART II – QUESTIONS OF INTERPRETATION

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Chapter 2 - General Interpretative Approaches

Introduction

Among Israelis and Palestinians alike, archaeology and history are considered highly relevant to their quest for answers to fundamental questions such as identity and land; both disciplines, however, are open to different and often bitterly contesting interpretations. In this chapter, I intend to focus on what I believe are the most significant lessons that may be drawn from archaeology and history for the purposes of our present study, noting that in extra-biblical fields of study some proponents of both disciplines acknowledge new insights drawn from postcolonial studies.

2.1 Archaeology

At no time in the history of the discipline have all archaeologists followed one single approach to the theory and practice of archaeology, and (in common with many other disciplines) controversial changes took place in the second half of the twentieth century. Some key developments will be outlined below, noting where these have a specific bearing on Israel/Palestine, historically and in the present.

2.1.1 General developments in archaeology

When the discipline began to develop during the nineteenth century, the approach was that of *cultural-history archaeology*. The goal was not simply to uncover and describe changes in different cultures over the course of time, but to explain *why* these processes took place, thus placing an emphasis on historical *particularism*. In the early twentieth century, archaeologists who were working in locations (such as Mesopotamia) where they saw direct links between present and past societies mostly followed the direct historical approach of describing the continuity between past and present *cultural and ethnic groups*.

In the 1960s, a movement developed (especially among American archaeologists) that challenged the established cultural-history archaeology. This 'New Archaeology' (which became known as 'processual archaeology') claimed to be more 'scientific', requiring the testing of all hypotheses, and having an *anthropological* focus. The general view of society in 'processual archaeology' was that society is a *system*, composed of a set of sub-systems

such as subsistence, technology and trade. The processes and interactions of systems as they adapted to their environment provided the explanation for cultural change (Lester L. Grabbe, 2007: 7). Colin Renfrew, one of the first British archaeologists to adopt the ‘New Archaeology’, finally expressed dissatisfaction that ‘processual archaeology’ insufficiently addressed cognitive issues and he acknowledged that objectivity is an unattainable goal; nevertheless he still argued for ‘a fuller examination of the process of engagement’ by which human individuals and societies ‘construct their own social realities’ (Renfrew, 2002: 122-123). William Dever was one of the first ‘biblical’ archaeologists to recognise how the certainties of the old ‘Biblical Archaeology’ were being challenged by changes in the wider field of archaeology (this issue is discussed in §2.1.4).

In the late 1980s/early 1990s, particularly among British archaeologists, a new postmodern movement arose, questioning processualism’s appeal to scientific positivism and impartiality, maintaining that it was too determinative, ignored the place of the individual, and failed to recognise the subjective element in all archaeological interpretation (Grabbe 2007:8). The new movement, which became known as ‘post-processual archaeology’ or ‘interpretive archaeology’, focussed on contextual concerns, including the natural environment and the socio-cultural environment. Archaeology was seen as a continuing process, with no final or definitive account of the past. Ian Hodder, a leading British proponent of ‘postprocessual archaeology’, became concerned about crises he perceived in global archaeology, resulting from the confusion caused by these competing approaches: processual, postprocessual, and now even post-postprocessual (summarised in Hodder, 1999a: 3-5). Israeli archaeologist Amihai Mazar (2007: 27) observes that archaeology is a much more complex discipline than most people think! However, considerable benefits may be gained from the postmodern mode of thinking that inspired ‘postprocessualist’ archaeology. It has enabled the development of more flexible interpretation: various possible explanations may be acceptable for the same archaeological phenomena and (more than was the case in earlier periods) consideration is given to the role of human decisions and of the individual in history.

2.1.2 Archaeology and the socio-political milieu

In a tribute to the influential work of the late Canadian archaeologist Bruce Trigger, Thomas Patterson (2010: 133) echoed the widely-held opinion that Trigger ‘changed the direction of inquiries into the origins and development of archaeology’. In a seminal article, Trigger (1984: 356) suggested that ‘the nature of archaeological research is shaped

to a significant degree by the roles particular nation-states play, economically, politically, and culturally, as interdependent parts of the modern world system'. Trigger described the differences to be discerned among three 'alternative archaeologies' which were rooted, respectively, in nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist projects.

Concerning *nationalist archaeology*, he observed that most archaeological traditions are probably nationalistic in orientation. Archaeological research in the Middle East began in the late 18th century when European explorers increasingly travelled throughout the region following Napoleon's victorious campaigns in Egypt. As others have noted, for Westerners the study of material remains of the past served as a tool in their political and expansionist ambitions; it also demonstrated the usefulness of archaeology to their subjects in their ambitions for independence and national identity (Pollock and Bernbeck 2005: 1-8). The interest of Westerners in the Middle East was also due in part to their fascination with the 'Lands of the Bible', where they believed the origins of Western civilization lay (Meskell 1998: 2-3; Rowlands 1998: 331-332). To Trigger the primary function of nationalistic archaeology is to bolster the pride and morale of nations or ethnic groups, and is probably strongest among peoples who feel politically threatened and insecure about their collective rights in face of more powerful nations (ibid. 360). It draws attention to the political and cultural achievements of those considered to be national *ancestors*. Under the 'nationalist archaeology' rubric, he includes the modern Israeli state where archaeology plays an important role in affirming the links between 'an intrusive population and its own ancient past'. By so doing, the Israeli state asserts its right to possess the land (ibid. 358-359).

Although archaeology and antiquities have been engaged in many other countries to strengthen social bonds and the national consciousness required for building modern nation-states (cf. Silberman 1989, 1995; Meskell 1998), archaeology in Israel has always been a political, academic and national obsession (Elon 1971: 279-289; 1997). The Israeli-American historian Yael Zerubavel described in *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (1995), the role of biblical archaeology in creating modern Israeli identity and undergirding Zionist claims to the land:

Archaeology ... becomes a national tool through which Israelis can recover their roots in the ancient past and the ancient homeland. The excavation itself symbolizes the historical continuity between Antiquity and National Revival, which the Zionist collective memory constructs and the archaeologist's narrative reinforces. To participate in the archaeological excavation... is to re-establish the connection with the national past and authenticate national memory (ibid. 59).

By *colonialist archaeology* Trigger meant that which developed either in countries where European settlement replaced or subjugated native populations, or where Europeans were politically and economically dominant over a long period. While colonisers believed they had good reason to extol their own past, they saw no reason to celebrate the past of those they supplanted or subjugated. Indeed, they emphasised what they regarded as the Other's primitive level of accomplishments as a way of justifying their own poor treatment of them. The countries he includes under this rubric are North America (the USA and Canada), Australia and New Zealand, and Africa. In the conclusion to his paper, he remarks that Israeli archaeology might be classified as *colonialist* were it not for the fact that Israelis claim to have ancient historical roots in the land.

Philip Kohl (1998: 237-238) also finds Israel difficult to classify. It is not an immigrant state like the United States or Australia, since the century-old immigration of Jews to Palestine has been regarded by Jews as a return to their ancestral homeland: a view visibly reinforced through continuous excavation of sites dated to biblical times. Kohl concludes it is probably best to consider the archaeology practised in the modern Israeli state 'a specific form of colonialist archaeology, as defined by Trigger'. We may observe here that many present-day Israeli archaeologists (such as Israel Finkelstein) would vigorously reject the suggestion that they are either nationalistic or colonialist in their approach to archaeology.

Trigger's third classification is *imperialist archaeology* which he defined as world-orientated archaeology. He associated it with a small number of states that (at the time of writing) enjoyed or had in the past exercised dominance over large areas of the world: specifically the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the U.S.A. This part of his paper is of considerable interest, but is not of direct relevance to our present study.

In recent years archaeologists have acknowledged that, like many academic disciplines, their profession was a Western product that emerged in the context of the European Enlightenment (Pollock and Bernbeck 2005: 1-2). In §1.2.2 we noted that similar concerns have been raised about correlations between critical biblical scholarship and imperial ideology during the Enlightenment era. Recognising that imperialism and Western systems of thought were deeply implicated with one another, archaeologists have begun to trace the intimate relationship between imperialism and forms of archaeological knowledge (cf. Gosden 2001: 245; van Dommelen 2006: 109-110; Lydon and Rizvi 2010: 18, 23).

2.1.3 Archaeology and postcolonialism

Chris Gosden (2001: 241) coined the oft-quoted comment that ‘All archaeology today is postcolonial’. This is obviously true, he says, in a chronological sense: most former colonies are independent, although today’s world continues to cope with the consequences of colonialism. He considers it only partially true, however, in an intellectual or political sense, because the impact of postcolonialism for the theory and practice of archaeology has not been widely recognised as yet among archaeologists (cf. Liebmann 2008a: 1-2).

At an early stage in the spread of postcolonial thinking into the field of archaeology, Lynn Meskell (1998: 4-5) noted some benefits postcolonial insights offer to archaeology. She observed, for example, that the past is not a static, archaic residue but an inherited artefact with an active influence in the present, through the interplay of officially inscribed meanings and popular (or, subaltern) knowledge and understanding (emphasised in postcolonial studies). She encouraged archaeologists to take up the challenge of the postcolonial critique: so far as I am aware, archaeologists in general seem to have been slow to respond to her challenge.

Lydon and Rizvi (2010: 23-26) note themes that have emerged as archaeologists have engaged with postcolonial studies, including recognition of the critique of colonial systems of thought. This has resulted in new accounts of the past that stress indigenous and subaltern experiences, and the development of practical strategies for restitution and decolonization. They cite Gosden’s view (2001:245) that archaeology and anthropology are outgrowths of liberal philosophy, whose agenda involved study of the ‘Other’ — an undertaking fundamental to justification of colonial intervention, providing a colonial tool for governance of subaltern peoples. They argue that use of the postcolonial critique to inform archaeological interpretation has opened up for archaeologists new directions of research, such as considering the issue of *identity* as a significant variable, particularly within colonial contexts of exchange. They highlight how Homi Bhabha’s concept of *hybridity* has been found particularly fruitful for archaeological interpretation in such contexts, and is now often used to replace older terminology such as ‘cultural intermixing’.

Peter van Dommelen (whose field of expertise is Mediterranean archaeology) for some time has examined questions posed by postcolonialism, and their practical application to archaeological interpretation, which he finds relevant for his work (e.g. 1997; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2011). In his first paper, (1997:305-306) he commented that, although Classical and

Mediterranean archaeology have long considered *colonial phenomena* (in terms of colonies founded by people coming into a territory from elsewhere), the concept of *colonialism* has been given little attention. The term ‘colonialism’ is generally avoided: preference is given to its active counterpart ‘colonization’. As a working definition, he takes ‘colonialism’ to indicate the presence of one or more groups of foreign people in a region at some distance from their place of origin (the ‘colonizers’), and the existence of asymmetrical socio-economic relationships of domination or exploitation between the colonizing groups and the inhabitants of the colonized region (1997:306). He finds the concept of *hybridity* a powerful analytical tool for scrutinizing ‘the ambiguous dimensions of colonial situations’ and understands *hybridization* to refer to the ways in which social, economic or ethnic groups construct for themselves a distinct identity within the colonial context and situate themselves vis-à-vis the dominant, i.e. colonial, culture. Although van Dommelen’s work relates to a Mediterranean context, I find aspects of his writings relevant for my present study, and will consider these in Chapters 6 and 7. (At the time of writing I am not aware of any archaeologist working in Israel/Palestine who takes a postcolonial approach.)

A compendium that offers critical perspectives on archaeologies of the Middle East was published in 2005.⁴¹ There is no reference to postcolonialism, but it contains papers on issues of imperialism and colonialism in a range of situations. Only two articles consider Israel/Palestine: one by an Israeli archaeologist,⁴² one by a Palestinian archaeologist.⁴³ Significantly, the editors state (ibid. 3) that they had difficulty finding authors willing to write about certain topics. ‘This was particularly challenging for some of the controversial issues, especially those that touch directly on the intertwining of archaeology and modern political issues’. Two other collections specifically address some issues about archaeology and postcolonialism; each contains one article with a direct bearing on Israel/Palestine.⁴⁴

⁴¹ S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck (eds.) (2005) *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*.

⁴² Finkelstein, I. (2005) ‘Archaeology, Bible, and the History of the Levant in the Iron Age’, in S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck (eds.) *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*: 207-222.

⁴³ Yahya, A.H. (2005) ‘Archaeology and Nationalism in the Holy Land’, in S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck (eds.) *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*: 66-77.

⁴⁴ Scham, S. (2008) ‘Disinheriting Heritage: Explorations in the Contentious History of Archaeology in the Middle East’, in M. Liebmann and U.Z. Rizvi (eds.) *Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique*: 165-175; Porter, B.W. (2010) ‘Near Eastern Archaeology: Imperial Pasts, Postcolonial Presents, and the Possibilities of a Decolonized Future’, in J. Lydon and U.Z. Rizvi (eds.) *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology*: 51-60.

2.1.4 Archaeology and the Bible

As noted above, Napoleon's victorious campaigns in Egypt stimulated interest in the 'Orient' and increasing numbers of travellers fanned out across the region. Many of the earliest travellers were religious pilgrims, eager to discover locations where the great events recorded in the Bible took place, and to prove the historicity of the biblical stories. N.A. Silberman (1991) analysed the impact of the *biblical concept* of 'Desolation and Restoration' on Near Eastern archaeology and Western attitudes to the Arabs of Palestine. Western archaeologists and explorers in the nineteenth century expressed profound dismay at what they saw as 'the degraded modern level of civilization in the region in comparison with the impressiveness of its ancient remains' (ibid. 76-77). To them it was nothing less than literal fulfilment of biblical prophecy (e.g. Isaiah 6:11; Ezekiel 7:24) that the Holy Land would be laid waste until 'the end of days'. Christian preachers identified the Arabs as God's chosen agents of desolation (ibid. 81).

A lively record of a mid-nineteenth century group of pilgrims was written by Mark Twain, who arrived in Palestine in 1867 with a group of about one hundred and fifty Americans. In his account, whimsically entitled *The Innocents Abroad*, he remarked that most books he had read about the Holy Land appeared to reflect the varied creeds of their authors, who set out 'seeking evidences indorsing their several creeds': and duly 'found' a Presbyterian/Baptist/Catholic/Methodist/ or Episcopalian Palestine; and so it was with his group also. Reflecting on this, he wrote (Twain 1881: 472-473):

Honest as these men's intentions may have been, they were full of partialities and prejudices, they entered the country with their verdicts already prepared, and they could no more write dispassionately and impartially about it than they could about their own wives and children. Our pilgrims brought *their* verdicts with them.

The impulse which drove the early 'biblical archaeologists' to the Holy Land was very similar to that of Mark Twain's pilgrims; they too undoubtedly had honest intentions, but were likewise 'full of partialities and prejudices...[bringing] their verdicts with them.' Amy Dockser Marcus, a twenty-first century journalist and former Middle East correspondent for the Wall Street Journal, who has travelled widely in the region, commented: 'It is not easy to pinpoint the date when religious tourism ends and the field of biblical archaeology begins in earnest' (Marcus 2000: 12).

For the purposes of this study, it is not essential to relate the history of 'biblical archaeology' from its formal beginnings in the nineteenth century to the present. Archaeological matters specifically important for the task in hand will be raised as

necessary within the relevant contexts below. In this section, I wish simply to highlight basic issues concerning the nature and development of the Bible/archaeology relationship. John Laughlin (2000: Chapter 2) provides a concise but informative history of the relationship between archaeology and the Bible. He prefaces this chapter with an apt quotation of Sir Mortimer Wheeler's verdict that Palestine is the place where 'more sins have probably been committed in the name of archaeology than on any commensurate portion of the earth's surface'.

There are many complex issues and questions involved in this topic. Even deciding on the most appropriate name for the discipline has proved controversial. For many years, archaeological research in Palestine and adjacent countries where 'biblical' sites are found went by the name 'Biblical Archaeology'. However, some scholars (particularly William Dever) urged that this term should be abandoned, and alternatives such as 'Near Eastern Archaeology' or 'Syro-Palestinian Archaeology' (Dever's preferred term) should be adopted. Silberman (1998) has written in illuminating detail about the bitter controversy surrounding this issue and in particular about Dever's role in the controversy, especially in the academic consortium known as *The American Schools of Oriental Research*. Dever vehemently protested that his aim was to establish archaeology in the Levant as an independent, secular and professional discipline, and that what he seeks is an honest dialogue between those whose interest is archaeology and those whose basic concern is biblical studies (cf. his defence in Dever 1999).

The contemporary view of the majority of archaeologists working in the region is that it is not the purpose of archaeology to *prove* the Bible is in any sense historically 'true' or otherwise. This raises the fundamental question: what *is* the purpose of archaeology? Laughlin, an experienced field archaeologist, suggests that we should begin by stating what archaeologists do *not* do (ibid. 13). They do not 'dig up history' of the Bible or of anything else; nor do they excavate ancient economic, political, or social systems, and they certainly do not uncover ancient religions. The only things archaeologists discover from the past are *artefacts*: the material remains left by human activity or by natural activities (the latter sometimes called 'ecofacts'). Properly interpreted, these artefacts may provide a certain amount of information about issues such as those indicated above, but we must recognise that all interpretation is subjective. Even if artefacts include inscriptions or texts, they do not interpret themselves; two archaeologists looking at precisely the same data can come to quite different conclusions about what the data *mean*.

Regarding the assessment of biblical data on archaeological grounds, it is important that any ‘conclusion’ reached must always be kept open to modification, or even to rejection, should new archaeological data warrant this. In many cases, archaeological data may provide the only contemporary ‘witness’ for ‘events’ recorded in the Bible. Thus, archaeology is important because it has the potential to provide a separate witness to history and a source of distinct and independent data to shed light on the biblical text (Grabbe 2007:10). In a useful passage on ‘The Role of Archaeology and the Definition of *Biblical Archaeology*’ Mazar (2007: 31-33) emphasises that interpretation of the biblical text in light of archaeological data may be influenced by personal values, beliefs, ideology, and predisposition or attitude toward the text or artefact. He asserts: ‘Many archaeological conclusions are not certifiably factual, no matter when or by whom they were proposed.’

Despite all the controversy surrounding the term ‘biblical archaeology,’ Mazar considers that the *term* should continue to be used, but he carefully defines it as a *generic* term that embraces all aspects of archaeological research related to the world of the Bible. This ‘world’ includes the entire Middle East and eastern Mediterranean regions; the archaeology of each region contributes in some measure to our understanding of the world of the Bible, and as such it contributes to biblical archaeology. Mazar does not see biblical archaeology as an independent scientific discipline but as what he calls ‘the shopping cart’ that collects data from the various branches of Near Eastern archaeology and utilizes them in studying the Bible and its world. This is an approach that I have found fruitful in my current research with regard to the texts in Judges 1-5.

Mazar rejects criticism of his ‘Bible-centred’ orientation, on the one hand by those who do not accept that the Bible is relevant to the Iron Age, and on the other by those who maintain that archaeology is a self-contained discipline and ‘professional archaeologists’ should have no involvement in the study of biblical history or culture. He affirms that, for him and for many others, the relationship between the artefact and the text is the essence of biblical archaeology, in the terms in which he has defined it; it remains for those who hold this position, he says, to cope with the questions raised, avoiding on the one hand a naive, fundamentalist approach to the text, and on the other hand ‘any excessively manipulative, uncritical, or imaginative interpretations’ (ibid. 33).

2.2 History

Introduction

When considering ‘history’ I find helpful the following words of Michel-Rolph Trouillot (*Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* 1995: 2, 22-23): ‘Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators’. The inherent ambivalence of the word ‘history’ indicates this dual participation. In everyday usage ‘history’ means the *facts* of the matter and a *narrative* of those facts: ‘what *happened*’ and ‘what is *said* to have happened’. The first meaning puts the emphasis on the socio-historical process, the second on our knowledge of that process or on a story about that process. To some extent every historical narrative is a *fictional* story, but it is ‘fiction’ with special power: the power that it is *not regarded* as fiction by those who hear it. To ‘consumers’ of the history, it is a true account of the past, which not only shapes their view of the past, but also explains the present and directs the future (ibid. 5). As the title of his book makes clear, a key feature of his philosophy of history is that much of the past (even that which is preserved in some form of visible record) is ‘silenced’: passed over or pushed into the background (ibid. 26-27). Trouillot’s concept of ‘silencing’ is important; we shall return to it in later sections.

2.2.1 The *Longue Durée*

An important insight often forgotten in historical discussion is the extent to which any ‘history’ is shaped by long-term factors generally outside the control of the actors. This insight was developed by the French *Annales* School of historiography which recognised that different aspects of history have their own rhythm and temporal progress. While some historical features change quite rapidly, others change more slowly (Grabbe, 2007: 5). Recognition of these processes led Fernand Braudel (1980: 25-54) to distinguish three levels of history: (1) *la longue durée*: changes that take place over long time-spans, in terms not only of decades but of millennia; (2) *histoire conjonctures*: medium-term rhythms and processes such as the slower cycles of socio-economic change; (3) *histoire événementielle*: the level of ‘events’, specific outcomes of the thoughts and actions of individuals, the domain of the chronicler and the journalist.

The *Annales* approach to history gives priority to the *longue durée*. Long-term factors that influence historical processes include: *physical geography* (geology, climate, vegetation, types of terrain for animal husbandry and agriculture, communication routes,

and other features of the physical environs); *available natural resources* (essentials for daily life, communal modes of making a living, developing and retaining traditional lifestyles); *long-term historical factors* (movements of population, the rise, decline and fall of empires and kingdoms, traditional alliances, rivalries or feuds).

According to Finkelstein (1994; 2007: 79-82), large-scale archaeological surveys in the Southern Levant demonstrated that the emergence of Israel in the hill country of Canaan was not a unique or one-time event. The highlands were characterized by three waves of settlement. The first peaked in the late-fourth millennium BCE, but some dramatic crisis led to the abandonment of most settlements in the early-second millennium. The second settlement wave happened during the eighteenth/seventeenth to sixteenth centuries, when an impressive system of centres developed; another demographic crisis led to the collapse of this system during the late-sixteenth to twelfth centuries. The third wave (which marked the rise of the so-called ‘proto-Israelites’) occurred in the twelfth to tenth centuries.

Finkelstein (1996) acknowledges the significance of short-term, local, political, economic, and social occurrences such as the migration of local or ‘alien’ groups, and broader events such as foreign interventions. These non-cyclic phenomena provide an explanation for dissimilarities between various phases of the cyclic processes. Thus the emergence of Israel and other groups in the southern Levant was determined by long-term and short-term historical circumstances. K. Lawson Younger remarks (1999: 187) that, while Finkelstein’s insights are helpful, it must be recognised that lack of data for the history of the ANE limits our ability to elucidate cyclic patterns.

The *longue durée* context is significant for the differing fortunes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Judah in the south. There was considerable disparity of natural resources and economic potential between the two kingdoms, ‘with Judah continually the poorer’ (Grabbe 2007: 36). Judah suffered the double disadvantage of lack of good soil for growing grain and very low levels of rainfall; agriculture was largely at subsistence level and pastoralism was important to the economy. Israel (standing at a major crossroads for trade) was greatly advantaged. When the two Israelite kingdoms first appear in the inscriptions of powerful neighbours such as Assyria in the first millennium BCE, a marked division between Israel and Judah is already apparent. In Judges 5 there is a hint of this long-term division, in spite of their supposedly being one nation of twelve tribes.

2.2.2 Historical-cultural overview (ca. 1550-1200 & 745-681 BCE)

Introduction

The aim of this section is to give an historical-cultural overview of the A.N.E. during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BCE) and a critical period in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (ca. 745-681 BCE), as a framework within which to set the biblical accounts of Israel's settlement in Canaan and the fates that befell Israel and Judah.

2.2.2.1 The Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BCE)

During this era considerable wealth accumulated and, around the eastern Mediterranean, there was a free flow of people, goods and ideas, which resulted in an unprecedented level of international contacts and cultural exchange. Local power-bases developed complex political, economic, social, and cultural interactions, generally backed by military dominance. Six major kingdoms, or empires, arose and fell over this period: Kassite Babylon, Assyria, Hatti, Mittani, Mycenae and Egypt. Of these powers, Egypt became the greatest in territorial expansion, accumulation of wealth, and longevity.

The Egyptian New Kingdom (Dynasties 18–20; ca. 1550-1050 BCE) marked a high point in the history of Egypt. During the Late Bronze Age, Egypt dominated most of Syria-Palestine, with the two-fold aim of providing a buffer against attack from rival powers and controlling the major highways connecting Egypt and Arabia with the Levant and Mesopotamia. Northward expansion brought Egypt into conflict with Mittani and the Hittites. An agreement was reached with Mittani ca. 1400 BCE, an agreement that in effect marked the downfall of Mittani (Pitard 1998: 42-45). By the time of Dynasty 19, the Hittite empire had penetrated to Syria, and a famous battle took place between the Hittites and Egyptians at Qadesh (ca. 1274). Following an indecisive outcome, they renounced further hostile actions against one another, but Hittite power soon collapsed (Gottwald 2008: 15).

A large trove of correspondence ('the Amarna letters' ca. 1424-1350 BCE—including letters from a 'prince of Jerusalem') between Egypt and its Canaanite vassals indicates that the Egyptian empire was administered more loosely than later empires, especially the Neo-Assyrian Empire with which the kingdoms of Israel and Judah contended. Egypt's basic mode of control was to station Egyptian 'governors' at garrisoned sites in the small city-states or 'kingdoms' of Syria-Palestine, to ensure loyalty and payment of tribute on demand, and also to frustrate the constant tendency of these city-states to fight one another.

To counter any attempt by their vassals to renege on the duties expected of them, Egypt undertook periodic military incursions to punish disloyalty and reassert Egyptian hegemony (Pitard, 1998: 46-50; Redmount, 1998: 82-87; Gottwald, 2008: 13-14). The Twentieth Dynasty (ca. 1200-1050 BCE) saw the close of the New Kingdom. During the reign of Ramesses III (1180-1150), the mysterious ‘Sea Peoples’, of whom the Philistines are the best known, invaded Egyptian territory, but appear to have been repulsed. Toward the end of Dynasty 20, Egypt was weakened by being divided into north and south, and control over Palestine was gradually lost, probably ca. 1130 BCE. It is important to remember that throughout the Late Bronze Age, Canaan was dominated by Egypt. Grabbe (2007: 64) comments, ‘The history of the region is the history of an Egyptian appendage’.

2.2.2.2 The Neo-Assyrian Empire (ca. 745-612 BCE)

The Neo-Assyrian period lasted from ca. 900 to 612 BCE. My focus is on the era of the three greatest Assyrian rulers, who all practised population re-settlement: a key policy of the Assyrian Empire (cf. Radner 2011c). Israeli archaeologist Nadav Na’aman (1993b) analysed population changes in Palestine following Assyrian deportations, based on new excavations and surveys in modern Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. He believes the welter of archaeological evidence can now be combined with data derived from written sources of evidence (Assyrian, biblical and epigraphic documents) for a better understanding of the effects Assyrian deportations had on the demography, economy and culture of Palestine in the late 8th - 7th centuries BCE. As Na’aman’s findings seem highly relevant for important issues discussed later in this study, I propose here to summarise his conclusions, and will consider them in more detail where appropriate.

Deportations in the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE)⁴⁵

Tiglath-Pileser III conquered southern Syria and Palestine during his campaigns in 734-732 BCE, and annexed to Assyria some occupied areas, while other parts became vassal kingdoms; deportations took place from the captured territories. The archaeological evidence indicates that after these campaigns, Tiglath-Pileser III annexed the northern parts of Israel (Galilee, Dor and Gilead); only the hill country of Samaria remained in the hands of its last king, Hoshea. Part of the population of Israel was deported: the surviving inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III are incomplete, and the number of deportees is unclear. It is apparent from archaeological evidence that the Assyrians did not resettle the Galilee

⁴⁵ Dates are those used by Na’aman; there are slight variations on some of these dates elsewhere.

region, as they did in other parts of their realm, but left it in a state of partial abandonment and desolation. Na'aman (1993b: 106) suggested that the reason lies in the relative marginality of the area and its poor economic potential. Younger (1998: 225) speculated that the Assyrians' primary concern was unhindered access to the Philistine coast and Egypt. Whatever the reason for its desolate state, the implication is that the region of Galilee and its remaining population were of no great value or interest to the Assyrians.

Deportations under Sargon II (721-705 BCE)

On the death of Shalmaneser V (who ruled briefly, 727-721) and the accession of Sargon II, rebellions broke out around the empire. Sargon quashed internal revolt in Assyria to secure his throne, then conducted a victorious campaign against the Elamites in southern Mesopotamia, and conquered the rebellious provinces of Aram-Damascus. He next moved southwards, captured Gaza and defeated an Egyptian army. His programme of deportation soon began. Sargon II's programme differed from that of Tiglath-Pileser III, in that Sargon practised 'two-way deportation'—deportations *from* and deportations *to* Palestine — and there is considerable extant information about these deportations.

(1) Deportations from Palestine

In the course of his campaign southwards in 721 BCE, Sargon captured Samaria (which had joined the rebellion against Assyria), deported its people and turned it into an Assyrian province, Samerina. This marked the official downfall of the kingdom of Israel. The large number of deportees (27,280 according to Assyrian records) indicates that they were taken from the district of Samaria rather than just from the city itself. On that same campaign, he also deported the king of Gaza and took 9,033 of its people as captives. In 712 BCE, the Assyrian army marched again to the coast of Philistia, suppressed the rebellion of the king of Ashdod, and deported many of its people (the numbers for Ashdod are not known).

(2) Deportations to Palestine

Na'aman summarises the detailed archaeological evidence as follows. Having deported thousands of local inhabitants from Samaria and the coast of Philistia to various parts of the Assyrian empire (720-708 BCE), Sargon transferred in their place various population groups. People from the Zagros region of eastern Mesopotamia were settled near the Besor River (the Brook of Egypt) and probably also in the kingdom of Ashdod. Other groups from Babylonia and the Syro-Arabian desert were settled in the Samaria hill country as far south as the region of Bethel (see also Na'aman and Zadok 1988).

Deportations in the time of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE)

The Assyrian campaign in 701 BCE against Hezekiah (who may have led an anti-Assyrian coalition), and the siege of Jerusalem are related in Sennacherib's annals. Analysis of these annals indicates that his aim was to break and weaken Judah, the strongest kingdom that remained near the Egyptian border, by destroying as many Judean sites as possible and deporting thousands of their inhabitants to unknown places in the empire. Unlike his father's policy, Sennacherib's policy was 'one-way' deportation. Excavations in Judah have provided abundant evidence of how thoroughly destructive his campaign was, the effects of which remained even in the last years of Josiah's reign (639-609). After massive Assyrian deportations in 701 BCE, Judah lacked the human resources that would have been required to resettle and restore the destroyed and deserted areas.

We noted in §1.2.2 that a postcolonial optic for the study of the Hebrew Bible involves an analysis of the texts that seriously considers their socio-cultural context in light of the socio-political reality of a succession of empires. Segovia (2000: 126) emphasises that 'The shadow of empire in the production of ancient texts is to be highlighted.' The shadow of the Assyrian empire in particular will be considered in some detail during this study.

2.2.3 History and the Bible

We shall return to the question of history and the Bible in various contexts during this study. In this section, I propose to highlight briefly issues prominent in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Some of these issues are no longer of such burning concern as they seemed to be for a time, but their obituary cannot yet be written and repercussions of the controversies they caused continue to the present.

In an essay on the future of history after its encounters with historicism, postmodernism and postcolonialism, the historian Arif Dirlik (2002: 75-76) describes a crisis in historical consciousness, created by postmodernist questioning of historians' claims to historical truth. He insists that historians have always recognised the tentativeness and contingency of claims to historical truth. Our understanding of the past has certainly been complicated by new kinds of history (such as feminist and postcolonial reinterpretations of the past) that have appeared since the 1970s, but there is no need to panic about the status of history as such (ibid. 76-79). Historians should not pretend that the cultural and political changes of recent decades have little bearing on historical truth as traditionally understood ; nor

should they disavow the challenges that confront them as a result of these changes. Postmodernist questioning raises issues with which historians must engage; these questions do not mean the disappearance of history, but they point to more complicated ways of grasping the past, understanding the present, and looking to the future (ibid. 86-88).

Similar issues affected the discipline of biblical history, particularly the history of 'ancient Israel'. In the 1990s, biblical historiography was dominated by the storm that raged over theories propounded by the so-called 'minimalists' or 'revisionists': for example, T.L. Thomson 1992, K.W. Whitelam 1996, P.R. Davies 1997, N.P. Lemche 1998. While not constituting 'a school', they hold in common extreme scepticism towards the 'history of ancient Israel', considering the biblical account and the modern 'critical' reconstruction of Israelite history mere 'inventions' (cf. Moore 2006: 75-107). To R.P. Carroll (1998: 51) 'minimalists' are a 'new generation of theory-driven scholars...Much of what passes for postmodernist practices looks like a kind of neo-fundamentalism'.

We should recognise that a fundamentalist approach is not the province of 'Bible-believers' alone: dogmatic scepticism that rejects or denigrates the biblical text can be just as 'fundamentalist' as an ardent refusal to acknowledge that the Bible may be wrong (cf. Grabbe 2007: 23). Hans Barstad (1998) addressed this issue in his essay on 'the strange fear of the Bible' and the 'bibliophobia' manifest in recent ancient Israelite historiography. He affirms that as an historical source, the Hebrew Bible is of the 'same' nature and quality as other ancient Near Eastern literary texts; if we renounce the use of the Hebrew Bible on the basis that it is late and fictional, we shall have to do so with regard to most ancient sources (ibid. 127).

According to Collins (2005: 32) the 'most postmodern work' is Whitelam's 1996 book titled 'The Invention of Ancient Israel', sub-titled 'The Silencing of Palestinian History'. He challenged the legitimacy of 'ancient Israel' as an historical subject and criticised the focus of 'historical scholarship' on *Israelite* rather than *Palestinian* history. He has been widely criticised on various grounds, e.g. his argument that the history of the ancient Canaanites should be considered 'Palestinian history': Bronze Age Canaanites were not 'Palestinians' (cf. Collins ibid. 64-69). However, he highlighted fundamental biases that are now generally recognised to be manifest in traditional scholarship about 'ancient Israel'. In addition, from a postcolonial perspective his work is of value because he drew overdue attention to the 'Others' who are in the margins of the biblical narrative.

A common assertion of the ‘revisionists’ is that the Hebrew Bible is a product of the postexilic period. Davies favours the Persian period; Lemche and Thompson prefer the Hellenistic era. A late dating for the production of the Hebrew Bible has two principal consequences for regarding the Bible as a source of evidence concerning Israel’s past. Firstly, the further away in time the text is from the events it purports to describe, the less likely it is to contain reliable ‘history’. Secondly, if (as ‘revisionists’ maintain) the Hebrew Bible was invented in the postexilic period as the leaders of Judaism sought to create an ancient heritage and consolidate a common identity, the less objective and the more ideological it becomes. (Re. the ‘late dating’ of the Hebrew Bible see §3.1)

It is important to recognise that complete objectivity is an unattainable ideal; we all have biases and ideologies that make us gravitate towards theories with which we feel ‘comfortable’. There is always more than one point of view on any historical question; the subjective nature of much ‘scholarly’ argument is a fact with which we must learn to live. It seems to me that the most important contribution of postmodernist interpretations of the Bible and of history is how they draw attention to voices from the margins, and to Others who are ‘hidden’ or appear only as a foil in the biblical or other historical texts. It is also salutary to be aware of possible hidden agendas, conscious or not, in what claims to be objective scholarship, and to seek consensus in academic discourse wherever possible.

2.2.4 History and Memory

From the early 1980s, the emergence of the ‘memory industry’ (Klein 2000)/‘memory boom’ (Winter 2001; 2006) presented the discipline of history with an enormous challenge (Rosenfeld 2007: 508). Historians considered memory the raw material for history, or as a tool for unearthing the truth of the past. The ‘new historiography’ of the seventies endowed memory with greater status, but in the eighties memory emerged as a competitor with history (Dirlik 2002: 83). The memory literature of the latter period is connected most closely with traumatic events such as the *Holocaust* (Palestinians would add *al-Nakba*, their ‘Catastrophe’) which are beyond the grasp of language or any form of representation, much less of any historical account or attempt at explanation. Living memories of those who experienced traumatic events may achieve what is beyond the scope of history, by adding *moral* force to history for people seeking reparation, or by strengthening the self-image of newly-empowered groups striving to overcome their image as victims. Replacing memories of victimization or oppression is a feature of postcolonialism (ibid. 84).

Historians often forget, suppress or ‘silence’ memories inconvenient for their purposes (cf. Trouillot 1995), but what is sometimes called ‘social memory’ (Olick and Robbins 1998) or ‘cultural memory’ (Davies 2009; Hendel 2011) may make it possible to catch glimpses of people who have been marginalized or even erased from official history. In the 1920s French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs formulated a theory of ‘collective memory’: largely overlooked until historians discovered it in the 1980s. To Halbwachs memory is a matter of how minds work together in *society*: ‘It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories’ (Halbwachs 1992: 38). Coser pointed out in his Introduction that while, for Halbwachs, collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent *body* of people, it is *individuals* as group members who *remember* (ibid. 22).

The Jewish scholar Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1982: xv) expressed his indebtedness to Halbwachs ‘in spirit if not always in substance’ for his insistence that ‘collective memory is not a metaphor but a social reality transmitted and sustained through the conscious efforts and institutions of the group’. Although it was the ancient Israelites who ‘first assigned a decisive significance to history’ as the revelation of God’s will and purpose (ibid. 8), ‘[the] biblical appeal to remember ... has little to do with curiosity about the past’ (ibid. 10). For ancient Israel, memory and history bifurcated: ‘Memory flowed, above all, through two channels: ritual and recital’ (ibid. 11). Concerning the modern dilemmas faced by Jewish historians, he insists that ‘Jewish historiography can never substitute for Jewish memory’ (ibid. 101; cf. Olick & Robbins 1998: 110).

Regarding the question of history and collective/cultural memories in biblical studies, Ronald Hendel (2001: 602) affirms that ‘the historian has much to investigate regarding the collective memories of a culture.’ Cultural memories tend to be a mixture of historical truth and fiction, including elements such as historical details, folklore, ethnic awareness, ideology. They are communicated orally and textually and circulate in a discursive network. In a paper on the Exodus in biblical memory, Hendel (2001) used Jan Assmann’s concept of *mnemohistory*, which is concerned ‘not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered’ (Assmann 1997: 9). Mnemohistory involves a theory of cultural transmission that helps us understand history as an active process of meaning-making through time (ibid. 9). The data for mnemohistory are artefacts, texts, and other evidence of cultural discourse about the remembered past; the aim is to discern how this discourse has been constituted, and how it may inform and influence the present.

Concerning its use in biblical studies, Hendel sees in the approach of mnemohistory some analogies to the ‘history-of-religions school’ of Hermann Gunkel, particularly in its focus on the products of tradition; like much of Gunkel’s work, it endeavours to locate the *Sitze im Leben* of such traditions, in order to explore the social and institutional structures in which they may have circulated (Hendel 2001: 603). In his concluding section on ‘Time and the Exodus’ (ibid. 620-622) he argues that ‘The historically true and the symbolically true are interwoven in such a way that the past authorizes and encompasses the present.’ He finds a useful model for the temporal dimensions of the exodus story in the tripartite rhythm of historical time described by Braudel: event, conjuncture, and *longue durée* (cf. §2.2.1 above).

In his book on the Politics of Ancient Israel, Norman K. Gottwald (2001: 24-25) raised the issue of history and memory when stating the position adopted in this study, regarding the biblical account of Israel’s history. When the Hebrew Bible states that Israel lived through tribal, monarchic, and colonial periods — he considers the entire exilic period ‘colonial’ — Gottwald takes the biblical account to be correct in that claim (ibid. 96-112, 235-245). He concedes that our knowledge of the details concerning this political journey (from tribal through monarchic to colonial) is incomplete and often very fragmentary, particularly with regard to the first stage in consequence of the preliterate status of Israel prior to statehood. Nevertheless, ‘we do possess considerable written traces, meager as they are in solid information, of that first stage of Israel’s life before it became a state. Above all, the memory of a tribal Israel must be accepted as formally believable, whatever we make of the reported details, because of the very nature of state formation.’ He argues that states do not rise within a demographic and cultural wasteland, even though state-origin myths (such as we may find in the book of Judges) tend to stress the chaos and bleakness of life experienced by the community before state-imposed order prevailed. State regimes have as their foundation a population that is already possessed of some form and degree of social coherence, even though its pre-state social structures and traditions may have been diverse and conflicted.

Interpretative approaches such as those outlined in this section on issues of history and memory will be discussed further in relevant contexts below.

Chapter 3 - Biblical Interpretation

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3.1 Dating of the Hebrew Bible

Many biblical scholars have not been persuaded by the minimalist hypotheses. In this section, we consider examples of evidence provided by experts from other relevant disciplines who challenge the late dating of the Hebrew texts.

3.1.1 The evidence of linguistics

In view of the emphasis on the Persian period in recent biblical scholarship, Barr (2000: 88) found it strange that ‘extremely little attempt’ had been made to master Old Persian. ‘To judge from the literature produced so far, [these scholars] mostly know little or nothing of Old or Middle Persian and are ... dependent on secondary sources.’ In the ‘Academy’ Hebrew studies have been extended almost solely into the Semitic language family (e.g. Ugaritic), while Iranian languages (from a quite different family) are almost untouched. Grabbe (2001: 334) comments that in this area they ‘are probably on their shakiest grounds in the eyes of contemporary scholarship’.

Linguist Avi Hurvitz (1997: 304-311) was highly critical of minimalists' claim that biblical Hebrew was a literary language constructed during the Persian period (which is a cornerstone of their argument for the postexilic composition of the Bible). In response to P.R. Davies's *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (1992), Hurvitz challenged him on two issues: (1) the degree to which previous scholarly research in the linguistic realm of biblical Hebrew was taken into account; (2) the extent to which evidence of extra-biblical written sources is used. Hurvitz (*ibid.* 305 n. 10) argued that of those few scholars whose linguistic work was cited by Davies, some were inappropriately and incorrectly quoted. On the first issue, he claimed that Davies had ignored a wealth of information already available about the potential chronological development of Biblical Hebrew (*ibid.* 305-306); on the second issue, he reviewed external evidence in Palestine (mainly inscriptions) for 'classical' and 'post-classical' biblical Hebrew: evidence which demonstrates the development of Hebrew during the first millennium BCE (*ibid.* 307-311). Preserved within the Hebrew Bible are significant numbers of texts demonstrably older than the Persian period (cf. Hurvitz 2000).

3.1.2 Developments in archaeology

The development of New (or, Processual) Archaeology (cf. §2.1.1), with its interest in culture and its relationship to the environment, opened up new possibilities for crossover between archaeology and other disciplines. In the 1980s, the crossover between social-scientific study of ancient Israel and Processual Archaeology, with its methods for gathering evidence about daily life and people's relationship with the environment, led to important contributions to the understanding of ancient Israel (cf. M.B. Moore 2006:155).

Archaeologist Lawrence E. Stager's seminal article, 'The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel', published in 1985, gained wide acceptance. He described village and family life and the adaptation to the environment for which he found evidence in the archaeological record. He showed that the biblical concept of the 'father's house' (*bêt 'āb*) was a social designation, referring to an extended family functioning as one unit in the economic, religious and political sphere. In addition, Stager showed that evidence for this social unit is to be found in almost all Iron Age rural villages throughout Canaan. Social-scientific knowledge combined with the archaeological evidence demonstrated that the *bêt 'āb* was the predominant social unit in rural Israel and Judah (cf. Dever 2001: 123-124). Dever remarked that Stager's findings are archaeological 'facts on the ground' that correspond astonishingly well with descriptions in the book of Judges of daily life and over-all socio-economic conditions that purport to be 'factual'.

Processual archaeologists, with their focus on the adaptations of a population to its physical surroundings, emphasise factors such as a site's relationship to geographical features and evidence for agricultural practice. Postprocessual archaeology focusses on contextual concerns, including the natural environment, but is also concerned with the socio-cultural environment; all social activity has to do with meaning and interpretation: making sense of things, hence its alternative designation 'interpretative archaeology'. Some scholars have used aspects of postprocessual archaeology to address questions about Israel's past, including some pertaining to 'ethnicity'.

Sandra Scham's 2002 article on 'The Days of the Judges: When Men and Women Were Animals and Trees Were Kings' examines the symbolic nature of central hill country artefacts associated with 'early Israel', alongside texts from the book of Judges associated with the same context. She remarks on debates between 'traditional' and 'revisionist' scholars centring on the veracity of the biblical text, and on trends that focus on establishing, or refuting, the 'ethnicity' of ancient Israelites. Both currents fail to address the potential usefulness of the Hebrew Bible for elucidation of ancient cultures (ibid. 37-40). Scham explores what can be known about what she labels the 'lifeways' of people in the hill country of Canaan in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. She finds craft specialization, agricultural expertise, and an apparent urban-rural dichotomy in the hills of Ephraim (ibid. 48-50). She continues with close scrutiny of imagery found on individual artefacts and concludes that the material culture speaks of co-existence between agricultural and urban crafts as well as wild and domesticated animal exploitation (ibid. 50). She sees this dichotomy borne out, for example, in the story of Deborah, Barak, and Jael (located in Ephraim) because in these stories images, names and plots indicate positive and negative associations with urbanism and technology, as well as untamed nature.

The 'separate cultural strands' evidenced by plots in Judges 'had a pivotal role in the formation of the variegated cultural sensibilities that came to be known as Israelite' (ibid. 63). Scham's conclusions do not provide reconstructions of particular events or individuals; rather, they give insights to the mentalities and 'lifeways' of people remembered as the ancestors of Israel and Judah. To me her approach indicates that the book of Judges has preserved stories that accurately reflect aspects of the culture of various groups in Late Bronze/Early Iron Age hill-country Canaan. M.B. Moore (2006: 158) comments that 'the postprocessual approach allows Scham to say more about the time and place than most recent historians have felt confident saying.'

3.1.3 Historical critique

Rainer Albertz (2001) expressed disappointment that Niels Peter Lemche failed to develop the thesis of his 1993 article that proposed the composition/invention of the Bible in the Hellenistic period. Among his criticisms is the fact that Hellenistic culture is considered to have been more of a *threat* to the national identity of Near Eastern cultures than *fertile soil* for its growth. Although Lemche made some effort to deal with critics' objections, Albertz finds his responses mainly superficial. Hans Barstad (2002) discussed the methodical reasoning in Lemche (1993), concluding that, 'quite contrary to Lemche's claims, *I have not found one single argument in Lemche's article that really can be said to support a dating to Hellenistic times*' (Barstad's emphasis; 2002: 150). In his 2001 essay he focussed on the broader question of whether the 'Deuteronomic' sections of the Bible reveal the influence of *Greek* models. By means of a survey of the 'common theology of the ancient Near East', he demonstrated that the biblical material is far more closely related to *ancient Near Eastern* models.

In a review of T.L. Thompson's 1999 book on 'The Bible in History', L. L. Grabbe (2000) expressed disappointment at errors in the book's use of Second Temple Jewish writings. Because Thompson sought to date the Bible to the Hellenistic period or later, Grabbe was surprised that he made so many fundamental errors of fact. Moreover, Grabbe said, 'I have the distinct impression that his errors relating to Second Temple Judaism are often those of ignorance rather than oversight' (ibid. 123). Not only is Thompson's grasp of the Hellenistic and Roman periods weak, failing to master the sources and scholarship, some original sources are distinctly rejected and then 'covertly used as a basis for many assertions' (ibid. 140). James Barr (2000: 89) made similar remarks about the basic weaknesses of revisionist scholarship: 'one's doubts about revisionist positions are only increased by the hectic and hazardous character of some arguments that are used'. The revisionist picture 'far from being well evidenced historically...rests very little upon evidence, very largely on the conceptions and methods of those who have constructed it' (ibid. 100-101). For a critique of Davies and Thompson, see Nicholson (2004); concerning Davies and Lemche see Lambert (2004).

Israeli archaeologist Amihai Mazar wrote an informative paper in response to 'the current state of research on the history of ancient Israel [that] includes a wide spectrum of views, from extreme fundamentalism to extreme revisionism' (2003: 85). Recognising that many scholars believe that the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History (see §3.2.2)

were written during the 7th century BCE or later, and were further edited during the postexilic and Hellenistic periods, the question he seeks to address is the extent to which the biblical texts relied on and even cited earlier materials. He notes that extreme revisionists reject the existence of any reliable Iron Age historical data in the biblical text, while more moderate revisionists argue that the biblical texts were composed during the 7th century BCE, but are of minimal value for constructing the earlier periods in Israelite history. Yet, many mainstream scholars hold that, although the texts may have been written during the 7th century BCE, they incorporate much earlier material. His aim is to justify this ‘middle-of-the road’ approach from an archaeological position.

Mazar considers the settlement period to be the first period for which biblical data can be ‘cautiously tested against extrabiblical documents and archaeological evidence’. He believes such a comparison demonstrates that the biblical narratives about the period of the judges and the early monarchy provide ‘a valid general framework’ of Israelite history (ibid. 86). He notes the great influence on the biblical literature of Canaanite language, literature, and mythology, indicating continuous cultural development from the 2nd to the 1st millennium BCE and the incorporation of ‘Canaanite elements’ into Israelite culture at an early period (cf. Cross 1973, 1983; Day 2002). Archaeological research suggests that Canaanites, who continued to inhabit the coastal and northern plains of Canaan until well into the 10th century BCE (cf. 1 Kings 9: 20-21), could have been carriers of these Canaanite literary traditions.

Beyond such general observations, Mazar briefly reviewed a series of biblical texts about the settlement period that accord with early external textual and archaeological evidence, and can hardly have been invented in the 7th century BCE or later. Limits of space allow me to outline only two which are relevant for our present study:

- 1) The ‘conquest’ narratives in Joshua 1-10 and the list of cities in Joshua 12 indicate knowledge of a city-state system in Late Bronze Age (pre-Israelite) Canaan which could not be an invention of 7th century BCE authors. Mazar believes that a continuous tradition must have existed that retained this memory from the Late Bronze Age into the Iron Age.
- 2) The list of cities that (according to Judges 1:27-36) were not conquered by the Israelites fits well with archaeological finds from the cities excavated so far. In these cities, Canaanite culture continued until the late 11th century.

To Mazar, the biblical texts relating to premonarchic Israel retain kernels of historical reality that were inserted into a literary narrative produced at a much later date. The ‘kernels’ that can be confirmed by archaeology and extrabiblical texts strengthen his view

that they resulted from long-living historical memories, the transmission of tradition, and perhaps even early written ‘historiography’. (See also Mazar 2007: 28-30.)

Mazar’s colleague I. Finkelstein (2007: 12-20) considers himself to belong to the ‘centre’, though he and Mazar may sometimes be at opposite ends of this spectrum. He rejects the revisionist theory of the Bible’s utter lack of historical value. First, it is inconceivable that ‘in the fifth, or fourth, or even second centuries BCE, the scribes of a small, out-of-the-way temple town in the Judean mountains authored an extraordinarily long and detailed composition about the history, personalities, and events of an imaginary Iron Age “Israel” without using ancient sources’ (ibid. 13). He draws attention to the sheer number of name lists and details of royal administrative organisation in the kingdom of Judah that are included in the Deuteronomistic history: he considers such details to be unnecessary for a purely mythic history. If they were invented, their coincidence with realities uncovered by archaeological excavations and surveys is amazing. It is more reasonable to assume that they collected myths, folktales, popular heroic tales, and shreds of memory known to the population of Judah (ibid. 18).

The following quote from Sandra Scham’s article about the book of Judges (see § 3.1.2) seems to me an appropriate conclusion to this section.

There is something about the book of Judges that compels serious consideration ... This is not based upon any impression of plausibility. Rather it is the very implausibility of these ‘hero’ stories that seems to prevent our consigning Judges to the imagination of a single author... [It] is difficult to see how the exploits of Ehud, Samson, Jephthah or Gideon fit in with any of the designs of later Israelite political or religious leaders. (2002: 37-38).

3.2 Historical-Critical Approaches

The Documentary Hypothesis and the Deuteronomistic History (which are both relevant to the study of the book of Judges) are summarised briefly in §3.2.1 and §3.2.2. Scholarly debates about the relationship between the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History are considered in §3.2.3. For an outline of the development of modern critical study of the Bible — from the nineteenth century through the 1970s — see Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle (2011: 5-20).

3.2.1 The Documentary Hypothesis

The leading nineteenth century proponent of the methods and claims of historical criticism was the German scholar Julius Wellhausen, who published in 1883 his influential *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. Literary criticism of the Pentateuch had led to the conclusion that these five ‘books’ in their present form were the end-product of the joining together of four originally independent written documents. Wellhausen developed ideas proposed by Karl Heinrich Graf, and the ‘JEDP’ formulation became known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. J has been used widely as a symbol for the Jahwist/Yahwist or Judaeen source(s), dated to ca. 850 BCE; E denotes the Elohist or Ephraimite source(s), roughly parallel to J and produced about a century later. The legislative kernel of the present book of Deuteronomy (chs. 12-16) formed the D document, associated with the religious reformation in Judah under Josiah in 621 BCE; P (a priestly document) is considered post-exilic, possibly fifth century BCE (cf. J.P. Hyatt 1971:18-28).

As Grabbe (2007: 83) observes, the old consensus about the Documentary Hypothesis has gone, with nothing to take its place. R.N. Whybray (1987: 9) remarks: ‘It is easier to cast doubts on earlier theories than to offer a satisfactory alternative.’ Some scholars hold to the Documentary Hypothesis largely in its original form; others accept aspects of it, disagreeing on issues such as the order and dating of sources. There is some consensus that the Pentateuch found its final form in the Persian period, embodying pre-exilic traditions. Daniel E. Fleming (2012: 3-4) considers that literary-historical analysis such as Wellhausen’s is likely to continue, despite its frustrations; he believes it may well prove fruitful as a tool for distinguishing between the content in the Hebrew Bible that emanated from the people of Israel and that which emanated from the people of Judah. The latter issue, which is a primary concern in Fleming’s book, will be discussed in §5.2.2.5.

3.2.2 The Deuteronomistic History

In 1943, the German scholar Martin Noth published an influential study which argued that the major portion of Deuteronomy and the following six ‘historical’ books (Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings) form a distinct literary complex composed by a single exilic author during the sixth century BCE (Noth 1981). He named this complex the Deuteronomistic History (referred to as either DH or Dtr), to highlight the theological relationship he detected between Deuteronomy and the historical books.

There is some confusion in present usage of ‘Deuteronomic’ and ‘Deuteronomistic’; ‘Deuteronomic’ formerly referred specifically to the fifth book of the Pentateuch, while ‘Deuteronomistic’ referred to the work of editors influenced by Deuteronomy. Hermann Spieckermann (2001: 338) maintains that a strict distinction no longer has any meaning; Raymond Person (2002: 4-7) notes a lack of consensus: both terms may mean various things and are often used interchangeably. For consistency, I will generally use the term ‘Deuteronomistic’, and ‘Deuteronomic’ when quoting scholars who use this designation.

Of particular interest for this study is Noth’s interpretation of the book of Judges. The exilic author (whom Noth called the ‘Deuteronomist’) began the period of the Judges at Judges 2:6; this text immediately follows Joshua 23 which recounts Joshua’s exhortation to remain faithful to Yahweh’s law and reject the worship of other gods; Judges 2:6-23 recounts the people’s conduct after Joshua dismissed them. The Deuteronomist is said to have devised a stereotyped five-stage cycle of apostasy (sin, punishment, crying out, deliverance, and tranquillity) which characterised the tribal era. The pattern disintegrated, as each generation’s behaviour was worse than that of its forebears (Judges 2:19). The *core* of Judges in the ‘original’ Dtr consisted of Judges 2:6-11, 14-16, 18-19; 3:7 – 13:1). The present book is the outcome of a series of postexilic editorial revisions and expansions. Issues concerning deuteronomistic ideology and Judges is discussed in §4.5.1.

Frank Moore Cross (1973: 274-289) posited two editions of the Dtr. The first edition (*Dtr 1*) was produced in the 7th century BCE by a Judean author in support of Josiah’s religious reforms. The fall of the Northern Kingdom is attributed to the ‘illegitimate’ cult at the shrines of Dan and Bethel in competition with the Jerusalem temple (2 Kings 22-23). The second edition (*Dtr 2*), produced during the Babylonian exile (587 – 439 BCE), gave a theological explanation for the people’s traumatic uprooting, by rehearsing their history of idolatry and faithlessness. Regarding the ‘double redaction’ theory, see R.D Nelson 1981, 2005; R.G Boling 1974: 33-48, 1975: 29-38. The composition of the Dtr is still debated: cf. Campbell and O’Brien 2000; Römer and de Pury 2000; Person 2002; Römer 2005.

3.2.3 The Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History

Since the 1970s biblical scholars have argued about a possible thematic and chronological relationship between the Pentateuch (or at least the Tetrateuch: Genesis-Numbers) and the Deuteronomistic History (Whybray 1987: 221-235; Blenkinsopp 1998; Römer and de Pury 2000: 82-88). Many scholars identify a close relationship between ‘J’ (the source that

preserved most of the ‘historical’ material in the Tetrateuch) and the Deuteronomistic History: i.e. the author of ‘J’ was a Deuteronomist (Römer and de Pury 2000: 84-85). According to some, both sources reflect late-monarchic realities when Judah stood alone. Both are said to locate later-monarchic Judah at the centre of their narratives, that are intended to supply the ideological platform for the political programme of Judah in those times, e.g. by promoting the Pan-Israelite idea.

Others differ on these matters! It is not possible to consider a range of views: for a summary of the issues, see Mayes 1983: 139-149; for fuller analysis, see Nicholson (1998). As a useful illustration of the issues raised, I propose to summarise the proposals of Hermann Schmid (1977), whose views have been fairly widely accepted — needless to say, with caveats (cf. Nicholson: 1998: 245)! Schmid examines key passages generally attributed to ‘J’, and argues that they presuppose knowledge of the pre-exilic ‘writing prophets’ and were influenced by ‘Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic’ literature and theology. The texts he studies include the divine promises to the patriarchs, the call of Moses, Israel’s deliverance ‘at the Sea’, and wilderness episodes. He concludes that ‘Y’ belonged to the same milieu as the Dtr authors (which he believed was the exilic period).

Schmid maintains that the Yahwist’s work, like the Deuteronomist’s, was produced to meet the crisis caused by the fall of the Judean state and the exile. This was a crisis not merely for the future of Israel as Yahweh’s people, but for the future of Yahwism. The Yahwist used various traditions from Israel’s past and reworked them to create a theology of history that would meet the crisis of the time. In ‘Y’s theology of history (as in that of the Dtr) Israel’s guilt before Yahweh is one of the principal themes. However, Yahweh’s forbearance is also emphasised. Though their sin had wrought its consequences upon the nation, Yahweh’s continued faithfulness would overcome the consequences of their guilt: this is Yahweh’s ‘indestructible nevertheless’. Because of this ‘nevertheless’ Y’s theology is a theology of hope that will enable his people to survive the present calamity. For a summary of Schmid’s views on the Tetrateuch and the Deuteronomistic History, see Nicholson 1998: 143-145. Note that Schmid’s reasons for locating the J source and the Dtr in the traumas of the postexilic period are much the same as the reasons adduced by other scholars for locating both sources in later-monarchic Judah, at least in the first instance, even though this ‘theology of hope’ was to be reworked in the exilic period.

3.3 Some modern critiques of Historical Criticism

In this section, we will note briefly views expressed regarding aspects of Historical Criticism by representative archaeologists, postcolonial scholars and biblical scholars.

3.3.1 Historical Criticism and archaeologists

In many books and articles, Israel Finkelstein has articulated his views on the relevance of the historical critical approach to the Bible, views that seem generally accepted among Israeli archaeologists. It is his opinion that the major proposals of the higher-critical scholars of the 19th–20th centuries have withstood the test of time. While the theories of the Documentary Hypothesis and the Deuteronomistic History have been assaulted and required revisions over recent decades, no convincing paradigms have been offered to replace these models. They continue to provide a coherent historical and literary approach to issues of structure, time, and *Sitz im Leben* regarding the biblical text (Finkelstein 2007a: 9; cf. Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 4-24). He supports those who argue for ‘a relationship between the two great literary works, the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History’ and he ‘[sees] big portions of both of them as supplying the ideological platform for the political program of Judah in later monarchic times’ (2005: 209).

With regard to Judges, it is Finkelstein’s opinion that the biblical text does not depict the realities of the Iron I period. Although he accepts that it probably contains early materials that originated from northern Israelite sources, which could have been put in writing before the collapse of the Northern Kingdom, he believes that in its *current form* it is a relatively late, Deuteronomistic book representing the ideology of 7th century Judah (cf. §4.5 re. the dating and context of Judges; §4.6 re. the possible sources of Judges). Accordingly, he stresses the importance of the evidence of archaeology for the Iron I period concerning the environment: matters such as topography, geography, location in the wider region, agriculture, settlement patterns, also taking into consideration complex historical processes from the perspective of *la longue durée* (Finkelstein 2007b).

Finkelstein observes that so long as biblical textual critics and biblical archaeologists maintained their basically conflicting attitudes about the ‘historical reliability’ of the Bible, they lived in two separate intellectual worlds. Archaeologists working in the lands of the Bible, however, have made a dramatic shift in recent years to the methods of social sciences, he says, and now seek the *human realities behind* the text. In excavating ancient

sites, long-term anthropological models drawn from many world cultures have become keys to perceiving wider changes in the economy, political history, religious practices, population density, and the structure of ancient Israelite society. Adopting methods used by archaeologists and anthropologists in other regions, a growing number of scholars in Israel attempt to understand how human interaction with the complex environment of the land of Israel influenced its social system, religion and spiritual legacy (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 19-22; cf. §3.1.2).

3.3.2 Historical Criticism and postcolonial scholars

Uriah Kim (2007: 165-167) defines postcolonial biblical criticism as an investigation that uses analytic tools and insights from postcolonialism to interpret the Bible. However, it is not limited to tools or insights specifically associated with or directly derived from postcolonialism. It uses all available types of tools developed by biblical scholars; its distinctive commitment is to draw ‘interpretive energy’ from postcolonialism. Postcolonial interpreters of the Bible ‘use notions such as hybridity...and other terms that are not new but have been...configured by postcolonial theorists’ to articulate the complex relationship that takes place whenever there is an encounter between ‘the West and the Rest’.

Postcolonial interpreters use the tools of biblical studies as ‘counter-tools’ to expose the effects of colonialism on the text and on its interpreters. (Some of these issues were discussed and illustrated in §1.2.2.) Postcolonial interpreters appreciate historical criticism, because of its contribution to the knowledge of the Biblical text and the world ‘behind the text’. However, because historical criticism emerged in the context of western imperialism (cf. §1.2.2), biblical scholarship accumulated through historical criticism must be used critically. Postcolonial interpreters seek to raise problems and interests stemming from locations around the world, which may be very different from the concerns of the ‘West’.

R.S. Sugirtharajah (2003: 86-95) declares the methods of historical criticism invaluable for creating ‘a hermeneutic of distance’. He is critical of the relentless search of present-day Western biblical interpretation to bridge the ‘hermeneutical gap’ between text and reader. His reason for advocating a hermeneutical *distance* is that there is already a ‘hermeneutics of *proximity*’ in many reading communities. Anxious to interpret their lives with the help of the Bible, they ‘flatten’ the difference between the biblical world and their own situation. E.g. confronted with some life-threatening danger, a reader may liken his plight to Daniel’s and assume that God should intervene as he did in Daniel’s case.

Although we may have no existential difficulty, Sugirtharajah says, in seeing the relevance of the Exodus or Exile to us, we must admit that these events are not *our* story; we must attempt to separate biblical times and the present. The problem of easy identification with the biblical event, with biblical people and motifs, is that one tends to see oneself and one's enemy in 'biblical stereotypes'. Examples of this tendency are the ways in which Afrikaners in South Africa and the Zionist movement in Israel/Palestine have interpreted, indeed appropriated, the biblical accounts of the Exodus with regard both to possession of the land and to the status of the indigenes as modern 'Canaanites'. Such an interpretative parallelism gives little scope for fresh dialogue and understanding. The historical-critical approach provides a hermeneutics of distance which helps us not to overlook the enormous political, cultural and historical differences that lie between the contemporary situation and the world 'behind the text'.

3.3.3 An alternative perspective on Historical Criticism

In an essay that critiqued historical-critical approaches to biblical interpretation, John Barton (1998: 16-19) proposed a 'revisionist' perspective. Because the term 'revisionist' has become so closely associated with the 'minimalist' approach to biblical interpretation, being used as an alternative designation of that 'school' of thought, I have called Barton's proposal 'an alternative perspective'.

Barton is concerned with the fundamental question: what was the overall aim or philosophy of historical criticism? He draws attention to the fact that the usual perception is that historical criticism is part of the legacy of the Enlightenment, its practices belonging to 'modernity' — that is, it is a rationalistic approach committed to an ideal of neutral, universal truth that may be attained by means of 'scientific' methodology. It is certainly the case that from the time of the Enlightenment, historical biblical criticism increasingly held a dominant position in the 'Academy': this was a position that brought it into an uncomfortable, even confrontational, relationship with traditional theology.

Nevertheless, Barton maintains that it is possible to consider a 'revisionist' view of historical criticism's origins that can make some present attitudes towards historical criticism seem rather less tenable. He points out that there is a tradition in German scholarship that traces the origins of historical criticism to the *Reformation* rather than to the *Enlightenment*. He argues that we should speak simply of 'biblical criticism' rather than using the term 'historical-critical method': after all, he says, the connection with

history is at best partial and occasional. Barr (2000: 40-43) agrees with Barton on this issue. He likewise prefers the term ‘biblical criticism’ as it reduces the emphasis on the historical aspect. Within biblical criticism, he points out, there are several distinct operations, only some of which are strictly historical and these are not all historical in the same way. My personal preference also is for the term ‘biblical criticism’, but in this study it seems best to use the familiar terms ‘historical criticism’ and ‘historical critical approaches’ when referring to standard scholarship.

Although in the nineteenth century there was a (contingent) alliance between the concerns of history and of biblical criticism, the concept of reading the Bible critically did not arise out of an interest in history. Rather, it should be associated with the *Reformation insistence* on the *authority* of the *Bible* over the authority of the *Church*, and the believer’s right to *read* the Bible *freely*. According to Reformation principles, believers are entitled to ask whether the Bible really means what the *Church says* it means. Barton comments: ‘In that sentence lies the whole development of biblical criticism in germ.’ Faced with an *ecclesiastical* interpretation, the biblical critic need not accept automatically that the magisterium of the Church guarantees that *its* meaning is the ‘true’ one. The biblical critic reserves the right freely to apply rational principles of criticism, unconstrained by any alleged authorities: ‘whether the authority of Christian or Jewish tradition, the authority of current ecclesiastical structures or the authority of received academic opinion’.

We may note that claiming this kind of interpretative freedom is the basic philosophy also of the postcolonial approach to biblical interpretation (see §3.3.2.). Having come personally from a theological background that emphasised maintaining ‘received’ interpretation of the Bible — an interpretative approach which I eventually found too restrictive — Barton’s alternative perspective, along with the postcolonial approach, is a philosophy I hope to exercise in the following chapters which deal with interpretation of the book of Judges.

PART III – STUDY OF JUDGES chs. 1-5

Chapter 4 - General Introduction to Judges

While the focus of this study is on Judges chs.1-5, these chapters cannot be studied in isolation from the book of Judges as a whole. This general introduction discusses issues regarding Judges as a whole that have a bearing on the understanding of chs.1-5.

The following themes are considered:

- 4.1 Outline of Contents
- 4.2 The structure of the book of Judges
- 4.3 Judges ch.1 and the book of Joshua
- 4.4 Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts and the biblical text
- 4.5 The dating and context of the book of Judges
- 4.6 Possible sources of the book of Judges

4.1 Outline of Contents

1:1–2:5 The invasion of Canaan and Israel's settlement in the land

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|---------|--|
| 1:1-21 | Judah's conquests in southern Canaan |
| 1:4-7 | Anecdote about the victory at Bezek; capture and death of Adoni-bezek |
| 1:11-15 | Anecdote about the capture of Debir; actions of Caleb, Achsah, and Othniel |
| 1:22-36 | Limited successes of the northern tribes |
| 1:22-26 | Anecdote about the capture of Bethel |
| 1:27-36 | Failures in dispossession of the Canaanites |
| 2:1-5 | Postscript: A theological explanation |

2:6-16:31 Israel in the days of the Judges

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 2:6–3:6 | Introduction to the days of the judges |
| 2:6-10 | The death of Joshua and the elders |
| 2:11-15 | Apostasy and judgement |
| 2:16-19 | Introducing the judges |
| 2:20-3:6 | Enemy peoples |
| 3:7-11 | Oppression under Cushan-Rishathaim of Aram, and deliverance by Othniel |
| 3:12-30 | Oppression under Eglon king of Moab, and deliverance by Ehud |
| 3:31 | The exploits of Shamgar ben Amith against the Philistines |
| 4:1-24 | Oppression under Jabin king of Canaan, and deliverance by Deborah and Barak |
| 5:1-31 | The Song of Deborah |
| 6:1–8:32 | Gideon and the Midianites |
| 8:33–9:57 | The story of Abimelech |
| 10: 1-5 | Tola and Jair: minor judges |
| 10:6-11:40 | Jephthah and the Ammonites |
| 12:1-7 | Jephthah and the Ephraimites |
| 12: 8-15 | Ibzan, Elon, Abdon: minor judges |
| 13:1-16:31 | Samson and the Philistines |

Appendices

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 17:1–18:31 | Micah's household and the migration of Dan |
| 19:1–21:25 | The outrage at Gibeah and the punishment of Benjamin |

4.2 The structure of the Book of Judges

Introduction

This study is concerned with the book of Judges as extant; it does not examine conjectured sources about which there have been countless studies that have failed to win general support. The book appears to have been shaped and re-shaped at various stages during a long editorial history. As extant, it is an integrated work, most of whose parts are inter-related and have formed a significant structure, as seen in the Outline of Contents (§4.1).

There is widespread agreement that 1:1-2:5 forms the First Preface to the work, while 2:6-3:6 is a Second Preface. In this section, we shall briefly consider these two prefaces.

4.2.1 First Preface

1:1-2:5 The invasion of Canaan and Israel's settlement in the land

This section acts as an introduction to Judges as a whole, and is not to be considered an addendum to the book of Joshua. It is a distinct unit that prepares the ground for the period of the judges, setting the negative tone that seemed characteristic of those days and implying progressive deterioration in Israel's relationship with the Canaanites. Ch. 2:1-5 is a Postscript to ch.1, offering a theological explanation of what had gone before. Major issues raised in these verses are discussed in ch.6; at this point, we will summarise some ways in which the first preface is integrated into the narrative of the book as a whole.

4.2.1.1 Introduction of significant names in Judges 1

The anecdote in 1:11-15 about the capture of Debir introduces *Othniel* as a hero-figure, anticipating his later appearance in 3:7-11 as the first judge. The description of Moses' father-in-law as *the Kenite* (1:16) is relevant to later narratives concerning Heber *the Kenite*, *the other Kenites*, and *the clan* of Heber *the Kenite* (4:11, 17).

The account in Judges 1:27 of Israel's failure to dislodge the Canaanites in the plain of Jezreel, especially at *Taanach* and *Megiddo*, is the background to the battle recounted in the prose version of Judges 4 and in the poetic version of Judges 5. Note especially 5:19:

The kings came, they fought;
 then fought the kings of Canaan,
 at *Taanach*, by the waters of *Megiddo*;
 they got no spoils of silver. (NRSV)¹

4.2.1.2 Themes introduced in the three anecdotes in Judges 1

Three anecdotes which punctuate ch.1 contain important motifs that re-appear at key junctures in the rest of the book (Webb 1987: 119; Younger 1995: 86). This introductory section highlights and summarises motifs that occur in Judges 1-5:

1) The negative portrayal of Adoni-bezek, a Canaanite king (1: 4-7), foreshadows the disparaging portrayals of Cushan-Rishathaim ‘king of Aram’ (3:7-11), Eglon ‘king of Moab’ (3:12-30), and Jabin ‘a king of Canaan’ (Judges 4 and 5).

2) The conquest of Bethel, as portrayed in 1:22-26, was achieved through what may be regarded as devious means. Deviousness or trickery is displayed in the victories won by Ehud (3:12-30) and Jael (Judges 4 and 5).

3) The motif of strong women (whose strength serves to highlight the weaknesses of the men around them) appears in the story of Achsah (1:11-15) and reappears in the strength of character shown in the initiative exercised by Deborah and Jael (Judges 4 and 5).

4.2.2 Second Preface

2:6-3:6 Introduction to the period of the judges

In some respects, the First Preface is an odd introduction to the book of Judges, as it does not mention the ‘judges’, even with the introduction of Othniel, later to re-enter the stage as the first judge. The judges are first mentioned in 2:16. The *function* of 2:6-3:6 may be to focus on Israel’s spiritual failures that explained *why* Yahweh sent the judges. Four themes provide the historical/theological ‘build-up’ to the entry of the judges as ‘saviours’:

- 1) the death of Joshua and the elders (2:6-10)
- 2) apostasy and judgement (2:11-15)
- 3) introducing the judges (2:16-19)
- 4) enemy peoples (2:20-3:6).

¹ Except where otherwise indicated, English quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV): Anglicized Edition*, Oxford University Press (1995)

4.3 Judges ch. 1 and the Book of Joshua

Introduction

Judges ch. 1 has been widely regarded as a collection of fragments of varying dates and reliability, the overall picture being gradual infiltration and partial settlement of Canaan. The impression conveyed by Judg. ch. 1 is often said to be in contrast to the Joshua account that seems to indicate rapid conquest and possession of the whole land. However, although Joshua chs. 1-12 portray a unified, successful assault on Canaan by the Israelite tribes under Joshua's leadership a different image emerges in Josh. chs. 13-19 of individual tribes seizing land over a prolonged period until long after the days of Joshua: in the end, failing to drive out the Canaanites from much of the land (cf. B.S. Childs 1979: 247).

Another issue raised is the fact that Judg. ch. 1 has a tribal perspective and a geographic arrangement, whereas Joshua has a pan-Israelite perspective and chronological framework. Moreover, as it seems logical that a tribal society would precede the forming of national unity, many commentators assume Judg. ch. 1 to be both older and historically more reliable than the traditions in Joshua, which in any case archaeology is believed to have discredited (cf. Auld 1975; Boling 1975; Mullen 1984). Despite countless debates around textual issues that may be classified broadly as literary-critical studies of the biblical text, no satisfactory conclusions have been reached: the debate to me seems sterile.

An approach that I find more fruitful, and which accords with the postcolonial emphasis on investigating *the world of the text*, is the 'contextual method' in biblical interpretation. Years before the development of postcolonial interpretation in biblical studies, Kenneth A. Kitchen emphasised that 'geographically, historically and culturally, the Ancient Near East *is* the world of the Old Testament, while humanly speaking the Old Testament is a part of Ancient Near Eastern literature, history and culture' (Kitchen 1966: 24). In a detailed study of Judges 1 in its Near Eastern literary context, K. Lawson Younger (1994: 208 n. 3) described his approach as 'joining the analysis with the contextual method' (cf. §4.3.2 for details of Younger's approach).

4.3.1 The Contextual Approach

William W. Hallo, a leading proponent of this approach, described it as a ‘comparative/contrastive’ investigation of ‘the literary context, broadly interpreted as including the entire Near Eastern literary milieu to the extent that it can be argued to have had any conceivable impact on the biblical formulation’ (1980: 2). It is possible to gain better understanding of the conquest account in Joshua if the biblical account is compared to and contrasted with other ANE conquest accounts. This method offers the interpreter some controls in the assessment of biblical data: a lack of controls has contributed, at least in part, to some of the interpretative problems that have arisen in Old Testament studies (Younger 1990: 52).

Alan R. Millard (1985: 75) urged that, where comparisons are possible, they ought to be drawn; otherwise the Hebrew scriptures are dealt with in a vacuum, with misleading results. This was stated earlier by Kitchen (1966: 114-115) who regarded as inexcusable the failure of Wellhausen and almost all his contemporaries and followers to pay attention to the ANE material available from the late nineteenth century onward; in the forms preserved in extant Old Testament texts, it is clear that Hebrew literature displayed close stylistic similarities to the other ANE literatures among which (indeed as part of which) Hebrew literature developed. To Kitchen, the worst consequence was that the documentary theory in its many variations was ‘elaborated throughout *in a vacuum*’. Peter Machinist (2009: 482-496) argues that Wellhausen was neither ignorant of, nor indifferent to, Assyriology, but seems deliberately to have chosen not to engage with it. The reasons behind this choice are complex: in part personal, in part due to the scholarly climate of his day in Old Testament studies, but largely because he prioritized the ‘master text’ of the Old Testament for reconstructing the history of Israel and Judah (ibid. 501-505, 522-523).

Stylistic similarities between Hebrew literature and other ANE literatures have sometimes been interpreted as Israelite *borrowing* from the dominant regional culture, e.g. with regard to the perceived influence of Assyrian vassal treaties on the form, vocabulary and ideas of Deuteronomy. The case for such literary influences has been challenged by many scholars: for a brief account of various objections raised on literary grounds, cf. Norbert F. Lohfink 1977: 13-17. From a postcolonial standpoint, a purely literary approach, while providing useful background information for the study of biblical texts, in itself is little more than a cerebral exercise. Postcolonial interpretations approach the text, not only from a literary standpoint, but from insights into the profound impact of the imperial power on the worldview of those who became its vassals.

Lohfink's article (ibid. 19) highlighted an emphasis that would be developed by postcolonial interpreters of the biblical texts, when he wrote: '[We] must reckon with more than a century of massive Assyrian influence and culture to which Judah was suddenly exposed as a culture shock which had to be mastered.' He suggests that, if the authors of Deuteronomy borrowed their rhetoric and ideology from Assyrian treaties, it was with the *subversive intention* to declare that the suzerain of Israel is not the king of Assyria, but Yahweh (cited in Römer and de Pury 2000: 111-112). Mark G. Brett (2008: 82) similarly argues that the Jerusalem theologians resisted the imperial power through a *subversive use* of 'mimicry',² which he defines as 'a mixture of deference and critique which imitated the treaty genre precisely in order to argue *against* submission to the Assyrian gods'.

4.3.2 Assyrian 'history-writing'

Some scholars have expressed the opinion that, although the ANE created many 'historical texts' of various types, it did not develop a concept of 'history'. For example, Gerhard von Rad (1966: 166-204) considered that only Israel and Greece developed an 'historical sense' able to apply *causal thinking* to sequences of events. The 'uniqueness' of Israel is often quoted in this regard. On the other hand, Younger (1990: 53) argued that, although there are marked differences between the Hebrew histories and their ANE counterparts, just as there are variations in the kinds of history-writing found within the ANE at different times and different places, there are distinct similarities that can be considered as 'real' history-writing among the cultures of the wider ANE. Younger asserted that ancient historians *reconstructed* 'historical referents' into a coherent, figurative account which he described as 'a re-presenting representation' (1994: 207).

The work of Israeli Assyriologist Hayim Tadmor complements that of scholars such as Younger, Hallo, Millard and Kitchen who urge comparison with the Hebrew material. In a paper on the historical inscriptions of Adad-Nirari III, who ruled Assyria 811-783 BCE, Tadmor (1973) distinguished between two types of Assyrian historical inscriptions, designating one type as 'annals' and the other as 'summary inscriptions' (also sometimes referred to as 'summary, or display, inscriptions').

² On the postcolonial concept of mimicry, see Bhabha 1994: 85-92.

4.3.2.1 Annalistic Texts

A key feature of Assyrian annalistic-text narration is that it is arranged *chronologically*. Events are generally represented by stereotyped syntagms³ that build an iterative scheme; the description employs rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, which Younger defines as ‘the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect; more is said than is literally meant’ (1990: 323 n. 11). Significant examples are found in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal II who ruled Assyria 885-860 BCE: detailed in idem. 25-46, 79-115, 197-266; summarised in Younger 1994: 208-209.

Younger argues that the conquest account in Joshua chs. 9-12 uses the iterative scheme found in many Assyrian annalistic texts. The structure of the Joshua narrative is artificial, the writer/historian using the same techniques to arrange his materials and the same rhetorical devices such as hyperbole. ‘The narrative only approaches a representation of the reality it purports to describe, as is true of any historical narrative’ (ibid. 210).’

4.3.2.2 Summary (or Display) Inscriptions

The texts subsumed under this category are commemorative inscriptions without episodic narration. When military campaigns are included, earlier and later military activities are generally condensed into *one* narrative, coherent *geographically* but not *chronologically*. This type of inscription is usually shorter than any of the known royal annals: it was often inscribed on a surface such as a commemorative stele or a slab which was limited in space. Such inscriptions sometimes served as boundary-markers. Accordingly, Summary (or Display) Inscriptions do not display the iterative scheme of Annalistic Texts, but they engage many of the other rhetorical devices used in the Assyrian conquest accounts, such as hyperbole (Tadmor 1973: 141-150; Younger 1990: 241-253; 1994: 210-212).

Judges ch. 1 (to a large extent, the whole of Judges) is a stylized, *geographically*-arranged account beginning with Judah and ending with Dan; it maintains a south → north orientation in the following chapters. Judges ch. 1 uses its south → north *geographic* arrangement of tribal episodes to foreshadow the geographic orientation of the Judges cycles in 3:7 – 16:31 (Younger 1995: 76, 80; Hackett 1998: 138-141). Implicit in the

³ This is a linguistic term meaning a set of forms placed in a sequential relationship.

geographic arrangement there appear to be moral and spiritual movements within Israel, climaxing in the Dan episode.

Lilian Klein (1988: 23) argues that a moral or spiritual decline is evident from the very beginning of Judges:

[In 1:1] Yahweh tells Israel/Judah specifically what to do, but Israel only partially heeds Yahweh's command. Judah immediately establishes a battle pact with his brother Simeon. Thus, from the outset, Israel exerts self-determination, evidencing automatic trust in *human* perception. These verses may be regarded as introducing the ironic configuration of the book — the implicit difference in perception between Yahweh and Israel and Israel's insistence on following human perception.

The 'cycles' themselves, she maintains, seem to be intentionally arranged by the writer/historian to portray the decline in the character of the *judges* as illustrative of the progressive chaos of the time in the *nation* as a whole

Regarding the theology of the *framework* of Judges and the apparent portrayal of progressive moral and spiritual decline, Frederick E. Greenspahn (1986) offered a different interpretation. The framework that holds together originally independent stories in Judges 2-16 (the core of the book) is regarded by many as *Deuteronomistic*, portraying a cycle of idolatry, repentance and deliverance. Greenspahn argued that, apart from Judges 2:1-3:9 and 10:10-16 (which belong to a *secondary* editorial stage) the *earlier* framework was not deuteronomistic. From a theological perspective, the original framework did not see the period of the judges as 'a cycle of sin-and-atonement manifest in Israel's reward-and-punishment', but as 'a simpler cycle of oppression-and-salvation'. Suffering is a punishment for Israel's persistent evil-doing in God's sight; salvation results from God's unflinching benevolence whenever Israel cries out to him: continuing the process initiated by the exodus, in which Israel's suffering was dealt with by divine salvation. During the Judges period, the *extent* of divine mercy is magnified by Israel's persistent sinfulness.

4.3.3 Some Conclusions about the Biblical Accounts

In light of this brief consideration of the two different types of Assyrian accounts (Annalistic and Summary), several observations may be made regarding some of the 'problems' various commentators have claimed regarding 'differences' between the alternative accounts in Joshua and Judges of Israel's settlement in Canaan (cf. §4.3 Introduction). Firstly, since Judges 1 has been arranged *geographically*, it is natural that

the *tribes* are the focus of the narrative. However, this does not mean that the pan-Israel concept is absent. It underlies the chapter and the whole book. The opening verse says:

After the death of Joshua (וַיָּהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ),
 the Israelites inquired of the LORD (וַיִּשְׁאַלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיהוָה לֵאמֹר),
 Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites (מִי יַעֲלֶה לָּנוּ אֶל־הַכְּנַעֲנִי בְּתַחֲלָה)
 to fight against them (לְהִלָּחֵם בָּו)? (Judges 1:1)

The sense of lines two and three is that לָנוּ refers back to בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. It is significant also that the term בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל occurs more than seventy times in Judges (1:1; 2:4; 3:2; 4:1 etc.).

Secondly, as Joshua and Judges 1 are figurative accounts using, respectively, an iterative scheme of stereotyped syntagms or an artificial geographic arrangement, they narrate two aspects of one process: initial victory and subjugation. According to Mario Liverani (1988: 91-92) this difference may be observed in the conquest accounts of Ashurnasirpal II and others. While some campaigns rapidly brought certain areas under direct Assyrian control, other campaigns served to ‘soften up’ new areas for later subjugation. Similarly, according to Younger (1994: 237), while the conquest account in Joshua narrates (in a partial and selective manner) the initial victory that ‘softened up’ the land, the Judges 1 account (also partial and selective) narrates *failure* later to subjugate the land. Judges 1 highlights the incompleteness of the settlement, demonstrating that, despite initial victories, Israel failed to build on early success, to bring it to completion.

Several passages in the Appendices (cf. §4.1) underline the message that the initial expectation of conquest and settlement was never fully realised. In Judges 18 we read about the migration of the Danites who (according to 1:34) had been confined by the Amorites to the hill country. They settle finally in the city of Laish which they rename ‘Dan, after their ancestor Dan’ (18:29): וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁם־הָעִיר דָּן בְּשֵׁם דָּן אֲבִיהֶם. Renaming of sites after their conquest occurs throughout the Conquest traditions, with four instances in Judges 1: Kiriath-arba becomes ‘Hebron’ (1:10); Kiriath-sepher becomes ‘Debir’ (1:11); Zephath becomes ‘Hormah’ (1:17); Luz becomes ‘Bethel’ (1:23) (discussed in Chapter 5; cf. Eissfeldt 1968: 71-72; Malamat 1970: 14-16; Na’aman 1984: 279-281).

A further reminder of Israel’s failure to possess the whole land occurs in 19:12 with regard to entering Jebus (Jerusalem) for an over-night stay: ‘We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel’. The Hebrew terminology is significant: לֹא נָסוּר אֶל־עִיר נְכָרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵנָּה, especially the description of the residents

as נְכָרִי ‘aliens’, which indicates that they were regarded as ‘outsiders’ (cf. 21:12). Hebrew has a range of terminology to indicate those ‘who are not of Israel’. As Judith McKinlay observes (2004: 24), ‘Israel’s attitude to those it considers Other was both nuanced and ambivalent’. Some terms, including נְכָרִי, generally have a negative connotation (Rendtorff 1996: 77), emphasizing the ‘otherness’ of the נְכָרִי and separateness from בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The connotation of the term גֵּר (often translated ‘stranger’ or ‘sojourner’) — used frequently in the Pentateuch (cf. §6.3.1.6) — varies in different parts of the Bible: at times, the גֵּר is welcomed and integrated into the life of the community, but nevertheless is still *different* (ibid. 81). This term does not occur in Judges.

In Judges 21:12 a rather unexpected ‘geographic’ note occurs regarding the Israelite encampment at Shiloh, which the compiler/editor describes as ‘Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan’: שִׁלֹה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. As noted in §1.1, this is the only occurrence in Judges of the name ‘Canaan’ outside the opening five chapters. This note in 21:12 is an indication that Israel is still living in a land which it has not yet completely conquered and settled. Cities have been renamed following their conquest, but ‘the land of Canaan’ (אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן) has not yet become ‘the land of Israel’ (אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל).

To conclude this brief assessment of issues over ‘differences’ between Judg. ch. 1 and Joshua, it is necessary to comment on the commonly expressed assumption (cf. §4.3 Introduction) that Judg. ch. 1 is older and historically more reliable than the traditions in Joshua (said to have been discredited by archaeology). Moshe Weinfeld (1993: 121-135) argued that the tradition in Judg. 1:1-2:5 is ‘no less tendentious’ than that in Joshua; as opposed to their *framework*, the actual stories are no less reliable in Joshua than in Judg. 1. Younger (1994: 227) likewise commented that the Judges 1 account of the settlement is ‘no more and no less reliable’ than the Joshua account; both are stylized, selective narrations, each in its own way re-presenting or imposing structures on the ‘historical’ referents. He urges ‘willing suspension of disbelief’: ‘The reader of a historical text must curb his scepticism in order to “participate” in the world of the text’ (idem 1990: 55).

Amihai Mazar, who describes himself as ‘[an] archaeologist ... who is an outsider to textual research’, writes that he broadly accepts the significance of selective memory, of loss of memory, of censorship and biases arising out of ideological, theological, personal, or other motivations, all of which, he says, apply to *any* history, ancient or modern. He cites an example from the history of Israel’s 1948/49 ‘War of Independence’: on the one hand there is the official history produced by the Department of History in the Israeli

Defence Forces; on the other hand there are numerous other versions, among which are postmodern narratives that deconstruct key elements of the official history (2007: 28-31).

Similar observations are made by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (cf. § 2.2, Introduction) in his discussion of the ‘hidden past’ (which he designates ‘An Unthinkable History’) in official histories of Haiti. These ‘histories’ fail to acknowledge the successful slave revolt in early nineteenth century Haiti against the French colonial power (1995: 31-107). Any historical narrative is ‘a particular bundle of silences’, entering the *process of historical production* at the making of *sources*, the making of *archives*, the making of *narratives*, finally the making of *history* seen through the lens of retrospective significance (1995: 26-27). I believe such a process took place in the making of the ‘biblical history’ of Israel: e.g. concerning Judah after the demise of the Northern Kingdom. In §4.5.3.2, we note that the biblical account of ‘righteous’ Hezekiah’s reign is ‘silent’ about the scale of the disaster brought upon his people by his rebellion against Assyria, as uncovered by archaeology, whereas the bible is ‘silent’ about the considerable achievements (political, economic and social) of ‘apostate’ Manasseh, during his long and peaceful reign, as archaeology has attested (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 264-267).

4.4 ANE conquest accounts and the biblical text

Introduction

If we compare the ideology manifest in the conquest accounts of the various regional powers in the ANE, such as Egypt and Assyria, with Israel’s accounts in the biblical text of ‘conquests’ over her enemies at various times in her history, a number of similarities are apparent (Younger 1990: 233). Summarised below are some of the most commonly observed ideological outlooks and practices regarding hostility and aggression towards other peoples. We will note also that there are important differences in Israel’s approach to warfare, which was always of a relatively localised nature. Even when pre-monarchic Israel and, later, the Northern Kingdom or Judah was at its strongest, the people of Israel could never be regarded as a great power in the international scene.

4.4.1 The view of the Enemy

The Hebrew texts to some extent seem to display a view of the ‘enemy’ similar to that which may be observed in Egyptian and Assyrian accounts. From Egyptian literature, with little variation over the centuries, it is clear that the Egyptians harboured intense hatred for their foreign neighbours, and that this hostility was rooted in the Egyptian sense of superiority, an attitude validated by the religious system. This was expressed in the vocabulary used to describe the enemy who was characterised as ‘evil, bad’. Whoever the enemy was and wherever the enemy was found geographically, the vocabulary was basically the same: *the enemy was wicked and evil*. This could develop from simple *name-calling* to detailed description of divine reasons for the enemy’s downfall. The enemy was regarded as arrogant, cowardly, vain and boastful. Moreover, as the enemy was ‘evil’ there was good reason to annihilate him, figuratively if not literally (Younger 1990: 177-185). For the Assyrians, says Younger, there was only one Enemy — with a capital letter — appearing in Assyrian royal inscriptions. The Enemy is unsubmissive, insolent, proud and haughty, speaking words of hostility; he is false and treacherous, constantly plotting against Assyria (ibid. 67-69).

The series of judgements in Amos 1:3–2:3 paint Israel’s nearest neighbours in the same dark colours: Damascus; the Philistines in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron; Edom, Ammon and Moab. Some Judges narratives seem to convey a similar impression of Israel’s ‘enemies all around’: whether the focus is on Adoni-bezek of Bezek (Judg. 1: 4-7), Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram-naharaim (3: 8-10), Eglon king of Moab (3: 12-30), and Jabin a king of Canaan (4:2), or any other ruler or people, all are viewed through the same stark prism of ‘enmity’.

It is a negative vs. positive, ‘them’ vs. ‘us’, outlook: a binary relationship, that in Judges is indicated from the opening verse: ‘After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD: Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?’ Uriah Y. Kim (2007: 173) remarks that, ‘It makes no difference which ethnic group the Israelites were in dispute with’; the Judges narrative fixes the role of Israel’s Other as the antagonist in the construction of Israel’s identity. The representation of the Other as the villain, always scheming against the Israelites, is the common thread binding the tribes into a coherent community of Israel. However, we must recognise also the *ambivalence* in Israel’s attitude to those it considers Other, as highlighted by Judith McKinlay (cf. §4.3.3). Kim (ibid. 177-180) does draw attention to ‘some arbitrariness’ regarding who does, or

does not, belong to Israel: e.g. the unnamed man of Luz who helped the house of Joseph to conquer his own city (Judg. 1:22-26). Is *he* Israel's Enemy, even though he helped Israel to accomplish its mission? Kim concludes that the answer is unclear in Judges. For another interpretation of Judg. 1:22-26, cf. §5.2.2.1.

4.4.2 An ideology of terror

This is particularly marked in Assyrian texts. It has been argued that the Assyrians had a policy of 'calculated frightfulness': not engaging in terror for sadistic purposes, but using it as psychological warfare. Without 'mass media of communication' at their disposal, *terror* spreading from community to community was the most effective means of achieving advanced softening-up of an enemy population. Once Assyrian occupation was established in a territory, and the process of 'de-culturation' was under way, the 'ideology of terror' facilitated maintenance of control over restless populations (Younger 1990: 65-66).

According to some biblical texts, when Israel engaged in war it also (at least to some degree) practised an ideology of 'calculated frightfulness'. John Van Seters (1990) compared Assyrian Campaign Reports with the Joshua chs. 1-12 account of Israel's militaristic conquest of Canaan. He saw resemblances in form and presentation between Assyrian and biblical accounts so striking that he concluded the Joshua account is modelled on the Assyrian records. He noted (*ibid.* 7) that in the Assyrian campaign reports, special attention is given sometimes to the capture and execution or humiliation of foreign kings in the presence of the Assyrian king. According to Josh. 10: 16-28, five Amorite kings were captured, killed, and (after death) humiliated in the public display of their bodies, in the presence of Joshua. Joshua and 'all Israel' then continued their campaign of terror until 'the whole region' was subdued (10: 29-43). Judg. 1:4-7 strikes a similar note, though without such graphic detail, in the account of Israel's treatment of Adoni-bezek

The concept of 'total war' involving the destruction of a whole population, including women and children as well as fighting men, was a common practice throughout the ANE, including Israel according to the biblical text: e.g. Judg. 1:8, 17, 25. It is difficult to know how accurately the biblical account reflects the reality of what happened, or to what extent the writer/historian was using the rhetorical device of hyperbole that was noted above (cf. §4.2.2.1–§4.2.2.2). Unrealistic figures such as 'ten thousand [men]' in Judg. 1:4 are almost

certainly hyperbole. Note that the concept of the ‘ban’ (הָרֵם *herem*), as developed in Deuteronomy, does not feature in Judges, but it will be discussed briefly in §5.2.1.1, with regard to Judg. 1:17 where the root הרם occurs as a verb (‘totally destroy’) and in the place-name הַרְמָה (‘Hormah’).

We have noted already the fact that Israel was never a ‘great power’ in the ANE. Indeed, the Israelites as a whole are portrayed throughout Judges as a marginal people even within their immediate area, ‘harassed by better armed, wealthier Canaanite and Philistine competitors in the land’, as described by Susan Niditch (1993:113). According to Niditch, some traditional narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures (several of these narratives being found in Judges) project a war ideology that is quite different from that described above. She designates this ‘the ideology of tricksterism’, by means of which ‘marginal people can imagine themselves improving their situation at the expense of those with greater power’ (ibid. 110).

This form of ‘making war’ is discussed in ch.7 with regard to the Ehud/Eglon story. It is suggested that the social context from which this story emerged was the period when the Moabites under Mesha dominated Israel. This ‘trickster’ story may have been a response to the gloating of the enemy that Israel had previously dominated. The use of ‘trickery’ may indicate feelings in Israel of both hurt pride and insecurity. Remarking on the prevalence of ‘trickery’ stories in the Bible, O. Horn Prouser (1994:15-16) observed that Israel was generally the weaker party; ‘clever trickster’ stories allowed the Israelites to feel that they would prevail nevertheless (cf. Niditch 1987: xi-xv).

4.5 The dating and context of the Book of Judges

Introduction

In §§3.1.2–3.1.3, we noted that archaeologists such as Stager, Scham, Mazar, Finkelstein, (using various archaeological approaches, with varying degrees of certainty about conclusions), maintain that biblical narratives about the period of the judges may be considered, at least to some extent, to reflect daily life and socio-economic conditions in Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Canaan (ca. 1200 -1025 BCE). Diana Edelman (1996: 27-28) emphasised that it seems certain there is a centuries-long gap between the composition of Judges as a cohesive literary unit and the events recreated in it. She highlights also a growing recognition that, although the biblical text of Judges claims to portray Israel's occupation of the land and life prior to the emergence of the monarchy, it reflects the worldview of the socio-political setting in which it was composed: a monarchic society.

4.5.1 Judges and deuteronomistic ideology

Many scholars consider that Judges belongs to the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr), and date it variously according to their preferred dating of the Dtr (cf. §§3.2.2–3.2.3). The reign of Josiah in Judah (ca. 640-609 BCE), especially in connection with reforms attributed to him, is widely regarded as the context for the composition of the Dtr. Not all agree that Judges belongs to the Dtr. In an influential book, Moshe Weinfeld (1972: 1-3, 319-359) described nine concepts he considered typical of Deuteronomy and its 'school', listing all occurrences of these concepts in the Dtr: (1) the struggle against idolatry; (2) centralization of the cult; (3) exodus, covenant and election; (4) the monotheistic creed; (5) observance of the law and loyalty to the covenant; (6) inheritance of the land; (7) retribution and material motivation; (8) fulfilment of prophecy; (9) the election of the Davidic dynasty. In Judges chs. 2 and 10, he found examples of deuteronomistic phraseology relating to the struggle against idolatry (ibid. 320-324) and faithfulness to Yahweh (ibid. 332-341), but almost no occurrences in Judges for his other concepts.

Accepting the widely-held (but contested) view that Deuteronomy was 'discovered' during Josiah's reign around 622 BCE, Weinfeld (1985:90-91) argued that we must assume the main layout of the book was existent long before Josiah's time, dating it to the

reign of Hezekiah (ca. 726-697 BCE)⁴ in the context of religious and national reforms attributed to him. However, we do not know what material existed prior to Deuteronomy and what belongs to later Josianic elaboration. Regarding Judges, Weinfeld considers that the representation of the Judges period was drawn mainly from documents and traditions brought from the North to Judah in the reign of Hezekiah, following the demise of the Northern Kingdom (see §4.6.2).

Greenspahn (1986) drew particular attention to the fact that the element which first led to the identification of the deuteronomistic *genre* — namely, the idea of the centralization of the cult — does not appear anywhere in the book of Judges. Virtually all the elements of deuteronomistic thought listed by Weinfeld are lacking in Judges, the only possible exception being idolatry, though he sees a further few deuteronomistic concepts in what he deems to be ‘editorial’ sections of chs. 2 and 10 (cf. comments on Greenspahn in §4.3.2.2). However, the major sections of Judges (i.e. chs. 2-16) are not deuteronomistic in outlook, and he concludes that they *predate* the formation of the book of Deuteronomy.

Yairah Amit (1999a: 363-383) reaches similar conclusions. Examining the basic concepts Weinfeld defined as deuteronomistic, she concludes that Judges is related to Deuteronomy and its ‘school’ largely in the themes of the struggle against idolatry and faithfulness to God; only a few echoes of other deuteronomistic ideas appear in passages she regards as later insertions. Uniquely deuteronomistic ideas and ideals are foreign to the author(s) of Judges, who belonged to a generation that did not yet know the concepts and style of Deuteronomy. Amit locates the initial stage in the composition of Judges in the period between the end of the eighth century and early seventh century BCE, specifically in the days of Hezekiah in Judah, arising from the spiritual climate during his reign.

Thomas Römer and Albert de Pury (2000:118-119) believe that at least Judges chs. 3-16 should be regarded as pre-deuteronomistic, on the grounds that the best argument for the existence in some form of at least a cycle of pre-Dtr narratives is the fact that all the episodes in those chapters are situated in the geographic horizon of the Northern Kingdom. They doubt that a Judaeen Deuteronomist could have achieved ‘the astonishing feat’ of ignoring the familiar setting and worldview of Judah in the recounting of these tales.

⁴ The reign of Hezekiah presents many problems of interpretation and reconstruction, not least with regard to chronology. For concise discussion of the issues, see Miller and Hayes 2006: 400-404 and L.L. Grabbe 2007: 195-200. For the purposes of this study, I will follow mainly the chronology of Gershon Galil (1996). For details, see Chronological Tables, TABLE 2.

John Day (2002: 70-73), discussing the ‘Baal versus Yahweh’ struggle in ancient Israel (the Baal cult being the most enduring threat to the development of exclusive Yahweh worship), outlined the Old Testament account of Baal worship in the Judges period and its persistence during the time of the divided monarchy, in the Northern Kingdom and in Judah. During the period of the judges, Israel is said to have worshipped the Baals (Judges 2: 11, 13; 3:7; 10:6). A Canaanite god Baal-berith (‘Baal of the Covenant’) had a temple at Shechem (Judg. 9:4; cf. Judg. 8:33). Day points out that in the postexilic period Baal is not heard of at all, apart from a reference in the late prophet Zechariah 12:11 to the Aramaean cult of Hadad-rimmon. The fact that idolatry was no longer an issue in the exilic/postexilic period certainly seems to me to count against a late date for the composition of Judges.

From a literary standpoint, the Judges portrayal of idolatrous practices creates the atmosphere of these being a live issue at the time of writing. This supports the proposal for a pre-exilic date which might ‘fit’ the time of Hezekiah. There are brief references in 2 Kgs 18:4, 22 to religious reforms undertaken by Hezekiah, such as removing ‘high places and altars’; cf. 2 Chronicles 29-31. Some scholars dispute the historicity of this reform (e.g. Handy 1988; Na’aman 1995), but many others consider it plausible (e.g. McKay 1973: 15-17; Halpern 1991: 47-48, 65-70; Miller and Hayes 2006: 413-415; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006b: 269-275; R.A. Young 2012: 91-121). Various grounds of support are cited, such as the late eighth century BCE growth of the ‘YHWH-alone movement’ (M. Smith 1971: 15-56; van der Toorn 1996: 334-338), in which the YHWH-versus-Baal struggle came to the fore. There is archaeological evidence for Hezekiah’s ‘reforms’ (cf. Ze’ev Herzog et al. 1984: 1-34; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 285-288; Young *ibid.* 93-101). Unlike the extended account of Josiah’s reformation in 2 Kgs 22-23, the terse account of Hezekiah’s reform in 2 Kgs 18 does not indicate that any ‘book’ or collection of laws provided a basis for his actions, though various writers consider that an early version of Deuteronomic legislation may have served as an impetus for his actions (Ginsberg 1982: 115-116; Weinfeld 1991: 44-57; Miller and Hayes 2006: 413-415; Young *ibid.* 114-120). (Cf. §§6.2.3–6.2.4; 6.3.3.1; 7.1.5)

Quoting scholars such as Helga Weippert, Andre Lemaire, and Baruch Halpern, William M. Schniedewind (2004: 64, 77-81) argues that we may identify two pre-exilic editions of the Dtr, written under the sponsorship of the Judean kings Hezekiah and Josiah, followed by an exilic redaction. Positing a Hezekian edition of the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings offers an answer to the fundamental question: How relevant was the fall of the northern kingdom a century after the event, or two centuries later? The

fate of the northern kingdom weighed most heavily on the life and literature of Judah in the years immediately after Samaria's destruction and exile.

Drawing together the various lines of argument above, I believe there are sufficient grounds for arguing that (apart from deuteronomistic interpolations: c.f. §7.1.3.2) the writing of *the main part of Judges (chs. 3-16)* can be located in the time of Hezekiah.

4.5.2 The development of literacy

Is there evidence to support the assumption that literacy had reached a sufficient level of development by the late 8th/early 7th century period for a version of the book of Judges to be written? Very little certain evidence has yet emerged of the practice of writing in Judah in general and Jerusalem in particular before the eighth century BCE. However, dated from the latter part of the eighth century, Hebrew writing is found in monumental inscriptions, personal signet seals and seal impressions, small inscribed weights, and administrative ostraca. Considerably larger numbers of inscriptions dated to seventh century Judah and Jerusalem have been discovered, attesting to progressive development of writing skills and increasing use of written documents in Judaic society: a process that certainly started in the eighth century (Dever 2001: 202-221; Robb A. Young 2012: 50-59). This does not necessarily indicate an increase of literacy among the general population, though merchants and traders would have essential skills in basic reading and writing; the elite classes, official scribes at the royal court, and others such as followers or disciples who collected prophetic sermons or 'oracles' were increasingly literate.

Listing developments in Judah from the mid-eighth century, Amit (1999b: 28-29) noted the attestation in Proverbs 25:1 ('These too are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of Judah copied' NJPS) for the collection and copying by royal officials of wise sayings, which were a prominent part of wisdom literature. An assessment of Prov. 25:1 was made earlier by James L. Crenshaw (1985: 613-615) who concluded that '[for] a chosen few, special scribal training may have been provided in Hezekiah's court'. D.W. Jamieson-Drake (1991: 149-151), evaluating biblical evidence for schools in monarchic Judah, concluded that Crenshaw's assessment was 'quite close to the position our archaeological materials suggest'. Similarly, for Schniedewind (2003: 387; 2004: 75-77) this text supports his argument that the collection and editing of traditions, as well as composition of literature, began under Hezekiah. He maintains that there is no a priori

reason to discount the statement in Prov. 25:1, as it is not laden with the ideological implications associated with the attribution of the proverbs to Solomon. R.A. Young (2012: 288) supports Schniedewind's argument, and maintains that the notice in this verse regarding the activity of royal scribes in the time of Hezekiah is now widely accepted by other scholars also (cf. Weinfeld 1972: 161-162).

For the development of literacy in Israel and Judah, the rise from the mid-eighth century of the so-called 'classical (or, literary) prophets' was very significant (see Chronological Tables, TABLE 2). Amos and Hosea, who prophesied mainly to Israel, belong to the first phase of this type of prophecy: their oracles are the earliest preserved prophetic books in the Bible, and contain material that reflects the situation in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 790-750). After the demise of Israel, these writings found their way south into Judah, possibly taken there by followers of Amos and Hosea fleeing from what was now an Assyrian province. Isaiah and Micah, who prophesied primarily to Judah, belong to the second phase of this kind of prophecy. Isaiah had a long ministry of counsel and rebuke, and seems to have been active ca. 736–ca. 697 (during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah). We have eyewitness accounts from Isaiah and Micah of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and siege of Jerusalem. (Sources: Na'aman 1994: 218-222; Amit 1999a: 372-374; Dever 2001: 202-221; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 212-215, 280-284; Grabbe 2007: 115-118; Schniedewind 2004: 64, 84-90. Cf. §4.5.3.2.)

4.5.3 The Shadow of Empire

Introduction

Daniel I. Block (1999: 66) emphasised the importance of correlating the message of the book of Judges with its most likely historical context. Various scholars have pointed to the significance, in this regard, of the rise and growth of the Assyrian empire (cf. Weinfeld 1985: 83-95; Amit 1999a: 371-373; Römer 2005: 67-72). This critical socio-political development, that affected not only Israel and Judah but the entire world of the ancient Near East, is the focus of this section. We noted in §1.2.2 that a postcolonial optic for the study of the Hebrew Bible involves an analysis of the texts that seriously considers their socio-cultural context in light of the socio-political reality of a succession of empires.

The title of this section is borrowed from F.F. Segovia (2000: 126): ‘the shadow of empire in the production of ancient texts is to be highlighted’. From the mid-8th century to the early 7th century BCE, the Assyrian empire spread its shadow over the world in which Israel and Judah were set (cf. §2.2.2.2). Below is a more detailed account of major developments in the Assyrian Empire, and the possibility that these developments were significant factors influencing the composition of the book of Judges.

4.5.3.1 The Assyrian threat and the demise of the Northern Kingdom

Around 745 BCE, the Northern Kingdom (long prone to destabilising dynastic upheavals) experienced the assassination of two kings (Zechariah and Shallum) within seven months. (Cf. Chronological Tables, TABLE 2. Dates are seldom precise and chronology is not always clear in events during this period, but this is not critical for this study.). Between 745 and the fall of Samaria in 722/721, Israel was ruled by four kings who moved from obsequious vassalhood, to rebellion, conquest and eventual annexation. In the critical year 745, Tiglath-pileser III — known in the Bible by his Babylonian name, Pul (2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chronicles 5:26) — rebelled against his own overlord and set about turning Assyria into a vast, predatory and brutal empire.

Tiglath-pileser III ruled Assyria from 745-727 BCE, constantly driving westward. From the time of his rule, a pattern can often be discerned in Assyrian policy: first, ‘voluntary’ submission might be sought from local rulers, whose territory became satellite states. Disloyalty led to submission by force, the loser becoming an Assyrian vassal. Rebellion brought severe punishment, and the conquered territory was reduced to the status of a province; the leading elements of society were deported and replaced with people from other parts of the empire (Campbell 1998: 236-237; Miller and Hayes 2006: 367-369).

The first Assyrian invasion of Israel took place in 732: according to 2 Kgs 16:7-9, this was at the instigation of Ahaz, king of Judah. By the time of Tiglath-pileser’s death in 727, most of Israel had been annexed to the Assyrian empire; its northern regions were organised into three Assyrian provinces: Dor, Megiddo and Gilead. The hill country around Samaria was all that remained of the kingdom that, under Omri and Ahab, had become relatively powerful and prosperous: the Dtr, to use Trouillot’s terminology (§4.3.3), is ‘silent’ about the achievements of these two kings. The rump kingdom, hemmed in to the west, north and east by the new Assyrian provinces, did not survive long.

There is some debate as to whether Shalmaneser V (727-722), after a three-year siege of Samaria, captured it in the end, or if it was his successor Sargon II (722-705) who brought about its fall, and thus the final demise of Israel. In any event, Sargon claimed the credit in his own inscriptions, and his chronicles provide the fullest known Assyrian account of what transpired. (The only biblical reference to Sargon is in Isaiah 20:1) For useful summaries of these complex events, as they affected the northern kingdom in particular, see Campbell 1998: 236-240; Cogan 1998: 256-258; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 214-220; Grabbe 2007: 149-150, 163-166; Radner 2012b, 2012c.

The Assyrians deported thousands of local inhabitants from the defeated Samaria to various parts of the empire; to take their place, they transferred from conquered territories of Babylonia and the Syro-Arabian desert large groups whom they settled in the hill country of Samaria as far south as the strategic area around Bethel (the old Israelite cult centre) on the northern border of Judah (Na'aman 1993b: 111; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 220; Radner 2012c). Archaeological evidence indicates that considerable numbers of the original inhabitants of Israel remained in the land; together with the newcomers, they were organized into the new Assyrian province of Samaria (known to the Assyrians as Samerina), administered by an Assyrian governor.

4.5.3.2 The kingdom of Judah after the demise of Israel

The people and leaders of Judah must have been all too aware of the terrible destruction wrought all around them by the Assyrians. After the campaigns of Tiglath Pileser III in 734-732 BCE, the Galilee, Gilead and the northern valleys of Israel became Assyrian provinces; Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Phoenician and Philistine cities, and the remnant of Israel became Assyrian vassals (Levin 2013: 219-220), Samaria finally falling in 722/721. Throughout Hezekiah's reign, Assyria kept Judah under pressure that was ultimately overwhelming. Judah had become a vassal state through the pro-Assyrian policies of Hezekiah's father, Ahaz (742-726). Sargon II's annals and summary inscriptions, in a detailed account of the rebellion, defeat and annexation of Ashdod in 712 BCE, contain an interesting reference to Judah: 'To the Kings...of Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab...payers of tribute and gifts to Ashur, my Lord, [Ashdod sent] evil words...to set them at enmity with me...'. It seems that the Ashdodites tried to incite surrounding states

to rebel: but, as only Ashdod was attacked and punished, the others apparently did not join the rebellion (Na'aman 1994a: 239-240).

For about the first two decades of his reign, Hezekiah apparently continued his father's policy and complied with Assyria's demands for tax and tribute payments, although we do not have details concerning those years (Na'aman 1994a: 248). Archaeological evidence from extensive excavations in and around Jerusalem indicates that the kingdom of Judah nevertheless benefitted greatly from the trade links it enjoyed because of its association with the imperial power. Artefacts such as monumental inscriptions, seals and seal impressions, and ostraca for royal administration indicate that, beginning in the late eighth century, more mature state formation was developing in Judah (Cogan 1998: 249-250; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 243-246).

Sargon II died in 705 BCE and was succeeded by Sennacherib (705-681), who within a few years shattered Judah's prosperity. Hezekiah rebelled against Sennacherib, joining in (possibly, instigating) a coalition against him. Egypt seems to have supported this rebellion, and it has been suggested that other small neighbouring kingdoms, such as Ammon, Moab, and Edom, considered joining the coalition, but dissociated themselves from it when Sennacherib appeared on the scene (Cogan 1998: 250). Hezekiah's rebellion resulted in a ferocious attack launched by Sennacherib in 701. The Assyrians mysteriously failed to take Jerusalem, but devastated large tracts of Judah's territory, destroying the fortified city of Lachish and around fifty Judean settlements, and deporting thousands of Judahites to distant parts of the empire (Dever 2001: 167-172; Miller and Hayes 2006: 410-421). (The form 'Judahite' is now in common usage, as a parallel or complementary term to 'Israelite'.) Vivid personal accounts are found in the prophecies of Micah and Isaiah. Micah, a native of Moresheth (near Lachish) describes the grief and shock of the homeless survivors (Mic. 1:10-13); Isaiah, present in Jerusalem during the Assyrian assault, describes the terror of a military campaign north of Jerusalem (Isa. 10:28-32).

Sennacherib exacted heavy tribute, paid out of the temple's treasure, leaving Judah a semi-independent kingdom, severely reduced in area and wealth. Assyrian records and archaeological evidence broadly support the biblical account in 2 Kgs 18:13-19:37 of Hezekiah's revolt and Sennacherib's destructive invasion (Dever 2001: 171-172; Grabbe 2007: 212) — but the Bible only hints at the extent of the catastrophe that befell Judah, focussing rather on Hezekiah's faithfulness to YHWH, the deliverance of Jerusalem, and Sennacherib's withdrawal. Archaeology, however, demonstrates how widespread and total

the devastation was, particularly in the Shephela (הַשְּׁפֵלָה: mentioned in Judg. 1:9) — a fertile plain stretching ca. 10 km between Mount Hebron and the coastal plain.

Archaeological evidence also indicates that to a great extent Judah emerged from the final devastation of Hezekiah's reign during the long reign of his son, Manasseh (697-642 BCE), who practised a pragmatic *Realpolitik* of cooperation with Assyria. The account of Manasseh's reign in 2 Kgs 21: 1-17 gives no indication of the unprecedented prosperity Judah enjoyed during this reign; it portrays Manasseh as the ultimate apostate, who reintroduced the abominations abolished by his father (Grabbe 2007: 215). Archaeology points to significant 'silences' in the biblical text concerning the devastation in Judah at the end of Hezekiah's reign and the turn-around in Judah's fortunes during Manasseh's reign. The editor(s) conclude the accounts of the respective reigns of Hezekiah (in 2 Kgs 20:20) and Manasseh (in 2 Kgs 21:17) with the formula 'are not the rest of [his] deeds [righteous deeds in Hezekiah's case, sinful deeds in Manasseh's] written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah'. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the nature of these 'Annals', but it is apparent that whatever these sources were, they have been edited to suit the 'official history' (Menahem Haran 1999); it is not clear at what stage 'silences' entered the story. Such issues are relevant when we consider sources for the book of Judges (§4.6.2) and the nature of the narratives as we now have them.

4.5.3.3 Demographic and Ethnic Changes

The early period of Hezekiah's reign saw rapid demographic growth in Judah, the pace and scale of which have been charted by archaeological surveys. As noted first by Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi (1974), surveys in the hill country of Judah revealed several dozen new settlements founded around the end of the eighth century BCE; excavations in Jerusalem indicate that the developed area of the city tripled or even quadrupled in size at this period. Broshi argued that this sudden expansion was unprecedented, the only reasonable explanation being that most of the newcomers were refugees from territories to the north and west of Judah annexed by Assyria (Weinfeld 1985: 87-91; Cogan 1998: 244-248; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 243-246; Schniedewind 2003: 379-380; 2004:68-73; R.A. Young 2012: 42-47). It seems certain that many were migrants from the conquered kingdom of Israel; many scholars believe they brought their own religious traditions, in oral and written form, eventually to be incorporated in the biblical texts (cf. §4.6.2).

The Assyrian empire effected profound and long-lasting social changes affecting Israel/Judah and all the neighbouring states. Busteney Oded (1970: 183) says: ‘The organization of a conquered territory as an Assyrian province...involved a change in the ethnic composition of the population, in consequence of the Assyrian practice of wholesale deportations.’ He maintains (1979: 44) that one aim of population exchange and dispersion of ethnic groups was to break up separate ‘nationalistic entities’. A consequence of Sargon II’s regional reorganisation was that the ‘ethnic admixture’ in Samerina was much the same as that found in many areas of the empire (Cogan 1998: 256).

Karen Radner (2012c) argues that the Assyrians operated an intricate ‘*colonisation*’ policy which was meant to provide stability to their vast empire—politically, structurally, economically, and culturally. One of the Assyrian sources which are quoted by Radner indicates that the Assyrian authorities actively encouraged a mixing of the new neighbours. The ultimate goal of the resettlement policy was to create a homogeneous population with a shared culture and common identity: that of ‘*Assyrians*’.

On the question of ‘ethnicity’, postcolonialism moves away from the concept of *race* with its assumption of genetically-determined biological types. Chris Gosden (1999: 190) comments that the problem of ethnicity is an easy one to recognise but difficult to define. He summarises it as follows: ‘Ethnicity has to do with differences between peoples and/or groups which have some sort of self-identity and boundedness from others.’ (On *ethnic identity*, see Gosden *ibid.* 190-197)

According to Ashcroft *et al.* (2007:75-76), ethnicity is concerned with human variation in terms of ‘values, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviours, experiences, consciousness of kind, memories and loyalties’; an ethnic group is ‘a group that is socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of cultural or national characteristics’. In terms of these definitions, it is appropriate to speak of ‘ethnic issues’ arising from the policy of population transfer around the Assyrian Empire.

4.6 Possible sources of the Book of Judges

Introduction

This section considers briefly two key issues relevant to our argument that the writing of the book of Judges may be located in Hezekiah's reign: first, the circumstances in Judean society during his reign that may have been the catalyst behind the creation of this book; secondly, resources available to the authors/scribes involved in this endeavour.

4.6.1 Critical circumstances

Lori L Rowlett (1996: 11) observes that times of turmoil in a nation's life tend to foster narratives of identity. When chaos seems to threaten the existence of the nation, its people emphasise what she terms 'self-definition' — who they are, their origins, their perceptions of their destiny — so as to establish a sense of order amidst disorder. Other commentators make similar observations in their analyses of the existential crisis that befell not only the remnant of the Northern Kingdom (now an Assyrian province) but also their neighbours and kinsfolk in Judah. Catastrophe, or the threat of catastrophe, sharpens people's perceptions and provides them with a stimulus to 'recall what is in danger of being forgotten [and] to preserve what is on the way to foundering' (Römer and de Pury 2000:136). They argue that biblical historiography as it has come down to us was 'born of this catastrophe': the nation's myths of origin provide the inspiration for reaffirming its identity or creating a new identity.

With the demise of the kingdom of Israel and its conversion into the Assyrian province of Samerina, Judah found itself facing the 'non-Israelite world' on its own, and it 'needed a defining and motivating text' (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 229). As noted in §4.5.3.1, the Assyrians deported thousands of people from the defeated Northern Kingdom, and resettled defeated peoples from Babylonia and the Syro-Arabian desert in former Israelite territories, directly north of Judah: as close as Bethel. The mixed 'ethnic' composition of the population now residing in Samerina (§4.5.3.3) must have presented their near neighbours in Judah with fundamental questions about preserving their own identity. Such issues are considered in the following chapters of this study.

Other profound questions also demanded answers: how can the fall of Israel be explained? How can Judah avoid a similar fate? What kind of leadership is required to assure Judah's future? As most of the action in the book of Judges is set in Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin (the territory of the Northern Kingdom), and as much of its portrayal is far from flattering, it may be intended to serve as an indictment of Israel, and at the same time explain its destruction. The vivid portrayal of prevailing instability throughout the period of the judges may have been inspired by folk memories of Israel's chronic instability in consequence of its destabilising succession of dynasties (see §4.5.3.1 and Chronological Tables, TABLE 2). From the perspective of Judah, the criticism of the days of the judges may also be regarded as an attempt by a people who had not been destroyed and deported to avoid such a calamity ever befalling them (Amit 2009b:34-35).

4.6.2 Nature and provenance of sources

In this section, we simply note the nature of the sources used in the compilation of the book of Judges, how this had been preserved, and (considering the large amount of northern material) how this became available to those in the kingdom of Judah who compiled the book. Much of the content of Judges consists of 'folk materials' of various kinds. It is not clear how much of this may contain authentic historical memory, although in the introduction to §4.5 we noted that various archaeologists maintain that the biblical narratives concerning the period of the judges (at least to some extent) reflect daily life and socio-economic conditions in Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Canaan.

These folk materials help us to hear other voices, enabling us to have some perception of how generations of storytellers and their hearers/readers may have understood earlier times — adapting these stories to 'fit' their contemporary situation. Judges contains stories about early *heroes*: some scholars have posited *a collection of hero stories* (stemming mostly from the Northern Kingdom) that provided a source for the book, particularly for the narratives found in Judg. 3:12-16:31. There are also stories about early *tribal conflicts*, particularly in Judg. 17-21. It seems likely that such traditions may well have been *preserved in northern sanctuaries*, especially at Gilgal, Bethel, Shechem, and Shiloh: these places are all mentioned in Judges: e.g. Gilgal (2:1; 3:19); Bethel (4:5); Shechem (ch. 9); Shiloh (21:12-23).

We noted above that the early period of Hezekiah's reign saw unprecedented demographic growth in Judah, widely attributed to an influx of refugees from territories annexed by Assyria. It is likely that, after the first Assyrian invasion of Israel in 732 BCE, people began to migrate (especially from Dor, Megiddo and Gilead, now under Assyrian control) to Judah among people they regarded as kinsfolk, despite the bitter conflicts between them (c.f. 2 Kgs 16:7-9); many more followed after the fall of Samaria (Weinfeld 1985: 87-91; Radner 2012b; R.A. Young (2012: 285-287). Weinfeld (ibid. 90) suggests that, after the devastation of the north, the hatred between the peoples of Israel and Judah dissipated; this is perhaps reflected in Isaiah 11:13:

Then Ephraim's envy shall cease, and Judah's harassment shall end;

Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. (NJPS)

He interprets this as a consolation oracle originating in the period after the fall of Samaria. In its present context in the book of Isaiah, it seems to address an exilic or post-exilic situation, but it may express a longstanding desire for reconciliation, the oracle being recalled at various historical junctures.

The northerners who migrated to Judah, beginning from the time of the first Assyrian invasion of Israel in 732 BCE, almost certainly brought with them cherished accounts of their people's past 'story', oral and written. It is not unreasonable to speculate that among them were some who had officiated at the northern sanctuaries and would bring with them treasured traditions that had been collected and preserved in these sanctuaries: some of these traditions being eventually incorporated into the biblical texts (Schniedewind 2004: 93-96; Amit 2009a: 309-322; Finkelstein 2013: 153-164).

Chapter 5 - Major Themes in Judges 1:1-36

Introduction

We noted in the Introduction to §4.2 that, although the book of Judges appears to have been shaped and re-shaped at various stages during a long editorial history, nevertheless it is an integrated work (see Outline of Contents §4.1). In this chapter, we consider major themes in the following sections:

1:1-21	Judah's conquests in southern Canaan
1:22-36	Limited successes of the northern tribes

In Chapters 6 and 7 we consider the following themes:

Chapter 6 Major Themes in Judges 2:1-5

Chapter 7 Israel in the days of the Judges (Judges 2:6-5:31).

7.1 Key themes in the Second Preface (2:6-3:6)

7.2 Major Themes in Judges 3:7-5:31

5.1 Socio-political background to Judges 1

In a paper concerning 'historiography and the study of ancient Israel', Susan Niditch (2003: 141) made an observation which sums up the basic approach I have followed in this study, namely, that 'biblical literature was produced by people set in time and place and shared by audiences in a process of culturally framed communication.' In §4.3.2 - §4.3.3, we considered how 8th century BCE Assyrian 'history-writing' may have provided an important type of 'culturally-framed communication' which could have influenced different forms of 'history-writing' that are found in the Hebrew Bible concerning Israel's settlement in Canaan, and which may clarify apparent differences between *Joshua*, regarded as similar to Assyrian 'Annals' in which narrative is arranged chronologically (§4.3.2.1) and *Judges 1*, considered to resemble the form of Assyrian 'Summary Inscriptions' in which text is arranged mainly in a geographical pattern (§4.3.2.2).

Thomas C. Römer (2005: 70) noted that, as Judah was integrated into the Assyrian ‘world market’, it must have been influenced by the diffusion of Assyrian culture, and he considers that the Jerusalem scribes ‘were undoubtedly aware’ of Assyrian propaganda and literary production. Finkelstein and Silberman (2006a: 142) argue that:

‘Assyrian kings ... popularized and dignified the compiling of official chronicles—developing from terse building inscriptions into elaborate texts of thanksgiving for military victories or civil achievements, to bombastic and totally self-serving dynastic histories. It is likely that the spread of Assyrian military and political power encouraged the adoption of Assyrian cultural characteristics throughout the region, including chronicle writing as the high-status accessory of every respectable Assyrian vassal king.’

Other writers such as William M. Schniedewind (2003, 2004) and Robb Andrew Young (2012) also consider that the Assyrian empire was a highly significant element of the socio-political background to the writing of biblical texts that they attribute to the time of Hezekiah. These various factors support the argument that *the literary form* of the opening chapter of the book of Judges culturally ‘fits’ the historic period of Hezekiah’s reign.

In §4.4.2 we noted that ‘an ideology of terror’ is particularly marked in Assyrian texts: these were intended not merely to record events or to glorify the king, but to serve as propaganda which would instil terror around the region. The self-image that the Assyrians obviously wanted to propagate through their various forms of inscription (of which we now have a voluminous supply) was that they were invincible, so there was nothing to be gained by resisting them. Peter Machinist (1983) raised the question: how did that empire appear to its contemporaries in so far as we can judge from their sources?—the principal outside source concerning the Neo-Assyrian Empire being the Hebrew Bible.

Machinist turned to First Isaiah to examine the picture of the Assyrian state found in that prophet’s writings, and also if possible to find the *origin* of that picture. From a detailed study of passages such as Isaiah 7–8 (set in the days of king Ahaz of Judah), Isaiah 20:1-6 (which refers to activities of Sargon of Assyria), and Isaiah 36-39 (on Hezekiah’s confrontation with Sennacherib), he concludes that the image the prophet presents of Assyria is that of an overwhelming military machine, destroying all resistance in its path, devastating and plundering the lands of its enemies, deporting and importing captives—thus rearranging the political physiognomy of the entire region (which Hezekiah and his people witnessed taking place in the next-door province of Samerina). Comparing the general image and specific motifs found in Isaiah with those in Assyrian texts, Machinist concludes that it is distinctly possible that Isaiah’s knowledge of Assyria was

gained not just from personal experience of the Assyrians' activities in Palestine but also from official Assyrian literature, especially court documents. In Isaiah, he says, we are witnessing the effects of Assyrian propaganda in the kingdom of Judah.

In addition, when considering the situation Hezekiah confronted, it is important to recognise that *two* foreign cultures were imposed on Judah: not only that of Assyria but also (in consequence of Assyrian actions) that of the Northern Kingdom, which to the people of Judah 'must have seemed like an alien world' (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 126). We noted in §2.2.1 the contrast between Israel and Judah from the perspective of historical geography: this led to Israel being more open to political and commercial contacts (Schniedewind 2003: 385). There are other major differences to take into consideration. The population of the Northern Kingdom was heterogeneous: 'Israelites' in the highlands of Samaria, 'Canaanites' (indigenous elements) in the rural lowlands, Phoenicians along the northern coast, and Aramaeans on the eastern and northern border regions. While the Northern Kingdom had strong contacts with its neighbours, Judah was much more isolated territorially, having a common border only with the Philistine kingdoms of Ekron and Gath, and demographically homogeneous (Finkelstein 1999: 39-44; Schniedewind 2003: 379-387; Na'aman 2010: 14-18; Young 2012: 285-293). The demographic composition of Judah was radically changed by the influx of northern refugees: a factor which has a bearing on the interpretation of the first chapter of Judges.

5.2 Interpretation of Judges 1

Introduction

Finkelstein and Silberman (2006a: 142) maintain that one function of the Assyrian chronicles was to produce 'bombastic and totally self-serving dynastic histories'. It would not be totally unjust to say that, to a certain extent, Hezekiah and his scribes had a similar motivation in writing their 'chronicle' about Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan. Various writers discern a 'Judah-centric focus' in Judges 1 (e.g. Mullen 1984; Hoffman 1989; Weinfeld 1993; Brettler 2002: 97-103), and see this as a tendentious attempt to glorify Judah and denigrate Israel. There is certainly an element of truth in this, but I consider it would be unjust to describe the text as merely 'tendentious' (a term with very

negative overtones): we must bear in mind the immensity of the challenges Hezekiah faced in consequence of the fall of the Northern Kingdom. In §5.2.1-§5.2.2, we will look first at some criticisms frequently made about the content of the Judges text, and then ask whether there are more positive and even ‘dynamic’ ways of looking at some of these issues. From the long-term view, it is important to bear in mind the observation of Finkelstein and Silberman at the conclusion of the passage from which we quoted above (2006a: 142), that ‘Judah’s dynamic history was to be something different—and it would survive and be remembered long after even the greatest kings of Assyria had faded into obscurity.’

5.2.1 Judah’s conquests in southern Canaan (1: 1-21)

The opening two verses act as a heading for the subsequent account of Judah’s conquests.

1:1a וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּשְׁאַלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיהוָה

1:1b לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָּנוּ אֶל־הַכְּנַעֲנִי בְּתַחֲלָה לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ

1:2 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה יְהוּדָה יַעֲלֶה הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּיָדוֹ

1:1a After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD,

1:1b ‘Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?’

1:2 The LORD said ‘Judah shall go up. I hereby give the land into his hand.’ (NRSV)

5.2.1.1 Some significant issues raised in 1: 1-21

Judges 1: 1-2

We are not told how the Israelites ‘inquired of the LORD’, but the term שאל בַּיָּהוָה indicates some form of divination or oracular consultation (Auld 1975: 267). According to Auld, the usage שאל בַּיָּהוָה is restricted to Judges and Samuel (and parallels in Chronicles). Judah’s precedence is signalled in these opening verses, contradicting traditions found in Joshua, Numbers 27:15-23, and Deuteronomy chs 1–3 and 31: 1-8, in which YHWH appoints Joshua to lead the invasion and conquest of Canaan (Weinfeld 1993: 388-389). By including a promise that recalls a similar promise to Joshua (Josh. 1:2-5) the LORD indicates that Judah inherits the mantle of Moses and Joshua (C.A. Brown 2000: 140-141).

Forming a literary *inclusio* between 1:1-2 and a passage towards the end of the book of Judges, there is a similar indication of Judah’s prominence in Judges 20:18, in the context of the civil war between Benjamin and other Israelite tribes. The terminology used in the two passages is similar, though not identical:

1:1b מי יעלה־לנו אל־הכנעני בתחלה להלחם בו

1:2 ויאמר יהוה יהודה יעלה הגה נתתי את־הארץ בידו

‘Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?’

The LORD said, ‘Judah shall go up. I hereby give the land into his hand.’ (NRSV)

20:18b מי יעלה־לנו בתחלה למלחמה עם־בני בנימן

ויאמר יהוה יהודה בתחלה

‘Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?’

And the LORD answered. ‘Judah shall go up first.’ (NRSV)

The ironic twist is that whereas in 1:1b the Canaanites were the adversaries, in 20:18b the Benjaminites (fellow Israelites) are the adversaries. Daniel Block (1999: 559) asserts that by their conduct the Benjaminites have ‘demonstrated themselves functionally and spiritually Canaanites’. The LORD’s response is very terse—just two words in Hebrew: ‘Judah first’—with no promise of success. Indeed, whereas Judges 1:1-2 inaugurates a list of Judah’s successes, Judges 20:19-21 tells of Judah’s initial defeat by the Benjaminites.

Judges 1: 3

Simeon receives ‘no more than a mention’ here and in 1:17 (Auld 1984:134). Although he is presented as an equal partner with his ‘brother’ Judah, after 1:17 he does not appear again in Judges. Simeon’s inheritance was integrated into that of Judah (cf. Joshua 19:1), and in later periods, it is clear that Simeon had been absorbed into southern Judah.

Judges 1: 4-7

The first of the three anecdotes in Judges 1 starts at Bezek (v. 4) and concludes in Jerusalem (v. 7). Most discussions about this incident revolve around questions such as the name of the ruler of Bezek, the location of Bezek, the connection between Adoni-bezek and ‘Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem’ who appears in Joshua 10, and how this incident related to Jerusalem. Webb (2012: 100) highlights the fact that Adoni-bezek is the first Canaanite to appear in Judges; moreover, he is a leader among his people and as such exemplifies or embodies the kind of Canaanite regime and culture that is ‘ripe for judgment’. Following the account of Adoni-bezek’s flight and the Judahites’ pursuit and subsequent treatment of him (v.6), they are presented as agents of God’s just judgement, with which Adoni-bezek concurs (v.7). For an alternative interpretation of the Bezek incident, cf. §5.2.1.2.

Judges 1: 8-10

The movement in the next series of successes involving Judah begins in Jerusalem (v. 8) and ends in Hebron (v.10). The editorial intention appears to be that Jerusalem and Hebron should be clearly tied to Judah, because both cities were of great significance for the Davidic monarchy. The editor(s) tells us that ‘the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba’: we noted briefly in §4.3.3 the phenomenon of the re-naming of cities. Re-naming is a significant issue in today’s world as it was also in the ancient world. In an article about present-day issues concerning place-names (and the re-naming of places) in modern Israel as ‘reflection of continuity and change in nation-building’, S.B. Cohen and N. Kliot (1981: 243) observe: ‘Place-names, in Israel and elsewhere in the world, are an inherent part of the landscape made by humans—i.e. the cultural landscape. Place-names provide a clue to a culture, to ideology as part of a culture, [and] to historical changes in both.’ We will return to this issue concerning contemporary Israel/Palestine in PART IV; for the present, the observations of Cohen and Kliot seem relevant for our study of the Judges text.

Postcolonial readings offer valuable observations on this phenomenon. The postcolonial perspective reminds us that every site of human occupation has its own history; the various peoples who have inhabited each site over the course of time have left their own marks or ‘inscriptions’ upon it, overwriting those of their predecessors. A particular mark of colonial discourse is that, in its endeavour to write a new ‘national history’, it seeks to erase the previous history of each site, in order to portray it as an ‘empty land’ into which a new people can enter and write their own narrative (Kim 2007:176-177). Jerusalem, that was put to the sword and set on fire by Judah (1: 8), was once the city of the Jebusites called ‘Jebus’ (1: 21), though Jebusites were still living there— and note also 19:10-12.

Judges 1: 11-15

The question of re-naming arises also in the second anecdote about the capture of Debir, for ‘the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher’ (v.11); Caleb calls it by its old name ‘Kiriath-sepher’ (v.12), which indicates that it was the Israelites, or here the Judahites, who changed its name to Debir. Danna Nolan Fewell (2007: 124-126) points out that traces of meaning remain in the old name: ‘Kiriath-sepher’ is, literally, ‘the city of writing’ or ‘city of books’ — a place of learning, and thus a city of learners. This may imply that it had housed an official library or archive (Block 1999: 93), or perhaps was a ‘governor’s town’ (Boling 1975: 56). Whatever the actual nature of the old city, its name indicates that the Judahites had erased a city of writing, a place of learning and culture.

After the summary statement in v.11, Caleb sets down a challenge (v.12): he will give his daughter Achsah in marriage to whoever captures Kiriath-sepher. (According to the tradition found in Josh. 14:6-15, Joshua allotted the territory around Hebron to Caleb; cf. note on Judg. 1:20.) The challenge is taken up by a close relative, Othniel (v.13). The exact relationship is not clear in the Hebrew text, כָּלֵב הַקַּטָּן מִמֶּנּוּ: the antecedent of ‘his younger brother’ could be ‘Kenaz’ or ‘Caleb’. The translators of LXX^A and LXX^B come to different conclusions: the former indicates ‘brother’ Γοθονιηλ υἱὸς Κενεζ ἀδελφός Χαλεβ ὁ νεώτερος, while the sense of the reading in the latter is ‘nephew’ Γοθονιηλ υἱὸς Κενεζ ἀδελφοῦ Χαλεβ ὁ νεώτερος. Whatever his precise relationship with Caleb, Othniel — who reappears in 3:7-11 as Israel’s first ‘judge’ — is portrayed here as a victorious warrior, who defeats the enemy and wins his wife.

There is a ‘hidden’ family history behind the three named persons who appear in this narrative, which—significantly—has been included within the list of *Judah’s* conquests: they are *Kenizzites* who may have been regarded as ‘not true Israelites’. According to the tradition recorded in Genesis 36:11,15, 42, their ancestor Kenaz was an Edomite chieftain, a descendant of Esau. In Genesis 15:19-20 the Kenizzites are included with ‘the Kenites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites’ who were occupying land promised to Abraham. The Kenizzites, as Edomites, seem to have been located in the Negeb, adjacent to Edom proper. There will be further discussion about the Kenizzites in §7.2.1. For the moment, we may note that the three characters in the anecdote about Kiriath-sepher/Debir — Caleb, Achsah and Othniel, all portrayed by the editor(s) as noble examples— are *Edomites*.

Judges 1: 16

In 1:16 the action moves to the Negeb, abruptly introducing ‘Hobab the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law’ (NRSV). There seems to be a kind of ‘flash-back’ to the tradition found in Numbers 10: 29-32: some commentators (e.g. Brown 2000:143) suggest it was triggered by alliteration with ‘Kenaz’ (v. 13), a common Hebrew literary technique. According to this tradition Moses entreated ‘Hobab’ to join the Israelites on their journey, to share the blessings of the ‘promised’ land. The Hebrew text raises numerous questions: for example, it begins קִנְיֵי קֵינִי literally ‘now sons of Kenite’. The absence of the definite article before ‘Kenite’ suggests some mutilation of the text: e.g. the name of Moses’ father-in-law and the article may have been lost in transmission. The LXX translators tried to clarify the text: LXX^A reads Καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰωβαβ τοῦ Κιναίου ‘and the sons of Hobab the Kenite’, perhaps influenced by Numbers 10:29; LXX^B reads Καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰοθορ τοῦ Κιναίου ‘sons of Jethro

the Kenite’, possibly reflecting the tradition in Exodus 3:1; 18:1. There is no clear solution to this textual issue. We have noted already in §4.2.1.1 that the pointed description of Moses’ father-in-law as ‘the Kenite’ in 1:16 may be intended to anticipate the later narratives in 4:11, 17 concerning ‘Heber the Kenite’, ‘the other Kenites’, and ‘the clan’ of Heber the Kenite. The Kenites will be discussed further in §7.2.1.

Judges 1: 17

In 1:17, it is said that the Judahites and Simeonites ‘defeated the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and *devoted it to destruction* [חרם ‘utterly destroy’]. So the city was called *Hormah* [הַרְמָה]’ (NRSV). The new name given to Zephath implied ‘Destruction’: a perpetual reminder of the city’s fate at the hands of the Judahites and Simeonites. We referred to this event in our discussion of the concept of ‘total war’ (§4.4.2), where we noted that the concept of חֵרֶם *herem* (often translated ‘the Ban’), which involved the destruction of a whole population, was a common practice throughout the ANE, including Israel. The kind of ‘warfare’ attributed to Israel in the story of the conquest of Canaan did not arise from a ‘theology of holy war’ unique to the Hebrew Bible, but is a political ideology that Israel shared with other peoples in the ANE. All wars waged by any people/country were ‘holy wars’ in that they were dedicated to the glorification of their deity and the extension of the deity’s territory and rule (Younger 1990: 235-236).

The ‘law’ of the חֵרֶם is set out in Deuteronomy 7: its prescriptive phrases are in 7:1-5, 11, 16, 25, and its promises in 7:20-22 (Lilley 1993:174). According to Deuteronomy 7, the purpose of the חֵרֶם was to ‘dispossess’ יָרַשׁ the Canaanites. There seem to be three reasons for this ‘dispossession’: divine judgement on the Canaanites, protection of the Israelites from the influence of Canaanite religion, and fulfilment of YHWH’s promises to the patriarchs concerning the land (Younger 2002: 29). These issues will be discussed in §6.3.3. Besides Judges 1:17, the only other occurrence of the term חֵרֶם in Judges is in 21:11, where it is used selectively against the people of Jabesh-Gilead, to provide wives for the Benjaminites who had survived the civil war. However, the concept is present in the failure of the northern tribes to dispossess the Canaanites (1:27-36; see §5.2.2.2: Themes); this implies failure to implement the חֵרֶם. The concept is present also in the Danites’ annihilation of the population of Laish (18:17). In the civil war, if only six hundred Benjaminite men survived, this suggests that the חֵרֶם had been applied against Benjamin.

Judges 1: 18-19

Judah next moves on to the Philistine region: to Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, each ‘with its territory’. Regarding this verse, Auld (1984: 135) comments briefly that we have here a ‘striking boast’ of supremacy over the ‘home base’ of the ‘five lords of the Philistines’ (Judges 3: 3); he adds two observations: ‘Judah’s claim here co-exists very uneasily with her craven attitude to the Philistines in the time of Samson (Judg. 15); and again represents an achievement of later times.’ (These observations will be addressed in §5.2.1.2.) Hamlin (1990: 35) argues that the likely intention of ‘the Scribe [his term]’ in 1:18 is to direct his readers forward to the Samson stories in which Gaza (Judges 16:1), Ashkelon (14:19) and Timnah (14:1) — which is in the vicinity of Ekron — are all prominent in the story-line. At this point, I want to draw attention to textual issues regarding the list of Philistine cities in the Hebrew text which is followed by NRSV: Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, each city taken ‘with its territory’. LXX^A and LXX^B add to the list ‘Ashdod with its territory’. Boling (1975: 58) follows the LXX reading, arguing that the text concerning Ashdod dropped out of the Hebrew through haplography, but has been retained in the LXX.

Whatever the answer to that particular textual issue, for Auld (1975: 272) the most remarkable textual point in this verse is that in both Greek versions the text is *negative*, presumably to harmonise v.18 with the statement in v. 19, that Judah ‘were not able to dispossess the inhabitants of the plain’(JPS) — though the Judahistic editor adds a comment seemingly intended to exonerate Judah from blame for this limited success: it was because ‘they [the inhabitants of the plain] had iron chariots’. Hamlin tries to resolve the problem by arguing that the tradition in 1:19 probably referred originally to an attack on the pre-Philistine Canaanites who lived on the plain, and later made incursions into the hill country in the time of Shamgar (Judges 3:31; 5:6; cf. 3: 1, 3).

In an attempt to resolve the textual difficulty, LXX^A simply makes the whole statement in v. 18 negative by adding οὐκ at the beginning, καὶ οὐκ ἐκκληρονόμησεν Ιουδας τὴν Γάζαν καὶ τὸ ὄριον αὐτῆς καὶ etc..., while LXX^B has καὶ οὐκ ἐκκληρονόμησεν Ιουδας τὴν Γάζαν οὐδὲ τὰ ὄρια αὐτῆς οὐδὲ etc.... It seemed to me worthwhile to draw attention to such textual issues, as a reminder, first of all, that the text of Judges is not always straightforward or even certain; secondly, it reminds us that many generations of readers have wrestled with its interpretation, often reaching different conclusions — at times radically different, and even the cause of bitter controversy.

We have noted already traces of different sources and different points of view within the text of Judges. The two concluding verses in the account of Judah's conquests convey the impression of new voices speaking, to set the record straight on some of the claims about Judah's successes. Verse 20 contradicts v. 10, insisting that Hebron was awarded to *Caleb*, on the authority of Moses; v. 21 points out that the taking of Jerusalem was less successful than claimed in v. 8. Contra the claim that *Benjamin* failed to dispossess the Jebusites, according to Joshua 15:23 it was *Judah's* failure. The transference of this failure to Benjamin is widely interpreted as an example of editorial intention to glorify Judah, on this occasion deprecating Benjamin, in line with the final episode in Judges 19-21 (Mullen 1984: 46; Weinfeld 1993: 396; Brettler 2002: 101). Many commentaries try to harmonise or explain away such differences. It seems to me far more appreciative of the realistic nature of the bible's record to recognise that internal disagreement, contradiction, and even polemic, are integral to it. This is one of the factors which make the Hebrew Bible (in the words of Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 142) a 'dynamic history' that has survived and is remembered long after even the greatest kings of Assyria have 'faded into obscurity'.

5.2.1.2 Alternative readings

The recurring issue in the interpretations of Judges 1: 1-21 outlined above is whether the biblical account of Judah's conquests is a tendentious attempt to glorify Judah and denigrate Israel. In this section, we will look again at some key verses, trying to read the text from the perspective of Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah after the traumatic events of 720 BCE, which without doubt continued to have a profound impact upon the people of Judah. The following observations offer a brief summary of the situation they faced.

In the aftermath of the fall of Samaria, Judah was confronted with a new and difficult demographic situation arising from the influx of refugees from the northern kingdom (this is outlined in §4.5.3.3). However, for Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah, and probably for many Judeans, the destruction of Israel was believed to 'legitimate' the southern kingdom and the rule of Hezekiah, as scion of an ancient dynasty. The people of Judah began to develop a strong sense of identity as the inheritors of the past — the past of both northern and southern kingdoms — and a conviction of divine destiny, seeing Judah as the rightful heir to the territories of fallen Israel and to those of the Israelite population who had survived the destruction (Schniedewind 2004: 68-90; Finkelstein and Silberman

2006b: 259-285; Na'aman 2010: 1-6, 14-23; Fleming 2012: 47-55; Young 2012:285-293; Finkelstein 2013: 153-158). Further issues facing Judah at this time will be discussed in later sections.

Judges 1: 1-2

Let us look first at the opening two verses which form a heading for the account of Judah's successes, particularly considering YHWH's response to the question in 1:1b:

1:2 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה יְהוּדָה יַעֲלֶה הַגִּבָּה נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּיָדוֹ

The LORD said, 'Judah shall go up. I hereby give the land into his hand.' (NRSV)

The response may be taken as a *double-entendre* (Schneider 2000: 4). On the one hand, it provides an answer to the previous question that fits the immediate context, by announcing that YHWH is giving into Judah's hand the land that is at present under the control of the Canaanites. However, the reader understands that the LORD's response addresses not only the generation that was entering the land 'after the death of Joshua' but also generations of Israelites long after the period of the Judges, not only in the time of the monarchy but even when the monarchy had come to an end.

To Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah after the fall of Israel, הָאָרֶץ meant 'the whole land' (Webb 2012: 95) — including the territory that was now the Assyrian province of Samerina, and יְהוּדָה meant not just the tribe of Judah but the Davidic dynasty. The divine promise וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּיָדוֹ was interpreted to mean: 'I am giving the whole land into the hand of the Davidic dynasty', thus underlining Hezekiah's conviction of divine destiny. This conviction also signals the beginning of the pan-Israel concept in the kingdom of Judah, though this concept could not develop fully until the time of Josiah, when the power of Assyria began to fade (Finkelstein 2013: 154-158).

Judges 1: 4-7

An alternative reading of these verses focuses on *Bezek* (v. 4) as the location of Judah's first great victory. At first sight, it is a very obscure place to have chosen for such an important event in the 'promised land', particularly as the narrative reaches its climax in Jerusalem (v. 7), and the next section moves from Jerusalem (v. 8) to Hebron (v. 10): two cities that (as we noted above) were of great significance for the Davidic monarchy. What, if any, significance is to be found in the selection of Bezek? Commenting on biblical interpreters' quest to locate Bezek geographically, Weinfeld (1993: 390) pithily comments that 'all the attempts to determine the site of Bezek are pursuits after wind'. Weinfeld

argues that the writer was using a place-name that would be familiar to his hearers/readers in connection with traditional stories about Saul, the Benjaminite, who was the first king of Israel. Events surrounding the confirmation of Saul's kingship are recorded in 1 Samuel 11: 1-15. The chapter opens with a description of an Ammonite military threat against Israel (according to 1 Samuel 12:12, this was one of the issues that caused Israel to demand a king), and Saul accepted an emotional appeal for help brought by messengers sent by the elders. The people 'came out as one' to follow Saul's leadership (v. 7); he mustered them at Bezek (v. 8) and led them to a great victory over the Ammonites.

The author of the anecdote in Judges 1: 4-7 may well have used the place-name 'Bezek' as a literary device to refer obliquely to Saul, conveying the message that the very place where Saul had mustered his troops was the first site captured and destroyed by the Judahites. Other possible elaborations on the symbolism in the Bezek account are found in Weinfeld 1993: 390-391 and Schneider 2000: 5-6, but these details do not seem essential for my present concern. The key point is: Judah has overcome Saul! For Hezekiah and his people, the 'hidden' message in this incident was a warning to the Saulides—who still had influence in the territory of Benjamin—that Judah would prevail. One wonders if this indicates a sense of political vulnerability on the part of Hezekiah and anxiety about potential rivals: Saul had to be erased from the scene.

Judges 1:16

We noted above various unresolved issues in the Hebrew and LXX texts of 1:16. While these textual matters are of interest regarding transmission of the text, in the case of 1:16 they do not raise any major historical or theological issues. In view of the issue of an apparent 'Judah-centric' emphasis in Judges 1, it seems to me that the key point in 1:16 may be the reference to *Moses*. Is Judah's successful progression through the southern territories being portrayed as nothing less than the fulfilment of the promise made by Moses; is the writer implying that Judah is acting on the authority of no less a person than Moses himself? And did Hezekiah and his loyal supporters apply this Mosaic authority to Hezekiah, who came from the tribe of Judah? If this was the case, surely it would indicate not merely a propensity to boast, but an understandable need to be assured of divine authority to undertake the immense challenges he confronted: not least the ever-present threat from the mighty authority of the Assyrian king?

Judges 1:18

We noted that Auld adds two observations to his account of 1:18: that Judah's claim co-exists very uneasily with its craven attitude to the Philistines in the time of Samson, and represents an achievement of later times. The 'craven attitude' to which Auld refers concerns the account in Judges 15: 9-13 of an occasion when Judah declined to assist Samson and surrendered him to the Philistines. In response to Auld's opinion, I would ask: does not the negative portrayal of Judah in Judges 15 reflect the fact that the Samson narratives are probably *northern* in origin? From a northern perspective, the attitude of Judah was indeed 'craven'. It is interesting that the editor(s) who brought together material from both the southern and northern tribes to form the book of Judges retained a narrative which showed Judah in a poor light. The same phenomenon is found in the Samuel texts which include material—considered by scholars to be Saulide in origin—that shows David in an unfavourable light: e.g. his collaboration with the Philistines (1 Samuel 27: 2-9).

Concerning Auld's suggestion about 'an achievement of later times', we certainly can find evidence to support this idea. Weinfeld (1993: 395) —though he maintains that the notice about conquests of southern coastal cities in Judges 1:18 has no historical basis—believes that the source of the claim for Judah's dominion over the Philistine area may be found in the period when Judah expanded in the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8) or in the time of Josiah (he gives no reference for Josiah). Miller and Hayes (2006: 404-407) argue that there is evidence from Assyrian documents suggesting that Sargon may have granted to Hezekiah (Judah at this time being a vassal or client state) oversight of the area that included the Philistine cities of Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza, in recognition of services rendered to him by Hezekiah. No other time in Judean history, they claim, would seem to correspond to the geographical configuration reflected in the tribal lists in Joshua 15:1-12, 21-62 regarding Judah. For them the notice in 2 Kings 18:8 fits in to this general scenario. In a briefer discussion about these issues, R.A. Young (2012: 35-42) comes to a similar conclusion about the connection between 2 Kings 18:8 and events taking place in Assyrian activity in the region. It seems to me reasonable to conclude that the situation described by Miller and Hayes and R.A. Young is the source of the claim by the editor(s) of Judges 1:18 which is parallel, though not identical, to Joshua 15: 45-47. It is possible that Hezekiah's scribes may have been aware of the Joshua tribal lists as they relate to Judah, and that Hezekiah and his people may have seen this as further support for their belief that Judah was fulfilling its divine destiny.

5.2.1.3 Giving a voice to Benjamin

As noted in §1.2.1 ‘Concerns of Postcolonialism’, a particular aim in postcolonial studies is to give a vocabulary and a voice to those whose history and knowledge have hitherto been hidden or discounted. It seems to me that this modern postcolonial concern is relevant for the study of the biblical people of Benjamin, whose history and knowledge have been obscured and disparaged in the biblical texts, which are written from a predominantly Judahite point of view, that is, from the viewpoint of the ‘winning side’ in the struggle for pre-eminence among the tribes of Israel/Judah in the land of Canaan.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of debate concerning the ‘hidden’ story of Benjamin, opening up new ways of understanding the Hebrew Bible: e.g. P.R. Davies 2007; Na’aman 2009; Finkelstein 2011a (in vigorous debate with Na’aman 2009); Fleming 2012: 13-16; 144-161. It is not possible within the limits of this study to discuss their work at length, but in the text of Judges as we have it, I believe there are pointers towards some of the new lines of thought, and that to some extent these can give Benjamin a voice. Daniel E. Fleming (2012: 145) writes that, according to the Bible, Benjamin seemed to be a ‘people apart’, its distinctness resulting from its location in crucial territory between Jerusalem and the highlands of Ephraim — the focal point of the conflict between Israel and the house of David: cf. the alternative reading of Judges 1: 4-7 in §5.2.1.2.

Philip Davies (2007: 104-108) highlights a ‘very distinct’ Benjaminite thread running from Joshua to Samuel: beginning with the conquest under Joshua, continuing with a ‘book of saviours’ (the core of Judges), and ending with Saul, the first king of Israel. He argues that this indicates an early ‘history’ of the origins of the northern kingdom, from which the Hebrew Bible’s historical narrative was eventually derived. For Fleming (*ibid.* 14-16), Davies has overplayed Benjamin’s role, but has correctly perceived the problem central to the entire character of the Bible: the definition of its history from Judah’s perspective.

I propose to focus on two narratives in Judges that illustrate the nature of the conflict between Israel and the house of David: the story of Ehud (particularly the summary of his lineage in Judges 3:15), and the concluding chapters (19-21) which recount the war between Benjamin and the rest of ‘Israel’. Schneider (2000: 47-48) points out that the description of Ehud in 3:15 is ‘powerfully loaded’, as its key elements (that he is a Benjaminite, a son of Gera, and is left-handed) relate to the David/Saul polemic; she argues also that Ehud is presented as ‘a decent judge from the tribe of Benjamin’ at this

early stage in the story of the northern tribes, to highlight the extent of the downward spiral of the tribes throughout Judges, and especially of Benjamin in the concluding chapters. The detail about Ehud's left-handedness is relevant in view of the civil war, when all the Benjaminite warriors were said to be highly skilled, left-handed fighters (Judges 20:15).

There are clear intertextual links between Ehud's designation as 'a son of Gera' and stories about David in 2 Samuel, where we meet another 'son of Gera' who twice confronted David. During the Absalom rebellion, he is described as 'a man of the family of the house of Saul...whose name was Shimei son of Gera' (2 Samuel 16:5); when David was returning to Jerusalem after Absalom's death, he is described as 'Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite' (2 Samuel 19:16). On the first occasion, he cursed David and threw stones at him and his retinue, later following them on the opposite hillside, still cursing David, throwing stones and flinging dust at him. On the second occasion, he appeared before David with 'a thousand people from Benjamin'; but he now confessed his guilt for his earlier actions, and begged for mercy when David's retinue demanded his death. David, declaring himself 'this day king over Israel', assured him 'You shall not die' (19: 22-23). David emerged victorious over Shimei and his fellow Benjaminites, and his magnanimity underlined the shameful behaviour of this 'man of the family of the house of Saul'.

Judges 19 furnishes the pretext for the war described in chapters 20-21, which reflect an anti-Saul polemic, as indicated by the geographical names in Judges 19-21 which are closely attached to Saul (M. Brettler 1989: 412-413). According to 1 Samuel 11:1-13 Jabesh-Gilead, which was the place where the war between Benjamin and the rest of Israel ended (Judges 21: 8-14), was crucial in Saul's ascent to power, because of his actions in saving the residents of Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites. To muster an army, Saul butchered a yoke of oxen and sent their pieces through the land, declaring that the same fate would befall the oxen of anyone who failed to rally to the cause. This image (which may be a source of the image of the butchered concubine in Judges 19) is contextually appropriate in 1 Samuel 11, but it is macabre and shocking in the Judges narrative.

Regarding Judges 19, Davies (*ibid.* 107) considers it clearly anti-Saulide, hardly looking like a Benjaminite tale. The fact that it provides the pretext for war in chapters 20-21, according to Davies, means either that any original Benjaminite story has been extensively overwritten (presumably by Judahite editors), or that there never was such story to be found in the folk traditions (but presumably is an invention to vilify Benjamin). However, Davies sees these only as possibilities; he finds no sufficient basis for a strong argument.

Fleming (ibid. 157) points out that, despite their defeat in the civil war, Benjamin can be perceived as Israel's equal in military capacity, 'a formidable presence on Israel's southern flank'. He argues also that the continuing reverence for Saul as a hero among the people of Benjamin ensured the preservation of stories about Saul for generations after the house of Saul ceased to compete with the house of David to rule Israel. As we noted already (in §5.2.1.2) regarding Judges 1: 4-7, anxiety about the continuing influence of Saulide partisanship seems to have been an issue in the time of Hezekiah.

To conclude this section focussing on Benjamin, let us reflect further on Judges 1: 21:

v. 21a וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי יָשַׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא הוֹרִישוּ בְנֵי בְנִימִן

v. 21b וַיֵּשֶׁב הַיְבוּסִי אֶת־בְּנֵי בְנִימִן בִּירוּשָׁלַם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

v. 21a The Benjaminites did not dispossess the Jebusite inhabitants of Jerusalem;

v. 21b so the Jebusites have dwelt with the Benjaminites in Jerusalem to this day. (JPS)

In our comment on this verse in §5.2.1.1, we observed that, contra the claim that Benjamin failed to dispossess the Jebusites, the account in Joshua 15:23 records it as Judah's failure: this transference of failure often interpreted as editorial intention to glorify Judah.

The phrase *וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי יָשַׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא הוֹרִישוּ בְנֵי בְנִימִן* in v. 21a presages a pattern that soon emerges in the portrayal of the northern tribes in vv. 27-33. Verse 27 opens with the statement that 'Manasseh did not dispossess' (וְלֹא־הוֹרִישׁ מְנַשֶּׁה); the repetition of *לֹא־הוֹרִישׁ* about each tribe in turn is like an ominous drumbeat (see §5.2.2.2). In v. 21b, the failure of the Benjaminites to dispossess the local inhabitants leads to co-existence in the land. The use of *לֹא־הוֹרִישׁ* along with *יָשַׁב* ('dwell') is a pattern repeated in vv. 27-33. (See BDB 440 re. *הוֹרִישׁ* 'dispossess' opp. *יָשַׁב* in these verses.) Note the contrast with v. 19: Judah 'were not able to dispossess the inhabitants of the plain' *לֹא לְהוֹרִישׁ אֶת־יִשְׁבֵי הָעֵמֶק* (see §5.2.1.1 on vv. 18-19); but there is no implication in v. 19 of co-existence between Judah and the inhabitants of the plain. The implied criticism in v. 21 is that co-existence was the *worst* outcome of Benjamin's failure to dispossess the Canaanites. The effect of this failure is underscored by the final *עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה* 'to this day': a phrase with various connotations. According to B.S. Childs (1963: 289), in contexts such as the present one, the redactor of earlier traditions was affirming that a condition associated with past events still continued in his day. A Benjaminite reader might respond: so, *we* are to blame for the problems of co-existence? Thus it has been over so many issues, *עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה*!

5.2.2 Limited successes of the northern tribes (1:22-36)

Introduction

At v. 22 we pass from the account of the settlement in the land by Judah and Simeon, with the focus particularly on Judah (vv. 1-21), to a new literary unit that is concerned with the settlement pattern exhibited among the northern tribes. The shift in focus is indicated by the introduction of ‘the house of Joseph’ (בֵּית־יוֹסֵף): that is, Manasseh and Ephraim, which (along with the tribes associated with them) were eventually to form the kingdom of Israel. The term בֵּית־יוֹסֵף occurs in vv. 22 and 23 but is not used again until v. 35, these references forming a literary framework within which the wars of the northern tribes are summarised. (Verse 36 is a kind of appendix, which will be discussed below.) The account of the settlement pattern among the northern tribes opens with a story of relative success (vv. 22-26), but the situation immediately deteriorates, as signalled by the opening words of v. 27: וְלֹא־הוֹרִישׁ מִנְּשָׂה אֶת־בֵּית־שֵׁשָׁן וְאֶת־בְּנוֹתָיָהּ (‘Manasseh did not dispossess [the inhabitants] of Beth-shean and its dependences’ JPS), each tribe in turn failing to drive out, or dispossess, the Canaanites. In comparison with the vivid accounts of Judah’s progress, their stories are told briefly, and the tone throughout is negative and censorious.

5.2.2.1 The significance of Bethel (1: 22-26)

The conquest of Bethel is not described anywhere else in biblical tradition, and this brief anecdote has no known source (Auld 1975: 276, 284; Mullen 1984: 50). According to Barnabas Lindars (1995: 51) it is possible that the present Judges story draws on a genuine tradition; however, it may be that — in the absence of any available historical record — the editor(s) simply applied a narrative motif in order to provide an account of the capture of this city, which was to be of considerable significance in subsequent Israelite history. The shrine established at Bethel by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12: 28-32) became a focus of anti-Israelite polemic for the deuteronomistic historians, but the story about Bethel as told in Judges 1: 22-26 does not appear to indicate any such bias, nor apparently do the references to Bethel in Judges 17-21 (but see our discussion in §6.2.3). Bethel was the meeting-place where Israel ‘inquired of God’ before the battle against the Benjaminites (20: 18), and was also where they offered sacrifices to the LORD after their defeat. This suggests that the Judges narratives concerning Bethel are likely to be pre-deuteronomistic in origin.

As in the account of Judah's conquest of the hill country (v. 19), the author notes that, when *בְּיַת־יִוֹסֵף* went up against Bethel, 'the LORD [was] with them' (יְהוָה עִמָּם v. 22); after this opening scene, however, YHWH is never described as being with any of the other tribes. The presence of YHWH indicates that the Josephites had the same resources as Judah enjoyed; this should have ensured success, but in the narrative that follows, there seems to be implicit criticism of both their strategy and its outcome (vv. 23-26). They send out a surveillance team to the outskirts of Bethel — a note in parenthesis telling us that the city was formerly called Luz (לֹז v. 23; cf. v. 26). On the basis of the verbal root לֹז 'turn aside (with devious connotations)', Boling (1975: 51) translates the city's name as 'Deception', linking it to the narrative plot. Contra Boling, Lindars (1995: 54) points out that in fact deception is not an explicit motif in the narrative; he suggests that the name comes from the noun לֹז 'almond-tree' (BDB 531): this interpretation is found among rabbinic scholars. In Israelite tradition that is consistently associated with Jacob, Luz had already become a sacred site (Genesis 28: 18-22; 35: 6-7; 48: 3-4); the capture of Bethel may, therefore, be perceived as a retaking of an ancient claim (Block 1999: 104).

The spies come into contact with a man leaving the city, and they enlist his assistance to find the way (presumably a covert way) into the city, promising that, if he helps them, they 'will deal kindly' with him: *עָשִׂינוּ עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד* (v. 24). The same terminology occurs in Joshua 2:14 concerning Rahab and the spies at Jericho: *עָשִׂינוּ עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד* (c.f. v. 12). It seems to be immediately obvious to the unnamed man at Bethel that these strangers are threatening his city with great harm, and that this will be his fate too if he refuses to help them. The term *חֶסֶד*, which has the basic sense 'goodness, kindness', is used widely to express the biblical concept of 'covenant loyalty' (BDB 338-339). As in the case of Rahab (Joshua 2: 12; 6:22-25), in the present context it likewise bears the latter sense, and the agreement apparently includes the safety of the man's whole family: c.f. v. 25 (Lindars 1995: 55). The covenantal use of *חֶסֶד* in connection with a Canaanite, who (unlike Rahab) does not profess faith in YHWH, may be intended to invite readers/hearers to interpret this event in the light of the divine prohibition expressed in Judges 2:2: 'Do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land' (though the term used here is *בְּרִית*).

Therefore there may be implicit criticism that the spies had made such a solemn pact with an unbelieving Canaanite. Webb (2012: 114-15) argues that the real *climax* of the anecdote is not reached when the city is 'put to the sword' (v. 25a), but when the man and his whole family are allowed to go free (v. 25b), in order to fulfil the obligations of *חֶסֶד*. Indeed, he says, this is a story not only, nor even essentially, about the conquest of a

Canaanite city, but about a solemn agreement made with a Canaanite. The biblical story concludes with the man and his family going to ‘the land of the Hittites’ (the location is uncertain), where he built a city, to which he gave the old Canaanite name, Luz (v. 26). The man had clearly remained a Canaanite at heart, and had founded a city where Canaanite urban culture could flourish. The implied indictment of the favour shown to the unnamed man makes the success of *בְּיַת־יוֹסֵף* in destroying Bethel only a partial success, and prepares the reader for the catalogue of manifest failures of all the other tribes in turn.

The above interpretation of the anecdote about the capture of Bethel has followed a broadly traditional approach. A postcolonial approach would paint a different picture, and I propose to suggest (briefly, for lack of space in this study) some emphases that a postcolonial reading might highlight. The nameless person, who appears simply as *אִישׁ* ‘a man’, remains nameless to the end: a mere cipher who seems to lack any feature that would give ‘flesh’ to him; he is a characterless pawn of the Josephite spies. But a closer reading of the text enables him to emerge as a remarkably rounded character, and indeed to become the hero of the story. This different view of ‘the man’ arises from a careful scrutiny of the Hebrew terminology used in v. 25b: *וְאָתְּהָאִישׁ וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחָתוֹ שְׁלָחוּ* ‘but they let the man and all his relatives go free’ (JPS).

The Hebrew term *מִשְׁפָּחָה* (BDB ‘clan’) is interpreted in LXX^A & LXX^B as *συγγένεια* ‘kinsfolk, relatives’—JPS conveys this more accurately than most English versions which use the term ‘family’: to western English readers this probably conveys the idea of a ‘nuclear family’. In ancient Israel, all members of a group who were related by blood and had a sense of consanguinity belonged to the ‘clan’ or ‘extended family’ (Paula McNutt 1999: 87-94; cf. Karel van der Toorn 1996: 199-205). The meaning of *מִשְׁפָּחָה* is indicated by the extent of Rahab’s ‘family’ as described in Joshua 6:23: *וַיֵּצִיאוּ אֶת־רַחָב וְאֶת־אָבֶיהָ וְאֶת־אִמָּהָ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָהּ הָאִישׁ וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחֹתֶיהָ הוֹצִיאוּ* ‘[they] brought out Rahab, her father and her mother, her brothers and all that belonged to her’— which is reiterated and summed up in the phrase *וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחֹתֶיהָ הוֹצִיאוּ* that is, ‘they brought out her whole clan’.

The unnamed man who escaped from Bethel with ‘his whole clan’ (*כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחָתוֹ*) would therefore have formed a large, all-age group that must have required careful negotiation and collaboration with the spies, and also needed time, ingenuity, determination, discretion, and clan loyalty, to gather them all together — at any moment liable to be discovered and denounced as a ‘traitor’. From the perspective of his neighbours in Bethel, he *was* a traitor, but, realising that in any case the city was doomed, he seized the chance to

save his whole clan and build a new life for them all. With such a large group to lead, the journey to ‘the land of the Hittites’ (wherever it was located), was long and difficult; but they eventually reached their destination, and he established his new community. To the editor(s) of the anecdote he may remain just an unnamed *שׂוֹרֵץ*, but to the careful reader he emerges as a man of honour who, at great personal risk, was faithful to his Canaanite heritage and to his entire familial obligations — a true hero.

Regarding the anecdote about the capture of Bethel, Tammi J. Schneider (2000: 21) comments that ‘[despite] the later importance of the city, no particular significance is given to it in the context of this narrative’. On a casual reading of the narrative that may appear to be the case, but from the perspective of Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem and Judah, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Bethel was a place of immediate and major concern. We have noted previously (§4.5.3.1; §4.6.1) that, following the defeat of the kingdom of Israel and its conversion into the province of Samerina, the Assyrians deported thousands of Israelites to other regions of the empire, and brought defeated peoples from other regions and resettled them in former Israelite territories, directly north of Judah — as close as Bethel (detailed in Na’aman 1993b: 106-112).

Looking at this situation from the perspective of Judah and its king, it is very important to realise the *close proximity* of Bethel to Jerusalem: only about 10 miles (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 141; idem 2006b: 274). Although Judah was an Assyrian vassal and for the earlier part of his reign Hezekiah was (at least outwardly) continuing his father’s policy of loyalty to Assyria, nevertheless — knowing the ruthlessness of the Assyrians, as so vividly described by the prophet Isaiah (see §5.1) — it must have made Hezekiah and his people feel very vulnerable to be so close to Bethel, now under Assyrian control.

At the same time, as indicated above (§5.2.1.2), they had come to see Judah as the rightful heir to the territories of fallen Israel and to the survivors of the Israelite population. In our interpretation of the anecdote about the capture of Bethel, we commented that this event may be perceived as a retaking of an ancient claim. The concept of retaking what rightfully belonged to YHWH would convey a powerful word, first, to Hezekiah and his people. Convinced that, just as YHWH had been with *בְּיַתְיִסְרָף* (1: 22), they too could affirm *יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ*: ‘YHWH [is] with us’, and could look to the day when Bethel would be retaken from the Assyrians.

Secondly, there was another constituency to whom such a word would come with particular resonance. Recent archaeological analysis of demographic patterns in the southern region of the northern kingdom, particularly in the vicinity of Bethel, has indicated that many of the Israelite refugees now in Judah and Jerusalem came from the region of Bethel (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 134-138). Thirdly, a postcolonial reading would emphasise that this anecdote represented a voice of protest and opposition addressed to the Assyrians, though the terror instilled by their overlords would require this subversive word to remain *hidden* in a seemingly simple story. The fulfilment of this hope would not come in Hezekiah's time, but it was apparently fulfilled in the days of Josiah, when the power of Assyria was finally waning; however, that hope was short-lived.

5.2.2.2 Portrayal of the northern tribes (1: 27-36)

Sources

A.G. Auld (1984: 138) commented that this section of Judges 1 consists only of a series of brief notes about difficulties experienced by the tribes who settled in central and northern Israel. M. Weinfeld (1993: 397), in line with his strong emphasis on the Judah-centric focus of the Judges texts, suggested that the editor had available to him sources which he so arranged as to impress the reader with the failures of the northern tribes, vis-à-vis the achievements of the Judahites, but he gave no indication of the possible nature or provenance of these sources. Brettler (2002: 101) briefly remarks without elaboration that, as some of the material in these verses has parallels in Joshua, it may have been copied from there, while material that has no parallels may be original to Judges 1.

Recently, however, some scholars have brought forward new proposals, that have emerged in part from fresh assessments regarding the significance of Bethel, and have shed some light on the possible origin and interpretation of this portrayal of the northern tribes. Several suggest that the Bethel temple was the repository and place of composition of northern biblical traditions. Philippe Guillaume's study (published in 2004) explored E.A. Knauf's proposal that a 'Book of Saviours' was composed at Bethel; in his opening chapter Guillaume concludes that the first stage of a 'Book of Saviours' (containing most of the material in Judges 3-9) was compiled at Bethel in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Samaria. In his second chapter, he argues that the major part of Judges 1 was composed in

Jerusalem after Sennacherib's siege of the city in 701 BCE. (See cross-references to other authors in the footnotes to Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2009: 440).

Daniel Fleming (2012: 314-321) has argued that before the fall of Samaria, Bethel was a key site for the collection of Israelite material that eventually became part of the biblical narrative from Genesis through Kings. He includes among such materials Israel's traditions about the conquest of Canaanite cities, incorporated into Judges 1. A number of scholars (e.g. P.R. Davies 2007:110; Fleming 2012: 314-315) have identified Bethel as an essential conduit for Israelite tradition into circles in Judah after the fall of Samaria. We noted above that many Israelite refugees in Judah and Jerusalem had come from the region of Bethel; while there is so far no specific evidence for this conjecture, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that some of these people may have brought with them from the repository in the Bethel temple some of their earliest traditions, possibly in both oral and written form. (On the issue of sources and the preservation of traditions, see §4.6.2.)

Themes

After the anecdote about Bethel, the accounts of all the other northern tribes are brief, lacking narrative content or chronological sequence, simply juxtaposed in a south → north geographic arrangement (see details in §4.3.2.2). Three recurrent themes are introduced in the opening verses about the tribe of Manasseh (vv. 27-28): dispossession of the Canaanites; co-existence with the Canaanites; and forced labour.

The first theme, *dispossession of the Canaanites*, is highlighted in these two verses, which begin and end with the statement that Manasseh 'did not dispossess' (לא־הוֹרִישׁ) the Canaanites [in the cities listed in v. 27]. The formula לא־הוֹרִישׁ is repeated in the cases of Ephraim (v. 29), Zebulun (v. 30), Asher (v. 31), and Naphtali (v.33). The reference to 'Israel' in v. 28 implies that the Manassite behaviour summarised here is to be generalised as a portrayal of the northern tribes as a whole. Since Judah had already been specifically exempted from the charge of failure to dispossess local Canaanite inhabitants (except for the qualified statement of Judges 1:19), we may regard this portrait as a representation of the Northern Kingdom as seen through Judahite eyes.

As described in Joshua 17:12, the cause of Manasseh's failure was that they were *not able* to dispossess the Canaanites: וְלֹא יָכְלוּ בְנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה לְהוֹרִישׁ אֶת־הַעֲרָבִים הָאֵלֶּה. However, there is a different explanation in the Judges account, following the list of cities in v. 27, where we read וַיֹּאֲלֵהוּ הַכְּנַעֲנִי לְשֹׁכֵת בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת 'the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in this region' (JPS),

or ‘were determined to live in that land’; the NRSV translation ‘continued to live in that land’ is too weak. (On the use of the root [נָאָל] see BDB 383-384.) The underlying impression is that the Israelites are charged with having less willpower or resolve than the Canaanites. Manasseh’s failure is further pressed home in v. 28 by use of the infinitive in the phrase *וְהוֹרִישׁ לֹא הוֹרִישׁוּ* ‘they emphatically did not dispossess them’, which may imply unwillingness to do so, or deliberate disobedience of YHWH’s command (Fishbane 1985: 203). Their failure to dispossess the Canaanites probably infers failure to implement the *חֶרֶם* (see §5.2.1.1 concerning Judges 1:17).

The issue of *co-existence with the Canaanites*, implicit in the case of Manasseh (v. 27), becomes explicit with regard to both Ephraim (v. 29) and Zebulun (v. 30), where we read *וַיָּשֶׁב הַכְּנַעֲנִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ*: ‘the Canaanites dwelt in their midst’ (JPS). However, the roles are reversed between tribes and Canaanites when we come to the Asherites and Naphtalites. In v. 32 we read *וַיָּשֶׁב הָאֲשֵׁרִי בְּקִרְבֵי הַכְּנַעֲנִי יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ*: ‘the Asherites dwelt in the midst of the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land’ (JPS). According to Lindars (1995: 65) this change was noted by Jewish commentators, who explained that the Canaanites regained power over Asher as divine punishment for their failure to expel the Canaanites. Of the Naphtalites we read in v. 33 *וַיָּשֶׁב בְּקִרְבֵי הַכְּנַעֲנִי יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ*; for no discernible reason except perhaps for variety of expression, JPS in this instance translates the same Hebrew terms as ‘they settled in the midst of the Canaanite inhabitants of the land’. For Martin (1995: 27), the main emphasis of the whole section (vv. 27-34) is on the continuing co-existence of the two elements in the population of the Northern Kingdom.

The issue of *forced labour* (*מַס*) appears in vv. 28, 30, 33 and 35. In its first occurrence (v.28) we read *וַיְהִי כִּי־חִזַּק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂמֹם אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי לְמַס*: ‘when Israel gained the upper hand, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour’ (JPS). Various commentators have taken the reference to *מַס* in these verses to reflect the Canaanite practice of *corvée*, known from Ugaritic texts; or David’s institution of *מַס* ‘forced labour’ in 2 Samuel 20:24; or Solomon’s conscription for *מַס־עֲבָד* ‘slave labour’ of the descendants of the peoples ‘whom the Israelites [had been] unable to destroy completely’ (1 Kings 9: 20-21). Lindars (1995: 59) suggests that, rather than attempting to associate the occurrence of *מַס* in the Judges texts with any specific historic situation, it is better to take it as a symbolic reference to serfdom such as that which the Israelites had experienced in Egypt.

In support of Lindars’ suggestion, it may be relevant that the term *מַס* occurs in Exodus 1:11, of Israel’s plight in Egypt: *וַיִּשְׂמִימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם*: ‘they set taskmasters

over them to oppress them with forced labour' (NRSV). BDB 688 defines סְבִלְתָם as 'burden, in the sense of the heavy labours imposed on Israel by Egypt'. If this intertextual reference is valid, there is great irony in the implication that the Israelites were treating the Canaanites as they themselves had been treated in Egypt. We may with some confidence assert that, whether or not there is an implied reference to Israel in Egypt, there is implicit criticism of the condition of serfdom imposed on the Canaanite population.

Chapter 1 concludes with a description of Dan's experience (vv. 34-35). The portrayal of the Danites is markedly different from that of the other tribes. The Danites' weakness and failure to occupy their inheritance is emphasised by the sentence structure: Dan is the object in the sentence; the subject is the Amorites. Furthermore, they were unable to subject the Amorites to forced labour: it fell to the house of Joseph, whose 'hand rested heavily on [the Amorites]', to impose forced labour upon them. The Danites' inadequacies have a key role in the later development of the narrative in Judges 18 (Brown 2000: 148).

The mention of the 'border of the Amorites' in verse 36 has various problems, first because its connection with the preceding verses is obscure. It may be that verses 34-36 originally belonged to a fuller account, detailing the frontiers of all the tribes, which may have ended with the present v. 36. However, some scholars follow several manuscripts of the LXX which read 'Edomites' for 'Amorites' (these terms are very close in Hebrew lettering: *האמר/האדמי*). In this case the reference would be to the border between Edom and Judah (Cundall 1968: 62-63; Auld 1975: 278). Which reading we follow is of no significance for the interpretation of these verses for our present purposes.

5.2.2.3 A postcolonial observation

Scholars have proposed several scenarios to account for the formation of 'Israel'. There are three classic 'models' which may be summarised as: Conquest; Migration/peaceful infiltration; Revolt/social revolution; there is also a 'Symbiosis hypothesis', a modified version of the infiltration model. For concise accounts of these approaches, see J. J. McDermott 1998; L.L. Grabbe 2007: 100-104. For the purposes of our present study, we will follow the general approach taken in postcolonial analysis of the text. While it acknowledges issues of 'historical factuality', with which the above approaches are broadly concerned, a postcolonial analysis focusses on the 'narrative world' and underlying ideology of the text. From this standpoint, the central issue is that, in common

with the biblical point of view as a whole, the book of Judges portrays the Israelites as coming from outside the land of Canaan. In the world of the text, they are ‘outsiders’ whose aim is to dispossess the indigenous Canaanites. In effect, they are *colonisers* in the land of Canaan; the Canaanites are the *colonised* in their own land. At various times, however, the Israelites themselves appear to be the colonised, at the mercy of more powerful peoples. In the time of Hezekiah, for example, the kingdom of Judah was a vassal to the Assyrian empire, and was surrounded by Assyrian provinces. Thus, the situation for the Israelites with regard to colonisation is fluctuating and complex.

Using a postcolonial concept, we may say that the whole of Judges 1 (both the ‘Judah-centric’ first part and the critical portrayal of the northern tribes in the second part) depicts the land as a ‘contact zone’. Mary Louise Pratt used this term in an influential essay entitled ‘Arts of the Contact Zone’ (1991), and developed it in her book ‘Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation’ (1992; second edition 2008). Pratt borrowed the term from linguistics, where the ‘contact language’ is an improvised language that develops among speakers of different languages who need to communicate with each other. She uses the term ‘contact zone’ to describe social spaces where ‘disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination — like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today’ (1992:4); we might add: ‘for example, in present-day Israel/Palestine’.

Pratt’s concept refers to ‘the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict’ (1992:8). She further emphasises that the importance of ‘a “contact” perspective’ is that it ‘treats the relations among colonizers and colonized...not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and often within radically asymmetrical relations of power’ (2008:8). Pratt’s ‘contact zone’ is similar to Bhabha’s ‘Third Space’, which we considered in §1.2.1 ‘Concerns of Postcolonialism’; but the concept of the contact zone lays greater emphasis on *difference*, and acknowledges the diverse forms of negotiation that may take place in the contact zone. It is ‘an extremely useful and flexible term for the many complex engagements which characterize the postcolonial space and its encounters’ (Ashcroft et al. 2007: 49).

As the portrayal of the land of Canaan in the book of Judges may be considered in terms of colonisation, as indicated above, it seems to me that the concept of the contact zone will prove relevant for this present study. Concerning Judges 1 as a whole, the dominant picture of the relationship between the indigenes and the outsiders may be described, in Pratt's words, as one of 'intractable conflict'. However, the narrative about the 'unnamed' man in Bethel, when considered (in §5.2.2.1) from a postcolonial perspective, may be said to have revealed a Canaanite and an Israelite entering into negotiation within the contact zone in which they had found themselves, and making a solemn agreement to which they both proved faithful. When considering particularly the narratives in Judges 3:6–5:31, I believe that the concept of the contact zone will be fruitful as a tool for analysis of the text.

5.2.2.4 Giving a voice to the Northern Kingdom

Archaeological evidence shows that during the long reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 790-750), the kingdom of Israel attained its greatest territorial expansion, reconquering Hazor and taking over control of Dan. It now included the whole northern region of the Jordan Valley, and possibly reached even further (Finkelstein 2011b). While the reign of Uzziah in the kingdom of Judah coincided in length to a large extent with that of Jeroboam II (see Chronological Table 2), Israel was considerably stronger than Judah, both militarily and economically: indeed, for most of the time that the two kingdoms co-existed, the northern kingdom dominated its southern neighbour. Nevertheless, both in the stories told of the two kingdoms in the Hebrew Bible, and also in the low level of interest shown towards the northern kingdom by modern scholarship, Israel has lingered in the shadow of Judah.

However, in recent years there has been a surge of interest in what has been dubbed 'The Forgotten Kingdom' (Finkelstein 2013). Among biblical scholars and archaeologists, there is increasing recognition that the story of ancient Israel as told in the Hebrew Bible was written by Judahite authors. Although archaeology, extra-biblical sources, and history clearly distinguish between the two kingdoms and peoples, the Hebrew Bible, in the strange process of its creation, brings into *one* the stories and experiences of these two peoples. There is wide consensus that the first telling of this story took place in Jerusalem, and that it represents Judahite ideology about land, kingship, temple and cult (ibid. 1-11). Fleming (2012: 4) succinctly summarises the basic premise of his book in the statement that 'The Bible belongs to and was created by the people of Judah'. The issues regarding the Northern Kingdom outlined above will be considered in Chapter 6.

It has long been recognised that the biblical literature contains within it historical traditions and religious doctrines that originated in the Northern Kingdom (Yair Hoffman 1989; Karel van der Toorn 1996; Na'aman 2010). Some recent studies argue that Israelite/northern traditions were incorporated in the Hebrew Bible (or, 'in Judah's Bible'), either because these traditions supported the Judahite ideology, or because of pressing political needs in Judah to absorb the significant Israelite population living in the kingdom in consequence of the fall of Samaria (Schniedewind 2003, 2004; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006b; Fleming 2012; Young 2012; Finkelstein 2013).

However, it is not easy to detect in the Bible which material may be of northern provenance (Hoffman 1989: 169); indeed, 'the original voice of Israel is barely heard in the Hebrew Bible' (Finkelstein 2013:3). The situation is well summed up in words of Fleming (ibid. 4): 'the voice of Israel...can be lost in Judah's choir'. Recognising that there are many difficulties involved in attempting to discern the Israelite content in the Bible, an attempt will be made in our continuing study of the Judges text to 'give a voice to the Northern Kingdom'.

5.2.2.5 Postscript: a theological explanation (2:1-5)

It is widely accepted that the paragraph division at the end of chapter 1 is wrongly positioned, as verses 2:1-5 form a conclusion or postscript to the First Preface, particularly to the negative portrayal of the northern tribes in 1: 22-36. Fleming (2012: 55-56, 59) notes that, in contrast to its portrayal of the northern kingdom, the Bible does not preserve a tradition of the southern kingdom having been built out of tribal components: there is no portrayal of Judah as a tribal association like Israel. We discussed in the Introduction to §5.2 the apparent 'Judah-centric' emphasis in Judges 1, and some possible ameliorating factors in the situation that pertained in the time of Hezekiah, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. The account of failures in 1: 22-36 clearly exempts Judah, already celebrated as the first to engage the enemy (at YHWH's appointment), and (along with Simeon) as the most successful among his brethren. Regarding Simeon, see note on 1:3 in §5.2.1.1.

If, as seems likely, the sources of the tribal traditions behind 1:22-36 were of northern provenance (such as the posited repository in the Bethel temple), it seems obvious that *the portrayal* of the northern tribes, as we now have it, has been filtered through the censorious eyes of Judahite editors. The postscript offers a theological explanation of *why the*

conquest of Canaan was only partial. We will outline briefly below (without comment at this stage) the ‘theology’ expressed in the postscript, especially in 2:1b-3. Important issues raised in this ‘theological explanation’ will be discussed at length in Chapter 6, as the ‘postscript’ may be regarded as a ‘bridge’ to the Second Preface (2:6-3:6), which is discussed fully in §7.1 — indeed as a bridge to all that follows, in the vivid portrayal of the troubles said to have beset Israel in the days of the judges.

It is argued that YHWH has been faithful to all the covenanted promises he made to his people, delivering them from Egypt and bringing them to the land he promised to their ancestors (v.1b). But they have not reciprocated his faithfulness: in particular, they have entered into solemn relationships (בְּרִית ‘covenant’) with the inhabitants of the land, and have tolerated some of their alien religious practices: thus disobeying YHWH’s specific command (v. 2). As punishment, YHWH will no longer drive out the former inhabitants of the land, but will leave them to be Israel’s perpetual enemies; using hunting imagery, YHWH warns them that these alien gods will be a ‘decoy’ or ‘trap’, ensnaring his people (v. 3). It will be implied throughout the narratives in the rest of the book of Judges that the Israelites’ failure to dispossess the Canaanites lay at the root of all their troubles (Martin 1975: 30-31; Auld 1984: 139; Weinfeld 1993: 398).

Chapter 6 - Major Themes in Judges 2:1–5

6.1 Literary structure of Judges 2: 1-5

As noted in §5.2.2.5, Judges 2:1-5 acts as both a postscript to chapter 1 and a ‘bridge’ to 2:6–3:6, in that it embodies (in 2:1b-2:3) a message delivered by the angel of the Lord, accounting for Israel’s past failures and introducing themes that recur in 2:6–3:6 (see §4.1, Outline of Contents). The angel of the Lord (in 2:1a and 2:4a) and the location Bochim (in 2:1a and 2:5a) form a literary *inclusio* for the angel’s message. Before discussing details of this message in §6.3, we shall briefly consider the significance of the terms in the *inclusio*.

2:1a וַיַּעַל מַלְאֲכֵי־יְהוָה מִן־הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל־הַבְּכִים
 [2:1b–2:3 *The message delivered by the angel of the LORD*]

2:4a וַיְהִי כִּדְבַר מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה אֲתֵּי־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

2:4b וַיִּשְׂאוּ הָעָם אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ

2:5a וַיִּקְרְאוּ שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּכִים

2:5b וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־שָׁם לַיהוָה

2:1a Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim
 [2:1b–2:3 *The message delivered by the angel of the LORD*]

2:4a When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the Israelites,

2:4b the people lifted up their voices and wept.

2:5a So they named that place Bochim,

2:5b and there they sacrificed to the LORD. (NRSV)

6.2 Significant terms in Judges 2:1a, 2:4-5

6.2.1 The angel of the LORD מַלְאֲכֵי־יְהוָה (2:1a, 2:4a)

In everyday usage, the term מַלְאֲכֵי basically carries a diplomatic sense, as in Judges 6:35 of מַלְאֲכֵי (messengers/envoys/official spokesmen) sent out by Gideon to muster an army; this basic sense underlies its usage in the expression מַלְאֲכֵי־יְהוָה, which may be translated ‘YHWH’s messenger/envoy’. This occurs nineteen times in Judges (e.g. 6:21) and the variant form מַלְאֲכֵי הַיְיָאֱלֹהִים three times (e.g. 6:20); in each case, the figure thus described appears as the deity’s official spokesman. The prophets, in their role as YHWH’s

spokesmen, are also referred to with this term: e.g. in Malachi 3:1, YHWH announces, ‘I am sending my messenger מְלַאֲכֵי הַבְּרִית...the messenger of the covenant מְלַאֲכֵי הַבְּרִית’. Some interpreters have suggested that מְלַאֲכֵי-יְהוָה in Judges 2 is a human messenger/prophetic figure, but as מְלַאֲכֵי הָאֱלֹהִים/מְלַאֲכֵי-יְהוָה (mentioned altogether eight times in Judges 6) is clearly distinguished from the מְלַאֲכֵי־יְהוָה sent by Gideon in 6:35, it seems probable that the personage who conveys the message in 2:1b-2:3 is to be understood as a ‘heavenly’ envoy. We may note also that מְלַאֲכֵי הָאֱלֹהִים/מְלַאֲכֵי-יְהוָה appears in the Pentateuch, in contexts which generally indicate that the phrase is synonymous with the deity himself. In Judges 2, he addresses the people in the first person, clearly implying that what the messenger says, YHWH says: accordingly, his message must be treated with utmost seriousness (cf. Block 1999: 110-111; Brown 2000: 151-153; Webb 2012: 129-130).

6.2.2 Gilgal הַגִּלְגָל (2:1a)

The name ‘Gilgal’ הַגִּלְגָל (which always has the article) denotes a ‘circle’, possibly referring originally to the arrangement of stones in a sanctuary, for the purposes of offering sacrifice. Its location is uncertain, and it does not occur anywhere elsewhere in Judges (except in 3:19—see below), seemingly appearing in this text without explanation as to why the heavenly messenger ‘went up’ from *Gilgal* rather from some other centre such as Shiloh which features in Judges 18:31, 21:12-23. It certainly seems to assume that the hearers/readers were so familiar with the name הַגִּלְגָל that it needed no introduction.

At several key stages in Israel’s story, Gilgal features large: (1) in the conquest narratives of Joshua 1-12 (4:19-24; 9:3-5; 10:1-15, 40-43), as the military and religious centre of the Benjaminites; (2) during the early monarchy under Saul, as told in 1 Samuel (11:14-15; 13:2-15; 15:10-35); (3) in the Elijah/Elisha cycle (2 Kings 2:1, 4:38); (4) in the writings of the eighth century prophets: both Amos (4:4; 5:5) and Hosea (4:15; 9:15; 12:11) bitterly castigated Gilgal, while in Micah 6:5 it concludes a review of Yahweh’s case against his people (cf. James Muilenburg 1955:11-13). J. Alberto Soggin (1972: 9-11) argues that most of the source material behind Joshua 1-12 is associated with the territory of Benjamin, and that Gilgal was Benjamin’s sanctuary. The Benjaminite sanctuary of Gilgal, he says, was raised to the status of a ‘national sanctuary’ under Saul the Benjaminite king, and its status did not decline after Saul’s death; as clearly indicated in the prophecies of Hosea and Amos, it retained considerable prestige until the end of the kingdom of Israel. (We may note that after these eighth century references, Gilgal vanishes from the biblical story.) Soggin argues also that the largely Benjaminite traditions in

Joshua were collected in the sanctuary of Gilgal, which had a co-ordinating and unifying role in the transmission of the Northern Kingdom's traditions (see reference to Gilgal in §4.6.2 on the nature and provenance of sources for the book of Judges).

The only other reference in Judges to Gilgal occurs in 3:19, at a critical juncture in the story of Ehud ('son of Gera, the Benjaminite'). Soggin (1981: 51), in his discussion of this verse, remarks that Gilgal was evidently known to the audience as one of the provisional boundary points between Moab and Benjamin/Ephraim. In view of all the above observations about Gilgal, it seems to me that there is good reason to suggest that the reference to Gilgal in 2:1a holds a 'hidden' allusion to Benjamin and further to 'Saul the Benjaminite': a reference that implicitly reinforces issues that were raised in §5.2.1.2 concerning the alternative reading of Judges 1:4-7. We noted that the author of the anecdote about Bezek in 1:4-7 may have used the place-name 'Bezek' as a literary device to refer obliquely to Saul, conveying the message that the very place where Saul had mustered his troops before leading them to a great victory over the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:8-11) was the first site to be captured and destroyed by the Judahites. It was suggested that the key point of the narrative may be that Judah has overcome Saul. For Hezekiah and his people, the 'hidden' message in the incident at Bezek carried a warning to the Saulides—who still had influence in the territory of Benjamin—that Judah would prevail.

In the narratives of 1 Samuel (almost certainly edited through Judahite eyes), Gilgal is strongly associated both with the beginning of Saul's reign (11:14-15—note the threefold repetition of the name 'Gilgal' in these two verses), and with the eventual ignominy of his rejection by the LORD (15:10-35). The flow of the narrative leads straight from the statement in 15:35 that 'the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel' to the story of the divine selection and anointing of David (16:1-13). In 2 Samuel 19: 15-30, Gilgal is the setting for David's encounters with two members of the house of Saul: with Shimei son of Gera the Benjaminite, to whom David showed clemency (19:16-23—see §5.2.1.3), and with Mephibosheth grandson of Saul, to whom David showed generosity (19:24-30). For the Saulides of Hezekiah's day, the reference to Gilgal in Judges 2:1a may have held a 'hidden' allusion to Yahweh's rejection of the house of Saul and his choice of the house of David—who chose to show great magnanimity towards the house of Saul.

6.2.3 Bochim הַבְּכִיִּים (2:1a, 2:5a)

The name Bochim הַבְּכִיִּים (v.1a) literally means ‘[the] weepers’. The form with the article is unusual, and it is without the article in v.5a; it may simply be a variant, its form in v.1a possibly influenced by the preceding הַגִּלְגָּל (Block 1999: 111-112). It is said to have been given its name because it was there that ‘the people lifted up their voices and wept’ (v.4b). Its location is unknown, and it does not appear anywhere else in Judges, nor is it mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. Yairah Amit (2000:121) comments that it raises the question whether the place being referred to here as הַבְּכִיִּים/בְּכִיִּים was known to the hearers/readers by another, well-known, name. In an earlier study, Amit (1990:4-20) had already argued that ‘Bochim’ was a substitution for ‘Bethel’, as part of a hidden polemic against Bethel. It seems to me possible that ‘Bochim’ was a recognised nickname for Bethel. There may be a parallel in the scornful nickname ‘Beth-aven’ (‘house of evil’) that is substituted for ‘Beth-el’ (‘house of god’) in Hosea 4:15 — note that Hosea associates ‘Beth-aven/Beth-el’ with Gilgal in this message of judgement (cf. Amos 4:4, 5:5).

Many commentators have observed that a clue to the identity of Bochim may be found in the rendering of LXX^{AB} which adds an ‘explanatory’ phrase: ἀπὸ Γαλγαλ ἐπὶ τὸν Κλασθμῶνα καὶ ἐπὶ Βαιθηλ, literally, ‘from Gilgal to the [place of] weeping and to Bethel’. This interpretation may be supported by the association of Bethel with the ‘oak of weeping’ אֶלֶן בְּכֹוֹת in Genesis 35:8. Particularly relevant may be the incident to which we drew attention in §5.2.2.1, when Bethel was the meeting-place where Israel ‘inquired of God’ before going into battle against the Benjaminites (20: 18); after their defeat at the hands of the Benjaminites, they returned to Bethel, wept before the LORD, fasted and offered ‘burnt offerings and sacrifices of well-being before the LORD’ (20:26); yet again, they returned to Bethel and ‘wept bitterly’ (21:2). It appears that, in the collective memory, Bethel was a place that evoked associations with weeping, particularly ‘before the LORD’.

The question which arises in my mind is: why did the Judahite author/editor designate *Bethel*, rather than some other northern shrine, as the place to which the angel of the Lord ‘went up’, in order to deliver a message which was so severe that it caused all the people to weep? I believe that the answer is found in the situation we described in §5.2.2.1: after the fall of the Northern Kingdom and its conversion into the province of Samerina, Bethel was under Assyrian control, and — *being in very close proximity to Jerusalem* — it was a place of immediate and major concern to Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem and Judah.

It is important now to look more closely at the reasons why nearby-Bethel appeared so threatening. A number of factors contributed to the anxiety of the Jerusalem authorities, especially Hezekiah and the religious leaders in Judah. The first issue was the fact that Bethel was still a functioning sanctuary — we know this, for example, from the account of Josiah's 'reformation' as recorded in 2 Kings 23:4-20 — a fact that was crucial, as many of the Israelite refugees now in Judah and Jerusalem came from the region of Bethel (see reference to this in §5.2.2.1). For the northerners, the cult practices of the Bethel sanctuary and the traditions of the Saulide dynasty must have had an essential role in their understanding of their own history and identity (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006b: 269).

A related factor is the religious policy of the Assyrians. Contrary to the opinion that once held sway, religious tolerance was a hallmark of Assyrian control over provinces like Samerina (J.W. McKay 1973:69-70; M. Cogan 1974:60, 1993:412-414; P.J. King 1989:10; Miller and Hayes 2006: 390-391). Stephanie Dalley (2004: 397) draws attention to the claim in 2 Kings 17:24-28 that Sargon II allowed the return to Bethel of an Israelite priest who had been deported elsewhere in the empire (cf. Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 201), and argues that (as shown by McKay and Cogan) Sennacherib did not interfere in the cult of Yahweh. She adds: 'It was the people of Judah themselves who discriminated periodically against the resurgence of indigenous, Canaanite polytheism and the cults of local, non-Hebrew deities. The gods of Canaan, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and of the Phoenicians were the main focus of Judaeen zealotry.'

Finkelstein and Silberman (2006b: 274) maintain that, as Bethel was under Assyrian control and Judah was an Assyrian vassal, it seems likely that (at least until the death of Sargon II in 705 BCE) there would be no political or military impediment to the Israelites resident in Judah engaging in pilgrimages from Jerusalem to Bethel. To the Judahite authorities this would be intolerable, particularly considering the new demographic situation pertaining in Judah since the fall of Samaria. They were faced with the challenge to bind together the two very different elements of the population, Judahites and Israelites (this will be considered at more length in §6.2.4); Hezekiah would seek to take steps to discourage Israelites residing in Judah from returning to Bethel on pilgrimage. This dilemma must have provided the socio-economic and political, as well as religious, motivation behind Hezekiah's 'reform' programme (R.A. Young 2012: 207-209), and it may well lie behind the hidden polemic against Bethel in Judges 2:1-5.

6.2.4 All the Israelites כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (2:4a)

Although the individual tribes and their fortunes are the focus of Judges 1, in this opening chapter (and throughout the book) the authors/redactors indicate concern for the people of Israel as a whole (see §4.3.3). This is apparent in the use of the term כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל '(lit. sons) children/people of Israel' in Judges 1:1a and more than seventy times throughout Judges (on the collective significance of כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל see D.I. Block 1984). Having appeared at the outset in 1:1a, the second occurrence of כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל comes in 2:4a, forming a literary *inclusio* to the First Preface, 1:1-2:5 (see §4.2.1); we may say, therefore, that the First Preface opens with כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל seeking a favourable oracle from YHWH, and it closes with YHWH's messenger delivering a pronouncement of judgement as YHWH's response to their desire for an oracle.

It seems to me significant that, at this climactic point in the 'story', the redactors designate the addressees not simply as כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (as in 1:1a) but as כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The usage of the phrase כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל elsewhere lays strong emphasis on the prefix כָּל־ (e.g. Exodus 12:42; Leviticus 17:2; Numbers 14:2; Joshua 7:23; Judges 20:1). In the context under consideration, the use of this phrase conveys the message that YHWH regards the people, not as disparate tribes, but as a *whole* people: irrespective of their individual tribes, before YHWH they are *all* 'children of *Israel*' and equally accountable to YHWH. With its Judahite bias, Judges 1 emphasised the failures and disobedience of the tribes that formed the kingdom of Israel. Now, however, in response to YHWH's message of judgement, '*all* the children of Israel...lifted up their voices and wept...and...sacrificed to the LORD'.

Thus, we may hold that in the conclusion to the First Preface, the term כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל implicitly *includes Judah* among the weeping '*children of Israel*'. This association of 'Judah' and 'Israel' before YHWH illustrates an observation made by D.E. Fleming (2012:17), that the *names* Israel and Judah 'do not offer a universal key to fixed identities through time' but 'belong to a complex geography of shifting identities'. Before we consider further the use of the names 'Israel' and 'Judah', let us briefly note again the point made in verses 4-5, that the people of *Judah*, as well as those of the Northern Kingdom, were held guilty before YHWH of disobedience to his commands. Considering these verses from the perspective of authors/redactors in Hezekiah's time, I believe we may discern an oblique reference to Hezekiah's religious reforms according to 2 Kings 18:4 (cf. §§4.5.1; 6.3.3.1; 7.1.5).

We noted in §5.2.1.2 that, to Hezekiah and his people, the destruction of Israel ‘legitimated’ Judah and the rule of the Davidic dynasty; convinced of divine destiny, they identified themselves as inheritors of the past of *both* kingdoms. This is evident in Psalm 78:67-72: verses that seem to be religious propaganda emanating from the Jerusalem cult and the Davidic house. The thrust of this conviction (which would have been particularly powerful in the aftermath of the fall of Samaria) is expressed in verses 67-68:

78:67 וַיִּמָּאֵס בְּאַהֲלֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּבְשָׁבֵט אֶפְרַיִם לֹא בָחַר:

78:68 וַיִּבְחַר אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יְהוּדָה אֶת־הַר צִיּוֹן אֲשֶׁר אָהָב:

He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;
but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves.

Note especially the term בחר which is part of the election terminology of the Hebrew Bible, used as a means of explaining the past in terms of the divine will. Its occurrence here in a negative form לא בחר suggests a polemic intent, implying that Judah’s claim to be the chosen tribe, and Mount Zion to be the chosen place אֲשֶׁר אָהָב, is based not only on Yahweh’s positive choice but also on his rejection of the Northern Kingdom (R.P. Carroll 1971: 136-137; A.A. Anderson 1972: 561-562; R. Davidson 1998: 251-252, 259).

After the fall of Samaria, with groups of its elite deported to Mesopotamia and foreigners settled in the province of Samaria, the Northern Kingdom disappeared. The term ‘Israel’ became vacant territorially and politically; but the fall of one Israel opened the way for the rise of another ‘Israel’, not as a kingdom but as a concept (R.G. Kratz 2006: 103-105, 122-123; Finkelstein 2013: 154-156). As Judah became a mixed Judahite-Israelite kingdom (under Assyrian domination), the idea of what is often termed ‘biblical Israel’ emerged. This ‘Israel’ embraced כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, and claimed the territories of both former kingdoms. Two concepts lay at the core of the ‘pan-Israelite ideal’: the centrality of the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalem temple as the central place of worship (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 138-144; Na’aman 2010: 1-2, 14-22; Fleming 2012: 47-57).

When Israel and Judah first appear in inscriptions of powerful neighbours such as Assyria in the first millennium BCE, there are indications of a marked division between them (T.J. Schneider 2002). In Judges 5, there is a hint of long-term friction, despite their supposedly being one people of twelve tribes (see §2.2.1). There was open hostility between them during the roughly contemporaneous reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Azariah/Uzziah of Judah (Na’aman 1993a). However, there were times of co-operation, sometimes through diplomatic inter-marriage. Jehoshaphat king of Judah arranged a marriage between his son, Jehoram, and Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab king of Israel (2

Kings 8:18); the dynastic marriage of the two kingdoms ended violently (2 Kings 11:1-20). Hezekiah's son Manasseh (named after a northern tribe) married the daughter of a man from Jotbah in Galilee (2 Kings 21:19). Whether or not politically successful in the long-term, marriage ties between the royal houses implied willingness to form relationships. There seems to have been a tradition of inter-marriage: for example, Judges 19:1 recounts how a Levite from Ephraim 'took to himself' a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

There are a few hints in eighth century prophecy that the name 'Israel' may have been applied to *both* kingdoms before the demise of the northern one. For example, the prophet Micah certainly distinguishes between Israel and Judah as separate kingdoms that both clearly still exist (1:5), but more often he uses the names 'Jacob' and '(house of) Israel' (e.g. 3:1, 9-12) as a pejorative form of address when he is upbraiding a Judahite audience (J.L. Mays 1976: 41-45, 77-79, 86-89; Fleming 2012: 50, especially notes 29 and 30). In the writings of First Isaiah (8:14), there appears to be a striking indication of a Judahite view of a 'larger Israel' while the Northern Kingdom of that name was still in existence:

[YHWH] will become a sanctuary, a stone one strikes against,

for both houses of Israel (לְשֵׁנֵי בְּתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), ... a rock one stumbles over.

The ideas found in this text (which is difficult to translate) are unique, and it has been dated later than First Isaiah. However, the context within which YHWH's judgement is pronounced against the two royal houses (designating them יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתֵי) is certainly concerned with current realities of the two separate kingdoms (R.E. Clements 1980: 98-100; O. Kaiser 1983: 189-194; R.G. Kratz 2006: 122-127; Fleming 2012: 47-49).

The catastrophic events of 722/721 BCE undoubtedly challenged the people and leaders of Judah to confront the new socio-political realities of a mixed Judahite-Israelite kingdom. The pan-Israel concept had a religio-political aim, partly in order to integrate the northerners, but it was confined to the population within Judah until the power of Assyria waned in the late 7th century BCE, and it became possible to appeal to those living in Samaria. In the transformation that began in Hezekiah's days, texts that originated in the Northern Kingdom began to be incorporated into the corpus that eventually became the Hebrew Bible. It was necessary not to ignore or rebuff northern traditions (cherished by people who had become a significant element in Judah), but to absorb them (Schniedewind 2004: 78-80, 191). In promoting the legitimacy and centrality of the Davidic dynasty, however, the true significance of the Northern Kingdom was certainly downplayed.

In a postcolonial interpretation, the situation outlined above may be described in terms of *cultural hybridity* (see §1.2.1 and §2.1.3). In essence, ‘hybridity’ describes the creation of a new culture or identity when two or more cultures come into contact with one another. It assumes that culture is not static, but is always in the process of change through interaction between different peoples (G.A. Yee (ed.) 2007: 265). Although Homi Bhabha’s original concept seemed abstruse, it has proved to be a flexible heuristic tool. To R.J.C. Young (2009:79), hybridity works in different ways at the same time, according to the cultural, economic, and political demands of specific situations. Yigal Levin (2013:234) insists that, despite the huge cultural, economic, and political differences between the ancient world and the postmodern world to which postcolonialism is a reaction, the postcolonial model of hybridity can be useful in *describing* cultural processes in the ancient world.

It seems to me that the concept of hybridity can be a useful tool for describing the situation facing the mixed Judahite-Israelite kingdom. Because of limitation of space, I can only summarise some ways in which I consider it relevant.

(1) We noted that hybridity involves processes of cultural interaction that create new social spaces to which new meanings are given. The development of the concept of ‘ONE people, Israel’ out of two peoples, may be interpreted in a constructive way as fostering the development of new social spaces to which new meanings were being given.

(2) Hybridity is seen also as a concept that *confronts* but does not *erase* boundaries, implying an *unsettling* of identities (Ien Ang 2003: 149-150). This process may be seen in Israelite/Judahite tensions, such as the incident described in Judges 15:9-13 on the relationship between Samson and the men of Judah (§5.2.1.1 and §5.2.1.2), the narrative of the Levite’s concubine in Judges 19 (§5.2.1.3), and the note on Jebus in §4.3.3.

(3) Hybridity is sometimes seen as subversive and the basis for silent resistance to oppression (van Dommelen 2006b:137). Brett (2008:48) maintains that Deut. 13:2-10 subversively ‘mimics’ Assyrian treaty material, ironically, as a ‘silent’ means of demanding Israel’s exclusive loyalty to YHWH rather than to the Assyrian monarch. Silent resistance to Assyrian domination certainly existed in Judah for some time, but the ‘silence’ was broken disastrously when Hezekiah made a bold and foolhardy attempt to rebel against his overlord (2 Kings 18:7b).

6.3 The angel's message in Judges 2:1b-2:3

Introduction

We will now consider three major themes of the Hebrew Bible (condensed into brief statements in the terse language of the angel's message): the exodus from Egypt; entry into the land; the people of the land. As these themes form fundamental aspects of Israel's self-identity, we must discuss them at some length (within the limits of this study), and I propose to engage the principal findings of this scrutiny of 'the angel's message' when we consider the varied material in Judges 2:6-5:31. We noted in §1.2.1 that *identity* is a major concern of postcolonial discourse, according to which the elements that construct an identity include factors such as shared goals, ideas, narratives, myths, societal or public beliefs, collective memories, holy days, rituals, commemorations. I believe some of these elements of identity may be discerned in Judges 2:1-5 and also in 2:6-5:31.

Regarding identity formation, we must recognise that this is a continuous *process*: people continually negotiate and re-negotiate what it is that makes it possible for them not only to identify themselves as an 'us', but also to sustain that self-identity amid changing circumstances (J. E. McKinlay 2004: 20-21). Societies are not static units unchanging over time; at any particular point in time, the boundaries and constituent elements defining a self-identifying group are not identical to the group's past or future. It is methodologically unsound to presume that pre-monarchic Israel was coterminous with monarchic Israel in its boundaries or in the composition of its population (Diana Edelman 1996: 40-41).

In § 4.5.3.3, we noted that postcolonialism, in its approach to 'ethnicity', rejects the concept of *race* with its assumption of genetically-determined biological types. Gosden (1999:190) argued that 'ethnicity' is essentially a matter of 'the differences between peoples and/or groups which have some sort of self-identity and boundedness from others'. Ashcroft *et al.* (2007:75-76) describe an ethnic group as 'a group...socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of cultural or national characteristics'. It seems appropriate to speak of 'ethnic issues' arising from the Assyrians' policy of population transfer throughout their vast Empire. However, regarding the 'settlement' period in ancient Canaan, we must consider whether it is appropriate to use the term 'ethnic groups' to describe the various people-groups among whom (possibly *out of* whom) Israel emerged. Significant aspects of this issue will be addressed in §7.1.6.

6.3.1 'I brought you up from Egypt'

The opening sentence in the angel's message reads:

אֶעֱלֶה אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאָבִיָּא אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם

I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land
that I had promised to your ancestors. (NRSV)

In this section, our focus is on the first clause: אֶעֱלֶה אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם.

6.3.1.1 Hebrew terminology

Johannes Wijngaards (1965) noted that the Bible uses two formulae to describe Israel's exodus from Egypt. In the majority of references the formula is הִצִּיא [יצא hiphil] + מִן '(YHWH) *brought out from*', but in a significant number of texts we find the formula הֶעֱלָה [עלה hiphil] + מִן '(YHWH) *brought up from*'. Wijngaards argued that the two formulae have different implications. The הִצִּיא formula stresses the idea of *liberation from slavery* (e.g. Exodus 13:14, Leviticus 26:13, Deuteronomy 5:6). Where the הֶעֱלָה formula is used, the idea of liberation is generally absent; rather, the implication is the (divine) *leading of a journey/migration*. Sometimes the *goal* of the journey is made explicit with the addition of the formula הִבִּיָּא אֶל־ + הִבִּיָּא as in Judges 2:1, but it is often implicit even where there is no additional statement (e.g. YHWH's promise to Jacob in Genesis 46: 4).

Wijngaards made a detailed survey of the distribution of the two formulae in the biblical texts. He noted that the הִצִּיא formula is embedded particularly in the legislative parts of the bible (widely considered a relatively late development), such as the legal traditions in Deuteronomy 4:44–30:20, to an almost complete exclusion of the הֶעֱלָה formula. Another striking feature of the הִצִּיא formula is its absence among the early prophets (Amos, Hosea, Micah, First Isaiah), whereas the הֶעֱלָה formula is attested in pre-deuteronomistic and early prophetic texts such as Judges 2:1, 6:13; Amos 2:10; Hosea 12:14 [Eng. 12:13]; Psalm 81:11 [Eng. 81:10] (cf. discussion of Wijngaards' 'two formulae' analysis in T.B. Dozeman 2000:60-62). Other scholars also consider these texts pre-deuteronomistic: e.g. Hoffman 1989:179, 180; van der Toorn 1996:292-293; Amit 1999a:366. For our present study, it is relevant that the time of Hezekiah would 'fit' this dating of the הֶעֱלָה formula. The significance of both formulae is discussed in more detail in §6.3.1.5.

6.3.1.2 Issues of history, memory, and myth

In §2.2.4 we considered issues of history and memory, because of their recent impact on our understanding of the exodus story. Regarding history and cultural memory, we noted Hendel's paper (2001) which was influenced by the concept of *mnemohistory* proposed by Assmann (1997), and by Yerushalmi's book *Zakhor* (1982). Before discussing the exodus traditions, we will return briefly to history and memory, and to the important issue of *myth*. Yerushalmi stresses the significance of ritual and recital in festivals such as Passover, as channels through which memory flows. Blenkinsopp (2004) argues that oral tradition cannot adequately account for collective memory detached from the rituals of re-enactment and commemorative ceremonies, for which the Passover ceremony is the best example.

Cultural memory has fixed points: fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through *cultural formation* (such as texts, rites, and monuments) and *institutional communication* (recitation, practice, observance) (Assmann 1995: 129). It preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives awareness of its unity and peculiarity, in a positive ('We are this') or in a negative ('That's our opposite') sense. Assmann observes that the inevitable *egoism* of cultural memory, deriving from the need for identity, takes on dangerous forms, if the representations of the Other become images of an enemy (ibid. 130).

This kind of study focuses on ways in which a culture *shapes* an identity by reconstructing its past (Hendel 2001: 603; P.R. Davies (2008: 12-13, 106-107). To a large extent, a group's identity is based on 'stories we live by': more precisely, on narrative templates that give coherence to its past. The narrative form allows a group to be imagined as continuous, and for discrete events to be linked into a meaningful history; included in a general narrative template, different events acquire meaning (Marek Tamm 2008: 502).

In studies such as those outlined above, the 'stories' by which a group lives are often designated 'myths'. In the sense of traditional narratives, myths have an important role in the formation of ethnic identities; they are always set in the past, and always refer to the present; what they relate about the past is understood to shed light on the present (Assmann 2001: 112-113). In this context, myth does not mean 'untrue' in contrast to history as 'true'. P.R. Davies (2008: 112) comments that 'history' means 'the simple facts'; 'myth' means a narrative as defined above; the concept of cultural memory 'lies between the two'.

6.3.1.3 Origin and development of the Exodus traditions

In this section, our focus will be on the possible *Northern provenance* of the exodus traditions: an emphasis that has come to the fore in recent years (cf. Finkelstein 2013: 145-151; on the wilderness/wandering tradition, see §6.3.1.6). This issue is of particular significance for our present study, in light of our concern to ‘give a voice to the Northern Kingdom’. The first scholar to float the idea of a northern provenance seems to have been James Muilenburg, in a footnote to an article about the form and structure of the covenantal formulations (1959:350 n.3). Discussing problems regarding suggested early dates of the Elohist tradition, Muilenburg maintains that ‘the contention that E represents a more developed theology can be readily explained if the origins of the election-covenant faith are to be traced to the northern tribes, especially Ephraim and Manasseh.’

So far as I have discovered, Muilenburg himself did not pursue this idea, but it was picked up and developed by Robert Carroll (1971) in his detailed analysis of Psalm 78, to which we referred in §6.2.4. Carroll argues that the early traditions of the tribes of Israel were discrete, each tribe originally having its own traditions. The process of incorporating the different traditions into the unitary structure of traditions in the Old Testament as we now have it—representing the history of all Israel—took place over many stages of development which are not easy to trace with any certainty. Because we possess only the ‘final edition’ of the Bible, which is a predominantly Judaeian production, it is very difficult to discern the various traditions in their original forms and settings.

Carroll notes briefly the prominence of the exodus motif in the prophecies of Hosea, who laboured in the Northern Kingdom during the eighth century BCE, in contrast to contemporary Judahite prophets such as Isaiah of Jerusalem, in whose prophecies there is a remarkable absence of direct reference to the exodus. He comments that references to the exodus in Amos (e.g. 2:10; 5:25) should not be regarded as exceptions: although Amos himself came from Judah, it is clear that in his prophecies he was addressing a northern audience. The exodus tradition was certainly not unknown in Judah, but the emphasis in the southern kingdom was on the special role of David and the Jerusalem cultus. Carroll maintains that the influx of people from the north after the fall of Samaria led to a revival of interest in the exodus traditions, and there was an attempt to make these traditions relevant in the new situation that now confronted Judah. Carroll notes that, whereas Isaiah of Jerusalem largely ignored the exodus tradition, Second Isaiah largely ignored the Davidic motif, which had lost its direct relevance in the circumstances of the exile.

Other scholars have given particular scrutiny to the contribution of the prophecies of Amos and Hosea to our understanding of northern traditions and doctrines: notably Yair Hoffman (1989) and Karel van der Toorn (1996). In a much-quoted article, Hoffman notes that authentic material of northern origin—such as psalms, legends, prophecies—would provide the best source; he considers Hosea the most useful. A complementary approach would be to detect how Judaeen sources appear to be reacting to northern concepts: but material is scant, whether from the Northern Kingdom or from Judah (suggested sources—northern and southern—are noted in G. Davies 2004: 26-27; Na’aman 2010: 20-21). Within the limits of this study, it is not possible to discuss the views of various scholars. Following Hoffman’s approach, I propose to consider key texts in the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, which seem particularly relevant to this section which is focussing on the statement in Judges 2:1: אֶעֱלֶה אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם ‘I brought you up from Egypt’.

We noted in §6.3.2.1 that the העלה formula to describe the exodus from Egypt is attested in pre-deuteronomistic and early prophetic texts. We will now briefly discuss references to the exodus in the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, where the העלה formula occurs, and looking first at occurrences in Amos. It is widely accepted that Amos (though a ‘sheep herder’ from Tekoa in Judah) was active as a prophet in the Northern Kingdom ca. 760/750 BCE, during the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 790-750 BCE) (Amos 1:1).

Amos 2:10 וְאֲנֹכִי הֶעֱלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt. [NRSV]

Amos 3:1 שְׁמַעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלֵיכֶם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

עַל כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel,
against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt.

Amos 9:7 הֲלוֹא כַּבְּנֵי כְּשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם־יְהוָה

הֲלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

וּפְלִשְׁתִּיִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר וְאַרְמֵיִם מִקִּיר

Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord.
Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,
and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?

It is important to recognise that these references to YHWH ‘bringing up Israel from Egypt’ all occur in the context of polemic speeches, in each of which Amos addresses a

specific issue. In 2:10, he castigates Israel's misbehaviour and announces YHWH's consequent severe judgement (2:11-16). The positive affirmation in 3:1 of YHWH's gracious act in the exodus is followed by a doubtless shocking and unexpected oracle:

Amos 3:2 רַק אֶתְכֶם יָדַעְתִּי מִכָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה
עַל-כֵּן אֶפְקֹד עָלֵיכֶם אֶת כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם

You only have I known of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Amos has declared the exodus to be the ground of Israel's punishment, rather than (as the people complacently assumed) a ground for assuming YHWH's favour at all times.

The opening rhetorical questions in 9:7 re-state the same polemic pronouncement as 3:2, but in even starker terms. The prophet is clearly challenging convictions widely held by his hearers. He views Israel's belief in the uniqueness of the exodus from Egypt to be but a manifestation of their smug certainty that YHWH will show favour towards them, no matter how they behave: but YHWH rejects that attitude (9:7) and will punish his people (9:8a, 9-10). For fuller discussions of these verses, see J.L. Mays (1969: 156-163) and E. Hammershaimb (1970:134-140). It is not clear whether or not the views on the exodus as proclaimed by Amos from Tekoa in Judah are representative of typical Judahite opinion.

Wijngaards says the *העלה* formula is liturgical in character. It occurs in proclamations by YHWH (cf. *נָאִם-יְהוָה* in Amos 9:7), and recurs in clearly cultic exclamations, as in:

Exodus 32:4 אֵלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 12:28 הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

He notes that the literally independent Aaronic version and that of Jeroboam I, on the inauguration of *the cult of the golden calves* at Bethel and Dan, both record *העלה* as the ritual formula that was employed. He considers this to be evidence for the northern provenance of these traditions, and also for the sanctuaries of Bethel and Dan to be the places where the formula was most at home. Wijngaards also raises the possibility that the association of the *העלה* formula with the prohibited cult of the golden calves (in the view of the Deuteronomists) perhaps may be the reason why it was gradually avoided by later authors/editors in favour of the *הוציא* formula.

We will now consider Hosea whose long years of activity in Israel were largely contemporary with those of First Isaiah in Judah. According to the superscription in 1:1 (accepted by many scholars as reasonably accurate), it extended over the reigns of four

Judahite kings (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah: see Chronological Table 2); of the kings of Israel, only Jeroboam II is mentioned: the last six kings are omitted—may this be due to Deuteronomistic editing? The preservation of his sayings in Judean circles suggests that some of his associates escaped to Judah when the Northern Kingdom collapsed (J.L. Mays 1969:5). For our present study, it is important to note that the later period of Hosea’s activities in the north coincide with the early period of Hezekiah’s reign in Judah; it is relevant therefore to highlight some key features of his sayings, which may well have become known in Judah within Hezekiah’s time. It is not possible to do justice to the whole book of Hosea—in course of time put into its present form by Judahite editors—but the following is an outline of some issues that will arise in later sections of this study.

According to Leo Perdue (2013:183-186), who offers a postcolonial interpretation, two of Hosea’s dominant concerns were religious hybridity and associated cultural hybridity.

Religious hybridity included integration of Baal cults into Yahwistic religion, or even abandonment of Yahwism for Baal worship. Indeed, there are indications that, in the opinion of Hosea, the people *equated* YHWH with Baal: cf. Hosea 2:18, 19 (ET 16,17)

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה תִּקְרָא אִישׁי 2:18 [ET 16]

וְלֹא־תִקְרָאֵנִי עוֹד בַּעַלִי

וְהִסַּרְתִּי אֶת־שְׁמוֹת הַבְּעָלִים מִפִּיהָ 2:19 [ET 17]

וְלֹא־יִזְכְּרוּ עוֹד בְּשֵׁמָם

On that day, says the LORD, you will call me, “My husband,”
and no longer will you call me, “My Baal.”

For I will remove the name of the Baals from her mouth,
and they shall be mentioned by name no more.

It seems clear that Hosea’s objection was not merely that people applied the epithet ‘lord’ (בַּעַל) to YHWH, but that they had a tendency to conflate YHWH and Baal, so that YHWH’s essential identity and uniqueness were compromised (John Day 2002: 73). Of the canonical prophets, apart from Hosea, only Jeremiah (2:8; 23:13) seems to be deeply exercised about the Baal cult; none of the others ever mention the name of Baal, even when they censure syncretism. Day (ibid. 71) surmises that some may have been reluctant to mention the names of these despised deities.

Hosea (4:14; 8:5-6; 10:5) also condemns the Cult of the Golden Calves: see the account above on the inauguration of this cult at Bethel and Dan. Some commentators have maintained that the golden calves were pedestals on which the deity was understood to be

invisibly enthroned, or were intended to be images of the deity. Note, however, Hosea's comment (8:6) on the 'calf of Samaria' (that is, the one located in Bethel):

כִּי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהוּא חָרַשׁ עָשָׂהוּ וְלֹא אֱלֹהִים

For it is from Israel, an artisan made it; it is not God.

This statement is pointless unless Hosea believed there were people who did consider the calf to be a god. These words, which seem to be genuine sayings of Hosea, indicate that the idea should not be dismissed as Judahite anti-northern polemic.

Cultural hybridity, or 'a transition in culture' (Perdue op.cit. 183), accompanied religious hybridity. This is indicated in Hosea 7:8; its consequence is described in 7:9a.

אֶפְרַיִם בְּעַמִּים הוּא יִתְבּוֹלֵל

Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples.

אֶקְלוּ זָרִים כּוֹחוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע

Foreigners devour his strength, but he does not know it.

We have observed already in this study the severe depredations of the Assyrian empire in the Northern Kingdom (which coincided with the later stages of the prophet's activity); one major consequence was that Israel/Ephraim was indeed a mixed population. Because of its geographic location, it had always been more cosmopolitan than Judah; but now, this was probably truer than it had ever been. The 'foreigners' to whom the prophet refers are more likely to be erstwhile allies such as the Arameans and Egyptians, to whom Israel had turned frantically for help, rather than the Assyrians. Hosea, perhaps understandably, clearly regarded this situation as a wholly negative development. For a positive approach to cultural hybridity in postcolonial interpretation, see the concluding page in §6.2.4. This issue will be discussed more fully in later sections of this study.

HOSEA and THE EXODUS

Hosea's basic statement on the exodus is in 12:14 [ET 13] (note the העלה formula).

וּבְנֵי־בְיָהוּוָה הֶעֱלָה יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם

By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt.

The background is Hosea's concern in 12: 3-7 [ET 2-6] with the patriarch Jacob—who was closely associated with the cultic legend of Bethel—a concern which he resumed in 12:13 [ET 12]. It would appear that, in the Assyrian crisis, some circles in the Northern Kingdom turned to the Jacob tradition which held out to them YHWH's promise of the land in perpetuity. But for Hosea, the true starting-point of the relation between YHWH and Israel was the exodus. Possibly addressing his audience in the sanctuary at Bethel, he reminds them that Jacob's life was determined by a wife (12:13)—but Israel's life was determined

by a prophet [generally understood as Moses]. Hosea's identification of Moses as a prophet reappears in Deuteronomy 18: 15-22. This is another indication that Hosea was connected to those circles in the Northern Kingdom whose thinking and beliefs lay in the background to the development of the Deuteronomistic outlook (Mays 1969: 170).

Hosea (11:5-7; cf. 8:13; 9:3) declares that YHWH's judgement on Israel for its faithlessness and disobedience will be in effect a 'reverse exodus' (Perdue 2013: 185). Because the kindness and goodness of YHWH towards Israel/Ephraim had been thwarted again and again by their stubbornness, it would be necessary for them to learn all over again the lessons of hardship and bondage that they had experienced in Egypt. They would learn these harsh lessons through the merciless sword of Assyria who would be their king.

In the next section, we will critique some key issues of the exodus; we conclude this section with brief comments on Hosea's beliefs about Israelite identity and 'true' religion. Perdue discerns 'romanticism' for an ancient past when such hybridity (which Hosea considered a wholly negative development) did not exist in Israel, and this marked a struggle for *purity* in Israel's identity. The prophetic and later Deuteronomistic assessment of Canaanite religion is biased, but it is clear from both archaeological and biblical evidence that the influence of Canaanite religion on Israel was not wholly negative.

Particularly in the Hebrew psalter, Israelite religion appears at times to have been a synthesis between exodus traditions associated with 'a God who acts in history' and Canaanite concepts associated with 'a God who governs nature and fertility'. It could be argued that these Canaanite ideas enabled Israel to see its God as not just a tribal deity who helped Israel in its military endeavours, but as a God who also created and controlled nature. Although Hosea attacked Canaanite religious practice (above all, the conflation of YHWH and Baal), in practice he engaged Canaanite ideas about nature and fertility to reinterpret YHWH for his contemporaries (Phillips 1973:9). Issues such as those noted above regarding Israelite religion and Canaanite influence will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3.1.4 The concept of ‘Charter Myth’

The term *charter myth* has been borrowed from the field of anthropology; it was coined by the Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who studied Pacific islanders in the early 20th century. For him, *myth* had a *social* function: myths were to be viewed as *charters for social institutions* (Malinowski 1948:96); myth was ‘not merely a story told but a reality lived’ (ibid. 100); myth ‘expresses, enhances and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficacy of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man;...it is not an idle tale, but an active force’ (ibid. 101). Frances Harwood (1976: 785) points out that, for Malinowski, the *meaning* of a myth is to be equated with its *use*; it is not what members of a culture *say* about a myth, but what they *do with it* which is important. His observations of Pacific islanders led him to see also that myths tend to advance the agendas of the story-tellers and the people in power; they serve to justify the status quo in a society, proving why institutions must support those in power.

A number of biblical scholars have applied the concept of *charter myth* to the ‘exodus event’, and sometimes to the book of Exodus as a whole. So far as I have discovered, the first scholar to make this application was R.P. Carroll (1971:143-144, 149-150); in his discussion about the prominence of the exodus motif in the Northern Kingdom, he commented briefly that the exodus may be described as a *charter myth*, in that it provided the nation with both its ground of being and its right to exist in the ‘promised land’. A fuller treatment of this concept is found in Y. Hoffman (1989), in his analysis of the prophecies of Hosea and Amos. Dealing with the prophecies of Hosea first, he then considered Amos, and concluded that Amos confirmed his analysis of Hosea’s teaching, that the exodus had the status of a *constitutive tradition* in the Northern Kingdom; but he concluded also that Amos (from Judea) did not share the smug complacency of the northerners concerning the exodus (see the discussion in §6.3.1.3 on Amos 3:2 and 9:7).

K. van der Toorn (1996: 287-315) discussed this issue under the rubric *Inventing A National Identity: The Exodus As Charter Myth*; he saw it as an aspect of *The Religious Politics of Jeroboam I*, as described by the Deuteronomistic writers in 1 Kings 12, particularly v. 28 (a passage to which we referred in §6.3.1.3). According to van der Toorn the Deuteronomists probably incorporated older material and traditions, but he maintained that in its present form it reflects the vision of the Deuteronomists—that Jeroboam was motivated by political self-interest and *used* the exodus as a national charter myth that was designed to give the people of the Northern Kingdom the sense of a common past.

More recently, a different approach has been taken by K.L. Sparks (2010:73), who argues that the entire book of Exodus can be understood generically as a ‘charter myth’, such as may be found in living cultures and in texts from the Ancient Near East. The book of Exodus teaches that Israel is fundamentally a society delivered from slavery by Yahweh and covenanted to belong to him. Sparks points out that the term ‘myth’ in this case does not imply ‘invented’ in the fictional sense: most scholars, he believes, would concede that ‘genuine history’ in some form is reflected in the exodus tradition. He suggests the appropriate term might be ‘mythologized history’; but whatever label we use, he says, the exodus narrative—the ‘charter myth’—accentuates the exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel. (See the comments about the definition of ‘myth’ in §6.3.1.2.)

What strikes me is that, whatever differences there may be in *detail* between these various approaches to the exodus as a ‘charter myth’, what is common to them all is that they do not consider the relevance of some basic aspects of ‘charter myth’ as described by Malinowski. First, we should note his view that the *meaning* of a myth is to be equated with its *use*; what is important is not what members of a culture *say* about a myth, but what they *do with it*; secondly, we should take cognisance of his recognition that myths tend to *advance the agendas* of the story-tellers and *the people in power*. Let us consider some implications of these two aspects of ‘charter myth’ with regard to the exodus narrative.

We noted in an earlier chapter (§5.2.2.3) that for the purposes of our present study, we will follow the general approach taken in postcolonial analysis of the text, which focusses on the ‘narrative world’ and underlying ideology of the text. From this standpoint, the central issue regarding the exodus is that it portrays the Israelites as coming *from outside* the land of Canaan. In the world of the text, they are *outsiders* whose aim is to dispossess the indigenous Canaanites; in effect, they are *colonisers* in the land of Canaan, and the Canaanites are the *colonised* in their own land. From a postcolonial point of view, we may say that the Israelites *use* the ‘charter myth’ of the exodus to *justify* both their possession of the land and the harsh treatment meted out to the Indigenes (whether directly by the hand of YHWH or by themselves with his authority), and indeed to justify their unrelenting hostility to all those whom they consider to be ‘not among the true people of YHWH’: for example, the Samaritans. *Vis-à-vis* the Canaanites in this scenario, the Israelites are *the people in power* and the story of the exodus *advances their agenda*.

6.3.1.5 Liberation or migration?: significance of the Hebrew terminology

In the last three sections, we considered a number of important background issues regarding the Israelites' departure from Egypt: history, memory and myth; origin and development of the exodus traditions; the concept of 'charter myth'. The purpose of this section is to look in more detail at the *significance* of the Hebrew terminology outlined in §6.3.1.1. To recap briefly: the Hebrew text uses two formulae to describe the exodus: in the majority of references the formula is מן + הוציא '(YHWH) brought out from', but a significant number of texts use the formula מן + העלה '(YHWH) brought up from'.

There are important implications for our understanding of the *nature* of the Israelites' departure from Egypt (and entry to the 'promised land'), as the two formulae offer different portrayals of these events. The הוציא formula (which frequently adds phrases such as 'from the house of slavery') emphasises *liberation from captivity and slavery*: e.g. Exodus 13:14 בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery' (cf. Wijngaards 1965:92-94). The העלה formula occurs generally in contexts where there is an immediate connection with *coming to the land*, often reinforced with the addition of אֶל־ + הביא, e.g. Judges 2:1; Jeremiah 2: 6-7. This emphasises the idea of YHWH's gracious act of bringing the Israelites into the land. Their journey may be described as *migration* (cf. Wijngaards p.99). To summarise the two formulae, we may say that the act of הוציא is an act of *liberation* whose *goal* is *freedom*; the act of העלה is an act of *guidance* whose *goal* is *settlement*.

Wijngaards' analysis of the distribution of the two formulae in the biblical text indicates that, historically, the העלה formula (attested in pre-deuteronomistic and early prophetic texts) is the earlier formula, as the dominant הוציא formula (absent from the writings of the early prophets) is used in relatively late texts. It seems that the concept of the Israelites having been enslaved in Egypt, subjected to cruel treatment, was a new motif developed by the Deuteronomists at some later period in Israel's history (Wijngaards p.102). The historically earlier העלה formula presents the discerning reader with a portrayal of the *nature* of the Israelites' departure from Egypt (and settlement in the land) that is quite different from the familiar picture painted by the later הוציא formula, which became dominant in the biblical text. We are faced with the fundamental question: was it a process of *migration* rather than a dramatic *liberation* as indicated by the הוציא formula?

For a more detailed interpretation of the העלה portrayal, I am indebted to an article on Wijngaards' study, written by Rabbi Dr David Frankel who teaches Hebrew Bible at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem (Frankel 2008). He argues that the earlier העלה formula reflected an understanding of the exodus story in which *the giving of the land* was the issue of fundamental importance to the Israelites, who had been living in Egypt as *landless foreigners*, outsiders and aliens, as sojourners (גָּרִים). YHWH's great act of mercy which they were taught to remember was that they had been aliens with no land, but YHWH had led them to a land of their own. This characterises the Israelites as *migrants*, whose desire for new territory was the motivating factor in their migration, and provided the reason for embarking on the journey. We will return to this theme in §6.3.3.3.

Laws in the Covenant Code of Exodus concerning the sojourner living among them evoked memories that they themselves were strangers in Egypt: e.g. Exodus 22:20 [ET 21] וְגֵר לֹא-תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי-גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם 'You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (NJPS). In the historically later laws of Deuteronomy, there are frequent calls to 'remember you were a slave in Egypt' וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עָבַדְתָּ הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם (22:18; cf. 5:15; 15:15; 24:18 and 22). But Frankel draws attention to a striking prohibition in Deuteronomy 23:8 [ET 7] against *hating* Egyptians: לֹא-תִתְעֵב מִצְרַיִם כִּי-גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ צוּר 'You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land' (NJPS). He comments that this prohibition is based on the debt Israel owed to the Egyptians for hosting the Israelite sojourners!

It seems particularly telling that in Deuteronomy 24:18, 22 the injunction to 'remember you were a slave in Egypt' occurs in the context of laws prescribing protection of the גֵּר (cf. vv.17, 21). Frankel considers this another indication that Deuteronomy's formula 'for you were a slave in Egypt' is secondary, and that the earlier conception of Israelite life in Egypt (reflected in the prohibition against hating Egyptians) was 'for you were sojourners in Egypt'. These passages seem to indicate that Deuteronomy does preserve the conception of the stay in Egypt as a period when the Israelites lived as landless foreigners under Egyptian sovereignty, but not in terms of slavery: their status was that of גֵּר not עָבֵד. In Exodus 13:18b there may be a relic of another variant tradition: that 'the Israelites *went up armed* out of the land of Egypt' וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. They were not passive or helpless, but set out to win for themselves a land they could call their own!

6.3.1.6 'The land of sojourning'

As noted above, for Hosea the exodus marked the beginning of YHWH's relationship with Israel, but the bible contains *competing claims* about Israel's origins and its relationship with YHWH (cf. R.P. Carroll 1971:138-143). D. Frankel (2015a) highlights several passages that seem to be unaware of the exodus: e.g. *Deuteronomy 32:10-14* (cf. K.W. Whitelam 1989:32-36; P. Machinist 1994:44-45). Although it is attributed to Moses (31:30), the content of the poem reflects a time of serious crisis in Israel's life *in the land*. Recalling YHWH's faithfulness to his people 'Jacob' in the past (vv. 7-9), the poet affirms that יְמַצְאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוֹם יָלַל יְשֻׁמֹן '[YHWH] found him in a wilderness land, in an empty howling waste' (v. 10). For this poem and the people whose crisis it reflects, Israel did not enter Canaan from *Egypt*, but from the *wilderness* where YHWH found them helpless, brought them into a fertile land and cared for them until they were strong.

A similar affirmation is found in Hosea 13:5, 'It was I who fed [Heb. *knew*] you in the wilderness, in the land of drought [NRSV]'. There are several indications in his prophecy that Hosea knew not only exodus traditions but was aware also of a wilderness tradition (on this issue, see T.B. Dozeman 2000). Other passages also suggest that Israel began as a desert people: e.g. Jeremiah 2:2; Psalm 68:8 [ET 7]. In this tradition, God is not the redeemer from slavery but the provider of a fertile land for permanent settlement. Frankel considers it likely that the wilderness tradition reflected historical reality: some groups shared collective memories of their nomadic origins, while different groups 'remembered' the exodus (cf. R.P. Carroll *ibid.*) We will consider the issue of the 'wilderness tradition' further in §7.1.3.5 (3).

It seems to me that the traditions of the *patriarchs*, who appear as גֵּרִים 'sojourners' in Genesis, fit within this general pattern: YHWH was the provider of a fertile, permanent settlement for them (see F.A. Spina 1983; R. Rendtorff 1996; N.C. Habel 1995: 115-133 re. the גֵּרִים tradition). According to W. Zimmerli (1978:65), the 'P stratum of Genesis' frames its conception of the patriarchs' entry into Canaan by terming it the 'land of sojourning' אֶרֶץ מְגוּרִים: cf. Gen. 17:8 אֶת אֶרֶץ מְגוּרֶיךָ יָצַדְתִּי לְךָ וְלְבָנֶיךָ 'I assign to you and your offspring to come the land you sojourn in' [NJPS]; cf. Gen. 28:4 (Isaac's blessing of Jacob); Gen. 37:1 (Jacob's settlement in the land). The patriarchal traditions are discussed in §6.3.3.3.

6.3.2 ‘The land that I had sworn to your fathers’

The angel’s message in Judges 2:1 declares to ‘all the Israelites’:

אֶעֱלֶה אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם

וְאָבִיא אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם

וְאָמַר לֹא־אֶפְרָר בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם לְעוֹלָם

I brought you up from Egypt,

and I brought you into the land that I had sworn to your fathers.

I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you’ (literal translation).

In §6.3.1, we focussed on the issue of the exodus from Egypt. We will now consider YHWH’s promise to the fathers and YHWH’s covenant.

6.3.2.1 YHWH’s promise

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם ‘the land that *I had sworn* to your fathers’

In the NRSV, the phrase אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי is translated ‘that I had promised’; the NJPS translation ‘promised on oath’ is a paraphrase of the Hebrew [שָׁבַע] (see BDB: 989). The theme of *YHWH’s promise to Abraham* occurs numerous times in the book of Genesis. In the biblical narrative as we now have it, the first occurrence of the Abrahamic promise is in the story of Abram’s call (12:1-3): ‘go from your land (מֵאֶרֶץ) ...and go to the land (אֶל־הָאָרֶץ) that I will show you’. The promise is repeated in chapter 15, where the transaction is called a *covenant* (בְּרִית: see §6.3.2.3); the promise recurs in 17:8 when Abram is renamed ‘Abraham’. In 22:15-18, the concept of a *solemn oath* is introduced (בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי ‘by myself I swore’): strictly speaking, the divine *oath* here concerns progeny, not land.

The association of an *oath* with YHWH’s promise of *land* to Abraham occurs within the land promise to Isaac (26:3), with no explicit oath to *Isaac*. The promise of land to Jacob (28:13-15) concludes לא אֶעֱזֹבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ ‘I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you’; no divine *oath* is expressed. In Deuteronomy it is a common refrain (e.g. 1:8) הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב ‘the land that YHWH swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob’ + a further 9 times. In the following section, we will discuss first significant issues regarding the narratives about ‘the fathers’: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6.3.2.2 The ancestors ('fathers')

Different scholars have dated the Pentateuchal literature as early as the tenth century BCE and as late as the third century BCE. In recent years, the trend has been predominantly toward late dating: for example, in the writings of H.H. Schmid (1977), J. Van Seters (1977; 1983), and P.R. Davies (1992). Various factors have a bearing on possible dates when the traditions in the Pentateuch were first put into *written* form. It seems to me that the limited available evidence supports neither a tenth century nor a third century BCE date. What follows is a summary of lines of evidence that I consider reasonable. The first two have been discussed earlier in this study: the *evidence of linguistics* (§3.1.1) and the *development of literacy* (§4.5.2). I believe the arguments outlined in these previous sections are relevant for our present study of the Pentateuch, and I do not propose to elaborate on them here, as I wish to focus on further lines of evidence.

Evidence from archaeology as set out by Finkelstein and Silberman (2001: 38-47) is persuasive. The stories of the patriarchs and nations that arose from their 'trysts, marriages, and family relations' provide a sophisticated account of political issues in the Ancient Near East during the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, unmistakably from the perspective of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Genealogies portray peoples of the southern and eastern deserts with whom Judah would engage in strategic trade during late monarchic times. Names given to the sons of Ishmael represent distinct peoples of northern Arabia, first mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions of late eighth and seventh centuries. None of the specific names listed in the genealogies was relevant to, or even present in, the experience of the people of Israel before the Assyrian period.

Schniedewind (2004: 81-84) highlights the place given to the northern tribes. While Genesis privileges Judah (cf. 49:8-10)—the tribe from which its kings emerged—it also tells of the brothers from whom the Northern Kingdom arose; Exodus begins (1:1-4) by naming *all the tribes* that became the *people of Israel*. For Schniedewind this feature of the Genesis-Exodus stories is consistent with Hezekiah's religio-political programme to absorb northerners after the fall of Samaria (cf. §6.2.3). However, a *negative* note is sounded against the northerners, e.g. on the sin of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32-33; 1 Kings 12): cf. (as noted in §6.3.1.3) Wijngaards' comments on the liturgical character of the העֲלֵה formula in Exodus 32:4 and 1 Kings 12:28, Hosea's condemnation of the cult of the golden calves, and his strong disapproval that people in northern circles had turned to the *Jacob* tradition in the Assyria crisis.

Recent studies have concluded that the patriarchal stories first circulated separately, in the Northern Kingdom and in the kingdom of Judah. It is widely accepted that the core of the ‘Jacob cycle’ (Genesis 25:19-35:29) developed in the Northern Kingdom, and is the *earliest* material in the patriarchal narratives (van der Toorn 1996:255-264; A. de Pury 2006; E. Blum 2012; Fleming 2012:72-85). The present Genesis structure—which gives first place to Abraham (the ‘hero’ of Judah), with Jacob (the northern ‘hero’) coming last—is considered by some to be a late construct that serves to subordinate Israel to Judah (D.M. Carr 2006; R.J. Bautch 2009; T. Römer 2012). It is not possible here to discuss the dating and provenance of these stories, but it must be noted that among European pentateuchal scholars, a consensus seems to be emerging that interpretation of the literature and religion of ancient Israel must presuppose that the ancestral and exodus traditions were *separate* during most of the pre-exilic period, if not also through much of the exilic period, and were woven into the present Pentateuch structure in exilic/post-exilic contexts.

There is some certainty about the dating and provenance of the Jacob cycle. We noted Hosea’s references to Jacob (ch. 12); his listeners were clearly familiar with the Jacob saga, and regarded him as their common ancestor. Some scholars define the Jacob cycle as a northern foundation saga, or charter myth: this is supported by the fact that the very name ‘Israel’ was given to Jacob by God himself (Genesis 32:28). Several glosses that are pejorative towards Israel indicate Judahite editing after the fall of Samaria (e.g. 12:1b [ET 11:12B] ‘but Judah still walks with God and is faithful to the Holy One’). Hosea’s hostile attitude towards the Jacob cult is found later in Jeremiah (2:4-8, cf. Hosea 4:4-10). We noted also that for Hosea, Israel’s life was determined by a *prophet* [*Moses*]: i.e. the true starting-point of the relation between YHWH and Israel for Hosea was the *exodus*.

This emphasis is found also in the only reference to Jacob in Deuteronomy (26:5-9): ‘A wandering Aramean was my ancestor [an oblique reference to Jacob]; he went down into Egypt...The LORD brought us out of Egypt...’. According to de Pury (2000:166) these remarks were intended to be extremely disparaging: the father (Jacob) was an ‘Aramean’, i.e. a foreigner, not yet an Israelite; we were afflicted in Egypt but delivered by YHWH, and were led out by Moses. Similarly, the dominant emphasis in the Genesis portrait of Jacob is disparaging: he was weak and a twister, whereas Esau is sympathetically drawn. We have noted already in this study (§5.2.2.4) that the Hebrew Bible is ‘Judah’s Bible’; we must remember, therefore, that in Genesis we see Jacob through Judahite eyes.

6.3.2.3 YHWH's covenant in its Ancient Near Eastern context

לֹא־אֶפְרָרְךָ לְעוֹלָם לְעוֹלָם I will never break my covenant with you (2:1)

There are two broad categories of בְּרִית in the bible: covenants to which YHWH is a party, and those which involve only humans. There is an example of the latter in Judges 2:2: ‘and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land’; this use of בְּרִית will be considered in §6.3.3. The reference in 2:1 concerns a covenant to which YHWH is a party. However, there are two distinct *types* of covenant between YHWH and humans: the *obligatory* type and the *promissory* type.

The *obligatory* type is reflected in the Sinai Covenant between YHWH and Israel (the most commonly-occurring covenant in the bible); this covenant is widely believed to follow *treaty patterns* prevalent in the Ancient Near East; the *promissory* type is reflected in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. As the covenant in 2:1 occurs in the context of YHWH's *land promise* to the ‘fathers’, it is clearly a promissory covenant.

Weinfeld (1970) discusses two types of official judicial covenant common throughout the Mesopotamian sphere, from the mid second millennium onwards. (1) The *political treaty*, which he describes as a ‘vassal-type’ of covenant; (2) the *royal grant*, found in Babylonian texts from c. 1450-550 BCE (cf. L.W. King 1912), in the Syro-Palestine area (cf. D.J. Wiseman 1958), and in the Neo-Assyrian period (cf. J.N. Postgate 1969). Weinfeld calls this second type a ‘*Covenant of Grant*’. To understand properly the ‘land promises’ in the Patriarchal traditions, we must clarify the nature of YHWH's covenant with the Patriarchs, in the light of its Ancient Near Eastern context.

The covenant with Abraham belongs to the ‘royal grant’ type, which differs in essential ways from the ‘vassal’ treaty. The ‘grant’ constitutes an obligation of the master to his servant (as long as he maintains his service); the ‘treaty’ constitutes an obligation of the vassal to his suzerain. In the ‘grant’ the *curse* is directed at anyone who violates the rights of the king's servant; the *curse* in the ‘treaty’ is directed towards the vassal who violates the rights of his suzerain. Briefly, the ‘grant’ serves mainly to protect the *rights of the servant*; the main purpose of the ‘treaty’ is to protect the *rights of the master*. The ‘grant’ is bestowed as a *reward* for loyalty and good deeds already performed; the ‘treaty’ is an inducement to future loyalty; note also that the ‘grant’ is an *individual* gift to a loyal servant, while the vassal in the ‘treaty’ is the embodiment of his *people*.

Using terminology very close to that used in Assyrian ‘*Covenants of Grant*’ (cf. Weinfeld 1972:75), embedded in the promise to Isaac we read in Genesis 26: 3, 5:

(v.3) לך וילזרעך את כל־הארצות האל

והקמתי את־השבועה אשר נשבעתי לאברהם אביך

(v.5) עקב אשר־שמע אברהם בקלי

וישמר משמרת־י מצותי חקותי ותורת־י

(v.3) ‘To you and to your descendants I will give all these lands

and I will fulfil the oath that I swore to your father Abraham...

(v.5) because Abraham obeyed my voice

and kept my charge: my commandments, my laws, and my teachings’ (NJPS).

The notion in verse 5 of ‘keeping guard or charge’ is found in Assyrian texts (further examples of counterparts to biblical terminology are detailed in Weinfeld *ibid.* 74-81).

Weinfeld’s conclusion regarding the ‘promise of the land’ in the prologue(s) to Deuteronomy is that the Deuteronomistic author had assimilated the patriarchal covenant-grant pattern—as evidenced by the emphasis on YHWH’s ‘oath to the fathers’: e.g. in 4:31

כי אל רחום והנה אלהיך לא ירפך ולא ישחיתך

ולא ישכח את־ברית אבותיך אשר נשבע להם

‘For the LORD your God is a compassionate God,

he will not fail you nor will he let you perish;

he will not forget the covenant which he made on oath with your fathers’ (NJPS).

In its original context, YHWH’s promise of land was unconditional, though it presupposed loyalty and the fulfilment of some obligations towards YHWH (cf. Genesis 18:19); but the Covenant of Promise was not formulated as conditional (cf. Genesis 15). However, seemingly in response to the disastrous fall of Samaria and consequent loss of the northern territories, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic school made the grant of the land conditional on *observance of the Law*, which they considered ‘the most dominant and fateful factor in the history of Israel’ (cf. 4:1, 25-26, 40; 5:33; 6:17-18; 7:12 etc.).

Commenting on Genesis 26:5, Weinfeld argues that there is nothing Deuteronomic in the words ‘[Abraham] kept my charge: my commandments, my laws, and my teachings’. The origin of the concept שמר משמרת ‘keep a charge’ is not Deuteronomic (cf. *ibid.* 336): it is found in Assyrian texts (noted above); and the combination of terms חוקים ותורות ‘laws and teachings’ does not occur in Deuteronomic literature: Deuteronomy always uses ‘Torah’ in the singular and usually with the definite article, התורה ‘the Law’.

6.3.2.4 The emergence of בְּרִית as a biblical paradigm

Regarding the issue of *when* the biblical writers began to articulate the divine-human relationship in terms of בְּרִית, today there is widespread consensus among scholars that the use of covenant imagery to describe the divine-human relationship was not current in Israel before the eighth century BCE (cf. S.L. McKenzie 2000:24). However, as we have seen above, the institution of covenant in various forms was ancient within the Mesopotamian sphere; there is therefore no good reason to doubt that בְּרִית probably existed in Israel as a developing idea over several centuries: D.J. McCarthy (1972:112) terms this phenomenon ‘the evolution of the *berît* concept’. A significant factor in dating the emergence of בְּרִית as a biblical paradigm no earlier than the late eighth century BCE is the fact that (with the possible exception of Hosea 6:7; 8:1, and Isaiah 24:5; 33:8) the eighth century prophets do not refer to a covenant between YHWH and Israel. The interpretation and dating of the two verses in Hosea are uncertain, and the two verses in First Isaiah occur in passages generally regarded as belonging to the sixth or fifth centuries. If the concept of the covenant was commonly held in the eighth century, it is difficult to explain why the eighth century prophets did not engage with a concept that would surely have strengthened their case against the people of YHWH; this phenomenon, however, is easily understandable if the notion of covenant developed later (McKenzie: idem 24).

The first application of the term ‘covenant’ was probably to the promise of land to Abraham (Genesis 15:18), aiming to *undergird* the promise at a time of uncertainty when Israel’s continued existence in the land was in doubt. Strengthening the promise would reassure the king and his people about their possession of the land and their continued existence in it. A number of scholars have mooted a date late in Hezekiah’s reign, towards the end of the eighth century BCE, as a likely historical context: besides the fall of Samaria, Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah must have highlighted the tenuous nature of Judah’s hold on its land (cf. A.D.H. Mayes 1979:65; S. Boorer 1992: 448-449; Nicholson 1998: 142). During the seventh century BCE, the endeavours of the Deuteronomistic school produced the book of Deuteronomy (and eventually the deuteronomistic history). Engaging the widespread schema of Ancient Near Eastern treaties, the authors of Deuteronomy recast these treaties in terms of the *Mosaic* covenant as they understood it, and extended the application of the ‘covenant’ concept to include the obligations laid on Israel. As noted above, they also reinterpreted the older Abrahamic covenant, making the grant of the land conditional on observance of the Law (Nicholson 1979: 65-71; R.J. Bauckham 2009: 61-63).

6.3.2.5 The concept of an ‘eternal’ covenant

As indicated in §6.3.2.3, the style of terminology used in Genesis to express the divine *gift/grant of land* to Abraham corresponded closely to (and was sometimes identical with) the legal formulae of the conveyance *by royal gift* of property in the Ancient Near East. This is instructive regarding the concept of an ‘eternal/everlasting’ covenant in the promissory covenants of the bible, as we find *formulations of conveyance in perpetuity* in Ancient Near Eastern legal formulae of conveyance of property. The following formulae:

לְנֶדְוֹתֶיךָ עַד-עוֹלָם ‘for your descendants for ever’ (Genesis 13:15),

לְנֶדְוֹתֶיךָ אַחֲרַיִךְ לְדֹרֹתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם

throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant’ (Genesis 17:7),

לְאַחֲזֹת עוֹלָם ‘for a perpetual holding’ (Genesis 17:8)

are identical to conveyance/donation formulae in Akkadian documents from Alalakh and Ugarit, and from Elephantine (Weinfeld 1970: 199). In texts from Assyria and Babylonia proper, we do not find precise parallels to the formulae עַד-עוֹלָם, לְדֹרֹתָם, לְבְרִית עוֹלָם, לְאַחֲזֹת עוֹלָם, but the same *idea of perpetuity* is expressed (cf. L.W. King 1912).

The announcement of the divine gift of land to Abram in Genesis 15 concludes in v. 18a with the statement בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת-אַבְרָם בְּרִית ‘on that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram’. The phrase ‘on that day’ occurs in *grants* in documents from Alalakh and Ugarit, indicating the formal initiation of a legal contract. The delineation of the borders and specifications of granted land (as in vv. 18b-21) constitute an important part of the documents of grant in the Ancient Near East. A further point to note here briefly is that the grant typology outlined above is relevant for understanding the nature of other examples in the bible of promises and conveyances, such as the gift of Hebron to Caleb summarised in Judges 1:20. A fuller account of this land grant is given in Joshua 14:6-14. Note in v. 9 how the author employs the pattern of ANE legal formulae for a land-grant:

לְךָ תִּהְיֶה לְנַחֲלָה וּלְבָנֶיךָ עַד-עוֹלָם כִּי מְלֵאתָ אַחֲרַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

‘[Moses swore הוּא הַיּוֹם...the land...] shall be an inheritance for you and your

children עַד-עוֹלָם because you have wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God’.

Note that the *reason* for the gift is stated: it was bestowed as a *reward* for Caleb’s *loyalty* to YHWH and the ‘good deeds’ he performed during his mission with the spies, as described in vv. 7-8 (cf. the description of the ‘royal grant’ in §6.3.2.3).

6.3.2.6 Traditions of origin

The concept of divine promise of land to a particular people-group or tribe, who journey to settle in a new land, is not unique to Israel; it is a phenomenon found also among other peoples. According to Weinfeld (1993c:184), this concept arose particularly in the Greek world, during the period when Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean region was developing. Weinfeld sees parallels between Greek accounts and the land-promises in the biblical narratives about the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, and he made a detailed comparative study of this (ibid. 1-51). The settlement narrative in the Bible, he says, unfolds in two stages, which both have parallels in the Greek pattern of colonisation.

Stage 1: the first ancestor leaves his homeland with his family and sets out for a new 'destined' land; Stage 2: descendants of the first ancestor settle in the new land (hundreds of years later). Stage 1 is reflected in Vergil's *Aeneid* (based on the Greek pattern of the foundation of new sites); Stage 2 also parallels the Greek settlement traditions, recounted principally by the Greek historian, Herodotus. Weinfeld (ibid. 26-51) describes nine *basic elements of the settlement process* which he found in both Greek and Israelite traditions. For each element, he first illustrates the Greek example, and then indicates its biblical parallel(s). Below are the common basic elements he discerns (with very brief illustrative examples of his description of five of these elements, and simply noting the others).

- 1) *The promise of land* by Apollo to the Greek settlers: the poet Callimachus, in his *Hymn to Apollo* 5, sang 'Apollo swore that he would establish the land of Cyrene, the oath of Apollo is valid forever'. This is analogous to YHWH's promise to the Israelite settlers.
- 2) *Consultation of the divine oracle before settlement*: analogous to the question put by Dorieus at the oracle of Delphi ('if he should win the land whither he was preparing to go' Herodotus 5:43), are the questions posed by the Israelite settlers, as in Judges 1:1-2.
- 3) *Priestly guidance* for the settlers: Greek inscriptions in Cyrene (Northern Libya) refer to a 'seer' who accompanied Battos, the Greek founder of the settlement; in Israel, Joshua was subject to the divine law mediated by Eleazer, the priest (Numbers 27:19-22).
- 4) *Divine obligations*: the Delphic Oracle proclaimed to the settlers laws of the deity Apollo, warning that success in the land depended on observance of Apollo's laws. Parallel warnings in the Bible are found in priestly literature such as Leviticus 18:18.
- 5) *The Founder's Tomb* was venerated in Greek culture, as evidenced in traditions about the tomb at Cyrene of Battos, who was honoured as a 'hero' after his death. Similar traditions were preserved in Israel: cf. the conveying of Joseph's bones (Joshua 24:32).

The other basic elements of the settlement process described by Weinfeld are:

- 6) Naming (and also renaming) of new settlements;
- 7) Division of land among the settlers by lot;
- 8) Erection of pillars of stone at the conclusion of their journey;
- 9) Erection of an altar outside a new settlement.

Weinfeld emphasises that the concept of divine promise of land arose in the Greek world at a time when *Greek colonisation* of the Mediterranean region was developing. It is important to *define* the term ‘colonisation’ when using it in connection with Archaic Greece, as representations of ancient Mediterranean colonialism are often strongly influenced by modern colonial situations in the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century (cf. G.R. Tsetschladze 2006: xxiii-xxviii). In §2.1.3, we noted that Peter van Dommelen (whose field of expertise is Mediterranean archaeology) understood the term ‘colonialism’ to indicate the presence of foreign people in a region at some distance from their place of origin (the ‘colonisers’), and the existence of asymmetrical socio-economic relationships of domination or exploitation between the colonising groups and the inhabitants of the colonised region (van Dommelen 1997:306). In a later article, van Dommelen (2002:121) observed that *the term colonial* is used in Mediterranean archaeology to describe situations in which the *archaeological and historical evidence* shows people living in clearly distinct settlements in a ‘foreign’ region or enclave at some distance from their place of origin.

The Archaic period in Greece (ca. 800-480 BCE) was characterised by the spread of colonies along the coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, beginning about 750 BCE. Engaging the conception of Greek colonisation outlined above, Michel Austin (2008) discusses the Greek settlement of Cyrene, founded in ca. 630 BCE by Battos, an emigrant from the island of Thera in the Aegean, and founder of the Battiad dynasty (cf. John Boardman 1964: 152). Austin’s study offers significant comparison and contrast to Weinfeld’s study outlined above (Weinfeld frequently refers to Battos and the founding of Cyrene). Austin notes that telling the story of the foundation of Cyrene benefits from unusually abundant Greek literary sources (2008: 189-190). The earliest available literary evidence is found in the *Pythian Odes* of Pindar (ca. 522-443 BCE), notably in Herodotus (ca. 484-425 BCE), in an inscribed 4th century BCE decree from Cyrene, in the *Hymn of Apollo* by Callimachus (ca. 305-240 BCE), and some other post-Classical sources. The first significant *comparisons* I note are: the dating of Greek colonisation, which began at a critical time in the history of Israel and Judah, with the spread of the Assyrian empire, and the dating of the Greek literary evidence—remarkably similar to recent dating of biblical

texts about the patriarchal stories. The first *contrast* that strikes me is that (apart from the biblical texts) the story of the settlement of Canaan by the Israelites suffers from severe paucity of literary evidence.

Austin points out (ibid. 190-192) that, as the written sources are not contemporary (starting only in the 5th century BCE after several generations), their accounts would have undergone constant modification and selection, and they give mainly a Greek, not a Libyan, perspective. Archaeology, although useful, cannot be a substitute for literary narratives: it cannot provide a *narrative*, bring to *life* people and their actions, or indicate their *motivations*. Moreover, like the written evidence, archaeology is one-sided: most of what has been revealed so far is concerned with the material culture of the Greeks in Libya, not of the autochthonous Libyans. However, it does provide a degree of general control over basic aspects of the accounts in Herodotus. All these caveats—concerning written sources and the evidence of archaeology—apply to recounting the history of Israel.

Austin maintains that, after the Greeks settled in Libya, they projected their connections with Libya back to their heroic period. Stories in Pindar and Herodotus may have helped to establish the legitimacy of the Greek claim to Libya and the status of the Battiad dynasty, but it is not clear what historical information can be extracted from them (ibid. 193). These observations are similar to our note in §6.3.2.2 regarding evidence adduced from archaeology by Finkelstein and Silberman, namely that stories of the patriarchs and nations, their ‘trysts, marriages, and family relations’, render an account of political issues in the Ancient Near East during the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, told from the perspective of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.

Austin’s description of the founding of Cyrene by Battos contains distinct similarities to details in the biblical narratives about the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, especially his account of the crucial rôle of Apollo, which is a dominant feature in all the literary evidence, and parallels the rôle of YHWH in the biblical texts. While the story of Cyrene is not of direct relevance to the story of Israel and its settlement in Canaan, I believe that this brief study of Weinfeld and Austin has underscored the fact that the people of Israel (especially in the Northern Kingdom) were not ‘a people apart’ from the world of their day, but belonged integrally to the common cultural environment they shared with the other peoples around them. In §6.3.3.4, we shall discuss this question further.

6.3.3 ‘The inhabitants of this land’

Introduction

The angel’s message to the Israelites in Judges 2:1 concluded with the affirmation:

וְאֶתְּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת ‘I will never break my covenant with you’.

In **2:2a-b**, the message continues with a two-fold injunction (discussed in §6.3.3.1).

2:2a וְאֶתְּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

‘(As for you) do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land;

2:2b מִן־בְּחֹרֹתֵיהֶם תִּהְיוּ תִּהְיוּ תִּהְיוּ

tear down their altars’.

6.3.3.1 Preliminary interpretation of the text

Judges 2:2a וְאֶתְּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

‘do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land’

We note first the phrase יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ ‘the inhabitants of the land’. In light of the two occurrences of the term in the previous chapter, the reference clearly is to the *Canaanites*:

Judges 1:32 וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הָאֲשֵׁרִי בְּקִרְבֵּי הַכְּנַעֲנִי יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ

‘but the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land’

Judges 1:33 וַיֵּשֶׁב [נַפְתָּלִי] בְּקִרְבֵּי הַכְּנַעֲנִי יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ

‘but [Naphtali] lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land’.

In both verses, the issue is *coexistence* between Israelites and those Canaanites who remained in the land, because *they had not been driven out*. On the themes of *dispossession of the Canaanites* and *co-existence with the Canaanites* in Judg. 1:27-36, see §5.2.2.2.

In **2:2a**, coexistence is denounced in terms of an injunction against ‘making a covenant’ with the Canaanites: לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית. YHWH is not a party to this covenant: it directly involves only humans (see §6.3.2.3 on the two categories of בְּרִית). In the present context, the implication is that *this* בְּרִית is incompatible with YHWH’s ‘unbreakable’ בְּרִית with Israel. We noted in §5.2.2.1 that some have interpreted the pact between Israelite spies and a Canaanite man in Bethel in terms of the prohibition in 2:2a. If this textual link was intended, the implication may be that the process which led to coexistence *began* at Bethel.

Terminology used in Judges 2:2a occurs also in Exodus 23:32 (as noted by various commentators: e.g. Block 1992:114; Lindars 1995:78; Younger 2002:75; Webb 2012:131):

Judges 2:2a לא־תִכְרַתוּ בְרִית לַיּוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

Exodus 23:32 לא־תִכְרַת לָהֶם וְלֵאלֹהֵיהֶם בְּרִית

‘You shall not make a covenant with them or with their gods’.

To me it seems important to note that the injunction in Exodus 23:32 occurs in the context of the pericope (23:23-33) which forms the conclusion to the so-called Large Covenant Code (Exodus 21-23), regarded by many commentators as the oldest of the biblical codes (cf. J.P. Hyatt 1971:217-224; B.S. Childs 1974:451-464; Weinfeld 1993c: 76-98). In the middle of a long series of conditional promises, in verse 27 it says that YHWH affirms:

אֶת־אִימָתִי אֲשַׁלַּח לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִמַּתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר תִּבְאֵה בָהֶם

‘I will send my terror ahead of you, and throw into panic all the people you encounter.’

The noun אִימָה means ‘terror, dread’; אִימָתִי ‘my terror’ is terror inspired by YHWH (BDB 34). See our earlier comments on *the ideology of terror* in §4.4.1–§4.4.2; we will return to this theme in §7.1.4.1–§7.1.4.3.

Most of the themes and much of the terminology in this pericope are found in Deuteronomy, especially Deut. 7:1-5, 21-23; e.g. compare Exod. 23:27b הִמַּתִּי ‘I will throw into panic’ with Deut. 7:23b הָהֶם מְהוּמָה גְדֹלָה [YHWH] will throw into utter panic’ (NJPS). The verb הָהֶם means ‘confuse, discomfit’ or ‘throw into panic’: cf. Exod. 14:24; the noun מְהוּמָה implies ‘discomfiture, tumult, panic’ *due to YHWH in war* (BDB 223). In the Exodus account, the verb גָּרַשׁ ‘drive out’ indicates the *manner* in which YHWH proposes to deal with the Canaanites (cf. Exod. 23:28, 29, 30, 31); Deuteronomy adopts the style and broad themes of Exodus, but amends the Exodus terminology to conform to Deuteronomic ideology, according to which YHWH proposes *annihilation* of the Canaanites, e.g. Deut. 7:2 (cf. 2:34; 3:6; 20:17):

וּנְתַנָּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִכִּיתָם

הַחָרֵם תַּחֲרִים אֹתָם לֹא־תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית

וְלֹא תַחֲנֶנֶם

‘When YHWH your God has delivered them over to you and you defeat them, you must *totally destroy* them [חרם], you must not make a covenant with them and you must not show mercy to them’.

The admonition against making a covenant with the Canaanites (followed by the injunction to show them no mercy) seems now to take on a new meaning, namely, ‘do not allow them to remain alive’; cf. Deut. 9:3; 20:16-17 (B.J. Schwartz 2004:154-155).

In an analysis of the ‘ban’ (קָרַם) on the Canaanites, as this concept is expressed in various biblical Codes, Weinfeld (1999b) described the *developmental process* that took place over the course of time. In his concluding summary, he observed that, the farther the various codes moved away from the primary historical situation, the more extreme did the portrayal become; he argued that this shows how the laws about the ‘ban’ gradually became idealized and unrealistic. The most extreme position began to crystallize in the time of national revival during the reign of Hezekiah and culminated in that of Josiah. Originally, in Israel as in the Ancient Near East in general, the ‘ban’ was instituted as a vow and a dedication on the occasion of the proclamation of war against a specific city or hostile group. The Deuteronomic קָרַם was conceived—several centuries after Israel’s wars in Canaan—in an *a priori* manner as applicable to *all* the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan. (We commented briefly on the issue of קָרַם/קָרַם in §4.4.2 and also in §5.2.1.1 regarding Judges 1:17, where we observed that the concept of the קָרַם as it developed in Deuteronomy does not feature in Judges, which we argued was pre-deuteronomic.)

Judges 2:2b מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם תִּהְיוּ תִּצְוֹן ‘tear down their altars’

The injunction to ‘tear down their altars’ occurs in Exodus 34:13, within the so-called ‘Ritual Decalogue’ (or ‘Small Covenant Code’) in Exodus 34:11-26; vv. 11-16 form a homiletic introduction to the laws set out in vv. 17-26. The introductory ‘homily’ contains several characteristic Deuteronomic themes: YHWH will drive out the former inhabitants of Canaan; Israel must not enter into any transactions with the Canaanites and must destroy all their cultic objects, for these would tempt Israel to worship other gods.

In Exodus 34:13, the injunction to ‘tear down their altars’ is expanded with two further injunctions (which occur frequently in the Bible, especially in Deuteronomic passages):

אֶת־מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם תִּצְוֹן ‘You shall tear down their altars
 וְאֶת־מַצְבְּתָם תִּשְׁבְּרוּן and break down their pillars
 וְאֶת־אֲשֵׁרֵי תְּכָלְתוּן and cut down their sacred poles/Asherim’.

Compare the account of Hezekiah’s ‘reforms’ in 2 Kings 18:4 (discussed briefly in §4.5.1); see especially lines 2 and 3 below:

הוּא הִסִיר אֶת־הַבָּמֹת ‘He removed the high places
 וְשָׁבַר אֶת־הַמַּצְבֹּת and broke down the pillars
 וְכָרַת אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה and cut down the sacred pole/Asherah’.

The מַצְבֹּת ‘pillars/sacred stones’ were especially associated with Canaanite worship and were frequently proscribed (e.g. Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:21-22). ‘Asherim’ is the plural form of

אֲשֶׁרָה ‘Asherah’: it is sometimes the name of a Canaanite goddess as in Judg. 3:7 (plural), sometimes a cult object as in Judg. 6:25-30. (The issue of ‘Canaanite worship’ will be discussed in chapter 7, especially regarding Judg. 2:11-13, 3:7; cf. §7.1.3.)

To conclude this section, note that the injunctions in Exodus 34:13 are immediately followed by a parenthesis (v. 14) in which YHWH’s severe warnings over the related issues of making idols and worshipping any other god are declared to be *grounded* in the very *nature of YHWH* (cf. M. Smith 1971:44; B.S Childs 1974:613):

כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל אֲחֵר

כִּי יְהוָה קַנָּא שְׂמוֹ אֵל קַנָּא הוּא

‘for you shall worship no other god,

because the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God’.

The phrase ‘a jealous God’ is a formula from the Decalogue tradition (Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; cf. Deut. 4:24; 6:15): always associated with the exclusive worship of YHWH. It characterises YHWH as a God who seeks recognition of his sovereign will and refuses to share his sovereignty with anyone; it expresses his exclusive claim on Israel and absolute intolerance of Israel’s turning to other gods (cf. Hyatt 1971:212, 324; Fohrer 1973:170-171; Zimmerli 1978: 110-111; Mayes 1979: 155). This is discussed further in §7.1.4.1.

It is important now to discuss ‘the Canaanites’ in more detail. We can approach this issue by reflecting on the Canaanites *as they are represented in the Bible*, or by considering them within the broader issue of ‘ethnicity’; both approaches are important. At present, our focus will be on the *biblical representation*: more accurately, on *two* biblical portrayals of the Canaanites, which may be described as the ‘Deuteronomistic ideology’ and the ‘Patriarchal ideology’ (the latter found especially in the book of Genesis). The issue of ‘ethnicity’ will be addressed in Chapter 7, in the context of discussing the people groups named in Judges 3:1-6 and other peoples who appear in the stories of the ‘judges’.

6.3.3.2 Deuteronomistic ideology of the Canaanites

In §6.3.3.1 we noted that Weinfeld, in his analysis of the ‘ban’ (תּוֹרַם) on the Canaanites in various biblical Codes, described the *developmental process* that occurred in the meaning of the ‘ban’ over the course of time. It seems to me that this development was an aspect of a much wider development taking place in a process that amounted to *denigration of the*

Canaanites. In references to ‘Canaanites’ in the ‘historical’ books of the Bible (widely regarded as the ‘Deuteronomistic history’), we may detect the beginning of *a process of denigration* as the term ‘Canaanite’ gradually developed into *a pejorative ciph*er.

As depicted in the Judges account of the ‘conquest’, the term ‘Canaanites’ appears to be *generic*, including all the former inhabitants of Canaan (cf. Judg. 1:9-17, 27-33), while in Judg. 3:3 and 3:5 the Canaanites seem to be just one of a number of peoples living in and around the land of Canaan; there are no further references in Judges to ‘Canaanites’. The name ‘Canaan’ appears six times in chapters 3-5, and elsewhere in Judges only in 21:12 (see comments on Judg. 21:12 in §4.3.3). The only reference to ‘Canaanites’ in the book(s) of Samuel occurs in 2 Sam. 24:7 where they are simply listed without remark in the account of David’s census of Israel and Judah. The next mention of the Canaanites in the Deuteronomistic history comes in the extensive narrative about the reign of Solomon.

In 1 Kgs 9:16 the inhabitants of the Phoenician city of Gezer are termed ‘Canaanites’ (collectively הַכְּנַעֲנִי). John Gray (1977:247) observes that in view of the ‘racial admixture’ in the region of Phoenicia (evidenced in the Amarna texts) the term ‘Canaanite’ denoted ‘a culture rather than a race’. Of particular interest to our present concern is the reference in 1 Kgs 9:20-21 to various peoples conscripted by Solomon into forced labour. The Canaanites are not mentioned specifically, but are certainly implied (cf. v.16):

כָּל־הָעַם הַנּוֹתָר ... אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָמָּה
בְּנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר נִתְּרוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָכְלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַחֲרִימָם
וַיַּעֲלֵם שְׁלֹמֹה לְמַס־עֲבָד

‘All the people who were left ... who were not of the children of Israel
—their descendants who were still left in the land, whom the children of Israel
were unable to destroy completely—these Solomon conscripted for slave labour’.

Note the reference to the practice of the חָרַם in the Deuteronomic phrase לְהַחֲרִימָם ‘to destroy completely’. On the issue of מַס־עֲבָד, see §5.2.2.2 regarding מַס as it appears in Judges 1: 28, 30, 33 and 35 (cf. J. Robinson 1972:121-122).

For the purposes of this study, it seems to me significant that in recent articles, two Classical Archaeologists referred specifically to Solomon. John Boardman (2006: 510-513) commented on the close relations of Israel and Judah with Phoenicia, and highlighted the role of Phoenician architects in the building of the Temple of Solomon. Hans Georg Niemeyer (2006: 152, 158-159), a specialist in Phoenician studies, discussed ‘joint ventures by kings Hiram of Tyre and Solomon’, and referred to 1 Kings 9:11-13 and 10:22

as useful sources of information. These comments do not provide verification of particular details in the biblical narratives mentioned above regarding Solomon, but they do place Solomon in the period and Levantine context in which the biblical writers placed him.

The Deuteronomistic ‘historians’ make no further reference to Canaan/Canaanites in the book(s) of Kings. However, in considering the religious politics of the Omrides in the Northern Kingdom, K. van der Toorn (1996:328) surmised that rivalry developed between the worshippers of Yahweh-El (who was now the ‘official god of Israel’) and those who remained devoted to Baal as their god. The former claimed to be the true ‘Israelites’ and began referring to the latter as ‘Canaanites’, using the term as ‘a derogatory adjective applied to others’ (cf. E. Bloch-Smith 2003:420-425; M.G. Brett 2008: 72-73, 90-91).

There are no references to ‘Canaan’ in the writings of the prophets, except for one obscure reference to ‘the language of Canaan’ in Isaiah 19:18. Ezekiel (located in Babylon, probably c. 593-570 BCE) refers once to ‘the land of the Canaanites’ אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי (16:3). In response to a ‘word of the LORD’ (v. 2), הוֹדַע אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת־תּוֹעֲבֹתֶיהָ, ‘make known to Jerusalem her abominations’ (on תּוֹעֲבָה ‘abomination’ see below), Ezekiel told a pejorative ‘parable’ against ‘Jerusalem’—by implication, against the whole people of Israel—for unfaithfulness to YHWH from its earliest origins up to his own day, bringing YHWH’s judgment upon them in the destruction of Jerusalem. This indictment opened with the statement: ‘Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites’ (v. 3). One commentator remarks: ‘The statement is heavy with sarcasm...for the term *Canaanite* was a by-word for moral decadence’ (J.B. Taylor 1969:133).

The suggestion that by the time of Ezekiel the term *Canaanite* had become a by-word for moral decadence is a theme that comes to the fore in the so-called ‘Holiness Code’ in Leviticus chapters 17-26, regarded as part of the ‘Priestly Work’ (‘P’). While it almost certainly contains older sources, it is widely agreed that *in its present form* it belongs to the exilic/post-exilic period, and emerged from Babylonian rather than Palestinian groups. The period of the sixth and fifth centuries may be surmised from the apparent relationship of the Holiness Code to the Book of Ezekiel, and by the concluding exhortation in Lev. 26 which seems to portray an exilic situation (cf. J.L. Mays 1964: 54-55; P.R. Ackroyd 1968:85-86; W. Zimmerli 1978: 113; P.J. Budd 1996: 5-12).

In some ways, the Holiness Code seems to offer an alternative to the Deuteronomistic approach to the situation confronting the people of Israel in the exilic/post-exilic period; it

certainly represents a different strand of thought. However, both the Deuteronomistic strand with its emphasis on *law* and the Priestly strand with its emphasis on *holiness and cult*) come together in the work of Ezra (see reference below to Ezra). In Leviticus, there may be *two* priestly traditions, generally referred to as ‘P’ and ‘H’; ‘P’ (chapters 1-16) is concerned mainly with *rituals*; ‘H’ (chapters 17-27) also contains rituals, but is concerned primarily with *behaviour* (J. Milgrom 2004: 6). For this present study, our concern is particularly with references made to the *Canaanites* in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

In 18:2, YHWH identifies himself using the formula ‘I am YHWH your God’, which is the formula that occurs at the beginning of the Sinaitic covenant (Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). YHWH then declares (Lev. 18:3):

כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֲרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם־בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ
וּכְמַעֲשֵׂה אֲרֶץ־כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ
וּבְחֻקֹּתֵיהֶם לֹא תִלְכוּ

‘You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived,
and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you.
And you shall not follow their statutes’.

There follows a long list of statutes detailing forbidden sexual relationships that include incest, homosexuality, and bestiality. This concludes (Lev. 18:27) with the statement:

כִּי אֵת־כָּל־הַתּוֹעֵבֹת הָאֵל עָשׂוּ אֲנָשֵׁי־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיכֶם וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ
‘for all these abominations have the people of the land done, who were before you,
and the land became defiled’ (KJV adapted).

Note the recurrence of *תְּעֵבָה* ‘abomination; loathsome, detestable thing’ in Lev. 18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30; cf. 20:13. In the Bible, *תְּעֵבָה* is a predominantly Deuteronomistic term, found sixteen times in Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut. 18:12). Its only other occurrences in the Pentateuch (Genesis 43:32; 46:34; Exodus 8:8) are concerned with *Egyptian* sensitivities. In the ‘books’ of the prophets, it occurs in Isa. 1:13; 41:24; 44:19 and Jer. 2:7; 6:15; 7:10; 8:12; 32:35; 44:22; the most prolific use is in the book of Ezekiel (42 times).

Further reference to the *Canaanites* comes in Lev. 20:23, following a long section (vv. 10-21) that lists sexual irregularities similar to those in Lev. 18, with the command:

וְלֹא תִלְכוּ בְחֻקֹּת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר־אָנִי מְשַׁלֵּחַ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
כִּי אֵת־כָּל־אֲלֵהֶם עָשׂוּ וְאָדַמְתִּים

‘You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you.
Because they did all these things, I abhorred them’.

J. Milgrom (2004:201) emphatically insists that there is no extrabiblical evidence to support the Priestly contention that the Canaanites were steeped in sexual immorality. He argues that the charge of sexual depravity was a means of both stigmatizing an ancient enemy and warning Israel that YHWH would expel *them* from the land if they followed such practices. B.J. Schwartz (2004:164-169) emphasises that the view promulgated by ‘H’ differs from the rest of ‘P’ and from other Torah sources; he also maintains that this concept arose out of polemic needs as a means of stigmatizing the cultural ‘others’—‘whether real,’ he says, ‘or, as in the case of the Canaanites, imagined.’ As the Canaanites were perceived to have been Israel’s predecessors in the land, the most *abhorrent* kind of behaviour would provide moral justification for their displacement and destruction.

We noted in §6.3.3.1, Weinfeld’s comment (on the *developmental process* in the meaning of the ‘ban’) that, the farther the various codes moved from the primary situation, the more extreme did the portrayal become. It seems to me that the same problem occurred with the *portrayal of the Canaanites*: the farther away the biblical writers moved from the original situation, the more extreme did their portrayal become. The question arises: in the exilic/post-exilic period, to Jews in Babylon or ‘returnees’ in Jerusalem, *who (or what) were Canaanites?*

It seems to me not impossible that the term ‘Canaanites’ was used by the pious returnees as a disparaging cipher for those of the continuing population (‘the people of the land’) who opposed the official ‘Jewry’ (cf. van der Toorn’s surmise that in the time of the Omrides ‘Canaanite’ was a ‘derogatory adjective’ applied to those in the Northern Kingdom who remained devotees of Baal). ‘The people of the land’ in post-exilic Yehud were considered not to be ‘true Jews’; consequently they were barred from admission to the official religious institutions that were established by the returnees, and intermarriage was strictly forbidden (cf. Lemche 1991: 165-166).

There may be an indication of this in a key passage in the book of Ezra (written possibly c. 398 BCE; cf. P.R. Ackroyd 1973: 24-26). In Ezra 9:1 we read:

לֹא־נִבְדְּלוּ הָעָם וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם מֵעַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת כְּתוֹעֲבֹתֵיהֶם
לְכַנְעֲנֵי הַחִתִּי הַפְּרָזִי הַיְבוּסִי הָעַמֹּנִי הַמְּאָבִי הַמְּצָרִי וְהָאֲמֹרִי

‘The people of Israel, the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.’

Note the term תַּעֲבֹדָה ‘abomination’, repeated in vv. 11, 14; cf. its use in Leviticus 18. The eight ‘peoples’ listed were probably conventional names understood by the author to be representative of עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת ‘the peoples of the lands’. Lemche (1991: 84) comments that the inclusion of the *Egyptians* indicates that the author’s motives in drawing up this list were *ideological* and certainly not historical. The particular feature of the list that strikes me is that the *Canaanites* stand prominently at the *head* of the list of eight who are guilty of ‘abominations’. The following verse indicates that the particular ‘abomination’ in Ezra’s mind was the issue of ‘mixed marriages’, a problem on which he elaborates in his ‘Prayer’ (verses 5-15).

The continuing power of such anti-Canaanite language can be seen in some late apocryphal/deuterocanonical tales: for example, **Susanna**, with its abusive insult, ‘You son of Canaanites!’ (Sus. 56). This tale was written at a time when the term ‘Canaanite’ no longer had any socio-political reality (cf. **Jubilees** 25:1-9). In the apocryphal book of **Judith** (ch. 5) some of the ‘nations’ whose names occur in traditional lists of those who populated pre-Israelite Canaan feature in the narrative. It is said that the general of the Assyrian army summoned the ‘princes’ of some of these ‘nations’, addressing them sarcastically as ‘you Canaanites’.

6.3.3.3 Patriarchal ideology of the Canaanites

In §5.2.2.3, we commented that Judges 1 depicts the land of Canaan as a ‘*contact zone*’: a term used in postcolonial criticism to describe the space in which people of different geographic and historical backgrounds come into contact, establishing relationships that tend to involve coercion and inequality. The ‘contact zone’ concept emphasises *difference* and the diverse forms of negotiation that may take place in the contact zone. We noted that, while the portrayal of the relationship between indigenes (Canaanites) and outsiders (Israelites) in Judges 1 implies constant conflict, the narrative about the ‘unnamed’ man in Bethel (see §5.2.2.1) revealed a Canaanite and an Israelite entering into negotiation within the contact zone in which they found themselves, and making a solemn agreement to which both proved faithful. I find the contact zone concept a fruitful tool for analysis of the Genesis texts regarding relationships between patriarchs and Canaanites.

The description of the land of Canaan as a ‘contact zone’ may be seen as an aspect of the portrayal of Canaan as ‘the land of sojourning’ (cf. §6.3.1.6). In this present section, we shall consider two contrasting situations in which patriarchs and Canaanites came into contact: Abraham’s contact with Melchizedek (14:18-20) and Jacob’s contact with Hamor and Shechem (33:18-20; 34:1-31).

Abraham’s contact with Melchizedek

At first sight the account of Abram/Abraham’s contact with Melchizedek is an abrupt interruption in a narrative that begins in 14:1-17 and concludes in vv. 21-24. The narrative tells how Abraham and his servants went to war against invading monarchs who had captured his nephew Lot with people from Sodom and Gomorrah and all their possessions. Abraham rescued Lot and the other captives along with everything that had been seized by the invaders; on his way back from his victory, he was met by the king of Sodom (14:17). After the ‘interruption’ of the Melchizedek incident, the meeting between Abraham and the king of Sodom continued (vv. 21-24). It seems to me, however, that there is another way to ‘tell the story’ so that it *includes* the Melchizedek incident as an integral part of the larger story told by the biblical writers. We can recount what transpired when Abraham was ‘on his way back from his victory’, as follows: ‘he was met by the king of Sodom and the king of Salem; after a private meeting with the king of Salem, Abraham then resumed his contact with the king of Sodom.’ We will return to this ‘alternative version’ of how the story ended after considering some key factors in Melchizedek’s background ‘story’ that are significant for the interpretation of his contact with Abraham.

It has been suggested that ‘Salem’ was an abbreviated form of ‘Jerusalem’: in the poetry of Ps. 76:2, ‘Salem’ is parallel to ‘Zion’. In view of the ‘Amarna letters’—fourteenth century BCE correspondence between Syro-Palestinian city-kings and the Pharaoh, which included letters from a ‘prince of Jerusalem’ (cf. §2.2.2.1)—there may well have been a pre-Israelite city-king of Jerusalem. The name ‘Melchizedek’ is old-Canaanite, meaning ‘(the god) Zedek is king’; Jerusalem was a Canaanite city (cf. Judg. 1:21; 19:10-12) with an established religious tradition and ritual, its king being its chief priestly figure: the combination of these offices was common in the ANE. King Melchizedek was ‘priest of *God Most High* (אל עֶלְיֹן)’ (Gen. 14:18). The name אל עֶלְיֹן is known from the Ras Shamra tablets as a title of Ēl, the head of the Canaanite pantheon; this may have been one of the deities worshipped in pre-Israelite Jerusalem (R. Davidson 1979:38-39; A.S. Herbert 1962:34; N.H. Sarna 1970:116-117; B. Vawter 1979:197-201; G. von Rad 1972:179-180).

It is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the much-debated meaning of the details in the Melchizedek incident or its interpretation elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the issue that to me is the key to interpreting the *significance* of the *contact* between these two individuals—which many commentaries do not note at all—which is, that Melchizedek was the *Canaanite* priest-king of a *Canaanite* city, just as the *Canaanite* king of Sodom ruled a *Canaanite* city. Bearing this factor in mind while reading the text of Abraham’s contacts with both Melchizedek and the king of Sodom, I believe it would not be straining the sense of the text unduly to suggest that Abraham’s contacts with these two monarchs portray him as a mediator of goodwill and peaceable relations in Canaan, the land of his sojourning.

Abraham accepted Melchizedek’s blessing that was performed in the name of the Canaanite god אל עֶלְיֹן, and he acknowledged Melchizedek’s authority by giving him ‘a tenth of everything’: which seems to mean ‘a tenth of the retrieved goods’, i.e. the booty. In Gen. 14:22 there is a textual issue about the name of the Canaanite god; in Abraham’s address to the Sodomite king the text prefixes YHWH to the name (יְהוָה אל עֶלְיֹן). This may indicate editorial reluctance to put the name of a Canaanite god into the mouth of Abraham, or a desire to stress the identity rather than difference between Melchizedek’s god and Abraham’s god—in line with the biblical idea that individual non-Israelites could acknowledge the one ‘true’ God, YHWH. However, the Greek Septuagint and Syriac texts do not read יְהוָה in v. 22, and it seems to me that, whatever the editorial intention, the insertion of יְהוָה reduces the positive purpose and power of this verse.

Engaging our ‘alternative version’, we now consider the continuance of Abraham’s contact with the king of Sodom, which we perhaps may read as follows. When the king of Sodom told Abraham to give him the people of Sodom whom he had brought back, but to keep the booty (which had been wholly in Abraham’s possession until he gave a tenth to Melchizedek)—to which he was probably entitled as the spoils of the war that he had led—Abraham declined the offer: he would not enrich himself at the cost of the Sodomite king and his people. All he asks is that his young followers be refunded for the cost of their rations, and that his three allies be given their share. If this reading is appropriate, we may say that Abraham’s *personal contact* with Melchizedek had given him a *different attitude* to the booty. What is remarkable is that Abraham declared to the king of Sodom that *he had sworn to the Canaanite god* that this was the action he proposed. What is certain is that (contrary to Deuteronomistic ideology) there is no hint of condemnation of the Canaanite blessing bestowed by Melchizedek or of the Canaanite god worshipped by the kings of Salem and Sodom. In his individual *contacts* with both kings, Abraham displayed exemplary *respect* both for them and for their religious traditions: essential factors for establishing peaceable co-existence in the *contact zone*—provided all parties to the relationship accept this approach.

Jacob’s contact with Hamor and Shechem

Before discussing Jacob’s contact with Hamor and Shechem as told in Genesis ch.34, we must note important details in Genesis 33:18-20 (noting first that *Shechem* in 33:18 refers to a person, not a place). Jacob was ‘in the land of Canaan *on his way from Paddan-aram*’; to realise the significance of this, we must recall his departure for Paddan-aram on instructions from his father Isaac, as told in the convoluted tale in Genesis 27:41-28:2 (which space does not allow us to discuss).

What is important for our present concern is that before Jacob set out for Paddan-aram, Isaac blessed him. According to Genesis 28:3, Isaac’s blessing of Jacob began as follows:

וְאֵל שַׁדַּי בְּרַךְ אֶתְּךָ וְיַבְרֵךְ וְיַקְרֵךְ וְיִמְלֵךְ וְיִמְלֵךְ לְקַהֵל עַמִּים

‘May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous,
that you may become a company of peoples’(NRSV);

cf. Gen. 35:11 at Bethel, and Jacob’s blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh in Gen. 48:3-4. The divine title *אֵל שַׁדַּי* was especially associated with the Abrahamic covenant in Gen. 17 (cf. 17:1). The promise of blessing in 28:3-4 is similar to YHWH’s promise to Abraham in 17:4-6. Jacob is promised that he will become ‘a *company* of peoples’ (*קָהָל* means ‘a company/ assembly/ community’). However, YHWH’s promise to Abraham uses different

terminology: he will be the ancestor of *הַמִּוֹן גֹּיִם* ‘a great throng of nations’ (17:4, 5). This reflects the concept of *covenant* in ch. 17 (a ‘P’ text); it included not only Abraham and Isaac (yet to be born) but also *Ishmael and all the men of his house, including all his slaves* (note especially vv. 23-27). To Vawter (1977: 224-225; 308-309) the P covenant ‘embraced a larger Israel, not a narrow one’ (see further comments on this in §6.3.3.4).

The ‘larger Israel’ concept seems to be present also in YHWH’s promise to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:14): *וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה וּבְנוֹרְעָךָ* ‘All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants’ (NJPS). The phrase that seems particularly significant (yet receives little attention) is *כָּל־מִשְׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה* (*מִשְׁפָּחָה* is used here in the wider sense of ‘people/nation’). This is a re-affirmation of YHWH’s promise to Abram in Gen. 12:3 *וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כָּל מִשְׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה*. The meaning is not certain, but seems to indicate that YHWH intends Abraham and his descendants to be mediators of his blessing to ‘all the peoples of the earth’—a theme developed by Deutero-Isaiah (cf. G. von Rad 1972:159-161; W. Zimmerli 1978:69-70, 215-224). The question that arises is this: if it is YHWH’s intention that *ALL the peoples of the earth* be included in his blessing, this surely means that YHWH’s blessing must include the *Canaanites*?

With these thoughts in mind, we proceed now to consider Jacob’s contact with Hamor and Shechem. Contact was initiated when Jacob purchased from Hamor’s family the land on which he had pitched his tent; there he erected an altar and called it *God, the God of Israel* *אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (33:19-20). Note that the term *אֵל* is used here of Israel’s God (cf. *אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*); it occurs also in the name *יִשְׂרָאֵל*. The term *אֵל* was a generic term for ‘deity’ in the ANE, and was also the name of the chief Canaanite god. These divine names, found in key Genesis texts concerning patriarchal religion, are widely considered to derive from the worship of the Canaanite god *Ēl*. From an early period, the names and titles of Canaan’s gods were appropriated to YHWH. For discussion of these terms, see §7.1.3.1.

The tragic narrative that unfolds in ch. 34 opens in v.1 with an evidently innocent act on the part of the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob: *וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה ... לְרֵאוֹת בְּבָנוֹת הָאֶרֶץ* ‘Now Dinah went out... to visit the women (daughters) of the land’. She was patently building friendly contact with the local Canaanite women; this may not have been her first visit, and there is no suggestion that she was committing a reprehensible act in making this contact. On this occasion, her visit ended in tragic consequences for herself, her family and their Canaanite neighbours. The story cannot be recounted in detail; the focus of interest in the following comments is on the *reactions* particularly of Shechem, Hamor and Jacob.

Shechem's first act was *dishonourable*: he seized Dinah and 'dishonoured' her (v. 2). But, realising that he loved her, he resolved to act *honourably* towards her; thereafter his actions and words were honourable, as were his father's responses. Shechem took Dinah to his house (cf. vv. 17b, 26)—in view of his efforts to win her affections (v. 3), she may not have been unwilling to go with him, and it soon became clear that he was not seeking a casual liaison but intended to marry her, as he informed his father (v. 4). When Jacob learned about the situation, he said and did nothing, deciding to wait for his sons to return from caring for their animals in the open country (v. 5). Hamor soon made contact with Jacob to discuss matters with him, father-to-father, but received no response (v. 6). On their return, Jacob's sons reacted with fury (v. 7). Hamor appealed to the brothers, emphasising Shechem's love for the girl and the benefits that the marriage would bring for both communities (v. 8-10); Shechem addressed the girl's father and brothers, promising to pay any amount they asked as a marriage gift, so that he could marry her (v. 11-12).

Space does not allow analysis of the terms Hamor and Shechem offered; the relevant point is that their ever-increasing generosity underlined Shechem's love for Dinah and the sincerity with which he and his father sought the marriage. They agreed unhesitatingly even when the brothers declared that Hamor, Shechem and the men of their community must be circumcised (v. 13-17). After a diplomatic argument from Hamor and Shechem, the men of the community agreed and—in good faith—all were circumcised (v. 18-24). But Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi raided the city while the men were 'sore' from the circumcision; they killed the men, went to the house of Hamor and Shechem, murdered them and took Dinah with them. Jacob's other sons joined in looting the city, seizing the animals, possessions, dependants and women, plundering everything in the houses: in effect carrying out *קָרַח* (v. 25-29). Jacob, passive at the outset (v. 5-6), remained passive throughout, and even at the end his role was very weak. His censure of his son's actions was merely a peevish complaint that they had made life difficult for him among the local Canaanites and had put his household at risk of destruction if attacked (v. 30-32).

Brief observations on aspects of the narrative

Some details in the text emphasise the contrast between Jacob and his sons and the Canaanites in this story. The formulaic comment in v. 7 that 'such an outrageous thing ought not to be done in Israel' (cf. 2 Sam. 13:12) reads more as an excuse than as a genuine justification for their subsequent actions; it is anachronistic in its use of the term 'Israel' and may be an editorial attempt to ameliorate the brothers' outrageous behaviour. The editorial comment in v. 13 that the brothers spoke 'deceitfully' is a surprising moral

judgement on them, as the authors of the patriarchal narratives seldom evaluate characters and their actions in this way (cf. G. von Rad 1972: 333; R. Davidson 1979: 196). Note that in the narrative, no religious significance is attached to the practice of circumcision in the brothers' insistence on it as a requirement for marriage; they appear to use circumcision merely as a device to weaken all the Canaanite men long enough for the brothers to take appalling action against the whole Canaanite community.

There is a striking aside about Shechem in v.19: *וְהָיָא נִכְבָּד מִכָּל בֵּית אָבִיו* 'Now he was the most honoured of all his father's house'. (*נִכְבָּד* means 'honourable/ distinguished/ respected'. It seems to me that the designation *נִכְבָּד* might be applied also to Hamor.) The comment does not in fact add anything to the dramatic movement of the storyline, which seems to indicate that it is a significant point that the editor(s) particularly wanted to make. We may be intended to contrast this tribute to Hamor's son Shechem with Jacob's rebuke (albeit mild) of his sons Simeon and Levi in v.30 and his final bitter verdict on them in Gen. 49:5-7; cf. the references to the 'tribe' of Simeon in Judges 1:3 and 1:17, especially Simeon's participation with his brother Judah in the *מִרְדָּם* that took place against the 'Canaanites' at Zephath/Hormah (see note on Judges 1:17 in §5.2.1.1). The rampage of murder and plunder carried out by Jacob's sons (vv. 25-29) contrasts starkly with the conclusion of Abraham's respective contacts with Melchizedek and the king of Sodom.

Abraham, Melchizedek, and the king of Sodom each contributed in his own way to fostering a peaceable outcome of the contact zone into which circumstances had brought them. Both Hamor and Shechem made every possible effort to make constructive contact, and to bring about a positive outcome for all concerned, not least for Dinah, whose feelings are never taken into account by her father and brothers. Hamor and Shechem emerge from the narrative as far more honourable than Jacob. As in the case of the narrative about Abraham, Melchizedek, and the king of Sodom, there is no condemnation of the Canaanites or of their way of life in this patriarchal story. Again the Patriarchal ideology of the Canaanites is markedly different from the Deuteronomistic ideology.

6.3.3.4 Some further insights into different traditions of origin

In §6.3.2.6, we considered comparisons Moshe Weinfeld saw in *patterns of origin* in biblical and Greek traditions. ‘The pattern is based on two stages: the first, pertaining to one man with his family migrating from a great center of civilization to a new land; the second, pertaining to settlers in new territory’ (Weinfeld 1988b: 369). *The second stage is predominantly the period of lawgiving*. It seems to me that this concept of a two-fold pattern of origin is relevant to our discussion of the different ideologies of the Canaanites and the traditions out of which they arose:

Stage 1: The Patriarchal/Sojourning tradition (cf. §6.3.1.6)

Stage 2: The Exodus/Sinai/Settlement tradition of lawgiving (cf. §§6.3.1.3; 6.3.1.5)

As commented by P.R Ackroyd 1968:90, in the Bible we find two different ways of thinking about the relationship between God and Israel—one in terms of the covenant with the Patriarchs, the other in terms of the exodus. In the Bible as we now have it, two motifs seem to have been combined: one is more characteristic of the ‘P’ material, while the other reflects the Deuteronomistic line of thought (cf. K. Schmid 2006: 47-50). I propose now to consider these two traditions, albeit briefly and inadequately in the space available.

Stage 1: The Patriarchal/Sojourning tradition

This tradition is widely considered to have come from the ‘priestly source’ (P), the latest of the biblical material, produced possibly in the fifth-century BCE. We must note that the date assigned to a ‘source’ does not determine the antiquity of the material within it; ‘P’ almost certainly contains very old material that had been found relevant to new circumstances for the community and was interpreted to address their present situation.

We noted in §6.3.3.3 the ‘larger Israel’ concept that seems to be envisaged in Genesis 17, as outlined by Vawter 1977: 308-309. He places the development of this concept in the context of the fifth-century BCE exilic community. He considers that although the Priestly ‘author’ believed utterly in the ‘chosenness’ of his people and the heritage of the promised Land, he was not a ‘narrow nationalist’. His understanding of the relationship of man to God had been born of a broader experience of the human condition than that which the chroniclers and poets of Israel’s travails and triumphs in the past had ever known. Above all, the loss of his Land and the need to find new sureties for old had taught him compassion for others around him who were weak and, like him, needed to know God’s guidance in their present situation. While this would scarcely be considered ‘ecumenism’, he said, nonetheless it was a necessary stage towards the ‘ideal’.

A closer analysis of the Persian Empire context is outlined in Albert de Pury (2000): ‘Abraham: The Priestly Writer’s “Ecumenical” Ancestor’. He observes the Priestly ‘writer’ not only witnessing the emerging Persian Empire but also actively participating in the theological debate within nascent Judaism. He saw the openness of Achaemenid rulers to local particularisms (provided Persian suzerainty was not challenged) and the fact that Achaemenid religion was monotheistic (though with a dualistic trait). Judaism was born in this cultural climate of a monotheistic religion that was benevolent towards other religions. The Priestly ‘writer’ (like Second Isaiah) embraced this evolution in religious thought; consequently, the exclusivistic national YHWH of the Deuteronomistic tradition could be celebrated now as the all-embracing Creator, and worshipped as the one and only God. De Pury convincingly applies this line of thought to the Abrahamic traditions (e.g. Genesis 17) as revealing that ‘Abraham must have been an “ecumenical” patriarch all along’ (p. 177).

Stage 2: The Exodus/Sinai/Settlement tradition of lawgiving

We noted in §6.3.2.4 that during the seventh century BCE the ‘authors’ of the book of Deuteronomy recast the schema of ANE treaties in terms of the *Mosaic covenant* as they understood it, and extended the application of the covenant concept to include the *obligations* laid on Israel. They reinterpreted the *Abrahamic covenant* in which the promise of Land had been unconditional (§6.3.2.3), and made the gift of the Land *conditional on observance of the Law*, given through Moses in the dramatic and terrifying scenes on Sinai. David Frankel 2015b (‘Judaism without Sinai?—discerning the tension between the Torah and the Prophets’) raises significant issues regarding the Law as ‘given at Sinai’. He points out that, outside of Exodus, Deuteronomy and the (very late) book of Nehemiah, the Sinai theophany is virtually absent from the Bible; he draws attention to an alternative tradition that Israel’s laws derived from multiple small prophetic revelations throughout the history of Israel, and he asks why the two traditions are at tension with one another.

The centrality of the Sinai theophany for Israel’s faith (recounted in Exodus 19-39) is stressed in Deut. 4:9-10, where Moses warns the people that they *dare not forget* how YHWH spoke to them out of the fire on the mountain top. This ‘unforgettable’ event established Moses as Israel’s lawgiver and YHWH as the source of the Mosaic Law; yet apart from Exodus and Deuteronomy, it is almost totally ignored in the rest of the Tanach, except for a late reference in Nehemiah 9:13-15. In First Temple times, most of Israel seemingly was unaware of the Sinai tradition: this does not necessarily mean that it was ‘invented’ in Second Temple times, but if there were earlier texts referring to Sinai, we do not have them. Frankel considers it possible that the whole Sinai Torah giving story is late.

There is evidence that generations of *prophets* were lawgivers: e.g. Samuel and Ezekiel; in a late text (Daniel 9:10) we read, '[we] have not obeyed the voice of LORD our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.' The prophets quoted God and legislated directly, without reference to the Mosaic Law. In Zechariah 7:12, there is a clear affirmation of this late prophet's conception of the law: 'They made their hearts adamant in order not to hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets' (cf. 1:6). His conception of the law as given by prophets implicitly denies the finality of the Deuteronomistic Torah; it is clear that he considered himself authorised by the 'spirit' of the LORD of hosts to continue serving a formative role in his community, declaring the divine law and enlarging the collection of the LORD's commandments (cf. 7:3 and 8:18-19).

The idea of a one-time revelation of God's teaching for Israel was inimical to priests and prophets; if the Torah is *a priori* and absolute, rather than revealed in response to contemporary realities, the role of priests and prophets is subordinated to the Torah of Moses. (The tension between the voice of the prophet and the 'authoritative' Torah is suggested in Deut. 13:1-6.) Frankel draws attention to the *social significance* of this tension. All societies desire stability and permanence, and he sees the canonization of the story about the Sinai theophany in the Second Temple period as reflecting an attempt to stabilize and unify Israel's religion. In this endeavour, variant laws and traditions were rejected or were modified and absorbed into the framework of the dominant tradition. It seems to me that the Patriarchal narratives as we now have them were among the traditions modified and absorbed into the framework of the dominant Deuteronomistic tradition during the Second Temple period, while the 'ecumenical' hopes implicit in these narratives were largely rejected by the mainstream authorities. Nevertheless these narratives were included in the Bible, with their insights still available to the perceptive mind.

Chapter 7 - Israel in the days of the Judges

In Ch. 7 we consider **Judges 2:6-5:31**. There are two main parts:

7.1 Key Themes in the Second Preface (2:6-3:6);

7.2 Major Themes in Judges 3:7-5:31, considering especially the development of themes found in **1:1-2:5** and in **2:6-3:6**.

7.1 Key themes in the Second Preface (2:6-3:6)

(Re. the ‘Second Preface’, see §4.2.) I do not intend to write a verse-by-verse commentary, but will discuss key themes in the text, engaging a ‘postcolonial approach’ when it seems relevant to *question* lines of interpretation indicated by historical-critical methods. A postcolonial approach entails looking for protesting or oppositional voices hidden in the text; it may result in readings that subvert the historical-critical ‘meaning’ of the text (cf. §1.2.2). The ‘Outline of Contents’ (§4.1) indicates four themes that form a ‘theological’ background to the days of the judges, *as interpreted by the editor(s)*:

- 1) the death of Joshua and the elders (2:6-10)
- 2) apostasy and judgement (2:11-15)
- 3) introducing the judges (2:16-19)
- 4) enemy peoples (2:20-3:6).

We shall use these themes as convenient headings for our discussion of 2:6-3:6.

7.1.1 The death of Joshua and the elders (2:6-10)

Judges 2:6-9 reiterates Joshua 24:29-31 (in a slightly different order); v.10 has no parallel in the Joshua passage, but the gist of it is implicit in v.7. It seems that the editor(s) of Judges intended the readers/hearers to consider the days of the judges *a continuation of Israel’s ‘story’* from where the book of *Joshua* ended; they were meant to recollect the whole Joshua story, or at least what was then available to them. The present book of Joshua falls into two main parts: (chs 1-12) and (chs 13-22) and an appendix (chs 23-24) (cf. Soggin 1972:1-14). The first part is mainly narrative, recounting the conquest of the land and Israel’s early faithfulness to YHWH. The genre of the second part is markedly different; it consists largely of lists for division of the land, and seems to have developed separately over many years, possibly reaching its present form in the post-exilic era.

In §2.2.2.2 we noted the emphasis of F. Segovia (2000: 126) that ‘the shadow of empire in the production of ancient texts is to be highlighted’, particularly the Neo-Assyrian empire (cf. §4.5.3.1). Several commentators believe that the catastrophic threat posed by this empire to Judah after the fall of Samaria in 722/721 was the locus for the ‘First Edition’ of Joshua (chs 1-12, 23-24), which presented an idealised account of Joshua as a powerful military leader (Na’aman 1994: 254-260, 281; Schniedewind 2004: 77-81; Römer 2005: 83-85; Fleming 2012: 133-143). These writers maintain that the incursions of Sennacherib during the reign of Hezekiah were the most likely socio-political context for the First Edition, which they interpret as a work of political and military propaganda (cf. §4.5.3 The Shadow of Empire, concerning the dating and context of *the book of Judges*).

R.D. Nelson (1981b) argued that *Josiah* ‘hides behind the mask of the deuteronomistic Joshua’, and he concluded that this interpretation of the person of Joshua supports those who believe that the primary edition of Dtr was produced during Josiah’s reign, in order to support the Davidic monarchy and as a challenge to reoccupy Israel *irredenta*. It seems to me, however, that Nelson’s arguments would be far more appropriate for the situation pertaining in Hezekiah’s reign. To Hezekiah and his people, the destruction of Israel legitimated Judah and the rule of the Davidic dynasty; convinced of divine destiny, they identified themselves as inheritors of the past of *both* kingdoms (cf. §5.2.1.2). The thrust of this conviction would have been particularly powerful in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Samaria. Hezekiah may have seen *himself* as the ‘new Joshua’ who would lead *all Israel* to overcome their present and greatest Enemy, Assyria (c.f. §§7.1.6.1–7.1.6.3).

Concerning Nelson’s point that the first edition of Joshua issued a challenge to reoccupy Israel *irredenta*, it is noticeable that ch. 11 brings the first edition to a climax with Joshua’s victories in *northern Canaan*: the very territory that became the Assyrian province of *Samerina*. These issues were far more alive and potent during the crisis confronting Hezekiah and his people than as a vague memory in Josiah’s day. It is noticeable also that the list of ‘conquered kings’ in ch. 12 highlights ‘kingdoms’ that appear in Judges. A *postcolonial reading* hears in these texts a subversive voice of protest and opposition *silently addressed to the Assyrians*: the terror instilled by the Enemy meant that subversion must be *hidden* in stories of days long ago. Their hopes remained unfulfilled in Hezekiah’s time, but apparently were being fulfilled at last during the reign of Josiah, when Assyria’s power was waning; their renewed hope, however, was short-lived (cf. §5.2.2.1).

7.1.2 Apostasy and judgement (2:11-15; 3:7)

Apostasy is the main theme in **2:11-13; 3:7** (discussed in §7.1.3); text below is NRSV.

2¹¹ Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshipped the Baals;¹² and they abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they followed other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were all around them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.¹³ They abandoned the LORD and worshipped Baal and the Ashtaroth*.

3⁷ The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and worshipping the Baals and the Asheroth* [*RSV transliteration of names].

Judgement is the main theme in **2:14-15** (discussed in §7.1.4)

2¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them, and he sold them into the power of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them to bring misfortune, as the LORD had warned them and sworn to them; and they were in great distress.

We note here some key Hebrew text considered to support the view that *the Second Preface* (apart from 2:6-10) is *deuteronomistic*. The opening statement in **2:11a** (cf. **3:7a**) is a formula found over 50 times in the Bible, predominantly in the book(s) of Kings:

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָרָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה

‘the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD’.

The nature of their ‘evil-doing’ is described in 2:11-13; 3:7 — they are warned against ‘idolatry’, in terms widely regarded as deuteronomistic polemic (see §7.1.3):

2:11b וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־הַבַּעַלִּים they worshipped the Baals

2:12b וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים they followed other gods

2:13b וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ לְבַעַל וְלַעֲשָׂתָרוֹת they worshipped [Heb. the] Baal and the Ashtaroth

3:7b וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־הַבַּעַלִּים וְאֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרוֹת they worshipped the Baals and the Asheroth

A further indication of deuteronomistic provenance is the *description of YHWH* in **2:12a**:

אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָם הַמוֹצִיא אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

‘the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt’.

This reference to the Exodus event uses the *הַמוֹצִיא* formula rather than the *הַעֲלָה* formula found in Judges 2:1 (cf. §§6.3.1.1; 6.3.1.5). Wijngaards noted that the *הַמוֹצִיא* formula occurs particularly in legislative material in the Bible, widely understood to be a relatively late development. He includes Judges 2:12 among the texts he classifies as ‘legislative’ (cf. Wijngaards 1965: 92, 95). For other examples of deuteronomistic phraseology in Judges, see the detailed analysis in Weinfeld 1972: 320-322, 339-340.

7.1.3 The question of ‘apostasy’

Interpretation of this question requires some awareness of *the development of Israelite religion* over many centuries: an issue that is complex and controversial. As detailed discussion of this question is impossible within the limits of our present study, I propose only to highlight issues that I believe are significant for the study of the texts with which we are particularly concerned, drawing on extra-biblical and biblical evidence.

7.1.3.1 The Ugaritic texts

In 1929 at Ras Shamra, a headland in northern Syria, on the site of the ancient city of Ugarit, excavations from the ‘library’ of the Baal temple began to discover a great trove of texts. The majority of the texts uncovered in the first stages of the excavations were of a religious and mythological nature; these texts — dating from ca. 1400 BCE — have had considerable impact on the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Useful concise summaries of these discoveries, and the impact of the Ugaritic texts on biblical interpretation, will be found in Schniedewind 2004: 38-40, 46-47; Collins 2005:101-102.

The texts reveal a pantheon of gods presided over by *Ēl*, who is called *father of the gods, father of mankind, creator of the earth*. He is *kindly and merciful, eternally wise*, but seems to be aged and ailing. His consort *Athirat (Asherah)* shares his high rank; she is worshipped as *creator of the gods*, and intercedes for others with *Ēl*. *Baal* dominates the pantheon; he is identified with Hadad, god of storms, rain and fertility, is *mighty, lord of the earth, a warrior god*. When *Mot* (‘Death’) kills him, nature languishes; but after his sister/consort ‘*Anath* (or ‘*Anat*) conquers *Mot*, nature revives. ‘*Aštarte* is connected with fertility, sexuality, and war; from the beginning of the first millennium BCE she was worshipped in Syria and Canaan. Many female figurines with exaggerated sexual attributes have been found: at least some of these probably represent ‘*Aštarte* (H. Ringgren 1966: 41-45; Th. C. Vriezen 1967: 31-45; R. Davidson 1970: 47-53; G. Fohrer 1973: 45-50).

Fohrer cautions that the Ugaritic texts come from a 14th/13th century BCE city-state whose population was ‘a motley mixture of Canaanite and non-Semitic peoples’; moreover these myths are poetic compositions representing ideas and customs of their day. However, there are noticeable affinities between Ugaritic and early Israelite poetry (e.g. Judg. 5:4-5), which show that ancient Israel belonged to a cultural context that survived the destruction of Late Bronze Age city-states; there was considerable continuity between Canaan and Israel in the depiction of their deities. (See further in §7.1.3.2 (1): Baal /the Baals).

Various texts in the Bible indicate that virulent *antagonism* developed against what some groups castigated as ‘Canaanite’ influences, railing especially against what they considered ‘Baal worship’. In marked contrast to the *Baal* polemic, there is no criticism of *Ēl*: indeed, the Bible seems quite relaxed about identifying YHWH with *Ēl*. As our present concern is with the condemnation of *Baal*, of the ‘*Aštaroth* and *Asheroth*, in the Judges texts indicated in §7.1.2, I do not propose to discuss at length the Ras Shamra *Ēl*, but will comment briefly on the significance of *Ēl* epithets to which we referred in §6.3.3.3.

In the **Abraham/Melchizedek** narrative, we observed that Melchizedek was ‘priest of *God Most High* (אל עֲלִיּוֹן)’ (Gen. 14:18), and that the name *Ēl-Elyon* is known from the Ras Shamra tablets as a title of *Ēl*, the head of the Canaanite pantheon. We noted that in Gen. 14:22 the biblical text prefixes YHWH to the name (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיּוֹן); the reason for this editorial ‘amendment’ is not certain, but the Greek Septuagint and Syriac texts do not read יהוה in v. 22. What is certain is that (contrary to Deuteronomic ideology) in the narrative there is no hint of condemnation of the Canaanite god or of his followers.

In the introduction to the **Jacob/Hamor/Shechem** story (Gen. 33:18-20), it is said that Jacob erected an altar in the city of Shechem and called it אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *God, the God of Israel*. This title suggests a process of reinterpretation such as took place at many ancient cultic sites. *Shechem* was an ancient cultic site whose local god seems to have been a manifestation of אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, who was now presumed to be אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *God of Israel*. The lack of criticism of *Ēl* in the Bible indicates that *Ēl* and YHWH were identified at an early stage in Israelite tradition. Indeed, the name אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (which probably means ‘*Ēl* will rule’) suggests that *Ēl* was the original chief god of the group named ‘Israel’ — a name attested as early as the late thirteenth century BCE on the stele of the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah.

The most common epithet in the patriarchal narratives is אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי *Ēl-Shaddai* (usually rendered ‘God Almighty’), which seems to mean *Ēl, the mountain one*, with reference to *Ēl*’s dwelling-place on a mountain. It is the preferred term for God in the account of the ‘P’ source concerning the period between God’s covenant with Abraham and the revelation to Moses of the name *YHWH* (cf. Gen. 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, 48:3; Ex. 6:3). The name *Shaddai* (rendered ‘the Almighty’) occurs in texts that may be as early as the tenth-century, e.g. Gen. 49:25; Num. 24:4, 16; Ps. 68:15 (ET 14). (Regarding YHWH and *Ēl*, see M.S. Smith 1990:7-12; J. Day 2002:13-21, 32-34; L.L. Grabbe 2007: 153-156)

7.1.3.2 Discussion of key texts

Before discussing the key texts highlighted in §7.1.2, it is important to comment briefly on the issue of *Judges and deuteronomistic ideology*, discussed at some length in §4.5.1. We noted a broad consensus that Judges is related to Deuteronomy and its ‘school’ mainly in two themes: *the struggle against idolatry* and *faithfulness to God*, found mainly in editorial sections of Judg. 2 and 10, while chs 3-16 (considered by many to contain the oldest material in Judges) are largely pre-deuteronomistic. It is important now to define more precisely the passages generally regarded as deuteronomistic. In addition to the Second Preface (2:6-3:6), the editorial sections in 6:25-32 and 10:6-16, and the Othniel narrative in 3:7-11, are considered deuteronomistic (Soggin 1981: 3-6, 37-47; Mayes 1985: 16-28; Lindars 1995:98-100; Brettler 2002: 25-28; Römer 2005: 6-8, 90-91, 136-139).

The ‘days of the judges’ (recounted in Judges and 1 Samuel) are often categorised as a period in Israel’s history when the cult of **Baal** *competed* with the cult of **YHWH**: a verdict based mainly on *the polemic against Baal* in Judg. 2:11-13; 3:7; 6.25-32; 10:6-16; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 12:10. These passages express the outlook of deuteronomistic editors who redacted older material found in Judg. 3-16, in order to conform these traditions to their viewpoint, as they sought to explain the fall of the Northern Kingdom and of the Davidic kingdom of Judah. Römer (ibid. 107-123, 136-139) makes a convincing case for the Neo-Babylonian era to be the time of this redaction, at the hands of editors among the exiles in Babylon. I believe it is important to *query* whether their representation of Baal and his rivalry with YHWH is an accurate account of the actual situation pertaining in the ‘days of the judges’, so far as we can determine this from the available evidence. In the study of our key texts (below), I aim to undertake this task, within the limits of our present study.

Judg. 2:11 וַיַּעַשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה וַיַּעַבְדוּ אֶת־הַבְּעָלִים

The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshipped *the Baals*.

Judg. 2:13 וַיַּעַזְבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַיַּעַבְדוּ לְבַעַל וְלַעֲשָׂתוֹת

They abandoned the LORD, and worshipped [Heb. *the*] *Baal and the ‘Aštaroth*.

Judg. 3:7 וַיַּעַשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה

וַיִּשְׁכַּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיַּעַבְדוּ אֶת־הַבְּעָלִים וְאֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרוֹת

The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD,

forgetting the LORD their God, and worshipping *the Baals and the Asheroth*.

We will now consider the deities *Baal/the Baals*, *the ‘Aštaroth*, and *the Asheroth*.

(1) *Baal /the Baals (2:11, 13; 3:7)*

The plural form **the Baals** (2:11; 3:7; cf. the ‘Aštaroth and the Asheroth’) seems to be typical of the Dtr. It does not indicate a plurality of deities bearing this title/name, but local manifestations of the same deity (Soggin 1981: 43; Day 2002:45, 68). The singular form with the article (**the Baal**) in 2:13 may be intended to indicate Baal worship in general, although there is no obvious reason for the singular in this verse (Lindars 1995: 103). Note that the article is used with Baal, ‘Aštarte and Asherah (Nicholas Wyatt 1999:101).

Commenting on **the Baalim** in 2:11, Lindars (ibid. 102) remarked that ‘The fertility practices of the Baal cult were considered degrading by the supporters of Yahweh and the worship of Baal is not infrequently referred to as harlotry (cf. v. 17).’ He continued: ‘Apostasy in [the historian’s] view leads inevitably to moral corruption and this in its turn leads to the degeneracy which renders the people helpless before their foes.’ These comments raise several issues: what is the *evidence* for ‘fertility practices’ in the Baal cult? May not the concept of ‘harlotry’ simply be a metaphor? *Who* was ‘the historian’ and *when* was he labouring? As indicated above, the answer to the questions ‘*who*’ and ‘*when*’ points to a deuteronomistic redaction during the Neo-Babylonian era. It is unlikely that anyone by that period had actual knowledge of the god Baal: his name was a polemic cipher. Day (ibid. 71) points out that in the postexilic period Baal is not heard of, except for a reference in the late prophet Zech. 12:11 to the Aramaean cult of Hadad-rimmon.

On the issue of *evidence*, Grabbe (2007:161) has pointed out that recent study has challenged assumptions about Baal worship and moral corruption: e.g. there is *no evidence* for ritual prostitution at Ugarit; the biblical text and subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions simply *asserted* that decadent sexual practices were rife, among ‘Canaanites’ in particular (cf. Albertz 1994:87-88, 172-173). A.D.H. Mayes (1985:44-45) insisted that it is mistaken to emphasise fertility aspects of worship among the Canaanites and to contrast this sharply with Israelite worship of YHWH. He argues that the Ugaritic texts indicate that *Ēl* — with whom YHWH was not in conflict — besides being head of the pantheon and creator of the earth was also *active* in nature and fertility; Baal — YHWH’s main rival in Israel — was *more* than a ‘fertility god’, and there is no evidence of his being involved in fertility rituals. In the mythological texts that relate his conflicts with *Yam* (‘Sea’) and *Mot* (‘Death’), the issue at stake is *his position as king*. His defeat of *Yam* makes him king in the divine assembly, and his defeat of *Mot* makes him king over the earth. In short, he says, ‘Baal is no nature deity, but a claimant to kingship who defeats his foes.’

We might paraphrase Mayes' remarks about Baal and say that 'YHWH is no nature deity (although *he is active* in nature and fertility), but a claimant to kingship who defeats his foes.' It is clear that there was an overlap between the characteristics of Baal in the Ugaritic texts and YHWH in the Hebrew Bible, similar in imagery and basic vocabulary. Some biblical passages provide indirect support for this contention: e.g. imagery and language *characteristic of Baal* are found in Pss. 29, 68; Judg. 5:4-5, representing *YHWH as divine warrior and storm God* (A. Weiser 1962:259-265, 477-490; G. Fohrer 1973:164-173; R. Davidson 1998:101-104, 210-217; J. Day 2002:91-105). Some commentators try to mitigate the force of these similarities by describing them as 'merely poetic'. However, it seems to me there is no sound reason to deny that such passages may be the remnant of earlier beliefs, hidden or reinterpreted by Dtr. Moreover, the manifest similarity between Baal and YHWH in earlier times may have been one principal cause of the fierce rivalry between the worshippers of the two deities. As K. van der Toorn (1996: 331) comments: 'Both Yahweh and Baal were strong personalities ... [and each] had his own mythology'.

In view of the anti-Baal polemic in the Bible, at first sight it seems strange to find in 'the days of the judges' and the early years of the monarchy theophoric personal names compounded with the name 'Baal', although the bearers of these names and their families undoubtedly were worshippers of YHWH. For example, 'Jerubbaal' was an alternative (earlier) name of Gideon (Judg. 6:32; 7:1); other names compounded with 'Baal' include Saul's son Eshbaal (1 Chron. 8:33, 9:39, redacted in 2 Sam. 2:10 to Ishbosheth) and Jonathan's son Meribbaal (1 Chron. 8:34, 9.40, redacted in 2 Sam 4:4, 9:6 etc. to Mephibosheth); the element 'bosheth' is a play on the Hebrew word בֹּשֶׁת *'shame'*. However, these compound personal names in fact offer another strand of evidence for a period when 'the cult of Baal was deemed tolerable by some Israelites' (M.S. Smith 1990:13); they are evidence also of the role undertaken by redactors in later times.

An important witness to theophoric names compounded with Baal and YHWH is found in inscriptions known as the **Samaria ostraca**. We may note that no personal names with the element *baal* are extant from Judah (I.T. Kaufman 1992; M.S. Smith *ibid.* 41, 65 n.3; Day *ibid.* 71-72). Over 100 ostraca were found in 1910 during excavations at the site of ancient Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom; around half are legible. They contain at least five names with the theophoric element *baal* and nine with the *YHWH* component; there is no indication of any social distinction in the names: they seem to have been ordinary names in common use (Grabbe 2007:157). The dating is not certain: it generally ranges between the late 9th century BCE and mid-eighth century (J.M. Miller and J.H

Hayes 2006:248); B. Mazar (1986:188) is more precise, arguing that the names reflect the situation in the mid-9th century, before Jehu's revolution.

The question of dating is important. An early dating takes us close to being within living memory of the dramatic events recounted in the 'Elijah cycle', regarding the prophetic resistance to the politico-religious policies of the House of Omri, especially Elijah's fierce opposition to Baal worship during the reign of Ahab. Space allows only brief notes on key features of 'the polarisation between Yahweh and Baal in 1 Kgs 17-19' (cf. F.C. Fensham 1980). The Omrides promulgated a policy that might be termed 'the juxtaposition of Yahweh and Baal worship': giving equal place to the two deities (Albertz 1994:150). To Elijah and the conservative circles around him this was a wanton attack on traditional Yahweh religion: thus, 'they replaced the royal programme "Yahweh and Baal" with the slogan "Yahweh or Baal" (ibid. 154)'. The late dating of the ostraca would bring us to the time of Hosea and his attacks against 'Baal'. On either the early or the late dating, the evidence of the Samaria ostraca is that family and personal piety in the Northern Kingdom were hardly touched by the controversies raised in conservative circles.

We return now to our study of the Judges texts.

In **Judg. 2:12**, using standard Dtr terminology, the editor(s) elaborate on the charge in **2:11** that 'they worshipped the Baals'. In **2:12a** Israel's apostasy is defined in terms of 'forsaking the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt' (see our note in §7.1.2 on the Hebrew text of 2:12a): i.e. they were accused of rejecting *a basic tenet of the Dtr*. In **2:12b** the charge of 'worshipping the Baals' is widened still further (cf. Judg. 10:6 which is a deuteronomistic passage, and is surely hyperbolic?):

וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים מֵאֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבוֹתֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָהֶם

They followed other gods, from among the gods of the peoples
who were all around them, and they bowed down to them.

The narratives in chs 3-16 do not *support* the accusation that they worshipped 'the gods of the peoples all around them'; indeed, the worship of **Baal** is not an issue in these chapters, except in connection with Jerubbaal/Gideon in 6:25-32 (a deuteronomistic passage).

(2) *The ‘Aštaroth (2:13)*

As noted in §7.1.3.1, the Ugaritic texts refer to three principal goddesses: Athirat /Asherah, ‘Anath, and ‘Aštarte. In the Bible, only *Asherah* figures frequently: we discuss her in (3); ‘*Anath* is attested only in the name of ‘Shamgar son of ‘Anath’ (Judg. 3:31; 5:6), and as a place-name, ‘Beth-‘Anath’ (Josh. 19:38; Judg. 1:33); ‘*Aštarte* has a minor role in the Bible, but her worship is *prohibited* in several contexts: associated with ‘the Baals’ in Judg. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 12:10, and with the ‘Sidonians’ in 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13.

According to S. Ackerman (1992: 24-26) linguistic evidence from the second and first millennia BCE identifies ‘Aštarte as a heavenly queen and divine consort. In later Greek and Phoenician sources, she is known as ‘Aphrodite’, goddess of sex and love. Egyptian representations show her on horseback carrying weapons of war; Egyptian texts describe her as a war goddess; in Ugaritic mythology also she sometimes acts as a war goddess. In the Bible (1 Sam. 31:10), we read that after Saul’s death, the Philistines took his armour to the temple of ‘Aštarte: this may reflect her association with war (ibid. 25-26).

The *vocalization* of ‘Aštarte’s name as rendered in the Bible is significant. In the light of extra-biblical parallels (cf. Greek *Astarte*, Akkadian *Ishtar* etc.) the form of her name in the Ugaritic texts would be ‘*aštar*. In the Bible, the name occurs as עֲשְׂתָרֶת *‘aštōret* (sg.) in 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13, and as עֲשְׂתָרוֹת *‘aštārōt* (pl.) in Judg. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3, 4; 12:10; 31:10. Several scholars (e.g. Olyan 1988: 9-10; Day 2002: 128-129) consider the vocalization in the biblical form a *polemical distortion*, intended to reflect the vowels of בֹּשֶׁת *bōšet* ‘shame’ (cf. §7.1.3.2 (1) re. names compounded with ‘Baal’). As noted in J.M. Hadley 1997: 396, all references to ‘Aštarte occur in polemical, deuteronomistic passages. Olyan (ibid. 11-13) argues persuasively that ‘the deuteronomistic writers can be shown to employ purposeful distortion in polemic against rival cults.’

Many scholars have identified ‘Aštarte as מְלִכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם ‘the queen of heaven’ who is castigated in Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25 (cf. Ackerman 1992: 26-28; Day ibid. 144-150; Dever 2005: 179, 230, 233-234). Albertz (1994:193-194, 343 nn. 47, 48) believes that the title מְלִכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם refers to ‘an Ishtar figure’ represented in Babylonian and Assyrian religion by the evening star; he locates this ‘goddess worship’ within the sphere of what he calls ‘family piety’. Dever uses the term ‘folk religion’; regarding the veneration of ‘Aštarte, he comments (ibid. 230) that ‘it would be surprising if the Israelite cults had *not* been influenced by these cults of the wider ancient Near Eastern world’. Some scholars have

argued that other goddesses, such as Asherah and ‘Anath, could have exercised the role of מְלִכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם. Day (2002: 145-150) considers several ‘candidates’, but he concludes that the most plausible case can be made for ‘Aštarte. He notes that Jeremiah’s reference to ‘the queen of heaven’ in Jer. 7:18 occurs in the context of his denunciation of cultic practices in Jerusalem, in the course of his ‘deuteronomistically edited Temple sermon’; the issue in Jer. 44 was the deep-rooted folk religious practices among Jews (men and women) living ‘in the land of Egypt’. It seems to me that—whether it was ‘Aštarte or another goddess who was revered as ‘the queen of heaven’—until the last days of Judah (if not even later than ‘the last days’) the deuteronomistic party was continuing to resist the people’s persistent veneration of other deities besides YHWH (see further below).

(3) *The Asheroth (3:7)*

Before the discovery of the Ugaritic texts in 1929 and subsequently, many scholars rejected the concept of a goddess *Asherah*, either within or outside the Bible: e.g. W. Robertson Smith (1889:188-189) argued that ‘asherah’ always referred to a wooden pole that had no divine associations of any kind; some who acknowledged references in the Bible to a *goddess* equated her with ‘Aštarte (cf. examples noted in J.M. Hadley 2000:4). The Ugaritic texts, however, revealed that there was indeed a goddess *Athirat (Asherah)* independent of ‘Aštarte (cf. §7.1.3.1); it is now widely (but not universally) accepted that there are references to this goddess in the Bible (cf. Day 1986:397-408; Hadley *ibid.* 5-11). As it is not possible within the limits of this study to consider the range of opinions in the Bible about Asherah, I propose to indicate briefly the main generally-held views.

In the Bible the word *asherah* אֲשֵׁרָה occurs ca. 40 times, in nine different books, in singular and plural forms. Most occurrences of the *asherah* indicate a *cult object* sacred to the goddess Asherah. There is no description of this cult object, but the verbs used in connection with *asherah* imply some form of carved wooden object: e.g. כָּרַת ‘to cut’ is used in Exod. 34:13; Judg. 6:25, 26, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4; 23:14. In five references, *Asherah* is the *goddess* herself: Judg. 3:7; 1 Kgs 15:13; 18:19; 2 Kgs 21:7; 23:4 and possibly v.7; it is widely agreed that the goddess *Asherah* in the Bible is to be identified with the Ugaritic goddess *Athirat* (cf. Hadley *ibid.* 54-55; Day 2002: 42-47). That the *asherah cult object* is certainly to be associated with the *goddess* Asherah may be deduced from a comparison of **2 Kgs 21:3**, which relates that ‘[Manasseh] erected altars for Baal, and he *made* an asherah

as Ahab king of Israel had *made*, and bowed down to the host of heaven and served them’, with **2 Kgs 23:4**, which relates that ‘[Josiah ordered the removal from the temple of YHWH] of all the articles made *for* Baal and *for* Asherah and *for* all the host of heaven [literal translations; my emphases]’. In 2 Kgs 21:3 the verb ‘made’ indicates a *cult object*, while 2 Kgs 23:4 *includes* Asherah with Baal and the host of heaven in a series of *deities*. In both contexts, asherah/Asherah is mentioned along with Baal and the host of heaven: this indicates a close association between them. It seems natural to conclude that the asherah *cult object* in the Bible symbolised the *goddess* Asherah (cf. Day 1986:403-404).

The text of **Judges 3:7b** וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־הַבְּעָלִים וְאֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרוֹת raises several difficulties. The parallelism with ‘the Baals’ makes it certain that the term ‘the Asheroth’ indicates a *deity*, but some scholars read *Aštaroth* here instead of *Asheroth*, as עֲשֵׁתְרוֹת occurs in parallelism with בְּעַל in Judg. 2:13; cf. Judg. 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3, 4; 12:10. Day (1986: 397; 2002: 45) notes that late versions of the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and two Hebrew manuscripts presuppose *Aštaroth* in Judg. 3:7 (cf. Hadley 2000: 63, 82). Day points out, however, that the *earlier* LXX and Targum presuppose *Asheroth*, and he argues persuasively that the fact that *Asheroth* is the *lectio difficilior* makes it more likely that this was the *original reading* (contra Hadley *ibid.* 63-64). Day adds that, even if those who see *Aštaroth* as the original reading are correct, nevertheless this still implies that whoever redacted the text in the postexilic period had understood Asherah to be a divine name, thus bearing witness to some awareness of Asherah as a goddess at a relatively late date.

We noted texts in which בְּעַל is associated with עֲשֵׁתְרוֹת; this accords with the Ugaritic portrayal of *Aštar* as Baal’s major consort (Olyan 1988:10; Collins 2005:117). The Bible also associates אֲשֵׁרָה with בְּעַל: cf. הַבְּעָלִים and הָאֲשֵׁרוֹת in Judg. 3:7, and in ‘side by side’ references to בְּעַל and אֲשֵׁרָה in 1 Kgs 18:19; 2 Kgs 23:4 (Hadley *ibid.* 66-68, 71-75); in Judg. 6:25, 28, 30 there are references to the *cultic* asherah ‘beside the altar of Baal.’ The passages which *bring Baal and Asherah together* are anomalous, as *Athirat (Asherah)* is the major consort of *Ēl* in the Ugaritic texts, and there is no known extra-biblical evidence of association between Asherah and Baal; indeed there are indications of animosity between them (cf. Olyan *ibid.* 38-45; Day 2002: 60-61). From scrutiny of the Ugaritic texts regarding Asherah and Baal, Hadley (*ibid.* 78, 173-175) concludes that ‘there was not much love lost between them!’ Is this anomaly to be explained by late confusion between Asherah and *Aštar* when the distinction between the two goddesses had been lost in the mists of time? Or is there a more significant explanation?

The answer to that question seems to lie in several inter-related factors which we can consider only in outline. First, we can garner from persistent accusations in the Dtr text evidence that asherah/Asherah, as cultic object and as goddess, figured in both popular and official religion in the Northern Kingdom and in Judah over a long period: in the Dtr corpus, charges on this issue are laid in the days of the judges (Judg. 3:7; 6:25-30), and during the monarchies of both North and South: in the reign of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 14:15), Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:23), the case of Asa's mother (1 Kgs 15:13), Ahab (1 Kgs 16:33), Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:6), the whole story of 'the people of Israel' (2 Kgs 17:10. 16), Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3,7). The 'reforming' kings—Asa (1 Kgs 15:13), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4), and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:4-15 *passim*)—made ineffectual efforts to destroy this cult (cf. Day 1986: 406-408; Olyan *ibid.* 9; Albertz 1994:86-87; Collins *ibid.* 116-117, 123).

Secondly, when we examine *the prophetic corpus* for evidence against asherah/Asherah, the most striking feature is the paucity of references to the asherah or to Asherah. We noted above the 'side by side' reference to בעל and אֲשֶׁרָה in 1 Kgs 18:19 where the towering figure is Elijah, whose opposition to Baal is absolute; but he takes no action against 'the prophets of Asherah'. Does this mean that the reference to 'the prophets of Asherah' is a gloss, or does it simply indicate that Elijah had no quarrel with Asherah (cf. D.N. Freedman 1987: 247-248)? In neither of the northern prophets, Amos and Hosea, is there any certain reference to Asherah; in contrast to Hosea, Amos does not mention Baal (cf. Olyan *ibid.* 7-9, 17, 19-22). A few texts in the Judahite prophets have been suggested: Isaiah 17:7-8, 27:9; Micah 5:13 (ET 14); all these texts are disputed (for a summary of arguments raised, cf. Olyan *ibid.* 15-17; Hadley *ibid.* 55-56). While arguments drawn from silence must be treated with caution, there seem to be no sound arguments against reaching the conclusion that the asherah/Asherah question was not an issue for the prophets.

Finally, we may argue that it seems evident that the Dtr corpus is the locus for the asherah/Asherah controversy. Apart from Dtr texts (and the very uncertain texts from Isaiah and Micah), the only other possible text is Ex. 34:13; however numerous scholars have argued that this verse is deuteronomistic: e.g. Noth 1962:262; Hyatt 1971: 27, 324; Childs 1975: 608-607, 613; Day 1986:406; Hadley 1997: 382-383. It seems certain that the answer to our question about the association of Baal and Asherah is that it was a polemical attempt by the deuteronomists to *discredit* Asherah (whose cult they opposed) by claiming that she was associated with Baal: 'implying guilt by association' (Day 2002:60-61).

Subsequent to the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, further archaeological finds have shed new light on *the question of apostasy*. Within the limits of this study, we will note insights from *the Ta'anach cult stand* and from inscriptions at *Khirbet el-Qôm* and *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*.

7.1.3.3 The Ta'anach cult stand

We previously noted mention of Ta'anach in Judg. 1:27-28; 5:19 (cf. §4.2.1.1; §5.2.2.2); on archaeological discoveries at Ta'anach, see P.W. Lapp 1964, 1969; A.E. Glock 1992. Before discussing the Ta'anach cult stand (sometimes called 'the Ta'anach altar': a designation rejected by Lapp 1969:44), it is important to realise that many cultic sites have been excavated, and hundreds of figurines and other artefacts relevant to our understanding of the religion of Israel/Judah have been discovered (cf. observations on this issue by the archaeologist J. Laughlin 2000:136-139). For an account of many such discoveries, with comments on their significance, see Dever 2005: 135-154. An historic approach is taken by Finkelstein (2013: 109-117); he locates the Ta'anach stand in the context of the Omride Kingdom, with particular regard to the heterogeneous population of the northern kingdom.

This elaborate stand, usually dated to the tenth century BCE, was excavated at Ta'anach in 1968 (Lapp 1969:42-44), at a *bāmāh* ('high place') or open-air cult site (cf. Dever *ibid.* 219; Grabbe 2007:159). Its exact function is uncertain, but it may have been used for libations or offerings. There are four tiers of iconographic representations (detailed in Hadley 1997: 375-381); we will focus on the tiers most relevant to *the question of apostasy*. On the bottom tier there is a naked female figure, flanked by two lions whose ears she is grasping; the third tier from the bottom has two rampant ibexes that are eating from a stylized tree of life, and are flanked by two lions almost identical to those in the bottom tier. The lions and sacred tree indicate that the naked figure is almost certainly Asherah: the Mother Goddess, known throughout the Levant as the 'Lion Lady' (cf. Ackerman 1992: 190-191; Dever 1984: 28-30; 2005: 151-154, 220).

On the top tier there is a quadruped with a winged solar disc on its back, understood to represent a deity: either Baal or YHWH. However, we noted above that Asherah was not associated with Baal (except in Dtr polemic). It is unlikely that Baal, a storm god, would be represented by a sun disc (cf. Hadley *ibid.* 380), but the Bible uses solar metaphors for YHWH: e.g. Ps. 84:12 (ET 11), and as we shall see below, Asherah and YHWH are associated in the inscriptions at *Khirbet el-Qôm* and *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*. Although it is not certain, it does seem likely that YHWH is represented in the Ta'anach cult stand.

7.1.3.4 The evidence of Khirbet el-Qôm

Khirbet el-Qôm is an archaeological tomb-site (with two tombs) in Judahite territory, ca. 12 km. west of Hebron, 10 km. southeast of Lachish. They were investigated by W.G. Dever in 1967 following their discovery by tomb-robbers, and he published a report on his findings in 1969. Both tombs contained inscriptions dated to ca. 750 BCE by Dever (1970: 165; in n. 53 he commented that Cross preferred ca. 700 BCE; Olyan 1988: 23 supports the later date). The inscriptions are difficult to read and to interpret (cf. Dever 1970; 2005: 131-133; Day 1986: 394-395; 2002: 49-52, 59-61; Hadley 1997: 363-368; 2000: 84-105).

Chiselled out of a pillar in Tomb II, there was a six-line Hebrew inscription: lines 1-3 are the most complete; only single words can be read in lines 4-6. There is now broad agreement that the sense of the inscription may be rendered as follows:

- ¹ Uriyahu the rich wrote it.
- ² Blessed be Uriyahu by Yahweh
- ³ from his enemies by his [Yahweh's] asherah he has saved him.
- ⁴ by Oniyahu
- ⁵ by his asherah
- ⁶ and by his a[sh]erah.

(Hadley 1987a: 50-51; 1997:364; Laughlin 2000:148; Day 2002:50; Dever 2005:132)

Heated debate has centred on the interpretation of 'his [Yahweh's] asherah': does it refer to the wooden cult symbol or to the goddess Asherah herself? Dever (2005:196-208) has given an update on his discovery and on scholarly reactions to his 1969 report, with special reference to his interpretation of *ashērāh* as the proper name of the goddess *Asherah*. Ziony Zevit (1984) also interpreted this word in the inscription as the name of the goddess, though he read it as 'Asherata', which Dever (ibid. 206) described as the 'Phoenician' version of the goddess's name. The Khirbet el-Qôm reference to 'his asherah' found support in roughly contemporary inscriptions discovered later at Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

7.1.3.5 The evidence of Kuntillet 'Ajrud

Kuntillet 'Ajrud, 'the Solitary Hill of the Wells', is ca. 50 km south of Kadesh-barnea in north-eastern Sinai, on a branch of the Darb el-Ghazza desert road between the Gulf of Aqaba and the Mediterranean (cf. Finkelstein 2013:135-138 'Arabian Trade'). In 1975/76 the site was excavated by a team led by archaeologist Ze'ev Meshel; they uncovered a one-period building that has been described as a religious shrine (Meshel 1978:50) or, as a

caravanserai for travellers and traders (Weinfeld 1984:124-125; Hadley 1987b: 207-208). For B.B. Schmidt (2002:102-103) it was a caravanserai that also provided for observance of religious ritual; pottery and inscriptions such as personal names indicate that Israelites and Judahites frequented it. Radiocarbon data indicate that the site was built between 820 and 795 BCE and abandoned after 745 BCE; the ¹⁴C data together with probable historical factors suggest that the site *functioned* between ca. 795 and 730/720 BCE (Finkelstein and Piasezky 2008: 180-184; cf. similar findings in Meshel, Carmi, and Segal 1995).

Since its discovery, countless articles and books have tried to interpret the Kuntillet 'Ajrud findings: conclusions on most issues are many and varied. Over time, a degree of consensus has emerged about some key findings; within the limits of this study, I propose to highlight three main issues that I consider relevant to our present study. Inscriptions were found on wall-plaster and on pithoi (large storage vessels); on Pithos A and Pithos B there were inscriptions that have been of major interest. As they are easier to decipher than the Kh. el-Qôm inscriptions, there is broad consensus over the reading of the consonants (cf. Hadley 2000:120). The sense of the significant phrases may be rendered as follows:

Pithos A: *I bless you by YHWH of Samaria and by his asherah*

(cf. Olyan 1988: 25-27; Hadley *ibid.* 121-125; Day 2002: 50-52);

Pithos B: *I bless you by YHWH of Teman and by his asherah.*

(Cf. Emerton 1982: 3, 9-10; Olyan *ibid.* 27-29; Hadley *ibid.* 125-129)

The main issues are: (1) *YHWH and his asherah*; (2) *YHWH of Samaria*; (3) *YHWH of Teman*. We shall now consider these issues, though very inadequately for lack of space.

(1) *YHWH and his asherah*

Debate on these texts has focussed on the term *his asherah*, raising two key questions:

- does it refer to *the asherah* cult symbol or to *Asherah* the goddess?
- does it imply that Asherah functioned as *YHWH's consort*?

Regarding biblical evidence about *the goddess Asherah*, the following points raised in §7.1.3.2 (3): *The Asheroth (3:7)* are relevant to these questions: there is wide agreement that *Asherah* in the Bible is to be *identified* with the Ugaritic goddess *Athirat*; detailed comparison of 2 Kgs 21:3 with 2 Kgs 23:4 indicates *close association* between *the asherah cult object* and *the goddess Asherah*, leading to the conclusion that the asherah cult object *symbolised* the goddess Asherah; the Dtr text provides evidence that asherah/Asherah figured in popular and official religion in the Northern Kingdom and in Judah, from the days of the judges throughout the monarchies of both kingdoms.

The main issue in the texts from Kh. el-Qôm and Kuntillet 'Ajrud is the Hebrew word that is translated 'by his *asherah*': the possessive pronoun 'his' is affixed directly to the noun '*asherah*', indicating *close association* between *asherah* and *YHWH*. Numerous scholars have argued that, as personal names do not take pronominal suffixes in ancient Hebrew idiom, the possibility that the reference is to the goddess is ruled out. However, it could well refer to the cult object (e.g. Emerton 1982:13-18; idem 1999:315-317, 334-335; Day 1986:392; idem 2002:51-52; Collins 2005:111-112). Counter-arguments have been made in support of the *goddess* as 'his Asherah': e.g. pointing to other 'Semitic' languages in which personal names take pronominal suffixes; others rebut this argument (cf. Hadley 366-367 n.16). No consensus has been reached on the basis of grammatical argument.

To me, a more fruitful approach is to consider possible clues contained within the Bible. We noted above that the Dtr text provides evidence that a/Asherah figured in popular and official religion in the Northern Kingdom and Judah over many years; the Dtr text also provides evidence of *association* between *asherah* and *YHWH*, particularly Deut. 16:21:

לֹא-תִטַּע לְךָ אֲשֵׁרָה כְּלִ-עֵץ אֲצִל מִזְבַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

for yourself an asherah—[*gloss?*] any tree—beside an altar of YHWH your God'.

The fact that *prohibition was felt necessary* implies that the installation of asherahs beside YHWH's altars was common practice (cf. Day 1986:392; Olyan 1988:9; Hadley 1997: 369, 395). An asherah in association with YHWH before his altar could be considered '*his asherah*'. A further point noted above was that the asherah cult object *symbolised the goddess*: thus, we might say that *Asherah herself was closely associated with YHWH* in his sanctuary. The Kh. el-Qôm/Kuntillet 'Ajrud texts may be said to support Deut. 16:21.

On the basis of these texts, many scholars believe that the goddess Asherah functioned as YHWH's consort (e.g. Meshel 1979; Dever 1984; Freedman 1987). In support of this view, note our observation above that *Asherah* in the Bible is to be *identified* with the Ugaritic goddess *Athirat*. In §7.1.3.1 we noted that *Athirat (Asherah)* was the consort of El, sharing his high rank, and interceding with him for others, and also that the Bible seems quite relaxed about identifying YHWH with $\bar{E}l$; indeed it may be said to equate YHWH with $\bar{E}l$. It seems a natural conclusion that, in some circles, YHWH was understood to have appropriated $\bar{E}l$'s consort Asherah. The supplicant may have offered prayers to YHWH before the *asherah* in the shrine; it may even be that prayers were offered to YHWH through the *mediation* of Asherah (cf. Hadley 1997: 367-368; Collins 2005: 119-200). The popularity of Asherah certainly seems to be supported by the discovery of hundreds of figurines and other artefacts, many of which may represent Asherah (cf. §7.1.3.1).

(2) *YHWH of Samaria*

The discovery of an inscription bearing the phrase ‘YHWH of Samaria’ at a site as far south as Kuntillet ‘Ajrud has various significant implications. I propose first to note briefly issues on which there is now wide consensus, and then to consider in more detail issues I believe are of considerable significance, but do not seem to have been widely discussed. The first point concerns the translation of *šmrn* which Meshel originally translated as ‘guardian’; Emerton (1982:3) disputed this and interpreted it as ‘Samaria’; this is now generally accepted (cf. Weinfeld 1984:125; Olyan 1988:32-33; Hadley 2000: 122-123). Furthermore, as Collins (2005:109) has remarked, ‘YHWH of Samaria’ is YHWH *as he was worshipped in Samaria*; this surely implies that—besides *בֵּית הַבַּעַל* ‘the house of Baal’ that Ahab is said to have built in Samaria (*בֵּית הַבַּעַל אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה בְּשִׁמְרוֹן*) 1 Kgs 16:32)—there was also a *בֵּית יְהוָה* in Samaria.

There is no reference in the Bible to a temple of YHWH in Samaria, but in 1 Kgs 16:33 it says: *וַיַּעַשׂ אֶהָאֵב אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה* ‘Ahab also made an *asherah*’. In an analysis of this verse, Olyan (ibid. 6-7) countered claims that the *asherah* of Samaria was associated with *Baal*; he also rejected A. Alt’s view that Samaria was the ‘Canaanite’ cult and political centre of the Omrides (ibid. 34-35). While I accept Olyan’s analysis of 1 Kgs 16:33, it seems to me that—in light of our note above that *the installation of asherahs beside YHWH’s altars* was common practice, severely opposed by deuteronomists—there was a polemical attempt by the Dtr to *discredit* the *בֵּית יְהוָה* built by the despised Ahab, by referring disparagingly only to the *asherah* installed beside the altar. What we can say with some assurance is that the inscription from Kuntillet ‘Ajrud supports the view that Yahweh was certainly worshipped in Samaria, and that Samaria was not a ‘Canaanite’ city.

Emerton (ibid. 12-13) made a further point that has been commonly accepted, namely that—although Israelites and Judahites frequented Kuntillet ‘Ajrud—the phrase ‘YHWH of Samaria’ must have been inscribed by *a traveller from Samaria*: this highlights its *distance* from Israelite territory. K. van der Toorn (1996:278) described it as an ‘outpost of the Northern Kingdom’, basing this on ‘the evidence of the strong Israelite influence in the remains’; various writers have remarked on the dominant Israelite connection (cf. Meshel 1992:108; Meshel, Carmi and Segal 1995: 211-212; Na’aman 2012: 4-5, 8-9; Finkelstein 2013:148-149). It seems to me important to consider the *historical background* to the development of this site, in order to *explain* the dominance of the Northern Kingdom.

The table below, excerpted from Chronological Table 2, gives approximate dates for key figures during the period when the site functioned (from ca.795 to 730/720 BCE). Noting this basic data, two aspects of *geopolitical development* that affected Israel and Judah will be outlined briefly: *Assyrian hegemony* and the long-standing *Israel/Judah power struggle*.

JUDAH	ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
Amaziah* ca.805-776	Joash ca.805-790	Adad-nirari III 811-783
Uzziah* ca.788-736 [*coregencies]	Jeroboam II ca.790-750	Tiglath-pileser III 745-727

In the late 9th century Hazael of Aram Damascus dominated Israelite territory in Transjordan and the Philistine coastal plain; ca. 796 BCE Adad-nirari III renewed Assyrian pressure in the west and crushed Damascus. Joash was emboldened to recover Israelite territory: this is attested in the Bible (2 Kgs 13:25) and is supported by archaeology which implies this took place under *Assyrian hegemony*. The Rimah Stele (discovered in 1967)—a ‘summary inscription’ of Adad-nirari III’s campaigns (cf. §4.3.2.2)—says ‘he received the tribute’ of Tyre and Sidon and of Joash ‘the Samarian’ (Joash’s tribute was not known previously). The tribute of these three seems to have been ‘voluntary’: ingratiating themselves with the Assyrians, whilst submitting as vassals. Kuntillet ‘Ajrud may have developed from Israelite trade initiatives under Joash, in conjunction with their Assyrian suzerain. This continued in the time of Jeroboam II, but Tiglath-pileser III used the easier Edom-Beersheba Valley route: this may explain the site’s abandonment. (Sources: Tadmor 1973: 141-144; Na’aman 1999: 11-13; S. Herrmann 1980: 233-234; B.E. Kelle 2002: 651-654; Miller and Hayes 2006: 331-347; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2008: 175, 180-184)

Relieved of former domination by Damascus, Israel and Judah engaged in conflict with their neighbours and with each other. The Bible briefly recounts a Judean defeat of Edom (2 Kgs 14:7), followed by a longer account of a clash between Amaziah and Joash, said to have been provoked by Amaziah (vv. 8-11). The Bible consistently implies that from the days of Ahab, Judah was a vassal to Israel (e.g. 1 Kgs 22:2-4; 2 Kgs 3:7); Amaziah may have been determined to exert his independence from Israel. But for him the outcome was disastrous: Joash defeated him at Beth-shemesh west of Jerusalem, advanced on Jerusalem, assailed the city wall, pillaged the temple, took hostages (including Amaziah) and returned to Samaria (2 Kgs 14:12-14, 17-20). It may be that Judahites were able to frequent Kuntillet ‘Ajrud in conjunction with their ‘overlord’ the Northern Kingdom. (Sources: Herrmann *ibid.* 228-230; Na’aman 1993:227-229; Meshel, Carmi and Segal *ibid.* 211-212; E.F. Campbell 1998: 231-234; Miller and Hayes *ibid.* 343-352; Finkelstein 2013:129-131)

(3) *YHWH of Teman*

The word תִּימָן can denote ‘the south’ in general, as in Zech. 9:14 which says that YHWH will march forth בְּסַעֲרוֹת תִּימָן ‘in the whirlwinds of the south’. Weinfeld (1984:126) rendered יהוה תימן as ‘Yahweh of the South’; Finkelstein (2013:149) paraphrased it as ‘YHWH of the southern arid zones’. תִּימָן is also used in connection with Edom, sometimes almost as a synonym. References to this region are found in several ‘theophany’ poems or songs (widely considered archaic); e.g. Hab. 3:3 opens with the words: אֱלֹהֵי מִתִּימָן יָבוֹא ‘God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran’. In Deut. 33:2, the ‘blessing of Moses’ highlights the geographic setting: יְהוָה מִסִּינֵי בָּא וְנָרָח מִשְׁעִיר לָמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ: מִהַר פָּאֲרָן ‘YHWH came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran’. In Judg. 5:4 the Song of Deborah recalls:... יְהוָה בְּצִאֲתוֹ מִשְׁעִיר בְּצַעֲדוֹ מִשְׁדֵּה ‘YHWH, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom...’; in v.5 YHWH is designated זֶה סִינֵי ‘the One of Sinai’, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘the God of Israel’ (cf. Ps. 68:9).

Teman, Mount Paran, Sinai, and Seir are all in or near Edom (Mount Sinai, often located in the Sinai Peninsula, in fact is likely to have been in the mountainous region of Edom). It seems that these ancient traditions may well have preserved a *memory* of a topographical association of YHWH with the ‘deep south’ of Edom. We may consider also the tradition that in the days of Ahab (ca. 868-854) the northern prophet Elijah journeyed to meet YHWH at Horeb (the Dtr term for Sinai), said to be forty days’ journey south of Beersheba; the probable dating for Elijah is barely a century before the period when Kuntillet ‘Ajrud functioned. It seems reasonable to suggest that the inscription *YHWH of Teman* is extra-biblical support for a topographical link between YHWH and ‘the southern arid zones’, and also to suggest that—although there is no direct evidence of an active Yahweh cult in תִּימָן at that time—YHWH was still worshipped in that region.

It seems to me possible that the inscription *YHWH of Teman* might have been written by a traveller who worshipped at the בֵּית יְהוָה in Samaria but who also knew the traditions preserved in the archaic poems or songs. The use of the designation *YHWH of Teman* in a personal invocation for divine blessing on a friend about to set out on a journey into the potentially hostile wilderness (מְדִבְרָה) is an indication that *the traditional association of YHWH with the southern מְדִבְרָה* was considered especially propitious for anyone making that journey. (Sources: Emerton 1982:10, 13; Weinfeld 1984:126; Olyan 1988:28; Albertz 1994:51-52; van der Toorn 1996:282-283; Hadley 2000:128-129; Collins 2005:110)

In light of our discussion about *YHWH of Teman* I wish to re-visit briefly two texts discussed in §6.3.1.6. We noted that the Bible contains competing claims about Israel's origins and its relationship with YHWH, and considered texts (of Northern provenance) that reflect a *wilderness tradition*: Deut. 32:10-14 and Hos. 13:5. The dating of Deut. 32 is uncertain, but it clearly pre-dates 722/721. Hosea's prophetic career began during the reign of Jeroboam II (when Kuntillet 'Ajrud was active) and closed as Israel neared its end.

Deuteronomy 32:10-14 recalls YHWH's faithfulness in the past to Jacob/Israel (vv.7-9), affirming that *מִצְאָהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוּ יָלַל יְשָׁמֵן* '[YHWH] found him in a wilderness land, in an empty howling waste' (v. 10). *Hosea 13:5* expresses a similar affirmation: *אֲנִי יְדַעְתִּיךָ אֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ תְּלֵאָבוֹת* 'It was I who knew you in the wilderness (מִדְבָּר), in the land of drought'. Several passages in his prophecy indicate that Hosea was aware not only of an exodus tradition but also of a wilderness tradition.

Considering his vivid portrayal of the מִדְבָּר, one wonders what stories Hosea may have heard from Israelite officials and merchants of his day who had travelled in those regions, as Kuntillet 'Ajrud indicates. Of course, this is speculation, and the evidence that has been gleaned from that significant site cannot be applied directly to such texts, but it seems to me that Kuntillet 'Ajrud does provide *contemporary background* to Hosea's conception of a wilderness tradition. In general, we may say that this amazing site appears to provide general support for the wilderness tradition that seems to pervade the Bible. The question arises: if *YHWH's origins* were in the mountainous region of Edom, *how* did the cult of YHWH make its way *north*? According to the widely-accepted 'Kenite hypothesis' the *Kenites* were mediators of the Yahwistic cult. This issue will be discussed in §7.2.1.3.

Baruch Margalit (1990) discerns another connection between Hosea, as an 8th-century North Israelite, and the evidence of Khirbet el-Qôm and Kuntillet 'Ajrud regarding *YHWH and his asherah*. He draws attention to Hosea's use of *marital imagery* to describe the theological bonding between YHWH and Israel. He argues that Hosea — confronted by the enormous popularity of the syncretistic Yahwism in evidence at Kh. el-Qôm and K. 'Ajrud — took over the imagery implied by the 'catch-phrase' *YHWH and his asherah*, and transformed it by substituting 'Israel' for 'Asherah'. His extensive use of marital imagery therefore may represent an *implied polemic* against the popular syncretistic cult: YHWH does indeed have an asherah — i.e. a wife — called 'Israel'. It is not possible to consider Margalit's interpretation at length, but I have certainly found it persuasive.

7.1.3.6 Does the charge of ‘apostasy’ stand?

Based mainly on Dtr polemic in *Judg. 2:11-13; 3:7; 6.25-32; 10:6-16; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 12:10*, the ‘judges era’ has been categorised as a time when the cult of Baal competed with the cult of YHWH. These passages reflect the outlook of editors in the Neo-Babylonian era who explained the fall of Israel and Judah by charging both kingdoms with apostasy. We selected *Judg. 2:11-13; 3:7* as our key texts. The accusation in 2:11 that ‘they worshipped the Baals’ is followed by an editorial elaboration in v.12 where Israel’s apostasy is *defined* as ‘forsaking the God of their ancestors’ and ‘following other gods from among the gods of the peoples around them’. The narratives in chs 3-16 do not support these accusations.

As informed discussion about the question of ‘apostasy’ requires some awareness of *the development of Israelite religion* over many centuries, we indicated that we would draw on biblical and extra-biblical evidence. As essential background to the biblical evidence, we considered first the Ugaritic texts. These show that ancient Israel belonged to a wide cultural context that survived the destruction of Late Bronze Age city-states, and that there was considerable continuity between Canaan and Israel in the depiction of their deities.

As biblical evidence, we noted e.g. that in the eras of the judges and early monarchy, we find theophoric personal names compounded with the name ‘Baal’, although the bearers of these names were undoubtedly worshippers of YHWH. *The Samaria ostraca* (dated late 9th/mid-eighth century BCE) are an important witness to theophoric names compounded with both Baal and YHWH. As a further example of our biblical evidence, we noted that close comparison of 2 Kgs 21:3 with 2 Kgs 23:4 leads to the conclusion that the asherah *cult object* in the Bible symbolised the *goddess* Asherah. We remarked also that in eighth century prophetic writings, the most striking feature is the lack of references to the asherah or to Asherah; it seems that the asherah/Asherah question was not an issue for the prophets.

Further archaeological finds shed new light on the question of apostasy. Along with the biblical evidence, cumulative evidence from the tenth-century *Ta’anach cult stand* and inscriptions at *Khirbet el-Qôm* (ca. 750 BCE) and *Kuntillet ‘Ajrud* (ca. 795–730/720 BCE) brings me to the following conclusion: for the pre-exilic period, I concur with the verdict of N. Wyatt (1999: 102) that religion in Israel and Judah, at popular and official levels, was basically polytheistic in nature. In addition, ideas of ‘foreignness’ about ‘Canaanite’ elements in the religion of both kingdoms are not justified; both are to be understood within that cultural tradition. The deuteronomic charge of ‘apostasy’ does not stand.

7.1.4 The question of ‘judgement’

Judg. 2¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them, and he sold them into the power of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them to bring misfortune, as the LORD had warned them and sworn to them; and they were in great distress (NRSV).

7.1.4.1 YHWH a JEALOUS God

The ‘evil-doing’ that kindled YHWH’s anger against the Israelites was summarised in 2:11-13; 3:7. They were warned against idolatry and the worship of other gods, in terms regarded as deuteronomistic polemic (discussed in §7.1.3). The Dtr editor(s), who clearly considered them ‘guilty as charged’, described (in 2:14-15) the judgement meted out by YHWH. Behind the sparse details of the narrative lie pronouncements such as occur in Exod. 34:11-16, a passage which contains characteristic deuteronomistic themes — as outlined in §6.3.3.1 regarding the interpretation of Judg. 2:2ב מִזְבְּחֹתֵיהֶם תִּהְיוּן תִּתְּצוּן ‘tear down their altars’. We noted that in Exodus 34:14, YHWH’s severe warnings over making idols and worshipping other gods are declared to be *grounded* in the *very nature of YHWH* (cf. Morton Smith 1971: 44; B.S. Childs 1974: 613):

כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל אֲחֵר
כִּי יְהוָה קַנָּא שְׂמוֹ אֵל קַנָּא הוּא
‘for you shall not worship any other god,
because the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God’.

The adjective קַנָּא represents God as *punishing those who ‘hate’ him* (Exod. 20:5//Deut. 5:9) and *demanding exclusive service* (Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24, 6:15) [BDB 888]. According to Fohrer (1973:171) the basic sense of קַנָּא is: *one who asserts his own rights over against others without regard for their rights*. The term ‘rights’ in an ANE context is anachronistic, but the term ‘requirements’ may convey his point: used of God it indicates his *demands*; used of people it indicates their *needs*. I do not propose to discuss the series of ‘events’ in YHWH’s acts of judgement as recounted in 2:14-15 by the Dtr editor(s), but rather will highlight briefly some underlying or hidden aspects of YHWH’s ‘jealousy’ that I perceive in my reading of the text, from the perspectives of ‘the plunderers’ and of ‘their enemies’, and also of the Israelites. Regarding YHWH’s chosen human ‘instruments’ of punishment, it seems to me that YHWH *uses* Others as *pawns*, manipulating them in order to work out his purposes for *Israel*, but without regard for any *needs* of those Others.

Commenting on the harshness of YHWH's threatened judgement on *those who 'hate' him* — i.e. *those who do not obey his commandments against idols and the worship of other gods* (Exod. 20:5//Deut. 5:9) — W. Zimmerli (1978:111) observed that 'in Yahweh's wrath against those who...are not prepared to obey his commandments, there glimmers the sinister possibility that Yahweh's commandments can have their deadly side.' Clearly there is tension between the account of his wrath and the preceding rehearsal in Exod. 20:2 //Deut. 5:6 of his merciful acts in the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt; all the passages that describe YHWH as אֱלֹהֵינוּ remind the Israelites of his deliverance.

The Dtr editor(s) no doubt intended to show the depth of Israel's ingratitude, but a hidden issue is uncovered by the extensive descriptions and severity of YHWH's warnings, such as the threat to destroy them from the face of the earth: וְהִשְׁמִידָהּ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה (Deut. 6:15). It seems that YHWH's case proved to be too weak to persuade the Israelites to *follow him alone* and to reject 'other gods' whom they apparently found more attractive and efficacious for settled life in the land. The climactic tension in Judg. 2:15 implies that, in response to the failure of the punishment he had meted out (as described in v.14), in desperation YHWH resorted to using a strategy of *increasing violence* that would bring **terror** upon them. We may draw a comparison with Yvonne Sherwood's observation — in her deconstruction of Hosea's husband/wife metaphor (1996:222) — that 'Alongside the picture of a self-assured deity who knows that Israel will return to him, the text presents a jealous and insecure husband who turns to violence in desperation.'

7.1.4.2 YHWH and the ideology of TERROR

YHWH escalated the severity of their troubles by focussing his efforts on one strategic plan: he ensured that they were defeated 'whenever they marched out [sc. to war]'. The final phrase of v.15 in the MT reads וַיִּצְרָר לָהֶם מְאֹד 'and they were in great distress'; but the mg. has וַיִּצָּר which is supported by the LXX that reads [scI κύριος] καὶ ἐξέθλιψεν αὐτοὺς σφόδρα 'Thus he afflicted them greatly' (cf. Soggin 1981:39). The constant failure of their military ventures would recall their 'wandering traditions' when YHWH was the 'warrior God' who fought their wars *for* them (cf. 'the Book of the Wars of the LORD' in Num. 21:14), and when they had the assurance of his promise as in Exod. 23:27

אֶת-אֵימָתִי אֲשַׁלַּח לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִמַּתִּי אֶת-כָּל-הָעַם אֲשֶׁר תִּבְאֵ בָהֶם

'I will send my terror ahead of you, and throw into panic all the people you encounter' (cf. Deut. 7:23).

Now, however, YHWH had become *their terrifying enemy* by bringing about their defeat and giving victory to their ‘enemies all around’. In effect, YHWH was engaging **terror** as a psychological weapon of war — a tactic practised by the Assyrians.

An ‘ideology of terror’ is particularly marked in Assyrian texts whose purpose was not just to record their triumphs or to glorify the king, but to act as propaganda that would instil terror in ‘Others’. They sought to propagate an image of invincibility: thus nothing would be gained by resisting them (cf. §4.4.2). This narrative could be re-stated as follows: An ‘ideology of terror’ is particularly marked in some biblical texts whose purpose was not just to record their triumphs or to glorify YHWH, but to act as propaganda that would instil terror in ‘Others’. YHWH sought to propagate an image of invincibility: thus nothing would be gained by resisting him (cf. the ‘testimony’ of Rahab in Joshua 2:9-11).

But, YHWH’s terror had been turned against the Israelites, and he used their ‘enemies’ as weapons with which to punish Israel. Again, the underlying portrait of YHWH is that he *used* Other peoples as disposable instruments of his wrath against Israel. In his view these Others possessed no ‘requirements’ or *needs* of their own: essentially, he de-humanised them. The irony is that the enemies whom YHWH enabled to be victorious over Israel would attribute their success to *their own god* who had demonstrated that he was mightier than the God of the Israelites. There is no indication in this pericope that YHWH’s escalating punishment was having the desired effect: Israel had still not responded to him.

7.1.4.3 YHWH’s nature and purpose

As the texts discussed in the two previous sections are deuteronomistic, their *portrayal* of YHWH’s nature and purpose is deuteronomistic. The earliest reference to *YHWH’s jealousy* may be in Ps. 78:58, a psalm believed to belong to the deuteronomistic ‘school’ (cf. Fohrer 1970: 289; Carroll 1971: 143-147). In the ‘historical texts’ the only reference to YHWH’s jealousy is in 1 Kgs 14:22-24 (a deuteronomistic comment). Of the prophets, only Ezekiel (a contemporary of the exilic deuteronomists) emphasised YHWH’s jealousy; e.g. in 8:3 he speaks of ‘the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy’. However, from our discussion in §6.3.1.3 of *Hosea’s* demand for *exclusivity* in YHWH worship, we may argue that the basic premise of YHWH’s jealousy was already *implicit* in his teaching (cf. Östborn 1956: 26-31). It is widely believed that, after the collapse of Samaria, a group of Hosea’s disciples fled to Judah; they became dominant in the future shaping of deuteronomistic thought (cf. Weinfeld 1972: 366-370; Albertz 1994: 180-186).

We quoted above the affirmation ‘I will send *my terror* ahead of you...’ (Exod. 23:27); this occurs in the pericope (Exod. 23:23-33) that concludes the ‘Large Covenant Code’. Most of the themes and terminology in this Exodus pericope occur also in Deuteronomy, especially Deut. 7:1-5, 21-23; but while Deuteronomy adopts the style and broad themes of Exodus, it amends the Exodus terminology to conform to Dtr ideology (cf. §6.3.3.1 on interpretation of Judg. 2:2a, לא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת ‘do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land’). The repeated use of גָּרַשׁ ‘drive out’ in Exod. 23:28-31 emphasises YHWH’s intention to deal with the former inhabitants by driving them out; but in Deut. 7:2 YHWH required their *annihilation*: הִחָרַם תִּהְרַם אֹתָם ‘you must utterly destroy them’ (cf. Deut. 20:17), a command that justified the practice of חָרַם, which the Israelites are said to have obeyed with gusto (cf. Deut. 2:34; 3:6).

Two major issues underlie **Deut. 7:1-5, 21-23**: firstly, as in the case of the ‘Others’ discussed in §7.1.4.1, before YHWH the former inhabitants had no ‘requirements’ or *needs*. In YHWH’s estimation, they were abhorrent and disposable. Secondly, YHWH commanded Israel to *imitate his nature and purpose* in their dealings with the former inhabitants of Canaan, by undertaking the task of their annihilation. We must note also that some **key Dtr concepts** occur in **Deut. 7:6-10**. It is not possible to discuss them at present, but it is important to highlight them, as these concepts will arise in later discussions.

(Deut. 7:6) Israel is עַם קָדוֹשׁ a ‘holy people’, סֵגֻלָּה ‘a treasured possession’, whom YHWH *chose* and *separated* from all other peoples. In the Pentateuch account of Mosaic religion, beginning from Exod. 3:5 the notion of *holiness* (from the root קדשׁ *qdš*) was a basic characteristic of YHWH and epitomized the exclusive, demanding, and regulated relationship between YHWH and Israel. The *holiness concept* is absent from patriarchal religion in Gen. 12-50 (cf. R.W.L. Moberly 1992: 99-104; M.G. Brett 2008:51-52).

(Deut. 7:7-8) YHWH’s choice was arbitrary, not dependent on their quantity or quality, but only on YHWH’s ‘love’ כִּי מֵאַהֲבַת יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם. W.L. Moran (1963) demonstrated that the deuteronomic concept of the ‘love of God’ was borrowed from political life in the ANE. *Political loyalty* was expressed by the term ‘love’, the suzerain demanding the vassal’s wholehearted love, tolerating no compromise, but rewarding the loyal vassal with his ‘love’ (cf. Weinfeld 1972: 81-82; P.C. Craigie 1976: 26; Brett *ibid.* 48-50).

(Deut. 7:9) שָׁמַר הַבְּרִית וְהִתְקַדַּד לְאֹהֲבָיו וְלִשְׂמֵרָי מִצְוֹתָיו ‘[YHWH] keeps covenant and *hesed* with those who love him and keep his commandments’. There are two distinct *types* of covenant between YHWH and humans: the *promissory* type as in the Abrahamic and Davidic

covenants and the *obligatory* type in the Sinai Covenant (cf. §6.3.2.3). During the seventh century BCE, the Dtr ‘school’ recast the schema of widely-known ANE treaties in terms of the Mosaic covenant as they understood it, and extended the ‘covenant’ concept to include the obligations laid on Israel (cf. §6.3.2.4). The *בְּרִית* to which Deut. 7:9 refers is clearly the *obligatory* type, which typically entails severe penalties for failure to fulfil YHWH’s uncompromising demands: this is tantamount to *rejecting YHWH (v.10)*.

However, the *Dtr* portrayal of **YHWH’s nature and purpose** as outlined above is not the only biblical portrait of YHWH’s nature and purpose. In §6.3.3.2; §6.3.3.3 we noted that the *Dtr* ideology of the Canaanites is radically different from the Patriarchal ideology of the Canaanites; this surely reflects radical differences between *the Dtr and Patriarchal ideologies of YHWH’s nature and purpose*. Significant contrasts between the **two ideologies of YHWH’s nature and purpose** may be summarised as follows.

Whereas *Dtr* ideology prohibits co-existence with the Canaanites, requiring not only their dispossession but their annihilation, in Genesis the land of Canaan is portrayed as a ‘*contact zone*’ where relationships between patriarchs and Canaanites can develop; they may live in *peaceable co-existence*. Thus, in the narrative of Abraham’s contacts with two Canaanite kings, Abraham displayed exemplary *respect* for both kings and for their religious traditions: essential elements for establishing *peaceable co-existence in the contact zone*. **YHWH’s approval of Abraham’s contacts with the Canaanite rulers** (surely implicit in the text) **reveals his nature and purpose**. In Jacob’s contact with Hamor and Shechem, there is no condemnation in the text of the Canaanites or of their way of life. YHWH’s approval of Jacob’s contact with Hamor and his family is implicit in the narrative of Gen. 34, and underscored in YHWH’s words to Jacob in Gen. 35:1.

We considered also YHWH’s promise to Abraham in Gen. 17:4-6 where he is assured that he will be the ancestor of *הַמּוֹן לְגוֹיִם* ‘*a host of nations*’ (17:4, 5). The terminology may reflect the so-called ‘*larger Israel*’ concept envisaged in ch. 17 (cf. vv. 23-27); this re-affirms the promise in Gen. 12:3 *כָּל מְשפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה*, which indicates that YHWH’s **purpose** is that Abraham and his descendants should be agents of his blessing to ‘all the peoples of the earth’. We may conclude that, according to Patriarchal ideology, YHWH’s **blessing** (which reveals his **nature**) is not an exclusive blessing for one people only, but is **inclusive of all the peoples of the earth** (*which includes the Canaanites*).

7.1.5 Introducing the judges (2:16-19)

As this section does not raise major issues of relevance to this study, I propose to note only some significant textual details. This is the first mention of ‘judges’ (שֹׁפְטִים) in the book of Judges, and they are mentioned (sg. or pl.) in every verse of this section. A reference in Judg. 11:27 to יהוה השֹׁפֵט ‘YHWH the Judge’ is the only other use of שֹׁפֵט as a noun. The verbal form occurs in 3:10 (of Othniel) and 4:4 (of Deborah), also in later chapters (especially chs. 10-12) that are not part of this study.

The root שֹׁפֵט means ‘to govern, exercise leadership’. In **v.16**, for the Deuteronomist(s) ‘judges’ are ‘deliverers/saviours’ (יֹשֵׁעַ), but in **v.18a**, they seem to be those through whom YHWH effects *his* deliverance. The subject of יהוה וְיֹשִׁיעֵם (‘and he delivered/saved them’) is not clear: it could be either the judge or YHWH. It certainly seems to refer to YHWH when considered in the light of **v.18b**: ‘for the LORD would be moved to pity by their groaning (כִּי־יִנָּחֵם יְהוָה מִנְּאֻקָתָם) because of those who persecuted and oppressed them’ (NRSV). The term נָאֻקָה ‘groaning’ is rare in the Bible. Its use here may reflect Exod. 2:24; 6:5 where it referred to the plight of the Israelites in Egypt. The inference may be that, as YHWH took the initiative in the past, so he is taking the initiative again to relieve them from their troubles. To me, the Exodus narrative always highlights YHWH’s *sole concern for Israel*, and not for innocents slain in Egypt or innocent inhabitants of Canaan.

The NRSV translation of יִנָּחֵם ‘moved to pity’ (cf. NIV ‘had compassion on them’) may be questioned. The niph'al of נָחַם *may* express ‘be moved to pity/have compassion’ [BDB 637], as in Judges 21:6 ‘The Israelites had compassion for Benjamin’, describing an *emotional response* to the Benjaminites’ plight. Such a response on YHWH’s part is certainly not characteristic of YHWH in the Dtr. The niph'al of נָחַם may also express ‘be sorry/rue/repent’ of one’s own doings [BDB 637]. This usage (with YHWH as subject) occurs in several contexts expressing ‘rue/regret’: e.g. YHWH regretted making Saul king (1 Sam. 15:11, 35), though YHWH does not just change his mind ‘like a mortal’ (1 Sam. 15:29); he relented of his intention to destroy the people of Jerusalem because of David’s sin (2 Sam. 24:16). In light of these examples of the use of נָחַם with YHWH as subject, the AV ‘it repented the LORD’ (cf. NEB ‘the LORD would relent’) is more true to the Hebrew text, particularly if **v.18b** refers back to **v.15**: יַד־יְהוָה הָיְתָה־בָּם לְרָעָה ‘the hand of the LORD was against them for רָעָה evil/misery/distress/injury [BDB 949]’.

The brief pericope introducing the judges ends in **v.19** with a bleak account of *failure*. The Deuteronomist(s) doubtless intended to portray the total failure of the Israelites to learn the lessons YHWH sought to teach them through his acts of judgement and through the judges he raised up; above all, they failed to remain faithful to YHWH alone. However, regarding the charge in **vv. 17, 19** of ‘following other gods’, note our observation (at the conclusion of §7.1.3.2 (1) Baal /the Baals) that the narratives in Judg. 3-16 do not support the accusation that the people worshipped ‘the gods of the peoples all around them’, and that the worship of Baal in particular is not an issue in these chapters, except in connection with Jerubbaal/Gideon in 6:25-32 (a deuteronomistic passage). *Alternative readings* of this pericope would ask whether the judges themselves may have failed to fulfil their role; or, did YHWH fail to select the right persons for the task assigned to them? YHWH’s decision to raise up judges certainly failed in the end, making the movement to monarchy essential: maybe *that* is the chief point that the Deuteronomist(s) intended to make.

7.1.6 Enemy peoples (2:20-3:6)

This section has a composite structure, containing various kinds of material:

- 2:20-23** Joshua is re-introduced (cf. **2:6-10** The death of Joshua and the elders)
- 3:1a, 3-4** contains a list of peoples who were ‘left’
- 3:1b, 2** are editorial comments
- 3:5-6** includes a different list of enemy peoples.

In §7.1.2 we observed that the *Second Preface* (2:6-3:6) is widely considered to be deuteronomistic, apart from **2:6-10**. It seems to me that, while **2:11-15** (Apostasy and Judgement) and **2:16-19** (Introducing the judges) are certainly deuteronomistic, none of the material in **2:20-3:6** is deuteronomistic, apart from editorial comments.

2:20-23 reintroduces Joshua, providing a *sequel* to the events in **2:6-10**, and giving further insights to the role of Joshua and the possession of the land. This is discussed below.

3:1a, 3-4 and **3:5-6** reflect significant details in the so-called ‘First Edition’ of the book of *Joshua* (chs. 1-12, 23-24): cf. §7.1.1 concerning the probable *dating* of the ‘First Edition’ of Joshua in the reign of Hezekiah. Note also our argument in §4.5.1 that, (apart from deuteronomistic interpolations) the writing of *the main part of Judges* (chs. 3-16) can be located in the time of Hezekiah. These issues are discussed below.

7.1.6.1 Joshua and the possession of the land (2:20-23)

The Hebrew text in this pericope is complex (cf. the detailed discussion in Lindars 1995: 109-112 of various textual problems). The key points are reasonably clear, and they all reflect passages in *Josh. 23*: the reference to *YHWH's covenant* in Judg. 2:20 reflects Josh. 23: 16; *YHWH's vow* in Judg. 2:21 reflects Josh. 23:13; the references to *Joshua's death* in vv. 21 and 23 reflect the statement attributed to Joshua in Josh. 23:14: 'I am about to go the way of all the earth'. Of particular significance is the reference in *YHWH's vow* to '*the nations that Joshua left when he died*': הגוים אשר יצב יהושע וימת. The verb יצב is used here in the sense of 'leave over', rather than 'leave, abandon, forsake' [BDB 737]. The implication is that Joshua 'handed on to others the unconquered peoples, to complete the task after his death'. This seems to be a corrective to the idealised account of possession of the land under Joshua's powerful military leadership (cf. §7.1.1).

7.1.6.2 The peoples who were left (3:1a, 3)

3:1a affirms that it was *YHWH* himself who had 'left these nations' still to be conquered. **3:3** lists the nations who were 'left': *the five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath*. This list corresponds broadly with the more detailed list in *Josh. 13:2-6*, which was identified by A. Alt as a distinct body of material inserted into the second part of Joshua (chs. 13 -22); it is independent of and considerably older than its present context (cf. Soggin 1972:11-13). We will consider below the possible date of this material.

Judg. 3:3 puts in *the prominent first place* תְּמִשֵּׁת סִרְנֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים 'the five lords of the Philistines'. סִרְנֵי means 'tyrant, lord' [BDB 710]; it is always plural, referring to the rulers of the five centres established by the Philistines in the central and southern coastal region of Canaan ca. 1200 BCE. The prominence of the Philistines among the nations who were 'left' is even more marked in *Josh. 13* which opens with 'all the regions of the Philistines' (v.2) and also names all the Philistine centres (v.3). There is a reference to 'the five lords of the Philistines', with a list of their centres, in the time of *Samuel* (1 Sam. 6:16-17). They loom large in the narratives about *David* (cf. 1 Sam. 27-31), who finally repulsed them after they attacked him on hearing of his anointing as king over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:17-25; 8:1). It seems to me that the tradition about the Philistines' role in David's travails as he established his rule explains their prominence in Judg. 3:3//Josh. 13:2-3. Space does not permit discussion of the other nations. For a concise account, cf. Lindars 1995: 114-116,

which indicates that the nations listed in Josh. 13:2-6 are associated broadly with territory traditionally connected with the *Davidic kingdom* at its most extensive.

We noted above the question of the possible date of *Josh. 13:2-6*. Some have located it in the reign of Josiah, but others place it much earlier (cf. Soggin 1972: 11-12; 151-153). I believe a convincing case can be made for the (short-lived) period of political, economic and military resurgence under the roughly contemporary reigns of Jeroboam II in Israel and Uzziah in Judah. Jeroboam II is said to have restored Israel to the northern boundary of the Davidic realm (2 Kgs 14:25; Amos 6:13-14) (cf. support in Finkelstein 2011b: 240-242). Uzziah is credited with retaking the port of Elath in the south (2 Kgs. 14:22), and possibly seizing Philistine territory (2 Chr. 26:6) (cf. R.J. Coggins 1976: 249-250; J. Gray 1977: 614-618; Millar and Hayes 2006: 352-357). Thus, for a short time the combined territories of Israel and Judah re-embraced the widest boundaries of David's realm.

If this dating is correct, it seems certain that the list of unconquered nations — whether the brief version of Jdgs. 3:3 or the more detailed version of Josh. 13:2-3 — was known in the time of Hezekiah. Did Hezekiah see himself as the 'new Joshua' (cf. §7.1.1) to whom YHWH had 'handed on' the role of completing the task 'left over' by Joshua? In §5.2.1.2 ('Alternative Reading' of Judg. 1:18) we discussed the account in 2 Kgs. 18:8 of Hezekiah 'attacking the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory'. May the underlying *motivation* for this undertaking have been his perception of himself as the 'new Joshua'? And was his ultimate *goal* to re-establish the farthest boundaries of the kingdom of David, which now lay under the domination of the Assyrian empire?

7.1.6.3 Another list of enemy peoples (3:5)

The Israelites lived among *the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites*.

Similar lists of the peoples traditionally held to have been dispossessed by the Israelites on their entry into Canaan occur eighteen times in the Bible, with some variation in number and order. The *six peoples* in Judg. 3:5 are the most frequently named; this list is found predominantly in Exodus (3:8; 3:17; 23:23; 34:11) and Joshua (9:1; 11:3; 12:8). In Deut. 7:1, 'the Girgashites' are added; the *list of seven* also occurs only in Josh. 3:10; 24:11. We will note below examples of specific references to the 'enemy peoples' in biblical narratives, giving brief accounts of how they are generally understood by commentators.

The **Canaanites** were autochthonous inhabitants of Canaan, particularly along the coastal plain and in the valleys, especially in the Jordan valley (Num. 13:29; Josh. 11:3).

The **Hittites** were an ancient people of Anatolia, ruling a large empire until ca. 1200 BCE.

The Bible locates them in the area of Hebron and Beersheba (Gen. 23; Num. 13:29).

The **Amorites** were autochthonous inhabitants of Canaan (sometimes equivalent to the Canaanites); they are described as inhabitants of the hill country (Num. 13:29; Josh. 11:3).

The **Perizzites** are known only in lists such as above; we cannot identify or locate them.

The **Hivites** occur mostly in lists; they are associated with Mount Lebanon in Judg. 3:3.

The **Jebusites** were the inhabitants of Jerusalem before it was eventually captured by David (2 Sam. 5:6-8). Note our discussions on two specific references in the Judges text to the Jebusites in Jerusalem: on Judg. 1:21, cf. §5.2.1.3; on Judg. 19:12, cf. §4.3.3.

The **Girgashites**: little is known of this people; they are mentioned in Gen. 10:16.

Note that only the Canaanites and the Amorites represent the autochthonous population. (Cf. details in Hyatt 1971: 73-74; Mayes 1979: 119-120, 182-183; Soggin 1972: 58-59)

Soggin (1995: 44) remarks that this stereotypical list was ‘probably handed down by Israel in a very early period’. Two questions arise: (1) origins of the non-autochthonous groups; (2) can we trace the tradition to a time in Israel’s story? (cf. §6.3.3.2 for discussion about the Canaanites). Recent research leads to the conclusion that the roots of ‘biblical’ Israel lie in a major displacement of peoples in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean regions towards the end of the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE), at a time of widespread upheaval following the destruction of the Hittite empire and disintegration of Mycenae (cf. Na’aman 1994c: 235-239; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 83-90; Killebrew 2005: 32-37).

Na’aman (ibid. 239-243) argues that, during Iron I (1200-1025 BCE), this large-scale migration brought ‘northern’ groups to Canaan, where they had an important role in the settlement pattern. They settled along their lines of travel: Hittites from Anatolia, in Hebron; Hivites from Cilicia, between the mountainous ranges of Hermon and Lebanon; Jebusites from the Hittite empire, in Jerusalem. The location of Girgashites from western Anatolia and the origin of the Perizzites remain as yet unknown. The groups who entered Canaan (possibly including groups of ‘Israelites’ returning from a sojourn in Egypt) gradually settled among various autochthonous groups. Na’aman (ibid. 246) observes that the model emerging from his analysis is of ‘small and larger groups of variegated ethnic and cultural background’ settling in Canaan over a long period, gradually cooperating in their new environment, and becoming part of a ‘new population’ (cf. Stager 1998: 90-93; Finkelstein and Na’aman 1994: 12-17; Killebrew ibid. 149-185; Grabbe 2007: 118-119).

We noted two questions: (1) origins of non- autochthonous groups; (2) tracing the tradition to a time in Israel's story. It seems to me that Na'aman made a good case for his answers. A further question is: Why were these peoples regarded as '*enemies*'? It is probable that 'northern outsiders' met resistance from the autochthonous population, and were 'remembered' as enemies. Lindars (1995:117) remarks that these lists were 'survivals of names from the past which continued to be used in spite of ethnic changes over a long period'. The 'list' occurs in 1 Kgs 9:20-21 (cf. §6.3.3.2); if the reference to a remnant of these peoples still left in the land reflects social attitudes in Solomon's day, it indicates that they were regarded as 'second-class citizens' who could be conscripted into slave labour (regarding dispossession of the 'Canaanites', co-existence, and forced labour cf. §5.2.2.2).

A postcolonial analysis of this text (cf. §5.2.2.3) would focus on the 'narrative world' and underlying ideology of the text. From this standpoint, the central issue in this passage is that, in common with the biblical point of view as a whole (which 'tells the story' as Israel 'remembered' it) it portrays the Israelites coming from *outside* the land of Canaan. Did the 'memory' of groups of 'Israelites' who returned from a sojourn in Egypt become the 'memory' of all Israel? In the world of the text, the Israelites are *outsiders* whose aim is to dispossess the 'Canaanites'; in effect, they are *colonisers* in Canaan; the autochthonous population are the *colonised*. According to P. van Dommelen (1997: 306) an essential mark of colonisation is 'the existence of asymmetrical socio-economic relationships of domination or exploitation between the colonizing groups and the inhabitants of the colonized region' (cf. §2.1.3): a good description of the situation portrayed in 1 Kings 9.

Finally, as both the 'First Edition' of Joshua and the writing of Judges 3-16 can be dated to the time of Hezekiah, a further question comes to mind. It seems beyond doubt that the editor(s) of the *Judges* text were familiar with the list of enemies cited in Judg. 3:5, as it is found five times in *Joshua* (3:10; 9:1; 11:3; 12:8; 24:11): did they find contemporary relevance in this list of enemies? It seems to me that the answer to that question lies in the major demographic and ethnic changes resulting from the Assyrian policy of 'population transfer' that brought foreign migrants to settle in close proximity to Judah (cf. §4.5.3.3). To Hezekiah and his contemporaries, these foreigners, recently imposed upon them as near neighbours, were 'enemies' threatening the stability and even the identity of Judah. The traditional list became a hidden code for these enemies; and their confidence that *YHWH* was on *their side* was a subversive act of resistance against the power of the Assyrians.

7.2 Major Themes in Judges 3:7-5:31

Introduction

In §7.2 we will discuss in more detail themes that were highlighted in Chapter 4 (General Introduction to Judges) and were commented on briefly when these themes occurred within the textual studies of Chapters 5 and 6, and in §7.1.

7.2.1 Kenizzites and Kenites

Cf. introductory notes about Kenizzites and Kenites in §4.2.1.1 and general observations in §5.2.1.1 about these groups in the sections concerning Judg. 1:11-15 and Judg. 1:20.

7.2.1.1 Kenizzites

In our discussion about Judg. 1:11-15 (§5.2.1.1) we observed that there is a ‘hidden’ family history behind the three named characters in the anecdote about the capture of Kiriath-sepher/Debir: Caleb, Achsah, and Othniel. Their exploits are included within the account of Judah’s conquests in southern Canaan (1:1-21), and it follows the affirmation in v.10 that ‘Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron’. However, we noted in Judg. 1:20 an alternative tradition about the capture of Hebron which contradicts the account in v.10, emphasising that ‘Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said’. We commented that in the Bible we may often discern different sources and various points of view in the text, a feature which I believe we should not try to harmonise or explain away; rather, we should recognise that internal disagreement and contradiction are integral to the Bible, and are part of the developing story of the people in its pages.

A narrative account of this alternative tradition occurs in Josh. 14:6-15, which introduces Caleb in v.6 as בְּנֵי־יִפְנֵה הַקְּנִזִּי ‘son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite’, and in v.14 it concludes: עַל־כֵּן הָיְתָה־הַחֶבְרֹון לְקַלְבִּי בְּנֵי־יִפְנֵה הַקְּנִזִּי לְנַחֲלָה ‘So Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite’. The tradition of Caleb’s seizure of Hebron is associated in Num. 13:30-33 with the reconnaissance of Canaan from Kadesh; John Gray (1967:137) suggests that this may have been a Kenizzite hero-legend. Caleb certainly is portrayed as a heroic figure in the ‘conquest’ traditions, particularly in Num. 13-14, where he is counted as a Judahite (Num. 13:6).

However, in the reference to נֶגֶב כְּלָב ‘the Negev of Caleb’ in 1 Sam. 30:14, ‘Caleb’ seems to be the name of a ‘clan’ that is clearly differentiated from ‘Judah’; this may indicate that Caleb should be considered the eponymous ancestor of the *Calebites*. Regarding possible Israelite *attitudes* to Calebites, in the narrative about David and the wife of Nabal in 1 Sam. 25 there seems to be a pejorative tone in the editorial remark at the end of v.3 that the unprepossessing Nabal was ‘a Calebite’: this may be a familiar pun on the similar-sounding word כְּלָב ‘dog’ (cf. H.W. Hertzberg 1964: 202; R.P. Gordon 1986: 182). Behind this apparent attitude to Calebites may lie *folk memory* that the Calebites (thus also the Kenizzites to which they belonged) were regarded as ‘not true Israelites’.

A non-Israelite origin of the *Calebites/Kenizzites* is indicated in Gen. 36:11,15, 42 where *Kenaz*, the ancestor of the Kenizzites, is listed as an *Edomite* leader descended from *Esau*, eventually incorporated into Judah (cf. P.K. McCarter 1980: 396). J. Blenkinsopp (1972: 18, 25, 113 nn. 18,19) maintains that the name *Kenaz* is Hurrian, suggesting that the Kenizzites were from a people who had migrated from Armenia and occupied Anatolia, later moving into Syria and Palestine (cf. J. Bright 1981: 56-66; ‘Who were the Hurrians?’, in *Archaeology* 61/4: 2008; ‘Hurrians’, topic in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: 2016 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hurrian>)). There is no space to discuss these issues, but it seems to me that the Kenizzites were probably part of the major displacement of peoples who settled among the Israelites during Iron I and were gradually absorbed by them, as discussed in §7.1.6.3 (cf. Bright *ibid.* 133-137 re. the complexity of Israel’s origins).

7.2.1.2 Kenites

As noted in §5.2.2.1, Judg. 1:16 abruptly introduces ‘Hobab the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law’ (NRSV; cf. Judg. 4:11). The bible also gives him other names with varied personal details: in Num. 10:29 he is בְּן־רְעוּאֵל הַמִּדְיָנִי ‘Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite’; in Exod. 2:18, he is called רְעוּאֵל ‘Reuel’; and he is יְתֵרוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן ‘Jethro, the priest of Midian’ in Exod. 3:1, 18:1. It is widely recognised that this variation reflects different traditions (cf. K.D Sakenfeld 1995: 64-65; Z. Farber 2015: pp 2-3, n. 2). In the bible there is some confusion between *Kenites* and *Midianites*: to explain this, a number of scholars identify the *Kenites* as a subtribe or clan of a *Midianite* coalition (cf. Bright 1960:124-125; L.E. Stager 1998: 105,111; for detailed discussion of this issue, see W.J. Dumbrell 1975).

Judg. 1:16 may reflect a tradition in *Numbers 10:29-32*, that Moses urged ‘Hobab’ to join the Israelites on their journey, promising that ‘if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that the LORD grants us’ (v.32 NJPS). *Numbers* does not indicate Hobab’s decision, but *Judg. 1:16* suggests that he went with them, as his descendants were allies of Judah. Kenites and Israelites were allies in the time of Saul: before a battle with the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:5-6), Saul warned the Kenites to leave ‘for you showed חֶסֶד to all the Israelites’. The term חֶסֶד has a range of meanings; some interpret it here as a *treaty* or *covenant*, notably F.C. Fensham (1964:52-53) who argued that 1 Sam. 15:5-6 drew on the account in *Exod. 18:1-12* of a meeting between Moses and his Midianite/Kenite father-in-law Jethro, which Fensham interpreted as a ‘covenant-making scene’. This is supported by A. Cody 1968: 154-155, 165-166; Hyatt 1971:187, 189-190; Soggin 1981:77-78.

There are indications of hostility between Israelites and Kenites in *Num. 24:21-22* which says that they were cursed by Balaam. The incident opens: וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַקֵּינִי ‘And he looked on the Kenite’; the curse begins: כִּי אִם־יִהְיֶה לְבַעַר קַיִן ‘Yet Kain is destined for burning’ (v.22, NRSV). For our present study, the significant term is קַיִן which is used as a collective singular name for the Kenites (v.22). In *Genesis 4:1*, קַיִן (‘Kain’/‘Cain’) is the name given to the first son of Adam and Eve. Some scholars see ‘Cain’ as the eponymous ancestor of the Kenites (cf. extensive lists of scholars against or for this theory in J. Day 2009: 335-336, nn. 1-2). The concept may be supported by the descriptions of Cain’s offspring Jabal and Tubal-cain in *Gen. 4*: יָבָל ‘Jabal’ is called ‘the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock’ (v.20), while תּוֹבַל־קַיִן ‘Tubal-cain’ is said to have ‘made all kinds of bronze and iron tools’ (v.22; cf. R. North 1964: 378-383).

The portrayals of Cain and his offspring seem to reflect what we ‘know’ or may surmise of Kenite *lifestyle*: Cain became a ‘wanderer on the earth’ (*Gen. 4:24*), and the Kenites were a semi-nomadic people who lived in tents (cf. *Judg. 5:24*); they are understood to have been itinerant smiths (cf. BDB 883-884): Bright (1960: 124) called them ‘travelling tinkers whose trade would have carried them far and wide’ (cf. Gray 1967: 248; Blenkinsopp 2008: 140-144; Day 2009: 342-343). The Kenites certainly seem to have been a ‘marginal’ people who (unlike the Kenizzites) appear not to have been integrated with the Israelites. (We will discuss this in §7.2.3.3) The Kenites are also considered to have been significant for the development of Yahwism among the Hebrews (see below).

7.2.1.3 Origins and development of Yahwism

According to biblical tradition Moses had a dramatic first encounter with YHWH in the wilderness region far south of the area where the Israelites settled (cf. Exod. 3:1-15). However, there is some biblical and extra-biblical evidence that YHWH already ‘resided’ in those regions and was worshipped there before he was the God of Moses and of Israel. We will indicate briefly some of the evidence, using relevant aspects of earlier discussions.

(1) *YHWH’s links with the southern arid regions*

Discoveries at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud are significant, especially inscriptions about *YHWH of Teman* יהוה תימן (cf. §7.1.3.5; we noted that תימן may denote ‘the south’). References to the southern regions occur in several ‘theophany’ poems: e.g. Teman, Mount Paran, Sinai, and Seir (cf. Hab. 3:3; Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:4-5). Seir is used almost as a synonym for Edom: e.g. in Num. 24:18; Judg. 5:4; Ezek. 35:15 (cf. J.R. Bartlett 1969: 7-9). The portrayal of YHWH’s triumphal ‘going forth’ at these locations suggests that these were sanctuaries where YHWH’s devotees would worship him (cf. Blenkinsopp 2008: 136-139).

We observed that these ancient traditions may well have preserved a *memory* of a topographical association of YHWH with the ‘deep south’ of Edom, and that it is reasonable to suggest that the inscriptions concerning *YHWH of Teman* provide extra-biblical support for a topographical link between YHWH and ‘the southern arid zones’, and to maintain that (although there is no direct evidence of an active YHWH cult at that period in Teman) it is likely that YHWH was still worshipped in that region.

(2) *Possible evidence from Egyptian texts*

Some Egyptian texts refer to a group whose name is usually transcribed as ‘Shasu’; they were a nomadic people (sometimes termed ‘bedouin’), connected mainly with southern Transjordan. Geographical areas associated with them are mentioned in the Amarna letters (ca. 1424-1350 BCE) and in texts from the reigns of Amenhotep III (ca. 1386-1349 BCE) and Ramesses II (ca. 1279-1213). Some of these areas bear names familiar to us from the Bible: e.g. ‘the land of the Shasu of *Seir*’; ‘the tribes of the Shasu of *Edom*’. Taken together these references locate the Shasu in Transjordan east of the Arabah and in the general area of Seir and Edom: note that these regions became associated with the Kenites.

There are references also to ‘the Shasu land of *Yahu*’/‘the land of Shasu-*Yhw*’. There is broad agreement that ‘Yahu’/‘Yhw’ corresponds to one of the forms of the name YHWH, and that it is associated with a region where the Shasu moved around. It is not certain

whether the deity took the name of the region or the region adopted the name of the deity. While we cannot be dogmatic, it is not impossible that the name YHWH had emerged in this region before the time of Moses (cf. Redford 1992: 269-280; Albertz 1994:51, 259-260 n. 51; Herrmann 1980:75-77, 83; Grabbe 2007:49-50; Blenkinsopp 2008:139-140).

(3) *Links between Moses and the Midianites*

Discussing the *YHWH of Teman* inscription at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, we noted the 'Kenite (or, Midianite-Kenite) hypothesis'; this holds that the Kenites were mediators of the Yahwistic cult: after his flight into Midian, Moses came to know the god YHWH (known to the Midianites) through his father-in-law (a Midianite priest). Biblical support is based largely on Exod. 2:15b-22; 3:1; 18:1-12, but it seems to rest on much speculation.

J.P. Hyatt (1955) proposed a theory that rested on biblical evidence and studies of pre-Moses religion. He discussed Albrecht Alt's monograph 'Der Gott der Väter' (1929) on the Genesis narratives about patriarchal religion. Alt argued that all the great patriarchs worshipped a 'numen' who had 'appeared' to him; the patriarch worshipped this god as his 'patron', passing on this cult to his descendants: Abraham's deity was אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם 'the god of Abraham'; Isaac's was פֶּחַד יִצְחָק 'the Fear of Isaac'; Jacob's, אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב 'the Mighty One of Jacob' (Alt ET 1966: 3-10, 45-66; cf. von Rad 1973:6-11). Accepting Alt's basic premise, Hyatt observed that the phrase 'the god of my (thy) father' occurs three times in narratives about Moses: Exod. 3:6; 15:2; 18:4. On the basis of these texts and Alt's theory, he conjectured that YHWH was the patron deity of an ancestor of Moses, possibly through his mother whose name 'Jochebed' (Exod. 6:20) contains a short form of 'YHWH'. He also suggested that Moses' family had entered Egypt from Midian, which would account for his flight to Midian and the association of Midianites and Hebrews. When Moses returned to Egypt, YHWH was already known at least to his own clan. This seems to me a fairly reasonable interpretation of patriarchal religion and its development.

(4) *Wider context of the Moses/Jethro narratives*

Texts in Exodus associating Moses with Jethro (2:15b-22, 3:1; 18:1-12) are often discussed in isolation from the book as a whole, but should be viewed within the wider narrative, as Jethro appeared at critical junctures in the Exodus 'story'. **Exod. 2:15b-22** is a *prelude* to the action in **3:1-6** which brings Moses, the former fugitive, to a confrontation with YHWH. Keeping Jethro's flock, he reached Horeb where (out of a burning bush) YHWH revealed himself. The subsequent narrative (**3:7-12, 16-17**) is in three parts:

vv. 7-8: YHWH declares that, knowing his people's suffering, he is about to deliver them;
 vv. 9-12: seeing his people's oppression, YHWH commissions Moses to bring them out;
 vv. 16-17: Moses must summon the Israelite elders to hear a special message from YHWH.

The Hebrew terminology used in this narrative to describe the 'Exodus' indicates that it is a Dtr redaction: the העלה **formula** (that is associated with *coming to the land*) occurs in **vv. 8** and **17**; the הוציא **formula** (which emphasises *liberation from captivity*) occurs in **vv. 10, 11, and 12**; cf. 18:1. In §6.3.1.5 we noted that the העלה **formula** was earlier than the הוציא **formula**, used in relatively late texts; the motif of *oppression in Egypt* seems to have been developed by the deuteronomists. Other motifs also indicate Dtr redaction: in **vv. 8** and **17**, description of the land as זבת חלב ודבש (cf. Deut. 6:3; 11:9 etc.); in **vv. 8** and **17**, the listing of indigenous peoples (regarding the same list, cf. §7.1.6.3); and in **vv. 16-17**, the ancestral promise of land (cf. §6.3.2 'The land I had sworn to your fathers').

In **Exod. 18** Jethro renewed contact with Moses, rejoicing 'for all the good that YHWH had done to Israel' (**vv.1-12**). (In §7.2.1.2 we noted F.C. Fensham's widely-supported interpretation of this meeting as a 'covenant-making scene'.) Jethro then advised Moses to establish a comprehensive judicial system (**vv. 13-27**). Many scholars have remarked that this system would be relevant during the monarchy, but not for wilderness living (cf. Hyatt 1971:192-194; Childs 1974:329-332; *ibid.* 1979:170-174; Blenkinsopp 1992: 171-173).

In the Exodus 'story', **ch.18** must refer back to **Exod. 4:18-23** which told how Jethro sent Moses back to Egypt with his blessing, לך לְשָׁלוֹם. In **Exod. 18:13-27**, he is said to have advised Moses for the crucial next stage of his journey. This passage serves also as a *prelude* to **ch.19** (The journey to Sinai) and **ch.20** (The giving of the Law). It is important to recognise significant **Dtr redaction** in both chapters. **Exod. 19:3b-8** is widely regarded as Dtr: e.g. סִגְלָה 'a treasured possession' (**19:5**; cf. Deut. 7:6), and גוֹי קְדוֹשׁ 'a holy nation' (**19:6** = Deut. 7:6 עם קְדוֹשׁ 'a holy people'); see our comments in §7.1.4.3 on **Deut.7:6-10**. Note in **Exod. 20:5**: אֲנִכִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא 'I YHWH your God am a jealous God' (cf. §7.1.4.1). On Dtr redaction in **Exod. 20:1-17**, see Hyatt 1971:207-217.

The above brief survey of the Moses/Jethro narratives highlights *the development of Yahwism* over many centuries, especially through Dtr (and later, Priestly) influence.

7.2.2 Responses to Oppression

Introduction

In §4.4.1: ‘The View of the Enemy’, we noted that Hebrew texts display a view of the ‘enemy’ largely similar to that found in Egyptian and Assyrian accounts. The ‘enemy’ was arrogant, cowardly, vain and boastful; and as the ‘enemy’ was ‘evil’ there was good reason to annihilate him, figuratively if not literally (Younger 1990:177-185). Some Judges texts reflect similar representations of Israel’s ‘enemies’: e.g. Adoni-bezek of Bezek (1:4-7), Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim (3:8-10), and Eglon of Moab (3:12-30). In this section, we consider three different kinds of response made by Israel to oppression under various circumstances, illustrated in the narratives about each of these ‘enemies’ in turn.

7.2.2.1 Humiliation of defeated foreign rulers:

We consider here the treatment of Adoni-bezek, a Canaanite king (1: 4-7), after his defeat by the Judahites. In §5.2.1.1 we noted without comment that, after his flight and the Judahites’ pursuit and subsequent treatment of him (v.6), the text presents them as agents of God’s just judgement, with which Adoni-bezek concurs, as he himself had taken the same action against many other kings (v.7). He certainly demonstrated the characterisation of the ‘Enemy’ as ‘arrogant, cowardly, vain and boastful’.

We now discuss the action taken against this defeated king: they ‘*cut off his thumbs and big toes*’. Commentators have interpreted this in several ways. Gray (1967: 247) remarked that cutting off the thumbs was a practical disablement for military service. Erika Bleibtreu (1991:56-57) and Fabrice De Backer (2009: 20, 28) give extensive evidence of cutting off enemies’ hands and feet in Neo-Assyria, as preserved in inscriptions and pictures; this was performed almost solely in association with military campaigns and battles. The intention in part was to incapacitate the victims and frighten anyone who might dare to contemplate resistance; it was also a way of ensuring the payment of any tribute that was demanded of them. De Backer (ibid. 38) maintained that the mutilation of enemies was believed to demonstrate the superior power of Assur and the inability of enemy deities to protect their followers. It seems clear that the Israelites believed their actions demonstrated the superior power of YHWH and the inability of ‘other gods’ to protect their followers.

Tracy Lemos (2006: 225-226) discusses in some detail the mutilation of enemies’ bodies: a common military practice throughout the ANE, as illustrated in Mesopotamian

and Egyptian art and attested in the Hebrew Bible. She argues that it was not random sadistic aggression but functioned in several important ways; for example, it signalled a newly established power dynamic between aggressor and victim, partly through the shame brought upon the victim and his community. We certainly may see the action taken by the Judahites (Judg. 1:6) as claiming a new power dynamic between themselves and the Canaanites. We do not have any information about Adoni-bezek's community, but probably we may assume they felt shame had been brought upon them.

A sacral interpretation of the severing of *thumbs and big toes* was mentioned briefly by Gray (ibid. 247); this idea was developed by E.J. Hamlin (1990:147) regarding the actions of the Judahites (v.6) and the former actions of Adoni-bezek (v.7). It draws attention to the consecration ceremony for priests whose thumbs and big toes were daubed with sacrificial blood (Exod. 29:20; Lev. 8:23) for performing their duties in the offering of sacrifices and standing in the holy place. Canaanite legends discovered at Ras Shamra indicate that Canaanite kings were also *priests* (cf. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18); thus, the severing of the thumbs and big toes of the Canaanite kings invalidated their consecration as kings.

Lemos (ibid. 237) suggested a striking interpretation of Adoni-bezek's treatment of his enemies: he boasted that as he had severed their thumbs and big toes, they were forced to pick up scraps under his table like dogs at their master's feet hoping for a morsel to be thrown to them. Thumbs and big toes being the part of the body that most distinguishes humans from animals he had relegated his enemies to a subhuman status. Compare our observation in §7.1.4.2 that YHWH apparently viewed Other peoples as disposable, with no requirements or *needs* of their own deserving attention: essentially, he de-humanised them. The Judahites doubtless assumed YHWH would approve of their actions in de-humanising Adoni-bezek, because they 'knew' that was YHWH's view of their enemies.

7.2.2.2 Disparaging portrayal of dominant foreign rulers

The story of 'Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram-naharaim' in 3:7-11 demonstrates this form of response to oppression. 'Standard' commentaries find various difficulties in this passage, most of which reach no satisfactory conclusion, though they agree on some points. There is wide agreement that 'Cushan-rishathaim' (literally 'Cushan of double-wickedness') is a distortion intended to ridicule the oppressor. There is little agreement about 'Aram-naharaim': some emend the reading 'Aram' to 'Edom', but others disagree

(cf. Gray 1967:213-215; A.C. Cundall 1968:72-74; Martin 1975:41-44; Soggin 1981:45-47; Schneider 2000:38-43; Webb 2012:158-161). As shown in these commentaries, many theories have been proposed for the ‘historical circumstances’ of this episode, but there is no consensus. Some consider it a Dtr construction intended to provide *Judah* with its own ‘deliverer-judge’, as all the other ‘deliverer-judges’ were of *Northern* provenance.

It seems to me that, to interpret this narrative satisfactorily, we should be concerned not with the ‘actual history’ behind the story but with the history behind the *telling of this tale*. As the writing of Judges 3-16 has been dated to the time of Hezekiah (a period when Judah faced a particularly critical situation after the demise of Israel; cf. §4.5.3.2) it is unlikely that the scribes would be concerned about a ‘deliverer-judge’ for *Judah* just to be on a par with the *fallen* Northern kingdom. A postcolonial reading would give due weight to identifying the likely stage in Judah’s fraught relationship with Assyria, when details in this tale (whatever its original provenance) would have contemporary relevance, providing Judah with a secret code for a hidden act of defiance against the power of the Assyrians.

There are geo-historical grounds for suggesting that אַרְם נַהְרַיִם ‘Aram-naharaim’ might be a cipher for *Assyria*. Aram-naharaim was the name for the area around Harran in Upper Mesopotamia (identical with Paddan-aram in the Bible). Territorially, it was ‘next door’ to Assyria; furthermore, from the mid-8th to the late 7th century, the ancient city of Harran was a major *Assyrian* city, controlling the point where the road from Damascus joins the highway between Nineveh and Carchemish (information from Britannica.com). Thus, in Hezekiah’s time this strategic city and its region were under Assyrian control.

The meaning of the name כּוּשָׁן רִישָׁתַיִם ‘Cushan-rishathaim’ (‘Cushan of double-wickedness’) is much-debated: particularly the term כּוּשָׁן as demonstrated in the above commentaries. After listing various theories, Webb (ibid. 159) concludes: ‘The fact is that the identity of the tyrant remains hidden from us’. From the perspective of a postcolonial reading, the identity is not significant, but it is clear that to Hezekiah’s contemporaries, the name would evoke the picture of a ‘tyrant’: an appropriate cipher for the *Assyrian king*.

‘Othniel’ was already a known character from the story of his exploits in Judg. 1:13, which portrayed him as a man of undoubted nobility of character and as a victorious warrior who defeats the enemy (cf. §5.2.1.1). After the Assyrians mysteriously failed to take Jerusalem in 701 BCE, at least for a time—despite the devastation wrought by the forces of Sennacherib (cf. §4.5.3.2)—Hezekiah would appear to be ‘a victorious warrior’. Othniel would therefore serve as an appropriate cipher for *Hezekiah* in this hidden act of

defiance against the mighty Sennacherib who had boasted in his own account of the siege: ‘Himself [Hezekiah] I shut up as a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage’ (see ANET 287-88, quoted in Miller and Hayes 2006:418-419; cf. Bleibtreu *ibid.* 54, 58). There was a relatively short period when Hezekiah and his people probably felt euphoric over the miraculous deliverance that had been wrought by divine intervention. It seems not unreasonable to suggest that it may have been during this time of hope that Hezekiah’s scribes re-wrote an old story involving Othniel (Soggin 1981:45 maintains that we find in Judg. 3:8b-9 a brief remnant of what seems to have been the original narrative).

7.2.2.3 The role of deviousness or trickery

Under this rubric we consider the Ehud/Eglon narrative in Judg. 3:12-30. To generations of biblical interpreters, it concerned *an historical event* during early pre-monarchical Israel; the twentieth century saw an emphasis on the study of *the Bible as literature* (for a literary approach to this text, cf. R. Alter 1981:38-41; Y. Amit 1989:97-123). Literary analyses use devices such as name symbolism, e.g. reading *sacrificial* overtones in Eglon’s name as ‘a play on *’egel* calf’: he turns out to be ‘a fatted calf readied for slaughter’ (Alter *ibid.* 39; Amit *ibid.* 110-11). Alter (*ibid.* 39) reads ‘deliberate *sexual nuance*’ in the thrust of the dagger and the opening/closing of doors, and *scatological humor* in the bathroom incident (*ibid.* 40). For an evaluation of historical and literary approaches, cf. M. Brettler 1991.

Aspects of the ‘historical’ interpretation will be questioned below. The literary approach highlights interesting details, but it is not clear whether such devices would have been perceived in ancient Israel, and we must ask what *purpose* these devices served: the extent and vividness of such details in the narrative suggest that it may have served a mocking or pejorative function. Neither the ‘historical’ accounts nor the narrative approaches consider the significance of the emphasis that Eglon was king of *Moab in particular* (cf. repetition: ‘king of *Moab*’ in vv. 12, 14, 15, 17; ‘*Moabites*’ and ‘*Moab*’ in vv. 28, 29, 30). Nor do they contextualise the narrative in the life of ancient Israel. It seems to me the Ehud/Eglon story should be read in the context of Israelite-Moabite relations so far as we know them.

On the nature and provenance of sources for Judges (especially 3:12-16:31), we noted in §4.6.2 that much of the content consists of ‘folk stories’ that originated mainly from the Northern Kingdom, possibly collected in sanctuaries such as Gilgal (note the reference in 3:19). Among northerners who began migrating to Judah after the first Assyrian invasion of Israel in 732 BCE, there may have been some who had officiated at the sanctuaries and

brought their treasured traditions (oral and written). These stories may provide us with some perception of how generations of storytellers and their hearers/readers understood earlier times, and also how stories were interpreted for contemporary situations.

The Ehud/Eglon story (as we now have it) climaxes at a battle in which (through clever trickery) the ‘underdog’ Israelites defeated their powerful oppressors, the Moabites. This account indicates how Dtr editors understood pre-monarchical ‘history’, but histories of *Israel* and *Moab* based on archaeological research indicate that it is anachronistic to set this story in the ‘judges period’. Israel and Moab, along with Ammon and Aram-Damascus, emerged as ‘states’ ruled by a single king in the early 9th century BCE, Judah and Edom about a century and a half later (cf. E. Bloch-Smith and B.A. Nakhai 1995:105-115; Finkelstein 1999:42-48; Bruce Routledge 2004: 136-141; Grabbe 2007:93-98). Note that in §6.2.2 we considered how Judahite eyes in Hezekiah’s time may have read the *Gilgal* reference in light of their current situation, and cf. §5.2.1.3 ‘*Giving a voice to Benjamin*’.

Routledge (ibid. 42) observed that: ‘Moab is portrayed relatively consistently across the chronologically disparate units of the canonical text of the Bible.’ The dominant portrait of *Israelite-Moabite* relationships is *hostility* (cf. Num. 21:29, 24:17; Deut. 23:3-4; 2 Sam. 8:2; 2 Kgs 3:4-27); the prophets charged Moab with pride and contempt for Israel/Judah (e.g. Isa. 16:6; Jer. 48:27; Ezek. 25:8; Zeph. 2:10; cf. P. Machinist 1991:428-429). There are a few indications of *positive* attitudes: cf. Deut. 2:9; 1 Sam. 22:3-4; the book of Ruth. We must ask whether Dtr ‘historians’ were *silent* about other situations where relationships deviated from their hostile stance: in §2.2.4 we noted that historians may suppress or ‘silence’ memories inconvenient for their purposes (cf. §4.4.3.2). Brettler (1995: 87) holds that traditions indicative of a positive attitude towards Moabites circulated in ancient Israel, and that the Ehud-Eglon story was intended to *combat* such views.

Sexual issues are found in Num. 25:1-9; Gen. 19:30-38 ‘explains’ the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites and relation to the Israelites in the birth of Moab and Ammon after Lot’s incestuous relationship with his daughters. The story probably expressed Israelite/Judahite contempt for Moab (cf. Finkelstein & Silberman 2001:38-42); however, some suggest an older Moabite-Ammonite tradition lies behind it, lauding their forebears as the survivors of a great disaster, and the heroism of their ancestral mothers (cf. G. von Rad 1972: 223- 224; B. Vawter 1977: 242-243; R. Davidson 1979: 78-79). A Moabite-Ammonite tradition would offer an insight into the Others’ own perception of their past.

Extra-biblical evidence about Moabite/Israelite relations *from the Moabite perspective* is found in the *Moabite/Mesha Inscription* (hereafter *MI*), dated ca. 850-840 BCE. With some variations, the story told on *MI* echoes the story in 2 Kgs 3:4-27 (cf. Herrmann 1975:215-219; Miller & Hayes 2006:291-306; Routledge *ibid.* 133-153). *MI* extols the achievements of ‘Mesha king of Moab’, boasting that he prevailed over ‘[Omri] king of Israel who oppressed Moab for forty years’; ‘[the god] Chemosh returned the land of Moab taken by the house of Omri’. *MI* gloats that Mesha went on to seize Israelite strongholds: ‘Yahaz, to annex it to Dibon [Mesha’s capital]’ and ‘Ataroth, expanding his rule to the Plain of Madaba’. The events described in *MI* fixed the northern border of Moab for the remainder of the Iron Age (cf. Finkelstein & Silberman *ibid.* 201; Finkelstein 2013:125). There seem to be no grounds for questioning *MI*’s claims of Omride oppression over Moab and Moabite advances into Israelite territory: note that the Bible is ‘silent’ on both issues.

The histories of Israel and Moab outlined above do not indicate any period at which a ‘king of Moab’ could have dominated Israel for eighteen years as claimed in Judg. 3:14. However, Routledge (*ibid.* 47) maintains that ‘both the consistency of the Bible’s oppositional stance to Moab and its reflection in the independent witness of the Mesha Inscription make it reasonable to take the Bible’s theme of conflict with Moab as reflecting an actual Iron Age social context.’ It seems not impossible that the social context from which the Ehud/Eglon story emerged was the period when the Moabites under Mesha dominated Israel: was the ‘trickster’ story a response to the gloating of the enemy Israel had formerly dominated? The use of ‘trickery’ may indicate feelings of both hurt pride and insecurity. Remarking on the prevalence of ‘trickery’ stories in the Bible, O. Horn Prouser (1994:15-16) observed that Israel was generally the weaker party; ‘clever trickster’ stories allowed the Israelites to feel that they would prevail nevertheless (cf. Niditch 1987: xi-xv).

We asked what *purpose* literary devices served. The answer may lie in ‘a strategy of *Othering* discourse’ in Israel regarding ‘the proximate other’—more dangerous than the Other who is ‘far’ (cf. J.Z. Smith 1985:15; M.G. Brett 1996a:10; J.E. McKinley 2004: 22). Routledge (*ibid.* 42-44) uses the terms ‘familiar Other’ (which included Moabites) and ‘foreign Other’: the danger of the ‘familiar Other’ being *assimilation*. Archaeological surveys revealed that *Iron I* Israelite and Moabite villages led an almost identical way of life (cf. Finkelstein & Silberman *ibid.* 119). This being the case, storytelling (as in Gen. 19:30-38; Judg. 3:12-30) would serve as an ‘Othering’ device to establish boundaries.

7.2.3 Women in Judges 1-5

Introduction

The book of Judges opens on a warlike note: *After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD, 'Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?'* (Judg. 1:1). Judges thereafter recounts wars of conquest and occupation (1:2-3:6), wars of liberation (3:7-16:31), civil war (chs 19-21), and tribal feuds; there are also individual acts of violence (e.g. Adoni-bezek in ch.1; Eglon in ch.3). Judges is a violent book, and the lives of *women* are interwoven with violence and wars. In this section we focus on **women in Judges 1-5** who faced various forms of violence, noting that later chapters undoubtedly tell what seem to be ever-more terrible tales of terror against women — not least in chs 19-21 (cf. our discussion of these chs in §5.2.1.3).

7.2.3.1 Achsah (Judges: 1:11-15)

On general *textual issues* that arise in Judg. 1:11-15 see §5.2.1.1, and on various issues raised by the *identity* of Caleb, Achsah and Othniel as *Kenizzites* or *Calebites* see §7.2.1.1.

The narrative in Judg. 1:11-15 recounts how the Judahite leader Caleb, setting out to make war against the inhabitants of Kiriath-sepher/Debir (v.11), declared to his warriors that he would give his 'daughter Achsah as wife' to whoever successfully attacked the city (v.12). The story is thus set on a battlefield, an arena generally considered to be a *male* preserve (cf. S. Ackerman 1998:1). Achsah's role in the battle was to provide the warriors with an inducement to strive for victory, in light of Caleb's promise to give his 'daughter Achsah as wife' to the successful warrior, *whoever* he might be. Fortunately for Achsah, Caleb's nephew Othniel took the city, so Caleb duly 'gave him his daughter Achsah as wife' (v.13). Caleb's repetition of his daughter's *name* (which meant 'bangle' or 'anklet') may indicate that she was really 'precious' to him; but she was used as 'the collateral for a piece of Canaanite real estate' (cf. D.N. Fewell 2007:127). However, Achsah as *wife* proved to be a practical woman, and assertive towards both husband and father; in the end she could claim land ownership, at least to some degree (vv. 14-15) (cf. Ackerman *ibid.* 2).

This narrative might be read as a 'father-daughter tale', illustrative of the dominantly androcentric world-view of the Bible, in which women were assigned to a subordinate and marginal role in the Israelite community. The patriarchal ethos is reflected throughout the

Bible, in its legal texts and narratives, prophetic texts, poetry, and wisdom literature. For example, in the Pentateuchal laws about vows, women were under their father's authority before marriage (Num. 30:3-5) and under their husband's authority after marriage (Num. 30:6-15) (cf. E.W. Davies 2003:1-3). Many texts (e.g. Judg. 3:6) underline the rights of fathers to 'take/give' daughters in marriage. A daughter was considered her father's possession, as seen in Caleb's decision to 'give' his daughter as wife to whoever met his terms; there is no indication in the text that he even forewarned Achsah. Other narratives show that a proposed marriage often entailed negotiation and financial arrangements between the woman's father and the prospective groom's father: cf. Gen. 34:11-12, in the narrative about Jacob, Hamor, Shechem, and Dinah, as discussed in §6.3.3.3.

However, when the text of Judg. 1:11-15 is deconstructed, its contradictions become apparent. While Achsah as daughter seemed subject to her father's wishes, the ideology of male domination breaks down when Achsah emerges as a capable and independent woman, assertive towards husband and father, finally holding land she could claim to own. When the narrative about Jacob's contact with Hamor and Shechem is deconstructed, the male domination ideology breaks down when *Dinah* (in defiance especially of her domineering brothers) chose to live in the house of Hamor and Shechem, returning to her father's house only by force after her brothers had killed her husband and father-in-law. Throughout the sorry tale the patriarch Jacob is revealed to be a weak and passive man. Such texts indicate that in spite of the Bible's dominantly androcentric world-view, there is a tradition within the Bible that resists its patriarchal agenda. Cf. the argument of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1995:19-20) that a critical hermeneutics of remembrance reclaims the 'subversive memory' of women's past struggles against patriarchal domination.

7.2.3.2 Deborah (Judges 4 & 5)

In these chapters we are told of a decisive battle fought by Israelite forces against a Canaanite army led by Sisera at the Wadi Kishon (4:7, 13; 5:21; cf. Ps. 83:9) after cruel oppression for twenty years by 'King Jabin of Canaan'. The story is told in two forms: a prose account (ch. 4) and a poetic description (ch. 5), the two versions varying in a number of details which we will not discuss here (they may be found in any Bible commentary); nor do I propose to discuss historical issues: for a concise analysis see A.D.H. Mayes 1969. For the purposes of our consideration of *Deborah*, I find the approach of Barnabas Lindars (1983:159) useful: he sees the two chapters as independent versions of a much treasured

story long held in Israelite memory, retold in the two literary versions now available to us, behind both of which lies oral tradition. He considers it well-nigh impossible to tell the story without drawing on *both* accounts, as each has gaps which the other can fill.

Within the overall focus of §7.2.3 on how *violence and wars* affected the lives of *women in Judg. 1-5*, our study of *Deborah* will be primarily a literary one. **Judges 4** opens with a *Dtr introduction* (vv.1-3); the main action begins at v.2: ‘YHWH sold them into the hand of **Jabin king of Canaan** who reigned in Hazor’. The events told in vv.4-22 lead to a *Dtr conclusion* (vv. 23-24): ‘On that day God subdued **Jabin king of Canaan** before the Israelites. The hand of the Israelites bore harder and harder on **Jabin king of Canaan** until they destroyed **Jabin king of Canaan**’. Note the emphasis on ‘Jabin king of Canaan’; however, as Canaanite city-states never formed a single political entity, there was no ‘king of Canaan’. Soggin (1981:63) suggests that the figure of Jabin, associated with Hazor, may have remained alive in folk memory for a long time after its destruction (cf. Josh. 11:1-14).

The basic issue in chs.4 & 5 is Israel’s **struggles against the Canaanites** whose ‘iron chariots’ (4:3; cf. 1:19; see also 5:28) symbolised Israel’s marginal status vis-à-vis the far more powerful Canaanites. (‘Canaan’ is mentioned again in Judges only in 5:19 and 21:12; cf. §1.1 on references to ‘Canaan/Canaanites’ in the Bible.) Noting that Judges *opened* with the words: ‘After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD, Who shall go up first for us **against the Canaanites to fight against them?**’, we may see **Judg. 1:1** and **4:23-24** as a literary *inclusio*—with an interlude in 3:7-30 telling of deliverance from oppressors by Othniel and Ehud. From the point of view of Israel’s ‘historians’, the **long fight against the Canaanites** from the time of Joshua reached a **triumphant end** in the time of Deborah. (In chs.6-19 their focus was on invaders such as Midianites, Ammonites and Philistines: cf. **4:31**.) It is important for interpretation of *Deborah* to note that her story is told within the account of Israel’s momentous **final struggle against the Canaanites**.

Deborah appears to have been introduced into the narrative very abruptly in **4:4**:

וְדִבּוֹרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אֵשֶׁת לַפִּיֹדוֹת הָיָא שֹׁפֵטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵת הַהִיא

‘Deborah a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.’

(I am not persuaded by any of the various amendments to the phrase ‘wife of Lappidoth’.) Influenced no doubt by the preceding stories about ‘judges’ who acted as ‘deliverers’, many commentators describe Deborah as a ‘judge’ and ‘deliverer’: e.g. A.E. Cundall (1968: 82) introduces her as ‘the saviour of her people and the only woman in the distinguished company of the judges’, with little recognition of her role as ‘a prophetess’.

The description of Deborah as a ‘judge’ rests on **4:4b** ‘she was *judging* (הִשְׁפִּיטָה) Israel at that time (NRSV)’, and **4:5b** ‘the Israelites came up to her *for judgment* (לְמִשְׁפָּט)’. The term used in **4:4b** does not require a judicial sense, but may mean ‘govern/lead’ (the context indicates it has this meaning here); note also the vocalisation in **4:5b**: literally ‘for *the* judgment’, suggesting that it did not refer to judicial settling of local disputes but to a specific issue for which the people sought *oracular guidance* from YHWH through Deborah in her role as אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה (cf. Younger 2002:140). In light of the fact that ‘at that time’ Israel confronted a major crisis in its struggle against the Canaanites, this seems a more likely scenario than seeking to settle local disputes (cf. Block 1999:196-197).

J.S. Ackerman (1975:11) pointed to the situation during the monarchy in Israel when an appeal was made to the king for help: the term מִשְׁפָּט referred to the *pronouncement* of the king’s decision on *the action he would take*. In **4:6a**, after the people’s appeal to Deborah, *she took action*, summoning Barak and delivering a message (**vv.6b-7**) in the form of an *oracle* (this begins with a call to the person addressed and ends with an announcement of certain victory: cf. Soggin 1981:72-73). She tells Barak: ‘YHWH commands you to muster a great army to confront Jabin’s commander Sisera; he will give him into your hand.’ This is surely *YHWH’s response* to Israel’s cry אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (4:3a). (Deborah did *not* enter the storyline ‘out of the blue’: at all times YHWH was directing events!)

Soggin (ibid. 71) comments that from the outset (**vv.4-5**) the text has presented Deborah ‘as a person of paramount importance [and] Barak...clearly seems inferior to her’. His reaction to the oracle in **v.8** (‘If you go with me, I will go, but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go’) is marked by lack of enthusiasm and reticence (ibid. 73). The narrative does not indicate a motive for his response. Some interpreters see it as a mark of cowardice (cf. Lindars 1983:164); Block (1999:199) argues that ‘at a deeper level the objection reflects recognition of Deborah’s status. The request to be accompanied by the prophet is a plea for the presence of God.’ Deborah’s response to go with him sounds rather irked (**v.9**) and she issues a further prophecy: that the *glory* will not be his as YHWH will hand Sisera over to a *woman*. (The ironic twist in the tale is that the woman will not be Deborah, as the reader may assume, but Jael whom we will discuss in §7.2.3.3.) Barak calls his troops to Kadesh and is accompanied by Deborah (**v.10**), who issues the call to commence battle (**v.14a**). Although Barak goes on to win a notable victory, ‘his insistence that Deborah accompany him instantly diminishes his heroic stature’ (Younger 2002: 142).

Deborah's primacy over Barak is emphasised in **Judges 5**. He is mentioned three times (in **vv.1, 12** and **15**), always in association with Deborah. In **v.1** Deborah (her name is cited first) and Barak sing the Israelites' victory song, but the verb שָׁר is in 3rd-pers. *feminine sing.* (וַתִּשֶׁר). In **vv.12** and **15** Deborah's name occurs in the first line of each verse while Barak's name comes second. In **v.12** Deborah receives the divine call to 'break into song' (i.e. sound the reveille); Barak is instructed to take captives in the battle. But **v.7** is even more indicative of Deborah's status; the text is difficult but it seems to say that Canaanite oppression ended when Deborah 'arose as a mother in Israel' (cf. Ackerman 1998: 27-47). The text does not indicate what being 'a mother in Israel' might mean in practice; Lindars (1997:168) suggests that it probably indicates that Deborah was 'one whose act preserves the population of the nation'. Note that Barak is not mentioned at all in **v.7**!

P.C. Craigie (1978) draws parallels between the 'Song of Deborah' and the Ugaritic myth of 'Anath or 'Anat (cf. our comments on 'Anath in §7.1.3.1, §7.1.3.2, part (2): The 'Aštaroth). The name 'Anath occurs in **Judg. 5:6a** in the reference to שִׁמְגַר בֶּן-עֲנַת 'Shamgar son of 'Anath'. Craigie (ibid. 375-378) considers there are good grounds for believing that the reputation of the warlike goddess 'Anath was well-known to the northern tribes who are listed in the Song of Deborah. He sees general similarity between the warrior role of 'Anath in the heavens and that of Deborah in the Canaanite war, and also similarity between Barak and the male warrior in the Ugaritic myth who *served* 'Anath. Craigie's use of such parallels between Ugaritic myth and biblical texts is endorsed in Soggin 1981:76. It certainly seems to me to support the image in **Judg. 5** concerning the role of Deborah herself and the relative position that pertained between her and Barak.

It is notable that the description of the battle in **4:14b-16** does not mention Deborah, nor is there any further reference to her in **ch. 4**. It is even more remarkable that this strong and influential woman was 'forgotten' in later tradition, while Barak was 'remembered' and lauded. In 1 Sam. 12:11, Samuel reminded the people that YHWH sent Jerubbaal and Barak*, Jephthah and Samson to rescue them from their enemies [**amended reading*]; see also Heb. 11:32 (cf. J.C. Exum 1985:84-85; J.A. Hackett 1985:27-28; S. Ackerman 1998:30; G.A. Yee 2007:2-3). It seems to me that this is an example of how biblical 'authors' continually fostered the ideology of male domination by 'marginalizing women and minimizing their role in the events which they recorded' (E.W. Davies 2003:60-64).

7.2.3.3 Jael

We noted above that the fundamental issue in chs.4 & 5 was Israel's long struggle against the Canaanites, faced with whose superior power and control Israel's status was marginal. For interpretation of *Deborah's varied role* it is important to recognise that her story is integral to the account of *Israel's final victory* over the Canaanites. Having announced YHWH's call to Barak, Deborah accompanied him when he led his troops to Kadesh. She issued the command to commence the battle (4:14); the description of the battle itself does not mention Deborah, nor is there further reference to her in ch.4. In 4:15-16 it is said that YHWH caused the complete rout of Sisera's forces, pursued by Barak, and annihilated.

Jael enters the narrative at the juncture where Deborah left the scene; it may be said that narratively Jael *continued* (and *successfully completed*) the campaign Deborah *commenced* against the Canaanites. A seemingly intrusive aside in **4:11** introduces הֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי 'Heber the Kenite', a descendant of Moses' father-in-law: therefore related by marriage to the Israelites. (Re. use of the term קַיִן 'Qayin' and background about the *Kenites*, cf. §7.2.1.2.) The 'aside' sets the scene for Jael to enter (**4:17**); she is described as 'wife of Heber the Kenite'. The phrase 'Heber the Kenite' occurs in 4:11, twice in 4:17, and in **Judg. 5:24**:

תְּבָרַךְ מִנְּשִׂיִם יָעַל 'Most blessed of women be Jael,
אִשְׁתֵּי הַחֵבֶר הַקֵּינִי the wife of Heber the Kenite
מִנְּשִׂיִם בְּאֹהֶל תְּבָרַךְ of tent-dwelling women most blessed.' (NRSV)

Some commentators argue that the second line of **Judg. 5:24** calls Jael 'a woman of the *Kenite community*' (cf. Halpern 1983c: 388 n.45, 393 n.56; Soggin 1981: 65-66, 74-75; Ackerman 1998:99; *ibid.* 2000:37-38). They follow the argument of Abraham Malamat (1962: 144-146) who pointed to the term *hibrum* in texts from the city of Mari that described a 'bonded-together tribal unit'; to him this suggested that חֵבֶר, the Hebrew cognate of *hibrum*, should be translated as a common noun, rather than a proper name. Halpern noted similar usage of חֵבֶר in Hos. 6:9 כְּחֵבֶר כֹּהֲנִים 'a band of priests'. He accepts that either translation might apply in Judg. 5:24 but argues convincingly that in 4:11 and 4:17 it *must* mean that Jael is 'the wife of Heber the Kenite' (*ibid.* 393-396).

Without explanation **4:11** opens with the remark that 'Heber the Kenite had separated from the [other] Kenites'; the verse concludes with information about the *location* of his encampment: וַיִּטֵּא אֹהֶלוֹ עַד-אֵלֶּיךָ בְּצִעְנַנִּים אֲשֶׁר אֶת-קִדְשׁ 'He pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaananim* near Kedesh' [*Qere reading]. The text uses the idiom of Heber *stretching out*

his tent (נָצְדָה עַד ‘stretch out as far as’), to emphasise the *remoteness* of this location. It seems to have been some distance from the battle scene (4:15-16) but near enough for Sisera, fleeing from the battle, to reach ‘the tent of Jael’. He probably felt safe going to Heber’s camp: כִּי שָׁלוֹם בֵּין יָבִין מֶלֶךְ־הַחֲצוֹר וּבֵין בֵּית הַקֶּר הַקֵּינִי ‘for there was peace between King Jabin of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite’ (NRSV) (4:17).

Heber had moved near Canaanite territory, and (although affiliated with the Israelites) he had made some ‘friendship agreement’ with the Canaanite king, Israel’s great enemy. Halpern (1988b:85-87) suggested that although Heber was apparently supporting the Canaanites, he may have been working secretly for Israel as a ‘double agent’ (cf. G.A. Yee 1993:113-114). This is uncertain and it seems like an unnecessary attempt to ‘save face’ for Heber. The literary devices that highlight his remote location represent him as a **borderland figure**, not only geographically but ethnically: having cut himself adrift from his fellow Kenites and aligned himself with the Canaanites rather than with the Israelites, he cannot belong fully to either side (cf. S.V. Davidson 2004:89; K.D Sakenfeld 2007:196-197; *ibid.* 2008:16). (See comments below on the concept of **borderlands**.)

The text does not explicitly indicate *Jael’s* ethnicity or loyalties, but she appears to be a Kenite and faithful wife, who with her husband became a borderland figure. Nor does the text indicate whether Heber consulted her about moving to this location: the androcentric view of the Bible about the duty of wives makes consultation highly unlikely. What is certain is that the Israelites’ overwhelming victory against the Canaanites, and Sisera’s consequent appearance at her tent following his flight from the scene of battle, required her to make a serious decision. The opinion of Sisera’s mother and her ‘wise women’ (5:30) that ‘a girl or two for every man’ was only to be expected for victorious warriors was certainly giving voice to *common expectation*: this fate might well have occurred to Jael.

R.G. Boling (1975:104) translated the account of Sisera’s death in 5:27 as follows:

בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ כָּרַע נָפַל שָׁכַב ‘At her feet he slumped. He fell. He sprawled.

בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ כָּרַע נָפַל At her feet he slumped. He fell.

בַּאֲשֶׁר כָּרַע שָׁם נָפַל שְׂדוּד At the place where he slumped, there he fell. Slain!’

He argues that this verse ‘recapitulates [Sisera’s] arrival at the tent and his collapse in exhaustion’ (*ibid.* 115). According to Niditch (1989:47-50) the terms used in these lines have *sexual overtones*. She noted first that in the Bible רַגְלִים ‘legs’ or ‘feet’ are often used as euphemisms for genitals, and showed that the terms, כָּרַע and נָפַל (especially when used in conjunction: cf. BDB 502), שָׁכַב, and שְׂדוּד all occur in contexts of *death* and in *sexual*

contexts. In light of the *common expectation* expressed by Sisera's mother, it seems reasonable to read sexual overtones in **5:27**. Fear of being raped by Sisera may 'explain' Jael's apparently extreme actions in **5:26//4:21**. Some read the Jael narrative as a powerful '**No!**' to *the rape of women in the context of war* (cf. Sakenfeld 1997:20-21), but many other interpretations have been mooted (cf. Matthews 1991:15-19; Yee 1993:112-114; Sakenfeld 2008:16-17). Space does not allow discussion of these interpretations here.

We observed above that the text represents Heber and Jael as **borderland figures**. This is a concept developed in *transcultural studies*: that **borderland spaces** (the settled area adjacent to 'constructed' boundaries) can be spaces of energy when fixities are questioned and the potential for change is released (cf. Ashcroft et al. 2007:25). The deconstructive potential of the space where cultures encounter one another underlies the idea of the transformative power of the **contact zone**. In §§6.3.3.2; 6.3.3.3 we noted that *Dtr ideology* of the Canaanites is radically different from *Patriarchal ideology*. While *Dtr ideology* prohibits co-existence between Israelites and Canaanites (in effect, **constructing boundaries**), *patriarchal ideology* portrayed the land of Canaan as a *contact zone* where relationships could develop between patriarchs and Canaanites, enabling them to live in *peaceable co-existence*. In the account of Abraham's contacts with two Canaanite kings, there is no disapproval in the text of his *respect* for them and for their traditions. These are essential elements for the creation of peaceable co-existence in the contact zone.

We saw above that 'there was *peace* between Jabin...and...Heber' (**4:17**). Israelite 'historians' no doubt disapproved of such an agreement, and possibly included it to disparage Heber. However, we might interpret this detail in the text as a genuine endeavour by both men to enable *peaceable co-existence in the contact zone* between their two peoples. The text does not tell us what happened to Heber and his clan after the outcome of the battle, but the trace of his peaceable endeavour has been left in the Bible. Nor does the text tell us about what happened to Jael. Deborah's Song celebrates Deborah as a woman who 'arose as a mother in **Israel**' (**5:7**); Jael is celebrated as a loyal **Kenite** wife, culturally located among '**tent-dwelling women**' (**5:24**). It is significant that Jael was not integrated with the Israelites but remained a tent-dwelling woman, and honoured as such in the Bible for her role in Israel's struggle against those they considered enemies.

Concerning the recognition found in the Bible for Jael's role in Israel's struggle, we may consider briefly **Judg. 5:6a** where Jael is paired with Shamgar:

בִּימֵי שָׁמְגַר בֶּן-אַנָּת בִּימֵי יָעֵל 'In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,

בִּימֵי יַעֲלַי in the days of Jael'

We noted in §7.2.3.2 the significance of the name עֲנַת. Apart from this detail about his name, the identity of Shamgar is obscure. The only issue about which there is general scholarly agreement is that he was **not an Israelite**; there is no consensus about other issues surrounding his identity, nor about his inclusion in **Judg. 3:31** among the 'judges' who 'delivered Israel'. The only common detail that makes sense of his being paired by the author(s) with *Jael* in **5:6a** is the fact that she also was **not an Israelite**. YHWH had delivered **Israel** through **non-Israelites!** (cf. A. Van Selms 1964; Martin 1975:51-52; Schneider 2000:56-58, 88-89; Brettler 2002: 23-25; Younger 2002:128-131, 150)

It is an often underplayed (even hidden) aspect of biblical narrative that at numerous times throughout the story of Israel, YHWH is shown to have engaged **non-Israelites** from various positions in human society (women and men) to fulfil vital roles in the working out of his deliverance or judgement of Israel. As a further example, we may recall that in §7.2.1.1 we noted that there seemed to be a lingering *folk memory* that the Kenizzites (to which Caleb, Achsah, and Othniel belonged) were regarded as **not true Israelites**.

7.2.3.4 Unnamed figures

A total of 19 individual and collective female figures appear in Judges: only four are named (Achsah, Deborah, Jael, Delilah); the others are all nameless (cf. Athalya Brenner 1993:10-13). The predominance of namelessness is widely regarded as an indication of the marginalization of women in the Bible (cf. C.L. Meyers 1992:245; Davies 2003:63-64). However, we should note that although male figures in Judges are generally named, many are unnamed (cf. Brenner *ibid.* 11-13); but being 'unnamed' does not necessarily mean 'insignificant' (cf. our discussion in §5.2.2.1 about the 'unnamed' man at Bethel in Judg. 1:22-26). Likewise, namelessness of individual or collective females in Judges does not necessarily imply insignificance, even if appearing very briefly in the narrative. Brevity of appearance in the text does not mean that there is no story to tell: on the contrary, careful reflection may uncover hidden depths of meaning.

To conclude our consideration of **women in Judges** whose lives were affected by *violence and wars*, we will discuss briefly the significance of a woman and a group of women around her at the close of the Song of Deborah, in the aftermath of Sisera's defeat.

In a vivid vignette (**Judg. 5:28-30**) the **mother of Sisera** is shown gazing from a window (**v.28**), accompanied by her ‘**wisest ladies**’ (**v.29**) who had come to comfort her when her son had not returned from war as expected. They were unaware that (as the prose version recounts) ‘All the army of Sisera fell by the sword; no one was left’ (**Judg. 4:16**; cf. **5:21**). For hearers/readers of the story, knowledge of this fact might stir *pity* for the women at the window, depending on the viewpoint of the audience. As the women were **Canaanites**, fellow Canaanites might pity them, but the reaction of an **Israelite** audience might be: ‘They’ve got their just deserts!’

Such reactions from an Israelite audience would doubtless be aggravated further by the searing words with which Sisera’s mother is said to have comforted herself (**5:30**):

הֲלֹא יִמְצְאוּ יַחְלְקוּ שָׁלָל
 ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?—

רַחֵם רַחֲמָתַיִם לְרֵאשׁ גִּבּוֹר
 a girl or two [Heb. a womb, two wombs] for every man.’

We should not interpret these sentiments, however, as malice: they were just expressing *common expectations* (even to the present time!) about the fate of *women* at the hands of victorious warriors (cf. §7.2.3.3). It is unlikely that victorious **Israelite** warriors would have shown mercy to defeated foes. The reference to all the army of Sisera ‘*falling by the sword*’ brings to mind examples in **Judges** of **Canaanite cities** (i.e. whole populations, not just defeated armies) being ‘*put to the sword*’ by Israelites/Judahites (cf. **Judg. 1:8, 25**) and ‘devoted to destruction’ (**1:17**) (cf. our detailed study of these texts in §5.2.1). If survivors escaped to recount the terror of the Israelite onslaught to Canaanite communities where they took refuge, there may well have been grieving mothers among the refugees.

The vignette about Sisera’s mother and her ladies highlights the **common humanity** of these Canaanite women by showing us a naturally anxious, grieving mother supported by caring friends. In contrast, the ‘settlement’ narratives in **Judg. ch.1** do not recognise the **humanity** of the Canaanites among whom the Israelites lived in the land of Canaan. The human portrayal of Canaanites at the end of **Judg. ch.5** challenges *all* hearers/readers of **Judg. ch.1** to see through Canaanite eyes the Canaanites who appear in those narratives!

PART IV – CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Introduction

In our textual study of Judges 1-5 we recognised that *a postcolonial optic* for the study of the Hebrew Bible considers the *world of the texts* in light of the socio-political reality of *a succession of empires*. The dynamics between the dominant centre and subordinate periphery undoubtedly influenced the processes behind the production of the biblical texts. To facilitate understanding of these dynamics, postcolonial readings interact with the insights of other relevant disciplines such as archaeology, historiography, and Historical Criticism. A postcolonial optic looks for protesting or oppositional voices that may lead to readings that *subvert the traditional historical-critical ‘meaning’* of the text (cf. §1.2.2).

A postcolonial approach to the Bible also aims to read it in the context of *today’s world*, challenging readers to recognise the dynamics *of their own worldviews* in the interpretation of the Bible. This may lead to readings that offer reinforcement and constructive enlargement of views already held; or it may challenge the reader to acknowledge and to *hear* protesting or oppositional voices that may subvert cherished views.

In PART IV, we will consider first *two issues* which emerged during our textual studies and are significant in *today’s world* for the peoples of Israel/Palestine. These issues are:

- (1) ‘Naming/renaming’ (**Chapter 8**)
- (2) ‘Terror/terrorism’ (**Chapter 9**).

I believe that consideration of both issues will open up a range of significant areas of investigation. In each case, we will summarise relevant biblical references discussed in our textual studies, and then highlight comparable examples of such issues in today’s world.

To conclude this study, **Chapter 10 ‘Reflections’** considers various ways in which it has sought to address concerns that were expressed in the opening chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 8 - Naming/renaming

8.1 Biblical references

We observed that various texts in Judges indicate that the initial expectation of conquest and settlement was never fully realised. The Danites e.g. were confined to the hill country (1:31), but later migrated and settled in Laish, renaming it ‘Dan, after their ancestor Dan’ (18:29): וַיִּקְרְאוּ שָׁם יְהוֹעָזֵר בֶּן גִּשְׁשֵׁם בֶּן אֲבִיהֶם (cf. §4.3.3). We noted also that *re-naming* of sites after their conquest occurs throughout the ‘conquest traditions’, with four instances occurring in Judges 1: Kiriath-arba became ‘Hebron’ (1:10); Kiriath-sepher/‘Debir’ (1:11); Zephath/‘Hormah’ (1:17); Luz/‘Bethel’ (1:23); these were all discussed in §5.2.1.1.

A postcolonial perspective offers valuable observations on this phenomenon. It reminds us that every site of human occupation has its own history; peoples who inhabit a site, over the course of time leave their own ‘inscriptions’ upon it, overwriting those of their predecessors. A particular mark of *colonial discourse* is that, in its endeavour to write a new ‘national history’, it seeks to *erase* the previous history of each site, in order to portray it as an ‘empty land’ into which a new people can enter and write their own narrative.

Also relevant to the issue of *naming/renaming places* is our section on *Traditions of Origin*. We noted that the concept of divine promise of land to a people-group who journey to settle in a new land is not unique to Israel; it is a phenomenon found among other peoples. According to Weinfeld (1993c:184), the concept of *settlement* arose in the Greek world particularly during the period when *Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean region* was developing (ca. 800-480 BCE) (cf. the detailed discussion of this issue in §6.3.2.6).

Weinfeld drew parallels between Greek accounts and land-promises in biblical narratives of Israel’s settlement in Canaan; he made a comparative study of this phenomenon and listed common elements in the settlement process (ibid. 1-51). Naming and renaming of new settlements were among the common elements. The typology of sending spies into the land, then receiving divine counsel before building a settlement and naming it, is preserved in Greece and Israel. Similarly, the traditions of naming a new settlement after the eponymous ancestor of a tribe (cf. the Danites) and changing the name of a settlement (cf. Num. 32:38) are also found in Greek texts (ibid. 34-35).

Weinfeld’s emphasis that the concept of *settlement* arose during the period of *Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean region* is also relevant to modern Jewish settlement in

Palestine, which may be described as *settler-colonialism* (cf. §1.2). Some include Israel in a category of *immigrant-settler states* such as [white] South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in which settlers are not subject to ‘metropoles’ (parent states) as in imperial colonisation; they intend to settle in the new territory and make it their permanent home. But through their religious traditions, for two millennia Jews had ‘remembered’ the region now known as Israel/Palestine as their ancestral homeland (see further discussions in §8.2). However, all forms of settler-colonialism share certain common features, notably pervasive inequities between settler and indigenous populations: e.g. economic and political privileges are reserved for the settler-population, including rights to own land and to be subject only to their own justice code (cf. C. Elkins and S. Pedersen 2005: 2-4).

8.2 Formative stages of Jewish settlement

In §1.2.3 we noted that, historically, *colonisation processes* differed according to *context*, and that the principle of context applies to Israel. Gershon Shafir (1999: 81-96) observes that the *mode* of **Jewish settlement in Palestine** adapted itself continually to changing politico-economic realities (cf. Reuveny 2008:326-333). In the 1880s the term *Yishuv* came into use (Heb. ישוב ‘settlement’), referring originally to the Jewish residents of Ottoman Syria, but continuing in use until the establishment of the **State of Israel in 1948**.

A distinction has often been drawn between the **Old Yishuv** and the **New Yishuv**. The **Old Yishuv** was largely an Orthodox community dependent on philanthropic *ḥalukka* money from Jews in the Diaspora; they were based mainly in Jerusalem, Safed and Tiberius. The **New Yishuv** was the self-designation of settlers to whom the *Yishuv* was ‘born’ in 1882, thus distinguishing them from the *pre-Zionist Old Yishuv*. *Zionist historiography* named 1882 the year of the **First Aliyah** (Heb. עלייה ‘ascent’: to *Zionists* immigration to Palestine elevates Jews to a higher level of living); on *Zionism/ Zionist* cf. **Preface: Background Information**. Pogroms in Russia and Romania resulted in vast emigration of Jews during 1882-1903; most went to America, a minority to Palestine with Zionist support. A Second Aliyah occurred during 1904-1914.

Space does not allow us to discuss the First and Second Aliyot. For a vivid account of events during 1882-1914, cf. Amos Elon 1981: 95-119; note also the perceptive historical assessment of this period by Gudrun Krämer (2008:101-127) under the rubric ‘Evolving Nationalisms: Zionism and Arabism 1880-1914’. In view of our present concern regarding the issue of **naming/renaming**, we note briefly that **place-names** and **self-designations**

give insights to the worldview of settlers in the First Aliyah. For example, in 1882 they founded a settlement they *named* Rishon le Zion (‘first to Zion’), based on words in Isa. 41:27, ראשון להנה הנהם ‘First to Zion are they’. In fact, they were not *first*, being preceded by the **Old Yishuv** and earlier generations of Jews who settled in Palestine. This seems to indicate either unawareness of the facts or disparagement of pre-Zionist Others.

They named themselves *halutzim* (Heb. חלוצי halutz ‘pioneer’): possibly emulating white settlers in America (Pappé 2006b:39). Noting that the dominant settlers in the First and Second Aliyot were *Ashkenazim*, G. Shafir and Y. Peled (2002:74-75) point out that in 1881 and 1907 *Mizrahi* Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine from Yemen (concerning *Ashkenazi/Mizrahi* Jews cf. **Preface: Background Information**). No less pioneering than the *Ashkenazi* immigrants, the *Mizrahi* are never counted among the pioneering heroes of the *Yishuv* and have no place in Zionist collective memory. One reason is that the Zionist movement shared the Orientalist worldview of European colonial movements, considering itself an outpost of European civilisation (on Herzl’s vision of a Jewish state as ‘a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia’ cf. §1.2.3).

Basic features of the formative stages marked the worldview of the *Yishuv* until the founding of the State of Israel, and indeed continue in Israel today: e.g. dominance of *Ashkenazim* and marginalisation of *Mizrahim* (cf. §1.2.1); the role of pioneering and settlement; cooperative forms of social and economic organisation. Major changes did occur between the early period and the founding of the State of Israel, largely because of the **British Mandate**. In 1918, Britain occupied Palestine and in 1920 was granted a League of Nations Mandate to administer it; the Mandate ended in 1948 (cf. §1.2.3; for detailed accounts cf. Gregory 2004:76-88; Pappé 2006a: 248-256; Krämer 2008:164-187).

8.3 Developments in Israel/Palestine since 1948

Early in 1948, Britain announced its decision to end its Mandate on May 14. By that date British forces remained only in Jerusalem and Haifa: the Jerusalem garrison withdrew that day and at midnight the High Commissioner left for Haifa, leaving the country on 15 May. On 14 May the establishment of a Jewish State—to be **named the State of Israel**—was declared by the Jewish leadership, led by David Ben-Gurion, who became its first Prime Minister. By that time, one-third of the Palestinian population had already been evicted. (For a concise account of these complicated events, cf. Pappé 2006b:122-140.)

8.3.1 Naming *places*

Observing the practice of **Naming**, we will summarise a number of developments since 1948 in the land for which the **joint name ‘Israel/Palestine’** is widely used at present. **Places** and **place-names** are highly significant in the current Jewish-Arab conflict, as *both* peoples make vigorous attempts to legitimate their claim to historical rights to the land. Being able to *Name* places is an assertion of *power*, political and cultural. *Naming* also has a vital role to play in the construction of *collective memories* and *traditions* (for fuller discussions about this practice, cf. Julie Peteet 2005:157-159; Krämer *ibid.* 1-2).

8.3.1.1 Significant developments in 1949

Aware of the *power of naming*, on 14 July 1949 David Ben-Gurion appointed an official Names Committee whose remit was to Hebraize Palestine’s geography (cf. Nadia Abu El-Haj 2001: 91-98). Meron Benvenisti (2000:46-47) recalls that the aim of his late father (a member of the Committee) was to *erase* all *Arabic* place-names from the map and Hebraize even names of biblical origin, and to draw a Hebrew map as ‘a renewed title deed’ (*ibid.* 2). Ben-Gurion said the purpose of erasing Arabic place-names was to prevent any future claims by Arabs (Pappé 2006b: 138). I.e. the aim was to erase *the history of one people* (the Arabs) and write on the land *the history of another people* (Jewish settlers).

8.3.1.2 Significant developments in 1967, 1977

After the ‘Six Day War’ in 1967, there was a resurgence of the ‘Greater Israel’ concept. The Israeli religious right began referring to places in the West Bank with **Hebrew names**; they received a boost when the Labour government revived **biblical names**, issuing an order on 17 December 1967 that ‘the term “Judea and Samaria region” shall be identical in meaning for all purposes...to the term “the West Bank Region”’ (cf. Emma Playfair 1992:41). This **renaming** reflected a historic attachment to that region and rejection of a *politico-geographic name* that recalled former Jordanian sovereignty.

Although ‘Judea and Samaria’ was adopted officially in 1968 it was not used regularly; but the situation changed in 1977 when the right-wing Likud Party took power. Menachem Begin emphasised ‘the Land, people, and Bible, rather than the boundaries, citizens and laws of the State of Israel’ (Ian Lustick 2002: 37). Likud **renamed** the official designation of ‘settlements’, replacing ‘*hityashvut*’ with ‘*hitnahlut*’. In English both are translated ‘settlement’, but have different connotations in Hebrew. *Hityashvut* referred to early

settlements founded on collective principles, based on *self-labour*; *hitnaḥlut* refers to settlement in land occupied since 1967: being based on *naḥalah* (נַחֲלָה) ‘inheritance’, it indicates *an inherited portion of land*, evoking Biblical injunctions and promises. (Regarding the ideological transformation that took place in Israeli politics after 1977, cf. Lustick *ibid.* 33-38; Gregory 2004: 89-95)

8.3.1.3 Issues in Map-making

In a paper on ‘Place-Names in Israel’s Ideological Struggle over the Administered Territories’, S.B. Cohen and N. Kliot (1992:654) note that Zionists advocate ‘annexation of Judea and Samaria to realize the goal of the return of the Jewish people to the “Land” within its “*God-given, historic*” borders’: i.e. ‘Greater Israel’. In their final section (*ibid.* 673-676) they consider the issue of *map-making*, observing that **naming of places** and **drawing of maps** are symbolic acts of *possession*, intended to create a new reality or to retain a past that is no more. ‘Propaganda cartography’ is used by Jews and Arabs: Israeli children are taught that the ‘true’ boundaries of the ‘Land of Israel’ are those defined in the Bible; Palestinian children are taught through reference to the pre-1948 map of Palestine.

This raises important issues we can only note briefly. In ‘Deconstructing the Map’, the cartographer J.B. Harley (2001b:151) remarks ‘[We] often tend to work from the premise that mappers engaged in an unquestionably “scientific” or “objective” form of knowledge creation. Of course, cartographers believe they have to say this...but historians do not have that obligation.’ K.W. Whitlam (2007) critiques several biblical atlases of ‘Ancient Israel’ that encourage readers to believe the map is ‘a concise statement of facts about historical reality’ (*ibid.* 40). He concludes that, like their accompanying narrative, the map is ‘an instrument of subtle persuasion that needs to be examined carefully’ to recognise their strategies that persuade us the map is ‘a dispassionate and accurate representation of the real’ (*ibid.* 75). These caveats apply also to Martin Gilbert’s *Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (now in its tenth edition) which seems to me tendentious.

Re. “*God-given, historic borders*” of ‘Greater Israel’, we must recognise that the Bible presents *two* ‘ideal’ border-systems: one in ancient sources of the Pentateuch from priestly traditions (‘**P**’), another in the deuteronomistic traditions (‘**D**’) relating to the much later national resurgence in the period of Hezekiah and Josiah. The ‘**P**’ delineation of the borders of the land of Canaan, ‘from Lebo-Hamath until the wadi of Egypt’, is found in *Num. 34:1-15*. It encompasses the boundaries of the *province of Egypt* in the time of the

Egyptian empire. According to Num. 34, the ‘promised land’ does not include *Transjordan*. However, ‘D’ did not accept the concept of the Jordan as the border of the Land but followed the borders in *Gen. 15:18* that extended to the River Euphrates (cf. *Deut. 1:7; 11:24*), and considered *Transjordan* an integral part of the Land (cf. *Deut. 34*). The borders preferred by ‘D’ reflect traditional extended borders of the *Davidic kingdom* (cf. Weinfeld 1985:92-93; for extensive discussion cf. *ibid.* 1993c:52-75). We suggested in §7.1.6.2 that Hezekiah’s ultimate *goal* was to re-establish the farthest boundaries of David’s kingdom that in his day were incorporated into the *Assyrian empire*. Hezekiah’s scribes apparently felt free to disagree with the old Land traditions and amend them in order to support Hezekiah’s vision, with retrospective authority from Moses.

8.3.1.4 Palestinian strategies for *Naming places*

We noted in §1.2.1 that postcolonialism aims to give a vocabulary and a voice to those whose history and knowledge have been hidden or discounted, and focusses on the role of ‘subalterns’, aiming to write ‘history from below’. Since the late 1980s Palestinian historiography has developed a ‘history from below’ approach as a *naming strategy* for Palestinian refugees whose homes were *erased* during 1948. The majority (ca.66 percent) were *fellahin* (peasants) whose literacy rate was ca.15 percent. Their experiences are largely absent from written history, but in recent years **oral accounts** are giving voice to the subaltern: e.g. peasants, women, refugees (cf. Nur Masalha 2012, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*: 211-220).

An article by Rochelle Davis (2007) on ‘Mapping the Past, Re-creating the Homeland: Memories of Village Places in pre-1948 Palestine’ is relevant to the question of **naming places** for refugees whose villages were erased. The pre-1948 *physical places* are now ‘conceptual or memorial spaces’, but various means are being developed for ‘re-creating the homeland’, particularly through ‘village memorial books’ produced by refugees who have struggled to be *heard*. In refugee camps in Lebanon, assisted by UNRWA teachers, they use their own voices to evoke erased villages in the production of their ‘memorial books’. The books begin by *placing* the village geographically and *naming* it: the name evokes its history, with vivid descriptions of every aspect of village life and culture. It may be understood as ‘an attempt both to re-create and present the village [pre-1948] and emphasise their historical claims not only to the past, but also to the present and future’ (*ibid.* 57); cf. Peteet 2005: 159-160.

8.3.2 Naming *persons*

We now consider briefly personal **naming/renaming** by Zionists and Palestinians, as both peoples (albeit in different ways) faced social upheaval in consequence of events in 1948.

8.3.2.1 Zionist naming/renaming

Yakov Rabkin (2010: 129-132) argues that the aim of the Zionist project was to ‘create a *New Hebrew Man* who, *in contradistinction to the European Jew*, was to live “as a free man” in his own land.’ Reflecting Jewish experience in the Russian Empire (from where the hard core of early Zionist activists originated), the New Hebrew Man was to be the antithesis of the Diaspora Jew, considered effeminate, unable to defend himself, his family and community against murderous non-Jews. Jewish ‘self-hate’ was a constituent of Zionist ideology, expressed as ‘negation of the Diaspora’ and of its vernacular, Yiddish. The development of Hebrew as a *lingua franca* was an essential element in negation of the ‘exilic’ Jewish character that the Zionists frequently derided (ibid. 132-134).

Consistent with this Zionist ideology, during the post-1948 period, Zionist leaders, military commanders, archaeologists and authors changed their names from Russian, Polish and German to ‘Hebrew-sounding’ names: e.g. David Gruen became David Ben-Gurion; Ariel Scheinerman became Ariel Sharon; Golda Meyerson (née Mabovitch) became Golda Meir; Yigal Sukenik became Yigal Yadin (high-ranking military figure and leading biblical archaeologist). (For a detailed list of examples, cf. Masalha 2012:93-95.)

8.3.2.2 Palestinian naming/renaming

The experience of dispossession, exile, and the development of a sense of national identity led some Palestinians (especially young men) to fashion for themselves *new self-identities* as members of the resistance movement to confront their national plight. Many adopted a *nom de guerre*, signifying their identification as participants in the resistance. Palestinians have long asked themselves why they could not effectively resist Zionist colonisation.

Another resistance strategy emerged among Palestinian communities in various situations. Within the State of Israel many Palestinians were *internally displaced*: their villages were erased and they were dispersed, but regrouped in different localities. They replaced the traditional *clan eponymic* in their name with a new *surname* that re-called their destroyed village: e.g. someone from the erased village of *Ruways* took the surname

Ruwaysi (person from *Ruways*). ‘Village solidarity stands in place of the absent village and dispersed clan members’ (Susan Slyomovics 2002:3). Among those exiled outside Palestine, a strategy emerged of *naming* children (generally daughters) for the lost village: e.g. post-1948 *Yafa* (Jaffa) and *Jenin* are popular names for girls. Whenever a father calls out his daughter’s name, their lost village or town is immediately re-called (ibid. 4).

8.3.3 Naming *historical events*

A series of events that marked **The 1948/9 Arab-Israeli War** were experienced by Jews and Palestinians, and was a watershed for both peoples in their struggle over land and the shaping of their national identities. But **Jews named it ‘The War of Independence’** and **Palestinians named it ‘al-Nakbah’** (Arabic: ‘disaster/catastrophe’): they apply the term also to the whole period of the war (Dec.1947–Jan.1949). For reflections on the ‘facts’ of the war, cf. B. Kimmerling and J.S Migdal 2003:146-166; Oren Yiftachel 2006:53-64.

8.3.3.1 ‘War of Independence’ or ‘Nakbah’?

The *Israeli narrative* describes how a small band of Jews, besieged on all sides, faced a vast, coordinated Arab attack; but they defeated it on **15 May 1948**, their ‘**Independence Day**’, celebrated annually. The *Palestinian narrative* describes how they faced well-armed, trained Jewish forces, were under-armed and poorly led; the Arab forces had out-of-date weapons and half-hearted leadership. It ended in ‘**Disaster**’; Palestinians have no annual celebration. Until quite recently, the *Israeli narrative* was widely accepted as the ‘official, historical account’; the *Palestinian narrative* was denied, except around the ‘Middle East’. A major factor in the broad ‘western’ acceptance of the Jewish narrative undoubtedly was the Orientalist worldview of ‘The West’ which denigrates all ‘Arabs’. New developments in Israeli scholarship led to a ‘revisionist history’ which largely confirmed the Palestinian narrative (cf. Benvenisti 2000:101-143; Peteet 2005:155-156; Pappé 2011:15-45).

M.Trouillot (1995:113-115) provides a further relevant insight into the *Naming of historical events*. Taking as an example the *naming* of **14 October 1492** (the ‘day’ when Columba made landfall in the Bahamas) ‘**The Discovery of America**’, he argues that the *Naming* of an historical event is ‘a narrative of power disguised as innocence’. To call ‘**Discovery**’ the first invasions of inhabited lands by Europeans is an exercise in Eurocentric power. In the 1990s historians and activists denounced this term and *renamed* the event ‘**Conquest**’. Similarly, Israeli *naming* of **15 May 1948 ‘Independence Day’** may be considered a ‘narrative of power disguised as innocence’.

8.3.3.2 Alternative resistance strategies

Academics and historians have produced many excellent books debating the actual events of 1948/49, and the continuing outcome in present-day Israel/Palestine; but *scholarly books* are not accessible to everybody. However, many voluntary groups, who come from various walks of life, are providing alternative resistance. Below are three examples.

Breaking the Silence is an organisation of *veteran combatants* who have served in the Israeli military and have taken it upon themselves to expose to the Israeli public the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories. They endeavour to stimulate public debate about the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a civilian population on a daily basis and control that population's everyday life. Soldiers who serve in the Territories witness and participate in military actions which change them immensely. Discharged soldiers returning to civilian life discover the gap between the reality they encountered in the Territories and the silence they encounter at home. They strive to make heard the voices of these soldiers, pushing Israeli society to face the reality whose creation it has enabled. (Cf. [http://www.breakingthe silence.org.il/about/organization](http://www.breakingthe%20silence.org.il/about/organization))

MachsomWatch is a volunteer organisation of *Israeli women* who are peace activists from all sectors of society. They oppose the Israeli occupation in the West Bank, appropriation of Palestinian land and denial of Palestinian human rights. They support Palestinians' right to move freely, and oppose the checkpoints which severely restrict Palestinian daily life. On a daily basis, they monitor the West Bank checkpoints, Separation Fences, agricultural gates, military courts and Palestinian villages. They seek to influence public opinion in Israel and around the world, by recording and authenticating the impossible conditions faced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation, and also corrode the fabric of Israeli society and democracy. (Cf. <https://machsomwatch.org/en/>)

Zochrot ('remembering' in Hebrew) is an *NGO* based in Tel Aviv. The organisation's mission is to educate Israeli Jews about 'a history that has been obscured by enmity, propaganda and denial', and to promote their acknowledgment and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Palestinian Nakba of 1948. Zochrot believes that Jewish Israeli society still adheres to colonial concepts and practices, and that peace will come only after the country has been decolonized. While there are many groups challenging the 1967 Occupation of the West Bank, Zochrot is the only Israeli organisation dealing specifically with the historical events of 1948. (Cf. <http://zochrot.org/en/content/17>).

8.4 Creating a Contact Zone

In our textual studies, we noted several times that the concept of the *Contact Zone* is useful and adaptable (cf. in particular §5.2.2.3). Mary Louise Pratt used the term to describe social spaces where ‘disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination — like colonialism...and its aftermath today’: we added to her outlined list of places ‘present-day Israel/Palestine’. *The Max Rayne **Hand In Hand** Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel* (whose development I have long followed) is creating a remarkable **Contact Zone**.

Their stated mission is to create a strong, inclusive, shared society in Israel through a network of Jewish-Arab integrated bilingual schools and organized communities throughout Israel. For a general appraisal of their efforts to find coexistence and harmony, cf. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/jews-and-arabs-take-a-walk/> (posted August 6, 2014). The school has won wide support, as was indicated after three young Israelis from an extremist group (*‘Lehava’*) on November 29, 2014 set fire to a classroom in the Hand-In-Hand School at Jerusalem, spraying anti-Arab graffiti in its courtyard. About a week later, thousands of Jews and Arabs from Jerusalem and visitors from across Israel gathered in a city park to express support for coexistence: cf. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hundreds-march-for-coexistence-after-jewish-arab-school/arson/> (posted December 5, 2014).

By 2017 they operated integrated schools and communities in six locations (Jerusalem, the Galilee, Wadi Ara, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Tira & Kfar Saba), with 1,578 Jewish and Arab students and over 8,000 community members; they aim to create a network of 10-15 schools. Official support is already apparent. On January 17, 2017 the Minister of Education and State Comptroller led a delegation to the School in Jerusalem, accompanied by others such as the Director of the Jerusalem Education Authority, school supervisors and Jerusalem Education Authority representatives. The delegation said they had come to *learn* from Hand In Hand’s *success* in promoting inclusion, mutual respect and shared living, which had been recognized in a recent report. It was later announced that the School has been awarded the Municipal Education Prize for the 2016-2017 school year, ‘in the hope that its example will permeate the consciousness of the rest of the city’s residents.’ Reports of academic success and general development in their other schools, as well as in Jerusalem, are available on their website: <http://www.handinhandk12.org/>

Chapter 9 - Terror/Terrorism

9.1 Biblical references

In a section entitled **An ideology of terror** (§4.4.2), we noted that the Assyrian empire practised a policy of ‘calculated frightfulness’: not engaging in terror for sadistic purposes, but using it as psychological warfare. Spreading *terror* abroad was the most effective means of achieving advanced softening-up of enemy populations; once they had occupied a territory, the practice of ‘terror’ facilitated their control over restless populations. Some biblical texts indicate that when Israel was engaged in war it too practised ‘calculated frightfulness’: e.g. the account in Judg. 1:4-7 of Israel’s treatment of Adoni-bezek may be compared to Assyrian campaign reports of the capture and execution or humiliation of foreign kings. The practice of ‘total war’ involving the destruction of whole populations, including women and children as well as fighting men, was common throughout the ANE; according to biblical texts (e.g. Judg. 1:8, 17, 25) this included Israel. It is difficult to know how accurately the biblical account reflects the reality of what happened, or to what extent the writer/historian was using the rhetorical device of hyperbole.

In a discussion about **YHWH and the ideology of terror** (§7.1.4.2), we noted that in Judg. 2:15 the deuteronomistic historian implies that, in response to Israel’s repeated failure to heed his warnings, YHWH ensured they were defeated ‘whenever they marched out to war’. The MT of this verse concludes וַיִּצְרָה לָהֶם מְאֹד ‘and they were in great distress.’ However the mg. has וַיִּצָּר (supported by the LXX) which reads ‘he [YHWH] afflicted them greatly’. In effect, by bringing about their defeat and giving victory to their ‘enemies all around’ YHWH had become *their terrifying enemy*: he was engaging **terror** as a psychological weapon of war — a tactic practised by the Assyrians. In §7.1.4.3 we considered the question of **YHWH’s Nature and Purpose** in light of earlier discussions about the *Canaanites* (§6.3.3.2–§6.3.3.3). We noted that **Dtr** ideology of the Canaanites is radically different from **Patriarchal** ideology of the Canaanites, and that this reflects essential differences between *Dtr and Patriarchal ideologies of YHWH’s nature and purpose*. We may summarise significant contrasts between the two ideologies as follows.

Whereas *Dtr* ideology prohibits co-existence with the Canaanites, requiring not only their dispossession but their annihilation, in *Genesis* the land of Canaan is portrayed as a ‘*contact zone*’ where relationships between patriarchs and Canaanites may develop; they

can live in *peaceable co-existence*. Thus, in the narrative of Abraham's contacts with two Canaanite kings, Abraham displayed exemplary *respect* for both kings and for their religious traditions: essential elements for peaceable co-existence in the *contact zone*.

YHWH's implicit approval of Abraham's contacts with the Canaanite rulers reveals his nature and purpose. We considered also the promise to Abraham in Gen. 17:4-6 that he would be the ancestor of *הַמּוֹן לְגוֹיִם* 'a host of nations' (17:4, 5). This terminology may reflect the so-called '*larger Israel*' concept envisaged in ch. 17 (cf. vv. 23-27); this reaffirms the promise in Gen. 12:3 *מְשֹׁפְחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה*, which indicates that YHWH's **purpose** is that Abraham and his descendants should be agents of his blessing to 'all the peoples of the earth'. We may conclude that, according to Patriarchal ideology, YHWH's **blessing** (which reveals his **nature**) is not an exclusive blessing for one people only, but is **inclusive of all the peoples of the earth** (*which includes the Canaanites*).

9.2 Defining 'terror/terrorism'

There is no internationally accepted definition of terrorism. In 'Terrorism: The Word Itself is Dangerous' John Whitbeck (2002) observes that the word is so subjective as to be 'devoid of any inherent meaning'; yet it is dangerous as many people 'use and abuse' the word by applying it to whatever or whoever they may hate; the choice to use or not use it is often based 'not on the act itself but on who is doing it and to whom'. He suggests that perhaps the only intellectually honest and globally workable definition is a manifestly subjective one: *Terrorism is 'violence that I don't support'*. This definition might at least explain the universal condemnation of 'terrorism' in a world that seems to be full of it. There are similar comments in Amnesty International (AI) Report 2002, July: 7. Amnesty does not use the term 'terrorism' because there is no internationally agreed definition and because it is used to describe markedly different types of conduct.

States and commentators describe as 'terrorist' acts or political motivations that *they oppose*, but they reject its use concerning activities or causes *they support*. Joel Beinin (2003a: 12) quotes a definition espoused by Benjamin Netanyahu (1995): 'terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of civilians to inspire fear for political ends.' Beinin finds this definition provisionally serviceable '*if applied to both states and nonstate actors*' [my emphasis]—which Netanyahu does not do. With Beinin's proviso, this seems to be at least a reasonable definition for our purposes in this study (cf. Jeff Halper 2008:234-235).

9.3 Basic principles of international humanitarian law

According to our provisional definition, terrorism is ‘the...murder, maiming, and menacing of civilians’. Regarding ‘civilians’, Amnesty International affirmed in its Report 2002, July: 22 that ‘attacks on civilians are not permitted under any internationally recognised standard of law...Not only are they considered murder under general principles of law in every national legal system, they are contrary to fundamental principles of humanity which are reflected in international humanitarian law [which] sets out standards of humane conduct applicable to both state forces and armed groups.’

Concerning Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued a Statement (05-12-2001) affirming in para. 7 that ‘indiscriminate attacks...by Palestinian individuals or armed groups against Israeli civilians, and acts intended to spread terror among the civilian population are absolutely and unconditionally prohibited. *The same applies* [my emphasis] to targeted attacks on and the killing of Palestinian individuals by the Israeli authorities while those individuals are not directly taking part in the hostilities or immediately endangering human life.’ The Statement continues with an affirmation that ‘Reprisals against civilians and their property are also prohibited.’

In light of the above, it seems to me that a general *human rights approach* would be of value in considering the remaining sections of this study. As Halper says (ibid. 242) ‘A human rights approach to the issue of terrorism is useful because it is precise and inclusive. It condemns all forms of terror from whatever source.’

9.4 Groups who have violated human rights

Both AI and the ICRC emphasise the *accountability* of both Non-state and State actors. Below we will consider briefly three significant examples each of Palestinian and Israeli groups that have been characterised as ‘terrorist groups’. As space is limited, we will note the historical development of the selected groups only in so far as this remains relevant to the situation that continues in contemporary Israel/Palestine.

9.5 Palestinian groups

For historical background on the origins, development and inter-relations of the three Palestinian groups discussed below, cf. R.R. Ruether and R.J. Ruether 2002: 100-130.

9.5.1 Fataḥ

Fataḥ is a secular Palestinian nationalist movement whose aim is the establishing of a Palestinian state. The name ‘Fataḥ’ is the reverse acronym of Ḥarakat al-Tahrir al-Filistiniya (Palestinian Liberation Movement); ‘fataḥ’ means ‘conquest’ in Arabic. It was founded in 1959 by Yasser Arafat and a few comrades; their aim was to rally diaspora Palestinians in neighbouring Arab States to launch commando raids on Israel. In 1969 Arafat became chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), created by Arab states to represent the Palestinians internationally; in that year Fataḥ is recorded to have carried out 2,432 guerrilla attacks on Israel. As various Palestinian groups found Fataḥ ineffective, corrupt, and even too moderate, Fataḥ split into new groups, some of which regularly carried out terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians (cf. AI Report 2002, July: 10-12).

After a tumultuous history which we cannot recount here, Arafat and Fataḥ finally recognised Israel’s right to exist, and Palestinian leaders proceeded to take part in peace talks which were aimed at reaching a two-state solution. In Oslo Arafat signed an interim peace deal with Israel in 1993, but—despite decades of on-off negotiations—a full accord has remained elusive (cf. Ruether and Ruether *ibid.* 105-128). Following Arafat’s death in 2004, Fataḥ began to fall from its previous dominant position; in 2006 it lost parliamentary elections to Ḥamas (see below) and was essentially driven out of the Gaza Strip. Its power has been further eroded by continuing internal divisions and claims of nepotism and corruption in government (cf. a detailed BBC Profile of Fatah on 16-June-2011: available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13338216>).

9.5.2 Ḥamas

Ḥamas is an acronym of the Arabic phrase Ḥarakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya which means ‘Islamic Resistance Movement’; the Arabic word ‘ḥamas’ means ‘courage’ or ‘zeal’. As its name implies, the aim of Ḥamas is the liberation of Palestine from Israeli occupation through resistance and the restoration of the Palestinian people. All this must take place under the Islamic teachings of the Holy Quran, the ‘Sunnah’ (traditions) of the

Prophet Muhammad, and the traditions of Muslim rulers and scholars. It was founded in 1988, a year after the outbreak of the First Intifada, by Sheikh Yassin (assassinated by Israelis in 2004), emerging from the Muslim Brotherhood which emphasised conservative Islamic values. It won popularity by providing hospitals, schools and other services.

The Hamas charter maintains that all of Palestine belongs to the Muslim nation as a religious endowment, and that it is the duty of every Muslim to engage in jihad ('struggle') to liberate Palestine. It was responsible for suicide bombings targeted at Israeli civilians and rocket attacks on Israeli cities, leading to its international designation as a terrorist organisation. In 2006, Hamas defeated Fatah in parliamentary polls in Gaza; after a failed attempt to form a coalition government, a Fatah-led cabinet was established in the West Bank, and Hamas controlled the Gaza Strip, governing under strict Islamic legislation (cf. M. Berry and G. Philo 2006:82-88). During the 2014 Gaza/Israel conflict, Hamas forces were accused of committing serious human rights abuses including abductions, torture, and summary and extrajudicial executions (cf. AI Report 2015, May: 5-12; it includes violation of international law by Israeli military forces).

9.5.3 Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/'PFLP'

(Details are extracted from AI Report 2002, July: 15-16; AI Report 2002, November: 1-5); Philo and Berry 2011: 59-71, 84-89, 107-110.)

The PFLP was founded by George Habash in 1967, and is guided by 'Marxist interpretation and dialectical materialism'. It ruled out any agreement with Israel that would lead to *two* states, advocating *one* state with an Arab identity in which Jews might live without discrimination. It gained international notoriety after a series of aircraft hijackings which Habash claimed was 'publicity' for the Palestinian cause. It opposed the 1993 'Oslo Accords' between Israel and the Palestinians, but in 1999 reached an agreement with the PLO about negotiations with the Israeli government. However in 2010 the PFLP General Secretary ordered termination of negotiations. In 2011—denouncing the 1978 'Camp David Accords' between Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin—the PFLP called for social and political revolution in Egypt.

On 16 October 2001 members of the PFLP assassinated the far-right-wing Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze'evi, as reprisal for the killing on 27 August 2001 of its leader Abu Ali Mustafa when an Israeli helicopter fired rockets at his office in Ramallah. As reprisal for the death of Ze'evi, the IDF ('Israel Defence Forces') invaded Bethlehem,

Ramallah, Jenin and Nablus, killing children and civilians as well as Palestinian fighters. A report on the invasions of Jenin and Nablus was produced by AI (2002, Nov.) which concluded that ‘the IDF carried out actions which violate international human rights and humanitarian law’ (cf. AI 2002, July: 15 regarding killing of civilians by the PFLP). The significance of the PFLP in Palestinian politics has been waning as Hamas has progressed.

9.6 Israeli groups

The groups noted below are all regarded as continuing ‘*the legacy of Meir Kahane*’. Kahane (b. 1932) was an American-Israeli Orthodox rabbi and ultra-nationalist politician and teacher; he and his family moved to Israel in 1971. There he founded the militantly anti-Arab *Kach* (‘*Thus*’) *Party*, calling for the annexation of all conquered territories and the forcible removal of all Palestinians; Kahane lobbied for his beliefs in violent ways. His work is considered to be the direct or indirect foundation of most modern Jewish militant and extreme right-wing political groups. In November 1990 he was assassinated in a Manhattan hotel by an Arab gunman, but even after his death he has continued to have a powerful influence. (For a detailed account, cf. Ami Pedahzur 2012: 63-80.)

9.6.1 Terror against terror/‘TNT’

In 1974, Kahane raised the idea of T.N.T. (acronym for *terror neged terror*, i.e. Jewish terrorism against Arab terrorism). He proposed to the Israeli government that a ‘worldwide Jewish anti-terror group be established... organised and aided...*in the same way as the terrorists are aided by Arab governments*’. The government did not respond, so Kahane’s followers and others inspired by his ideas took action. They did not form an organisation, but joined in random anti-Arab atrocities, claiming ‘TNT’ responsibility; not all their attacks were in response to specific terror attacks by Arabs. They were most active in 1980-84. (cf. E. Sprinzak 1991: 234-237; A. Pedahzur and A. Perliger 2009: 89-95)

TIME Magazine (Mar. 19, 1984) reported the growth of Jewish terrorism led by a clandestine organisation, ‘TNT’. In the previous four years Jewish activists had launched more than 40 terrorist operations against Arab and Christian homes and institutions in Israel and the West Bank, such as the attempted assassination of three West Bank Arab mayors in June 1980 and an assault in 1983 on Hebron’s Islamic University: three Arabs were killed, 33 wounded. It noted also that in the previous week an Arab grenade had exploded on a crowded bus, killing three Israelis and wounding ten others.

9.6.2 The Bat Ayan Underground/‘Hilltop Youth’

In October 2000, the Second Intifada erupted and was soon marked by acts of Palestinian violence (mainly suicide attacks) against Israeli targets; as reprisal for Palestinian acts of terror, Jewish terrorist groups soon emerged. In the early months of 2002, groups of young residents from the hilltop settlement of Bat Ayan (dubbed the ‘Bat Ayan Underground’) almost succeeded in carrying out murderous terrorist attacks against two Palestinian schools. The Bat Ayan group was a network of semi-independent cliques of young settlers, the most famous of which became known as ‘The Hilltop Youth’, noted for particularly callous attacks on nearby Palestinian villages (cf. Pedahzur and Perliger 2009: 111-122). [At the time of writing such attacks are perpetrated regularly.]

These relatively recent settler groups are largely third-generation settlers, young people, many of whom are married and have small children. They have adopted a very simple, non-materialistic life, living in small trailers, with no running water and dependent on generators for electricity: to them it imitates ‘biblical times’. They believe that *war* should be declared and severely waged against all those who threaten Jews, and that reprisal against anyone who harms Jews is acceptable (cf. S. Kaniel 2005: 184-187). Thus, in effect they have adopted a *Kahanistic worldview*: promoting deportation, reprisal, and annihilation of the Palestinians (Arabs) in particular (cf. Pedahzur 2012: 136).

9.6.3 Extremist activity of Meir Kahane’s grandson

On January 9, 2014 The Times of Israel reported that *Meir Ettinger*, the grandson of Meir Kahane, was one of a group of far-right activists who allegedly attempted to carry out a ‘price-tag’ attack at a Palestinian village, in protest that earlier in the day Israeli officials had uprooted a settler olive grove in the West Bank. [A radical minority of settlers carry out ‘price-tag’ attacks as *reprisal* for Palestinian violence or any police or military action they deem unjust, often daubing ‘price tag’ on walls.] Ettinger’s group were held captive for over two hours by villagers until they were handed over to the IDF.

Ettinger blamed the IDF for refusing weapon permits for Israeli settlers. The village mukhtar told TV Channel 2: ‘[we] could have killed the settlers and buried their bodies; we spared them because we are Muslims and they are human beings even if they were hostile’ (cf. online at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/meir-kahanes-grandson-blames-idf-for-price-tag-attackers-ordeal/>). In 2013 Ettinger wrote a document entitled ‘The Rebel Manifesto’,

calling to bring down the Israeli leadership. ‘The aim,’ he wrote, ‘is to bring down the state, to bring down its structure and its ability to control, and to build a new system. To do it, we must act outside the rule of the state we seek to bring down.’ Regarding Ettinger and Israeli government attempts to respond to the growing threat from Jewish terrorism, cf. online at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/meir-kahanes-grandson-arrested-for-far-right-activity-2/>. We may note that Meir Kahane generally aimed to work within the system.

9.6.4 Some brief observations

(1) In §9.1 we noted **the use of terror** as psychological warfare in the Ancient Near East and the practice of ‘**total war**’ that involved the destruction of whole populations, including women and children as well as fighting men.

These policies and practices are mirrored in actions of present-day Israel/Palestine on the part of both Israeli and Palestinian activists.

(2) The issue of civilians

AI affirms that attacks on **civilians** by state forces and armed groups are contrary to standards of humane conduct as set out in international humanitarian law (cf. §9.3).

The **ICRC** affirms that indiscriminate attacks against **civilians** and acts intended to spread **terror** among the **civilian** population are absolutely and unconditionally prohibited.

We observed various examples of indiscriminate attacks being carried out by both Israelis and Palestinians.

The **ICRC** affirms that **reprisals** against **civilians** and their property are prohibited.

We noted continual cycles of ‘tit-for-tat’ reprisals being perpetrated by both Israeli and Palestinian protagonists (cf. §9.3).

9.7 Voices of reason and humanity

9.7.1 Palestinian voices

‘All liberation movements in history have affirmed that their struggle is about life not about death. Why should ours be an exception? The sooner we educate our Zionist enemies and show that our resistance offers co-existence and peace, the less likely they will be to kill us at will, and never refer to us except as terrorists.’ *Edward Said, quoted in AI Report 2002, July: 6-7*

‘No cause, not even a just cause, can make legitimate the killing of innocent civilians, no matter how long the list of accusations and the register of grievances. Terror never paves the way to justice, but leads down the shortest path to hell...For a victim is a victim, and terrorism is terrorism, here or there...Nothing, nothing justifies terrorism.’ *Palestinian poet Mahmood Darwish quoted in Gregory 2004: 106.*

9.7.2 Israeli voices

Founded in 1988, **Rabbis for Human Rights** is the only rabbinic voice in Israel explicitly dedicated to human rights. Representing over 100 Israeli rabbis and rabbinical students from different streams of Judaism, they derive their authority from their *Jewish tradition* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The view of its members is that, as Jews, they are obligated to protest against all forms of injustice against others, for all human beings are created in the image of G-d.

Their mission is to inform the Israeli public about human rights violations and pressure the State institutions to redress all injustices. They actively protect the rights of Palestinian farmers and land-owners against aggressive settlers, and provide legal advocacy for Palestinians. At the same time, they call on both Israelis and Palestinians to distance themselves from violence. In a time in which a nationalist and isolationist tradition is heard loudly and frequently, **Rabbis for Human Rights** gives expression to the traditional Jewish responsibility for ‘the different and the weak, the widow and orphan’, *regardless of race, gender and religious affiliation*’ (cf. <http://rhr.org.il/eng/about/>).

Chapter 10 - Reflections

The main issue in this study is the use of the Hebrew Bible, particularly by Zionists, to justify policies such as seizure of Palestinian land (cf. §1.1). In § 1.2.3 this issue was considered from a postcolonial optic which emphasises that Zionism emerged in ‘the age of empire’. When Herzl published *Der Judenstaat* (1896), he envisioned a Jewish state that would be ‘an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism’. In the common worldview of western imperialism the civilisation/barbarism binarism defines the status of Arabs as inferior Others; many Israelis today hold this western/imperial worldview of Arabs. There is considerable evidence to support the contention that the structure of privilege exercised by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories typifies settler-colonialism (cf. §1.2).

In the late nineteenth century, Zionists of the Jewish settler society in Palestine (the *Yishuv*) adopted the Bible as a constitutive text, considering it a national history and their title to the land (cf. §8.2 on its formative stages and §8.3 on developments since 1948). The Zionist appropriation of the Bible emphasised the book of Joshua, especially chs. 1-12; but Judges (especially ch.1) conveys a different impression of the settlement in Canaan. Noting the postcolonial emphasis on *the world of the text*, specifically the Near Eastern literary context of annalistic texts, we concluded that Josh. 1-12 and Judg. ch. 1 are figurative accounts, narrating two aspects of one process: initial victory and subjugation (cf. §4.3). We focussed on Judg. 1-5, as themes in these chapters are particularly relevant to our present concerns, arising especially from the emphasis on the ‘Canaanites’ (cf. §1.1).

In §1.1 we quoted an excerpt from personal reflections by a Palestinian pastor, Mitri Raheb (1999: 56), describing his painful alienation from the Old Testament. He voices anxieties felt by many Palestinians and also by many Jews who are confused about their religious traditions. A major issue is the violence and oppression suffered by Palestinians, justified in the name of the Bible which for Raheb has become ‘a frightening word’. We noted in §4.4.2 that the Assyrian empire followed a policy of ‘calculated frightfulness’, using terror as psychological warfare. According to some biblical texts (e.g. Judg. 1:4-7), Israel also exercised ‘calculated frightfulness’ when it engaged in war. In Chapter 9 we considered Terror/terrorism in contemporary Israel/Palestine, noting Palestinian and Israeli individuals and groups who perpetrate acts intended to spread terror among the ‘Other’ populations. Pastor Raheb may well have had in mind just such individuals and groups; he would certainly concur with the voices of reason and humanity that close the chapter.

Raheb reflects that the God he always knew as *love* had become a God who waged ‘holy wars’, destroying whole populations. This practice, known as *הָרָם* ‘the Ban’, was common in the ANE (cf. Judg. 1:17), when engaging in war (cf. §4.4.2; §5.2.2.1). In our study of Judg. 2:2a (cf. §6.3.3.1), we noted that, in an analysis of *הָרָם* in various biblical Codes, Weinfeld (1999b: 85-93) saw a *developmental process*. The representation of *הָרָם* was increasingly extreme as these codes moved farther from its historic origins; long after Israel’s wars in Canaan ended, the Deuteronomists applied the concept of *הָרָם a priori* to all the indigenous inhabitants, e.g. Deut. 7:1-2; 20:10-18 (cf. §7.1.4.3). Weinfeld suggests that this may have arisen in a period of ‘national revival’, possibly in the time of Josiah. The Bible itself (e.g. 1 Kgs 9:20-21) and the evidence of archaeology demonstrate that these peoples were not destroyed. The Dtr ideology of *הָרָם* has been widely misinterpreted as its ‘biblical meaning’, but it has no relevance or biblical authority in today’s world.

In a similar developmental process the term ‘Canaanite’ became a pejorative cipher (cf. §6.3.3.2): as depicted in Judg. ch. 1, it seems to be generic, including all former inhabitants of Canaan; by the time of Ezekiel, in late 6th century BCE Babylon, it was a by-word for decadence (cf. Ezek. 16); addressing returnees in Yehud in the Persian era (possibly ca. 398 BCE), Ezra 9:1 accused ‘Canaanites’ of ‘abominations’ (cf. Lev. ch.18). While these late developments occurred in the context of ancient Empires, they are highly relevant today, because Palestinians are regarded by many people as ‘today’s Canaanites’, and their portrayal often reflects Dtr and exilic/post-exilic viewpoints that no longer reflected the original sense of these terms. These extreme interpretations have no place in today’s world; their adoption seems to me to reflect the western/imperial worldview of Arabs.

Raheb reflects that his major issue is ‘his land’ in which he no longer has a right to live. Biblical references to ‘promises of land’ are often cited to support the state of Israel and its occupation of Palestinian territories: e.g. Judg. 2:1b ‘I brought you into the land that I had promised to your ancestors’ (on the Pentateuchal literature cf. §6.3.2.2). The promise is reinforced in Judg. 2:1c with the affirmation ‘I will never break my covenant *בְּרִית* with you’. The concept of *בְּרִית* was widespread in Neo-Assyria (cf. §6.3.2.3), but covenant imagery was not adopted in Israel before the eighth century BCE (cf. §6.3.2.4). A date late in Hezekiah’s reign, when Assyria was at its most powerful, is a likely historical context. Sennacherib’s invasion had underscored the tenuous nature of Judah’s hold on its land; in that critical situation the concept of ‘YHWH’s covenant’ undergirded ‘YHWH’s promise’. These traditions cannot be interpreted as justification for the seizure of Palestinian land.

Also relevant to the Palestinians' right to their land is our discussion in §6.3.2.6 on *Traditions of Origin*. The concept of divine promise of land to people journeying to settle in a new land is not unique to Israel. The practice of settlement developed ca. 800-480 BCE as the Greeks colonised lands around the Mediterranean (cf. Weinfeld 1993c:1-51). Weinfeld compared Greek accounts with land-promises in biblical narratives of Israel's settlement in Canaan. He described Apollo's promise of land to the Greek settlers: in a *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus (ca. 305-240 BCE) sang 'Apollo swore that he would establish the land of Cyrene, the oath of Apollo is valid forever'; this is analogous to YHWH's promise to the Israelites. The period of Greek colonisation overlapped with the spread of the Assyrian empire in Syro-Palestine; the dating of the Greek literary evidence is similar to recent dating of biblical texts about the patriarchal stories. These phenomena provide evidence that present-day Israel has no unique divine claim to Palestinian lands.

In Judges 3:5 there is a traditional list of peoples believed to have been dispossessed by the Israelites on entry into Canaan: 'The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites' (cf. §7.1.6.3). The 'Canaanites' represent autochthonous groups in Canaan; the Hittites *et al.* represent 'northern groups' who entered Canaan during Iron I; some entered from the south (including 'Israelites' returning from a sojourn in Egypt), settling over a long period among the autochthonous groups, becoming a 'new population' (cf. Na'aman 1994c). In §5.2.2.3 we noted proposed 'models' for the formation of 'Israel'; scholarly consensus supports peaceful settlement rather than the Dtr 'conquest' ideology adopted by Zionists. On the peaceful settlement model, Israelis and Palestinians both have a right to live in the land as their common home.

Judges is a violent book in which women's lives are interwoven with violence and war (cf. §7.2.3). Judges 1-5 portrays women who, at critical junctures, found hidden strength that counteracted weaknesses of the men around them: Achsah, Deborah, Jael, and some unnamed but significant figures. Their life stories show that despite the Bible's dominantly androcentric world-view, there is a tradition within it that resists its patriarchal agenda. It seems to me that in face of constant violence in contemporary Israel/Palestine, especially over the critical land issue, this biblical motif is particularly relevant for the women in cultures whose world-view is predominantly androcentric (cf. §8.33; §9.5-§9.6).

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