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A Biblical Mnemohistory of 'Egypt':

Exodus as the Legitimation of Israelite Continuity

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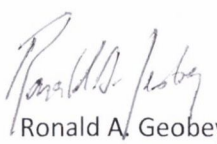

Ronald A. Geobey

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As a writer, I know that what is experienced has a direct effect on what is produced; and so much was experienced as I approached the end of this journey. The end product happened when it happened and as it happened because of who was in my life at the time; and I would like to thank my wonderful girlfriend, Karen Gartland, for her support, her patience and her understanding. As for her beautiful daughters, Abbie and Hannah, they offered new and surprising reasons for staying the course. Responsibility is a potent motivator.

SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis was to chart the evolution of the tradition in the Hebrew Bible of a migration from Egypt as it relates to the development of Israelite identity, with a view to negotiating a position between the poles of 'maximalist' or 'conservative' scholars maintaining the relative historicity of the received form (that which we know as *Exodus*); and 'minimalist' or 'revisionist' scholars pushing the date for the composition of Exodus into increasingly later periods in the development of Judaism. I have argued for a 'mnemohistorical' approach to critical analyses of the historicity of the migration tradition, seeing Exodus as the final product in a long history of the development of a tradition integral to the preservation of Israelite identity. While this in itself is not a new concept, I have identified significant 'memory contexts' in which revitalised incarnations of the migration tradition appear to be associated with distorted memories of identity (re-)negotiation.

Stressing my multi-disciplinary approach in **Chapter 1**, *Memory, Identity, and Historiography: The Bible as an Accretion of Reflection*, I combined concepts pertaining to 'Memory Studies', ethnic and national identity, historiography and archaeology. In **1.1**, I argued for an understanding of the received form of Exodus as a foundation myth concerned with protecting and perpetuating an idealised concept of the ethno-religious entity 'Biblical Israel'. While I argued that this foundation myth as we have it belongs to the context of reformulating Israelite identity in Persian period Yehud, I maintained that it has a long history of development attached to earlier incarnations of that identity. In **1.2**, I addressed scholarly skepticism towards the literal truth of the Hebrew Bible, arguing that the texts do indeed bear value for speculating as to the nature of ancient Israel (and Judah). I provided a concise review of approaches over the past century which have inspired or contributed to preconceptions in this matter, with particular focus on the matter of the 'Exodus' and 'Conquest' stories fundamental to an investigation of Israel's ethnogenesis in either Egypt or Canaan. In **1.3**, I argued that more attention should be paid to the artistic, didactic, and mnemonic quality of the texts. Dealing with matters of genre, convention and interpretation, I moved towards the conclusion that by identifying inner-biblical allusions associated by way of 'type-scenes' and motifs, the historicity of not just one but all texts connected in this way comes into question; and that these connections should inform conclusions as to the date of composition insofar as the ideological significance of major motifs is concerned. In **1.4**, the implications of my approach are summarised, whereby I proposed an historical context informing the 'eureka' moment which the biblical writers appropriated to legitimate their claims to continuity and the antiquity of 'Israel'.

In **Chapter 2**, I investigated what I have called 'the usual suspects' in biblical scholarship through which the great antiquity of the Exodus narrative is maintained by those asserting its historicity. The Hyksos; the Habiru; the Shasu; Akhenaten; and the Merneptah Stele; all were analysed insofar as the extra-biblical (and, potentially, the inner-biblical) information on each can – or cannot – be correlated with the 'grand narrative' of Exodus. I concluded that while latent memories of these 'usual suspects' and their interaction(s) with the earliest stirrings of the people who became 'Israel' may have contributed to distorted retellings of ancient events (Exodus 15, for example, appears to recall the Shasu crossing the Jordan), this by no means calls for the alignment of apparent correlations in the Exodus narrative with the historical (chronological) context which these memories appear to preserve.

In **Chapter 3**, I charted the evolution of the migration tradition as it is manifested especially in the books of Kings; the 'eighth-century prophets'; and Jeremiah. Here, I argued that while memories of the application of the migration tradition survive in these texts, they have been subordinated to the evolving ideologies first of Josian-era socio-economic changes and political propaganda; and then of the Persian period reformulation of Israelite identity occurring under the auspices of Jerusalemite elites.

In **Chapter 4**, my mnemohistorical study came full circle, with the anchor weighed not in the primordial past but in the Persian period 'present'. Here, I argued that while the 'return(s)' from Babylon would certainly have informed a reinvigoration of the migration tradition, Exodus was by no means composed wholesale without its metaphorical foot in the past. The matter of imperial 'authorisation' was also addressed, with a view to tempering the significance afforded Yehud in general and Jerusalem in particular in the great scheme of things. Finally, I argued that the historical transition between Babylonian and Persian power provided the opportunity for the replanting of 'Israelite' identity in Persian period Yehud, insofar as Cyrus became the antithesis of the Pharaoh of the 'Exodus'; and the 'returnees' were aligned with the 'liberated slaves' of that same story.

In my **Conclusion**, I argued that the *motif of transition in power* facilitated the connection throughout the *biblical history of Israel and Judah* of significant 'memory contexts' of identity re-negotiation; those which rose from the depths of latent memory (or were compiled from established tradition) as times in which the migration tradition was used to pose challenges as to the nature of 'Israel'. That same motif in Exodus marks the crystallisation of those ideas projected back into the primordial past so as to align the collective memory of the 'creation' of Israel in Egypt with the 're-creation' of Israel in Persian period Jerusalem.

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INTRODUCTION

> All cultural distinctions need to be remembered in order to render permanent the space which they construct. Usually, this function of remembering the fundamental distinctions assumes the form of a "Grand Narrative", a master story that underlies and informs innumerable concrete tellings and retellings of the past.[1]

In common parlance, use of the word 'history' can be confusing, and we talk about the history of our nation or our family as if it is incontestable. Yesterday is history; that old argument is history; my full head of hair is history. The overuse of the word leads to a presumption that history is a static phenomenon because what occurred in the past occurred as we believe it did and occupies a place to which we no longer have access; and so how can we say any different of it? I could say that I wrote *a* history of histories of a given topic, the latter incorporating accounts of past events, which, as such, might themselves be deemed histories. So, what exactly have I written? Even if I critically engaged with the material, I did not write *a* history of the place or event or person, but merely an evaluation of those who have gone before me who attempted to do so. Neither would I claim to have written *the* history of scholarship on the matter, for apart from the possibility that there is a vast amount of scholarship which no review can truly hope to incorporate, it will likely have changed before my account is even published (all of which is true for an historian of the Hebrew Bible). As for *the* history of a given topic – an authoritative, never-to-be-altered account of events incorporating every possible perspective and recounting everything precisely as it occurred – that is nothing short of the Holy Grail for historians (whether to find or create). Such a concept comes from a misconception of what the word means.

History in the literary sense (that which we now call *historiography*) is an articulation – a 'telling' or, in the words of Gershom Scholem, a "reconstruction of experience" – of what is *believed to have occurred* in the past;[2] and in the investigative sense it is "an attempt to get access to past memory subsequent to the occurrence of the historical event".[3] Ideally, it is the

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[1] Assmann, J., 1998: 3-4

[2] Scholem, 2011: 1; although note that Scholem is reluctant to articulate a blanket definition of "the historical process" (7). See further in 1.3, below, for my understanding of the texts to be dealt with herein as *historiographical literature*.

[3] Barstad, 2010: 8. Even the term 'historical event' is semantically precarious, for histories are filled with events subjectively qualified as 'historical'. What makes a past event 'historical', then, depends upon the context from which and within which it is evaluated. See especially Scholem, 2011, *passim* (a publication of two responses to a presentation made by Paul Riceour; both of which date to 1974).

product of the scholarly discipline of the same name, whereby accounts and memories of past events, people and places – whether preserved, to list some examples, in earlier written histories, oral tradition, folk etymologies, temple or palace records, religious ordinances and ritual observance – are brought together and critically analysed using data from related disciplines such as archaeology, sociology, and anthropology, to construct a coherent, chronologically arranged account with *a preconceived beginning and end*. More importantly, however, history is *a narrative about the past*, and as I will show further on, the history within which Exodus was eventually positioned – that of 'Biblical Israel' articulated in Genesis-2 Kings (the so-called 'Primary History'; see further below) – was subordinate to the literary conventions of its day (see 1.3, below); just as it was selective and subjective, and a product of specific motivations and aims. Brettler observes that the "modern bias toward scientific history" can restrict our willingness to assign the label 'history' to ancient works;[4] but where the scribal activity behind the biblical texts is concerned, I see no reason to distance it from a modern definition of history that sees the process as comprised of "cause-effect sequences as the author(s) understood them", when the choices we make as historians as to what events and people we should investigate are determined by occupying a position evaluating those same perceived 'sequences'.[5] In other words, an historian's conclusion as to a 'cause' begins with an investigation into the 'effect'.

For the purpose of this thesis, this 'Primary History' of 'Biblical Israel', and the 'historicisation' of prophetic oracles designed to legitimate the antiquity of their messages (see further below and in Section 3.3), will be viewed as part of a major literary endeavour, the product of an inquiry into the past brought to fruition by the scribal establishment of Persian Period Jerusalem with a view to consolidating the ethno-religious identity, 'Israel' (see Section 1.1 for the literary construction of identity). While those who composed these texts would have

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[4] Brettler, 1995: 10. I do not agree with Brettler's argument that to say that history is a narrative about *the* past presupposes measures of "facticity" (ibid.: 10: 43). Narratives do not imply historicity; and Brettler's equally concise re-wording of this definition of history – wherein history is "a narrative that presents *a* past" (12; emphasis mine) – does little to temper any implications perceived of the former. The past occurred, and historians narrativise a perception of it. No matter how many histories are written, there was only ever a single past to investigate; and to envisage 'multiple pasts' arises solely from the creation of multiple perspectives on that single phenomenon.

[5] Coats, 1983: 318. History in the abstract sense – and here I mean the way we use the word to speak about the past – is a particular concept of the past as foundational for the present; as well as being a concept of the present as determinative for the future. As such – and much like its literary manifestation – it is a subjective construct applied in the evaluation of specific events deemed pivotal within a greater understanding of the development of humankind.

been unfamiliar with our modern methodologies and perhaps even our concept of 'truth', they nonetheless incorporated many of the elements outlined above – as well as many others – to construct an account defined by their particular worldview and concerns. As I will show, they sought to articulate the potency of a particular 'cause and effect' sequence – related to political transition – which they perceived as repeatedly relevant to their development; a singular, binding concept of how external powers influenced the progress of their nation. They did so by bringing together accounts of past events and people and breathing new life into ancient traditions and collective memories the significance of which was determined by their newfound (contemporary) appreciation of a historically repeating circumstance which facilitated the harmonisation of those accounts.[6]

While I believe that our perception of historical truth – that which can be either proven or denied through the alignment of evidence existing outside of a (literary) history – played a part only insofar as it facilitated the projection of this cause and effect sequence back into the past (see throughout for my use of 'mnemohistorical anchors'), I will nonetheless apply it in my pursuit of the potential facts behind the received narrative to investigate the perceived antiquity of the traditions and collective memories preserved therein.[7]

A singular 'grand narrative' is at the heart of the Primary History, facilitating cohesion and continuity of ideology. Exodus is that narrative, and while I approach Exodus as a cultural memory – that is, a codified or 'sacralised' account of a past event through which a group defines itself and distinguishes itself from its neighbours, often manifesting in religious ceremony or ritual observance (see further from p. 20 below)[8] – its incorporation into the

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[6] As such, the construction of historical continuity will emerge as a major aspect of my argument.

[7] By the term 'mnemohistorical anchor', I mean a person, place or event in an historical narrative (the existence of whom or which is not in dispute) through which are 'anchored' chronologically the memories informing a tradition or story, the details of which are presented as entirely factual. Some examples in this thesis are Pharaoh Shishak (see 3.2.1, below); the Assyrian annexation of Samaria (3.3); and Pharaoh Necho (3.4.1). While many scholars have sought to find such anchors in Exodus, the nameless Pharaohs do little to lend veracity to the account, and place names such as Pithom and Ra'amses are equally unreliable for contextual dating (see further below, p. 110, n. 168). Apart from the problems posed by the variant versions of the migration tradition suggested by the references in the prophetic texts (see 3.3.1), the lack of credible 'anchors' for the claimed antiquity of the received form of the tradition have led me to adopt a less 'historicist' approach to Exodus. Nonetheless, I do not dismiss it out of hand, and Section 1.2 deals with the debate concerning the historicity of the migration and conquest accounts.

[8] Where the codification of memory is concerned, cultural memory can emerge as a result of historiography, but it brings history to life by perpetuating its relevance. It might be best to think of

narrative flow of the Primary History, its 'historicisation', reveals its potency as the cultural memory *par excellence*, the most important story of an ancient event in Israel's past which is alluded to repeatedly throughout that history as a paradigm for oppression and liberation. The features of Exodus which reveal its concern with the articulation, distinction and preservation of Israelite identity are dealt with in the first section of my opening chapter; and it is my thesis that the evolution of the tradition of migration from Egypt – which became what we know as Exodus *only with the crystallisation of the Primary History* – can be aligned with the evolution of the ethno-religious identity 'Israel', precisely because the evolution of the latter can be perceived in terms of a history of identity crises wherein the former was applied each time to maintain the integrity of 'Israel'.[9] It is this symbiosis of evolution which marks Exodus as central to both the literary and ideological character of the Primary History, and I will come to argue that the motif of political transition facilitates the connection between the ancient tradition of coming out of Egypt and the literary presentation of a select number of historical contexts re-presented to the people as pivotal moments in their past (the foundation of the kingdom of Israel; the annexation of Israel by the Assyrians; and the so-called 'reformation' of Josiah). In this sense, I envisage collective memories of coming out of Egypt being reformulated during each of these historical contexts, to such an extent that an understanding of Egypt as a tangible threat to identity recedes in the collective consciousness to be replaced by 'Egypt' as a 'cipher' for ethno-religious polarisation (see below in 3.3.3) as well as an archetype for tyranny and oppression.

There is, of course, no evidence for the mass migration out of Egypt of hundreds of thousands of people; not only at the time suggested by the Bible's internal chronology (which is itself dependent on correlation with the reign of kings whose activity and longevity is still

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cultural memory as 'living history'. It should be noted, however, that cultural memory does not need a writing culture in which to operate. In this sense, oral accounts of the past are equally as responsible for the creation of cultural memory as written ones. This is why, throughout this thesis, my use of the term 'cultural memory' does not necessarily imply an historiographical basis; and while both history and cultural memory can be applied to (re)structure group identity and distinction, cultural memory does not have to take literary form. For biblical scholarship, this concept has the capacity to change the way we think about the composition of texts evincing multiple and often conflicting ideas and phrases; for the codification of 'memories' (whether invented or not) which ended up in the received texts does not necessarily require textual precedents.

[9] I will employ the term 'migration tradition' (and its variants) from here on to refer to a story (or stories) told of an ancestral journey out of Egypt; a story which evolves to accumulate the details found in Exodus. To distinguish between a tradition and a cultural memory, I will say this: the former does not necessarily define the people who share it; whereas the latter does.

debated), but at any time in Egypt's past. That fact notwithstanding – and I will deal with some of the problems posed by biblical chronology in Section 1.2, below – the event appears to reflect vague memories of interaction with or disassociation from Egypt which were preserved within the general cultural milieu of second millennium BCE Syria-Palestine. To this end, my second chapter will deal with the potential antiquity of such (collective) memories which survived the coalescence of disparate ethnic identities resulting in the foundation of a people called 'Israel'. I deal with what I call the 'usual suspects' occupying the debate concerning the great antiquity of this ethnic group: the Hyksos, the Habiru, the Shasu, and the Egyptian Pharaohs Akhenaten and Merneptah.

Chapter 3 will deconstruct three major 'memory contexts' in the history of Israel and Judah wherein the migration tradition can be seen developing in tandem with *perceptions of* an 'Israelite' identity in recurring crisis over the centuries of development towards what we would now call 'Biblical Israel'. Here, the ideological connections reach beyond the Primary History, and by including an historical-critical analysis of prophetic texts wherein the migration tradition is promoted or alluded to in order to castigate the (implied) audience (Section 3.3 and, in a different context, 3.4.4), I will show that the relationship perceived by the biblical writers between identity crisis (and reformulation) and the tradition of coming out of Egypt determined not only which accounts of prophetic behaviour were aligned with the literary-ideological agenda of the Primary History, but also how their activity was 'historicised' to lend extra authority to the potency of that tradition. I believe that the words and activity of these legendary figures, surviving in the collective memory of the people and thus bearing their own inherent authority, were appropriated by the biblical writers and set into a chronological framework to bolster the authenticity of a concerted project of identity reformulation. In this regard, and where the allusions to the migration tradition are concerned, the fact that *those I believe to have been spoken* by these figures at this time betray awareness of *a variant version of that tradition* provides the basis for understanding these texts as being comprised of genuine eighth century prophetic oracles appropriated and re-contemporised by and within the context of the concerns of the scribal establishment of Jerusalem.[10]

In Chapter 4, I will come to the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah and the allusions to and the reflections upon the Primary History within, arguing that the recent reality (for the writers and their audience) of political transition which facilitated the (re)establishment of 'Biblical Israel' in Jerusalem inspired the presentation of that new 'creation' in terms of a disassociation from all

[10] As I will show in Chapter 3, there is a complex redactional history behind these texts which facilitates the construction of continuity between the ideals of 'Josian' Jerusalem and the formulation of the identity of 'Biblical Israel' in Persian period Jerusalem.

that had gone before. While the literary-ideological aspects of Ezra-Nehemiah maintained a select continuity with the Primary History – thus copper-fastening the concept that it is through triumph over crisis that Israel will flourish – the discontinuity made manifest by the *inversion* of the repeated outcome of political transition characteristic of that history suggests that the author of Ezra-Nehemiah presupposed the received form of Exodus, and recognised its potency for claiming the great antiquity of 'Biblical Israel' (see 5.2, below).

While the search for correspondence between particular details of the biblical narratives and extra-biblical data will certainly play a part (particularly in terms of my 'mnemohistorical anchors' mentioned above), this thesis is indebted to an understanding that modern historians share a surprising affinity with the writers of the Hebrew Bible, in that both possess(ed) very little knowledge about the origins of Israel. It will be shown that the biblical writers were concerned with the details of the past only insofar as they might legitimate their (newly foundational) present; and that – as with any history – "the historical circumstances in which a given book was generated [...] impacted directly on its purpose and contents", leading to confusion for modern historians navigating a sea of anachronisms in order to protect the credibility of their enterprise.[11] So rather than 'simply' speculating upon the origins and development of 'Israel' within i) the geopolitical context of a transition between the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age of Syria-Palestine; and ii) the monarchic and post-monarchic intrigues of Israel and Judah, this thesis will speculate upon how those ultimately responsible for the history of 'Biblical Israel' compiled an *accumulation of reflections* on these periods to produce not only a relatively coherent chronological narrative homogenised in its literary-ideological approach to the past; but also a corpus of historicised oracles and sayings of remembered figures, reinvigorated by that same concept of historical relevance.

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[11] Edelman, 2013: xix. Thompson (1999: 206) suggests that the biblical writers did not set out to write a verifiable account of the past, arguing that the difficulties with aligning their account with the archaeological evidence stems from a misconception of the Bible: "This is not because 'the Bible is wrong', but because the Bible is not history." The reappraisal in this thesis of the semantic application of the word 'history' is intended to clarify the perception of, in this case, Genesis-2 Kings as a whole (which is indeed *a History* of Israel), and it would be more concise to state that its *account of the past* is not *historically accurate*. Cf. Miller & Hayes, 2006: 51. Also Barstad (1996b: 111, n. 24), defending an understanding of the Bible as history: "[I]t is *not* possible to claim the texts of the Hebrew Bible are 'ahistorical'. No text coming out of the past can be. No one [...] would refer to the works of Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy as 'historical' books. But this does not at all mean that we cannot learn a lot about the societies in which these writers lived from the reading of their books. Even if the ancient Israelite society is long gone [...], this does not mean that the written remains from this society do not yield 'historical' information."

To say that this is a thesis about the history of 'Biblical Israel' or of the migration tradition which binds it is, therefore, insufficient; just as the claim that it is about memory, tradition or even myth would not account for the narrativisation and historicisation of these phenomena behind the production of that history.[12] Instead, the aim of this thesis is to account for the incorporation into history (and related historicised accounts) of all of the above, with a view to reconfiguring their relevance, their messages and their 'truths'. History, however, does more than just incorporate these phenomena; it aims to stop them in their tracks.[13] I believe that it was the aim of the scribal establishment of Persian Period Jerusalem to stop the evolution of those memories and traditions within the context of codifying and legitimating the identity of the people responsible for the resulting history; and to create a lasting cultural memory through the historicisation and 'sacralisation' of Exodus, that singular 'grand narrative' that unifies the whole.

As I will show in Chapter 4, the well-known argument that Exodus is merely an analogy for the 'return' from Babylon is insufficient for appreciating the longevity and antiquity of the migration tradition. It also does little for understanding why the people who remained in Judah would have embraced such a cultural memory as central to their self-identity. I will show instead that it was through the combined potency of long-held collective memories of the Egyptian migration and the reinvigoration and historicisation of those memories in 'post-exilic' Judah that 'Biblical Israel' reconfigured and promoted its identity to the extent that the majority of the population accepted not only Exodus but also the Primary History as the official history of their nation.

Finally, in my conclusion, I will revisit the issue of political transition and how a specific perspective on its consequences was used not only to legitimate the continuity of 'Biblical Israel' as articulated in its history; but also to articulate a new vision for the future of the people.

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[12] On the historicisation of myth, see from p. 15, below.

[13] Cf. Barstad, 2010: 8: "When memories are written down, history starts."

CHAPTER 1

Memory, Identity, and Historiography: The Bible as an Accretion of Reflection

> In the time of grand narrative, the presence of History meant that history could always conquer memory: History trumped "histories". In the time of grand narrative's collapse, this is no longer so. Thus it is hard to know how the tension between the historical and the mnemonic can ever be overcome. It is certain that the sum of memories does not add up to history. It is equally certain that history does not by itself generate a collective consciousness, an identity...[1]

1.1 Remembering Exodus, Identifying Israel

Historiography is an exercise in recollection – or, better, *re*-collection (*pace* Jan Assmann) – in that it demands of the historian that accounts of the past are collected which preserve or appeal to 'memories' of (perceived) historical events. Whether they are 'living' (communicative) accounts of said events, or accounts handed down through generations, the historian collects them to articulate a particular conception of the past; one which would invariably be forgotten. Yet for something to be truly *forgotten*, it must have actually occurred, and so it might be best to speak of lost accounts of the past as *abandoned*, in that the active dismissal of their *validity* has taken place.[2] This distinction recognises the potential existence at a given time of numerous accounts of the past jostling for superiority, accounts which – being defined by the requirements of each respective group to which they 'belong' – are necessarily subjective. It follows, then, that a singular conception of the past formulated by an historian is as subjective as the accounts upon which it is founded.[3] So which comes first, the 'memories' of the past or the histories authenticating them? This is where we turn to identity; and Megill, in

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[1] Megill, 2011: 197

[2] In his *Moses and Monotheism* (herein 2011), Freud spoke of tradition – in terms of 'oral report[s]' of the past – being ousted by written accounts, which were formed "according to [the] needs and tendencies of the moment". As to the 'trustworthiness' of either medium of relating accounts of the past, the fact that the latter involves a conscious program of 'forgetting' the former does little for its veracity.

[3] Cf. Megill, 2011: 196; Jonker, 2012: 65-66. Also Lambert, 2004: 357: "[A]ll historians select the material they present from a larger body of happenings [...] and selections are made according to what the writer [...] considers important." Also Zerubavel, Y., 1997: 5: "Historians may indeed strive to become detached analysts, but they are also members of their own societies, and, as such, they often respond to prevalent social ideas about the past."

responding to the 'Halbwachsian' model in which *established identities* lead to *the construction of memories* designed to legitimate them, posits the 'problematic of identity', whereby any appeal to memory arises from a context in which there is a "lack of fixity at the level of identity".[4] That is, where a crisis is perceived regarding the identity of the respective group, the construction of 'memories' goes hand-in-hand with the construction of that identity. Yet, in this 'chicken-and-egg' conversation, is it not worth asking how Halbwachs' identity is established in the first place and what memories might have existed before any narrative is articulated to support them? Likewise, how would our hypothetical group have defined itself prior to Megill's symbiotic program of identity-memory construction? The group is unlikely to have eschewed self-identification (although I concede that socio-political isolation might permit such a circumstance), and while I agree that questions of identity arise once identity is threatened (a view integral to this thesis), there must be a foundation of historical truth – borne by established traditions – upon which narratives of social cohesion are based. A crisis of identity implies the existence of *competing identities* resulting from (or, indeed, causing) the breakdown of social cohesion, and so a compromise is necessarily characteristic of the history composed in response to the crisis.[5] The credibility of this 'official' *History* requires some semblance of authenticity if it is to be accepted as truth, and if we perceive a society as an amalgamation of disparate groups maintaining their respective identities through their very own (collective) memories, the 'official' History must to some degree accommodate such groups accordingly.[6] In this regard, Jens Bruun Kofoed recognises the fluidity of the 'official' History:

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[4] Megill, 2011: 194-195

[5] On an individual level, Davies, Philip R. (2008: 106) notes that such identity "is meaningless without the existence of other identities from which it can be differentiated". Although cf. Brett, 2012: 40, who maintains that "even when [revisions of ethnic and national identity] were fiercely contesting alternative perceptions of reality, the overriding issues for the historical actors themselves would not have been the making of identity as such." If the debate here concerns the intentions of the authors, I find it difficult to believe that identity formulation (the subject of the volume within which Brett is here published) was merely incidental. Further, Brett highlights (*idem*) the need to address the 'emic' concerns of the authors with regards to "their own beliefs and actions". In the context of texts which clearly evince adherence to literary convention and are thus open to criticism from an historical point of view, it must be recognised that the intention was not to simply write 'reports' (cf. Galvin, 2011: 91) of past events. As will be explored further below and throughout this thesis in general, the sense of continuity evoked by the re-use of literary motifs is integral to establishing the antiquity and 'fixity' of identity.

[6] As will be explored further below, the biblical preoccupation with projecting shared kinship into the primordial past is a necessary element of nation-building and constructing identity. Cf. Smith, 1991: 26:

> It is [...] a continuous reconstruction, reconfiguration, and re-presentation of memories that [...] are found meaningful and important enough to keep alive by a given society. [...] It is a shared cultural memory that overcomes the differences between individuals and groups in the society until it too becomes unstable because of challenges from new counter-memories, and a new compromise is needed in order to create a new shared memory that holds the group or nation together.[7]

This situation necessitates a 'grand narrative' of the past capable of facilitating disparate reminiscences of the past and accommodating groups whose identities are *preserved by its constituent parts*. Yet, if accounts of the past which once existed alongside each other have been subsumed by a 'grand narrative', how can we be aware of such accounts and, further, how can we begin to reconstruct them? Such a quest is doomed to failure if it is founded upon mere speculation that those accounts existed in the first place.

When it comes to the Hebrew Bible, however, the clues for their existence are conspicuously present amidst the 'official' History of the people of Israel. In fact, it is from their presence in the text that many fields of biblical criticism arose, when scholars observed the harmonisation of disparate narrative accounts – leading to the development of numerous literary hypotheses (see below) – as well as, for example, anachronistic literary and linguistic characteristics in poetry (cf. the concept of 'archaising' as it is sometimes applied to exegeses on Exod. 15) and various culture-specific worldviews and conceptions of the divine.[8] Even the

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"In the short term, rival 'histories' may divide the community [...] but over the long term, the effect of their propagation and inculcation is to deepen the sense of shared identity and destiny in a particular community." Such an effect is arguably indebted to the construction of an accommodating 'history' incited by ethnic competition. However, as Glassie (1994: 962) observes, while the purpose of history is to "consolidate" societies, "the past about which [it] is a tale is so enormous that all narratives are incomplete", forcing historians to pick and choose what should be preserved to the point of excluding the memories of some people in accordance with "the needs of the moment." Regardless of the (presumed) desire of authorities to bind people together, it would seem that exclusion is an inevitable outcome of historiography.

[7] Kofoed, 2012: 303-304

[8] Alter (1981: 47ff.) disputes the attribution of disparate accounts to variant sources (the basis of many hypotheses prevalent in biblical scholarship), advocating for considering the compilation of these seemingly contradictory and 'repetitive' stories and motifs as evidence of the intrusion of literary convention (see further below). The words of Ehud Ben Zvi (2009a: 17) regarding the composition of the prophetic books are equally relevant in this regard. For him, it is "the discourse of the [Persian] period"

appropriation of the legends, myths and cosmogonies of neighbouring peoples is evident throughout the Bible.[9] Closer scrutiny of the Bible has revealed competing theologies and ideologies within the historical discourse, indicating that our concept of 'harmonisation' is not congruent with that of the biblical writers.[10] This sometimes uncomfortable fact notwithstanding, there is one constituent element of the Hebrew Bible which comes closer to harmonising the whole than any other: the story of the 'Exodus' from Egypt.[11] Yet it does not only bring the myriad texts of the Bible into an ideological embrace; it also defines the people who composed the texts, as well as their intended audience. The 'Exodus' is so embedded in the cultural memory of 'Biblical Israel' that we cannot speak of the identity of the latter without considering the appeal to the 'memory' of the former.[12] As a religious identity, 'Israel' cannot exist without its distinctive attachment to its history. An awareness of the passage of time purposefully disconnected from outmoded mythological perspectives on the divine – and instead associated with the interaction between YHWH and humankind – situates the people within the very arena through which YHWH reveals himself. In the words of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi:

> Where they evoke the past, it is not the primeval but the historical past, in which the great and critical moments of Israel's history were fulfilled. Far from attempting a flight from history, biblical religion allows itself to be saturated by it and is inconceivable apart from it.[13]

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in Yehud which should be seen as the context for bringing together "a multiplicity of ideological viewpoints and voices"; this is a "central, sociological and ideological feature [which] must be explained, not explained away".

[9] See further below, 1.3. Also Andriolo, 1981, for an analysis of biblical mythology within the context of an anthropological "myth-history model".

[10] As per Whybray (1994: 19), the biblical writers were mostly "indifferent to what we should call inconsistencies".

[11] Na'aman, 2011a: 39 observes that the 'Exodus' theme appears in "all layers of biblical literature, including poetry, law, historiography, prophecy and the Psalms." This point is echoed in Hendel, 2001: 601; cf. also Frisch, 2000: 3-5. While Greifenhagen (2002: 1) remarks that "53% of the 711 explicit references to 'Egypt' [...] or 'Egyptian' in the Hebrew Bible" occurs in the Pentateuch, the remainder of the references to Egypt (i.e. outside the Pentateuch) allude to the tradition of a migration from Egypt, indicating that 'Exodus' ideology informs the received 'canonical' text to an overwhelming degree.

[12] Cf. Hoffmeier, 2012b: 106: "[T]he exodus and wilderness narratives are central to OTT, and [...] without them, the tapestry of Israel's faith [...] unravels".

[13] Yerushalmi, 2011: 202. Cf. also Alter, 1981, 24ff. and see further below on 'historicized myth'.

Exodus is the concerted appeal to the 'memory' of an event experienced by the ancestors of 'Biblical Israel', resonating as the definition of what it means to be part of 'Israel'. Significantly, the people are not called to remember the myths of creation or the wanderings of their ultimate father, Abraham;[14] neither are they enjoined to recall the flooding of the world and the covenant with Noah or the dispersal of the nations at the Tower of Babel, despite how seminal these events appear to be. These stories are subsumed by the ideology of Exodus, because they do not tell the people of 'Israel' – that is, the idealised 'Israel' of the Bible – who they are (they are concerned with a time before 'Israel').[15] The different ways in which the migration tradition is presupposed, promoted, recalled and appealed to throughout the Bible suggests that the received Exodus is part of a retrospective on Israelite identity accommodating disparate identities present at the time of its composition. Yet while Exodus is part of the official 'History of Israel' emerging from a potential cacophony of histories competing amidst a crisis of identity, it also bears witness to *a series of such contexts* as its themes are projected back through the restructured history of both Israel and Judah as a whole, so that a generally coherent narrative of continuity emerges to 'bridge the gap' between the otherwise 'forgotten' past and the much more relevant present.[16] This narrative connects the haziest of memories of the origins of the ethnic group 'Israel' (see Chapter 2) – via the memories of the foundation and collapse of the kingdom Israel (Chapter 3) – to the more concrete context of the scribal work of post-exilic Jerusalem in which 'Israel' is the eponym of the socio-religious elite dominant in Judah (Chapter 4).

In this sense, Exodus is the foundation myth of this much later 'Israel', undergirding its affirmations of identity and the articulation of its destiny. A foundation myth is not necessarily untrue, just as 'myth' does not imply falsity.[17] The 'problem' with foundation myths is that their

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[14] For the Persian period relevance of the Abraham stories, see 4.2, below.

[15] Cf. Loewenstamm's suggestion (1992: 53) that the appeal to the memory of coming out of Egypt likely informed "an oath-formula" during the time of Jeremiah.

[16] For a similar approach to the deconstruction of the transmission history of Deuteronomy, see Van Der Toorn, 2007: 143-172. In a modern context, see Tamm, 2008: 502: "The narrative form allows the nation to be imagined as continuous, and for discrete events to be interlinked into a meaningful history [...]. Consequently, different historical events come to acquire meaning when included as part of a general narrative template."

[17] Assmann, 2001: 111ff.; Dever, 2003: 232; Westermann, 1984: 21; Smith, 1991: 24-25; Walton, 2006: 43-44. Cf., for example, Oswalt, 2009: 31ff., who tackles popular and academic definitions of myth to conclude that the biblical narratives should not be referred to as such (contra Mullen, 1993: 5, n. 14). It

primary concerns are anchored in the historical context in which they are composed, so while they may preserve details of past events and situations, such details can be corrupted by said concerns.[18] Our task as historians is to postulate circumstances best suited to the underlying concerns and questions of these myths so as to identify the context within which they were produced.[19] Yet how can we be certain that we are dealing with a foundation myth in the first place? In the case of the biblical story of the migration from Egypt, the preoccupation evident in the Bible with remembering an event so far in the past and relating it to the audience – notably, their children – as justification for rituals or socio-economic practices and laws identifies it as a foundation myth (compare, for example, Deuteronomy 16:1, 3b, 12; or 24:18, 22, two statements justifying an array of instructions in that chapter; or the summary of the 'Exodus' in Deuteronomy 26:5-9, which opens with the so-called 'little credo'[20]); thus the explanation of Passover in Exodus 12:26 reads:

> "And when your sons ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to YHWH, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses'."[21]

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seems to me that the primary concern in his rather apologetic (Christian) approach is to deconstruct the "inescapable historic association of the word [that is, *myth*] with factual falsehood" (38).

[18] Cf. Assmann (1998: 14): "History turns into myth as soon as it is remembered, narrated, and used, that is, woven into the fabric of the present." Averbeck, 2004, articulates well the relationship and the distinctions between 'history writing' and 'mythography'. My use here of 'foundation myth' correlates with what he labels "historical myth" (332), noting that "[i]t consists largely of analogical *thinking* about what is perceived by the writer(s) as reality, specifically historical, natural, geographical, cultural, economic, or social reality." Averbeck goes on to argue that this kind of myth is not entirely fictional. On the relationship between myth and fiction in its ancient (Greek) context, see Calame, 2009: 1-5. See also further in Calame, 2009 (77-78) on how the 'Potiphar motif' extrapolated from the Joseph story relates to the disassociation of myths from their sociocultural context.

[19] For example, the introduction into new 'strata' of old stories of certain values and virtues synonymous with specific periods of social change can help us to identify the period in which those strata were composed. Cf. Smith, 1991: 26

[20] De Pury (2006: 56) argues that this 'credo', with its inherent labelling of Jacob as a foreigner (Aramean) was designed by the Deuteronomists to denigrate the Jacob story of the origins of Israel which operated as a rival to the Exodus tradition (cf. also Niehr, 2010: 25). If this is the case, then considerable concession has been made with its inclusion in the text.

[21] Most English translations render 'your children' for the Hebrew בְּנֵיכֶם. I have opted here for the more specific and – I believe – culturally faithful (esp. in a patriarchal society), 'your sons'.

Similarly, legitimation of the festival of Unleavened Bread in Exodus 13:8 reads:[22]

> "And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what YHWH did for me when I came out of Egypt'."

The didactic air of these explanations is characteristic of foundation myths, and the specific self-reference inherent in "what YHWH did for me" creates a perpetual relevance. Each time this line is recited, the speaker is claiming personal ownership of the 'Exodus' experience; and so Exodus resonates for the people not as some irrelevant tale from an unknowable past, but as a story for the here and now, its appeal to great antiquity (its "yardstick of authority") rendering it beyond challenge from the point of view of its capacity to legitimate the present.[23] It is rare in a literary culture that a 'grand narrative' of origins is not articulated and regularly appealed to as the basis for the collective identity of the nation.[24] Exodus has endured as one of the grandest examples of this phenomenon: it tells the people who they had been and over what they had triumphed, and as a "temporal landmark", it serves to explain the present (favourable or otherwise; cf. the justification for the destruction of Jerusalem in 1 Kgs. 9:6-9) as

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[22] For an interesting discussion on both the distinction between and the merging of the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the biblical texts (in particular regarding aspects of sunrise and sunset and the Egyptian and Babylonian calendar [cf. Deut. 16: 1-8]), see Wagenaar, Jan A., 2004.

[23] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 208; Mullen, 1997: 38, n. 55. Eviatar Zerubavel (2004: 105) observes that legitimacy derives from a sense of "priority" resulting from "mnemonic battles where each side basically tries to *out-past* the other". Deuteronomy, as the 'epilogue' of the Mosaic narrative, can be seen as the 'engine' of Israelite identity-formation insofar as it relates the importance of 'remembering' to an account of events in the primordial past. For more, see Assmann, 2010. On the added weight of literary convention for providing authority to narratives of identity construction, see 1.3, below. The matter is taken up again in Chapter 4 and in my conclusion with regards to the Primary History and its relationship to the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence.

[24] The American national narrative informing Thanksgiving Day is a perfect example of this phenomenon, considering the relatively recent origins of the narrative itself (Siskind, 1992). For more on the use and abuse of the past for modern identity and nationalism, see Zerubavel, E., 2004 (esp. 101ff.); Zerubavel, Y., 1997; Tamm, 2008; and Pai, 2000. Cf. also Thompson's (1999: 375ff.) critique of the appropriation by 'Europeans' of the classical and biblical origin traditions. Dever, 2003: 234, compares the place of Thanksgiving Day in American cultural memory to that of the 'Exodus' in Judaism (cf. also *ibid.*, 1995: 211). Interestingly, Finkelstein (1996: 203) hints at this repeated analogy of Dever's as characteristic of the latter's bias in his conclusions regarding the development of Israelite ethnicity.

a situation indebted to the events recounted.[25] The audience can be assured in each context of retelling the story of who they are and of what they are capable, just as they can be assured that future generations will continue to emulate the faith and character of their ancestors. It is the complete vehicle of national identity, bearing all the hallmarks of a foundation myth.[26] Its authority and authenticity lies in the fact that it has been coloured with *memories of actual historical events*, woven together to bolster its credibility as a story reaching into the primordial past while at the same recalling numerous and (for its 'original' audience) much more recent historical contexts. In this sense, and also because the biblical writers incorporated mythological imagery in their narrative of liberation from Egypt (in particular, YHWH's control over the sea; see further, Chapter 2), Exodus is the perfect example of what we might call 'historicised myth', and not only because it has been placed into a chronological narrative.[27] Instead, to speak of myth as *historicised*, we must also recognise the potential presence of at least some elements of historical fact; or at the very least, attachments to memories of the same. Consider this extract from Nietzsche's 'Untimely Meditations':

> As long as the soul of historiography lies in the great stimuli that a man of power derives from it, as long as the past has to be described as worthy of imitation, as imitable and possible for a second time, it of course incurs the danger of becoming somewhat distorted, beautified and coming close to free poetic invention; there have been ages, indeed, which were quite incapable of distinguishing between a monumentalized past and a mythical fiction, because precisely the same stimuli can be derived from the one world as from the other. If, therefore, the monumental mode of regarding history rules over the other modes [...] the past itself suffers harm: whole segments of it are forgotten, despised, and flow away in an uninterrupted colourless flood, and only individual embellished facts rise out of it like islands...[28]

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[25] Frisch, 2000: 6. Ironically, the 'canonical' form of Exodus might well have lost its appeal as a foundation myth had the people of 'Israel' not continued to suffer at the hands of international powers; a matter integral to my argument.

[26] In using the term 'national identity' here, I am in agreement with the argument of Goodblatt, 2006, that Jewish identity adapted to the separation from markers of communal or 'corporate' identity defined by temple or territory. In this sense, evolving Judaism transcended these – and other – limitations as they are deemed necessary (by analogy) for the application of modern notions of 'nationalism' to the study of ancient Judaism.

[27] See further Ahlström 1984: 521-522 (responding to Alter's use of 'historicized fiction'). Cf. also Moye, 1990, regarding the "movement from historicized myth to mythicized history".

[28] Nietzsche, 2011: 75-76; also 1980: 17

Like Nietzsche's 'islands' of detail rising amidst historiographical constructs, elements of historical accuracy are the chronological and contextual anchors by which is maintained the authenticity and integrity of stories which would otherwise lose their value and meaning. Of course, these stories do not just *mean* something to their audience; they *belong* to them, for they define them. The migration tradition belongs at the same time to each individual context in which Nietzsche's 'islands' arise, as well as to all of them. The language of persecution, oppression and – most importantly – resilience resonates for the audience most fervently when they *empathise* with the cast of Exodus, and it is by focusing upon these themes that we can identify the numerous circumstances behind the repeated revision of the myth.[29] This is the context within which Exodus will be deconstructed in this thesis, with numerous historical contexts (what I will come to call 'memory contexts') proposed in which the tradition resurfaces as an appeal to the ancient identity of 'Israel', emerging finally as the foundation myth of the 'Israel' to whom these themes are paramount in their self-presentation as those best entitled to bear the ancient eponym (and to appropriate it from other claimants).[30] By claiming 'ownership' of a foundation myth built upon repeated historical retellings of the tradition of migration from Egypt, 'Biblical Israel' asserted its *uninterrupted connection* to the earliest 'owners' of that tradition. None of this dismisses the validity of the claims to legitimacy inherent in the myth; we are for now concerned only with recognising the motivations, or the "hidden agenda", to borrow Jan Assmann's term, behind this literary activity.[31]

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[29] This language of resilience is behind Dever's description (2003: 232-234) of Exodus as a "metaphor for liberation" and informs his relating of the meaning of Thanksgiving for *all Americans* to that of Passover for *all Jews*, despite both groups being fully aware that not all of their ancestors participated in either respective foundational event. Thompson (1999: 31-33) describes the Bible as "survival literature", while Assmann, J. (2010) concludes that Exodus "oscillates between a political narrative of liberation and a religious narrative of conversion and as such exemplifies the intricate connection between religion and politics."

[30] It is here that the terms 'foundation myth' and 'cultural memory' appear to merge, but while both phenomena can perpetuate identity, a myth looks to the past solely to explain or legitimate the present; and does not necessarily preserve a specific memory (or historical) context (it may have no basis in historical thought). A cultural memory, on the other hand, continually re-contemporises the past through ritual re-enactment so as to align it with the present. A foundation myth can, of course, evolve into a cultural memory, but only once it is set into a preconceived chronological framework and it is regularly articulated as a story of the past which has determined the cultural peculiarities of its referent group.

[31] Assmann, 1998: 10

It is not impossible to find examples of such activity in more recent times, and such tales of origins invariably emerge from times of socio-political unrest when scepticism is rife amongst the populous and the homogeneity of the nation is challenged by disparate assertions of identity.[32] If such periods of 'disorder' are to be addressed, a narrative appealing to the unity of all concerned is necessarily produced. This narrative is the product of a particular socio-political agenda, often riding roughshod over historical accuracy (as Nietzsche rightly observed). Nietzsche directed his cynicism regarding nationalism towards the use and abuse of history and its appropriation for their own ends by those in power.[33] While it would be disingenuous to presume that such ends are always nefarious (Ricoeur remarks on the positive integrative role of the commemoration of "founders and founding events"), they are specifically concerned with shaping what we might call the 'psychological destiny' of a people: they seek to mould a population within the restraints of an idealised preconception of the world and the 'mission' of the people as they are positioned within it.[34] What materialises within this context is a sense of being 'chosen', an ideology difficult to peddle without a belief in a supernatural persona with the freedom to make such a choice. In other words, if those in power pursue the rhetoric of being chosen for some lofty purpose, the presence of an external consciousness *acting within*

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[32] See, for analogous purposes, the collected essays in Hobsbawm and Ranger (Eds.), 2013. Smith (1991: 175-176) observes that "nostalgia for an ethnic past only surfaced in periods of acute crisis". Where the 'history' constructed to create a sense of homogeneity is concerned, it is not "history-in-general" but the binding together of "separate histories of particular communities" (*ibid*: 138) which respond to the crisis and transcend parochial distinctions and concerns. For more on modern reconstructions of origins, see pp. 183ff. in the same volume. Cf., however, Brett (1996: 3), who remarks that socio-political ideologies such as Communism and Western 'democracy' failed to bind people together as intended, especially in Asia, Africa and post-Soviet Europe, where "[e]thnic nationalisms [...] emerged as potent forces". As Norman Davies opens his immense history of Europe (1997: 2), he reminds us that "[c]ontemporary history is vulnerable to all sorts of political pressure" and that "no educated adult can hope to function efficiently without some grounding in the origins of contemporary problems." On the ancient context of "skepticism" [sic] and "pessimism" as the catalyst for legitimating the official 'history', see Van Der Toorn, 2007: 214ff.

[33] My use of Nietzche began merely from my admiration of his metaphor regarding the survival of 'embellished facts' within the context of the 'abuse' of history and cultural forgetting. While I sympathise with his views concerning this abuse by those in power, this by no means protects the writers of the biblical historical narratives from accusations of the same.

[34] Ricoeur, 1986: 261. Where the 'mission' of the people 'Israel' is anchored from an authoritative point of view in the promise to Abraham, this connotes an idealised (if not naïve) and ethnically monolithic descent from an ultimate ancestor, one unchallenged by interaction over time with external identity groups; cf. Miller & Hayes, 2006: 72.

history introduces the invaluable weight of authenticity.[35] Subsequently, and of immediate concern for those in power, the *current circumstances* are legitimated, for such rhetoric arises not only in the pursuit of aspirations, but in the justification of the situation deemed foundational for their fruition.[36]

Nietzsche hypothesises further that the past is in danger from the purposeful and selective probing into the collective memory of a nation so that a specific (monumentalised) history is constructed to bear the weight of justifying contemporary circumstances.[37] Hence, a process of selective remembering and forgetting is set into motion through which 'reality' fades into the distance: the past is 'damaged'.[38] The risks are great, for how can the collective memory of a people be overwritten in front of their very eyes; and, if it is, what does this mean for their collective identity, their sense of self? Herein lies the paradox, for it is within a context of such confusion that the past is best revisited and reinvented; it is while people are entertaining such questions of identity that the opportunity to (re)create collective identity arises. This is why I say that not all programs of historical reformulation with a view to affirming collective identity are nefarious; rather, the opportunity to bind people together under a unifying banner of hope for the future can be found which is beneficial in the wake of social turmoil.[39] Yet while Megill's

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[35] The introduction in 1954 of the phrase 'under God' into the Pledge of Allegiance in the United States (an act of Congress long deemed unconstitutional) arguably articulates the socio-political rhetoric intended to promote a sense of (theological) self-righteousness in the face of the perceived threat at the time from the Soviet Union. On the introduction of the phrase in this context, see for example, McKenzie, 2004; Canipe, 2003; Gey, 2002. In the biblical context, Assmann, J. (2010: 13) notes that, "[c]hosenness concerns the future" and that "the idea [...of...] the election of a whole people for partnership with God [...] seems to be to replace the king with the people of Israel". Only within a (theoretically, at least) 'democratised' society could this particular sense of 'chosenness' operate, and Grant (2004: 278-281) theorises that the Deuteronomic subordination of the Israelite (or Judahite) monarch to YHWH acts as a sort of socio-political levelling, so that the people might see themselves as beholden to the strictures of rule. See further below, however (3.4.3), on the Deuteronomic 'circumscription' of the king.

[36] In political terms, those in power cast themselves as responsible for directing the destiny of the people, to the point that leaders arguably present themselves as the representative or even the replacement of the divine guide (cf. Smith, 1991: 133, 176). Ricoeur (1986: 13) observes that dominance is insufficient, and ideology is a necessary element when it comes to legitimation.

[37] On the 'traditional' relationship between the past and the present, see Nora, 2011: 438-439.

[38] On 'active' and 'passive' forgetting, see Assmann, A., 2011: 334.

[39] Of course, as per Van Der Toorn (2007: 217), no single period has a monopoly on social turmoil, and so there are repeated contexts throughout the history of a people or a nation for the reinvention of identity. Thus it might be argued that the older the nation, the less credible are the details of its *History*.

approach to the memory-identity 'problem' is beneficial, it is upon the distinction between *reinventing* identity as opposed to *creating* it that focus must remain. The collective memories which bind people are not easily erased, but such a program might prove successful over time once the people are persuaded of the irrelevance of memories deemed contrary to the 'official' presentation of the past.[40] With the gradual dislocation from their historical 'anchors' of any 'conflicting' memories which might survive these programs of identity (re)formation, it follows that they would lose their credibility for successive generations. It also follows that the continued appeal to memories binding a group ideologically distinct from the 'official' identity would see such a group becoming increasingly marginalised. This is not to say that such marginalisation is a permanent state; instead, it creates the perfect conditions for latency, wherein ideas, memories, and 'histories' lay dormant amidst the greater context of the official 'truths' of the nation:

> The phenomenon of the latency period in the history of the Jewish religion may find its explanation in this: the facts which the so-called official written history purposely tried to suppress were in reality never lost. The knowledge of them survived in traditions which were kept alive among the people.[41]

In the deconstruction of Exodus herein, this thesis seeks to identify not only these dormant memories, but also the contexts within which they were initially formulated as articulations of identity. To better appreciate how these contexts will be revealed and explored, it will be necessary to read the Hebrew Bible as the embodiment of the cultural memory of 'Biblical Israel', and the product of negotiations of identity which resurfaced throughout the

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This is why I would be reluctant to agree with the idea that "legitimate history writing cannot be substantially fictional, whether in ancient or modern times" (Averbeck, 2004: 330). The problem for historians is determining not only how far one is removed from the earliest contexts described in that history, but also how many times that history may have undergone revision and distanced itself from historical accuracy with each respective version.

[40] Cf. the words of Yael Zerubavel (1997) as she opens her study on the debt to memory construction of modern Israeli identity: "By introducing a highly selective attitude to [...history and tradition...], alternating between rejection and acceptance, suppression and elaboration, it [i.e. modern Israel] has reconstructed a new national memory and tradition." If we consider the potency of modern Israeli identity and the relatively recent initiation of their program of identity construction, it is not difficult to see how quickly an 'official' history can assume legitimacy.

[41] Freud, 2011: 85. Cf. also Assmann, J., 1998: 217-218.

development of this carefully constructed ethnicity.[42] In his *Memories of Ancient Israel*, Philip R. Davies initially approaches the terms 'social', 'collective' and 'cultural memory' synonymously, before opting for the latter because it is "being mostly adopted in biblical scholarship".[43] He proceeds, however, to speak of his participation in the celebration of Christmas and observes that this ritualised commemoration of an 'historical' event is rather unconcerned with its own historicity. It is with this analogy that the distinction between social and collective memory, on the one hand, and cultural memory, on the other, is articulated; for while memories binding a group of people are indeed social and collective, they do not qualify as 'cultural' until they have been codified, stabilised and rendered permanent as manifestations and declarations of cultural distinction.[44] Such manifestations can take numerous forms (art, architecture, and music, for example), but it is with historiographical literature and ritual that we are most concerned.[45]

When the renowned Egyptologist, Jan Assmann, coined the term 'cultural memory' to better appreciate such manifestations of the collective memory in a given society, he was not introducing an entirely radical concept in a methodological vacuum; rather, he was building upon an already established field of 'Memory Studies' within which philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists and, of course, psychologists considered the relationship(s) between the remembered and forgotten past, and individual and group identity.[46] While the so-called 'memory boom' of the nineteenth century was indebted to nationalistic appeals to the past,

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[42] Cf. Jonker, 2011.

[43] Davies, Philip R., 2008: 107

[44] This is perhaps an exercise in semantics. Certainly, Ehud Ben Zvi uses 'social' and 'cultural' memory synonymously, particularly evident where he says (2013: 4) that *social memory* is "the public, integrated, and socially integrative representation of the past that is held, shaped, and negotiated within a social group, and which holds it together"; and further: "Social memory is about the past that is constantly present within the community and about the present of the community that is legitimized by that past". This 'constant presence' of the past is indebted to the codification and contemporisation perpetuated by cultic re-enactment and its associated proscriptions; and in a religious community, these institutions delimit and define cultural distinction.

[45] Edelman, 2012: 161: "Ritual is one of the means by which social memory is encoded in a culture, reinforcing a sense of shared distinctive practices and creating the impression that the associations they evoke are special."

[46] For an interesting study on the 'integrity' of (individual) identity and its relationship with 'autobiographical memory' (as well as with group membership), see Haslam et al., 2011. On the question concerning the relationship – or lack thereof – between history and memory (and the place of cultural memory in this discourse), see Tamm, 2008: 499-502.

the monumental events of the twentieth century prompted an ideological 'reversal' of the appeal to memory (as opposed to the glorification of the past inherent in the former approach); not least with the hope that by ensuring that the world would not forget the horrors of two global conflicts, we might honour those who suffered and died whilst also educating future generations on the potential devastation inherent in fascism, racism and intolerance.[47] In the wake not only of the possibility of forgetting, but of any concerted attack on remembering, the value of ceremony for the retention of collective memory and the identity it sustains cannot be underestimated.[48] Within the context of religion, this is precisely where 'cultural memory' belongs, protecting that which its adherents have deemed necessary for the survival of their shared sense of identity. In the case of Exodus, the manifestations of cultural memory protecting its relevance are the Passover festival and the 'codification' of the narrative articulating the collective memories upon which the festival is based. Permanency, then, depends upon the 'canonisation' of an account of the past, in which the 'history' – and here I will reiterate (cf. page 3-4, n. 8, above) that cultural memory does not require literary expression – is deemed untouchable and inflexible; the 'history' becomes *sacred*. By extension, it gradually renders impermanent and *illegitimate* any other versions still circulating amongst the people, until such a time that they are 'suppressed'. In short, 'remembering' an official version of the past cannot occur without the concerted 'forgetting' of another.[49] From a literary point of view, Exodus is more than merely an articulation of such a program overwriting earlier versions of the tradition; its inherent claim to revelation embodies the usurpation of the authority of oral tradition by the written word.[50] Yet how decisive, how total, can the

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[47] On the history of 'Memory Studies' (and especially the question as to whether the 'Holocaust' prompted its revival in the late 20th century), see the Introduction in Olick et al., 2011.

[48] Cf. Glassie, 1994: 962: "Repeated enactment invites committed participation, the formation of an ongoing social order". Jan Assmann (2011a: 16) observes that 'memory culture' concerns itself with the creation of a community by addressing primarily the question "What must we not forget?". Connerton (2011) elaborates on the 'performative' aspects of ceremony contributing to "bodily social memory" (wonderfully articulated as 'stylistic re-enactments of an image of the past' [*paraphrased*]), a significant element of collective identity. In the case of remembering the 'Exodus', of course, the festival of Passover maintains the relevance of and re-enacts this ancient 'event' (Hendel, 2001: 621).

[49] Tamm, 2008: 501. Cf. Kofoed (2012: 305): "The cultural memory is a group's official memory and is intrinsically related to power and tradition. [...] Cultural texts lay claim to an authority that embraces society as a whole; they determine its identity and coherence."

[50] Cf. Deut. 4:44 and 29:28 as they embrace the 'edition'; also 28:58, 61, and see further Van Der Toorn, 2007: 221ff.; Fitzpatrick-McKinley, 1999: 166-177. Also see 1.3, below; and further below in Section 3.4 on the Josian 'reform'.

'forgetting' of established traditions really be; and what are the implications for the retention of identity?

Consider the following phrase: "I remember therefore I am, and I am therefore I remember".[51] It is difficult to argue that, for better or worse, we are the sum of our experiences and how our memory stores, processes and *re*-collects them. While individual memory is not the purview of this thesis, it is nonetheless important to reflect upon it insofar as theories of collective memory are related to or extrapolated from its analysis. Aleida Assmann likens the dynamics of canonical and archival memory in a society to a storehouse of memory within each of us, constantly conceding space to new memories at the expense of older ones.[52] This 'replacement' of older memories does not render them permanently inaccessible; rather, they await retrieval in a haze of contextual dislocation until such time as our minds deem them necessary, relevant to the circumstances prompting recall. Halbwachs observed that personal memory is considerably more complex than a filing system permitting easy retrieval, and it may be that we "rely on chance" to discover the 'combination' to the 'safe' within which we have locked away our memories.[53] This concept is closely related to Freud's theories on latent memory defining his approach to the place of the 'Exodus' in the Jewish psyche, in that despite attempts at 'forgetting' (repression), contexts as yet unimagined may lead in later situations to the retrieval of old memories.[54] Problems arise when those memories are afforded different interpretations in light of their newly assigned contexts, invariably distorting the integrity of the old memories to the detriment of their reliability. This phenomenon approaches greater levels of complexity when experienced by a collective bearing a composite reminiscence of a shared past comprised of subjective and once disparate memories (as observed above). This constructed reminiscence calls for considerable concession to 'storage' space, for there is simply no room in the 'big picture' for every single detail of the experiences of every single individual. Further, if subjectivity introduces a lack of integrity; and that integrity becomes exponentially untenable as the 'big picture' becomes more elaborate, at what point should we envisage within the collective memory severed ties with actual past events? It is this very question which Freud's theories on latency seek to navigate. To extrapolate further still, the 'memory' of a nation is necessarily, at least on the surface, the 'big

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[51] From the title of Catherine Haslam's 2011 article on 'Self-Knowledge' (Haslam et al., 2011).

[52] Assmann, A., 2011. The 2001 Stephen King novel, Dreamcatcher, illustrates this concept quite dramatically, as 'Jonesy' trundles around his memory 'warehouse' incinerating old memories as new ones are introduced and 'filed' in their place.

[53] Halbwachs, 2011: 141

[54] The influence of Freud's work on reconstructions of a relationship between Pharaoh Akhenaten (14th c. BCE) and 'Mosaic monotheism' is discussed in Chapter 2.

picture' of that political entity accommodating the past experiences, current circumstances and future aspirations of its inhabitants. I say 'on the surface' because nationalism more often than not accommodates *the ideals of specific interest groups* driving the preconceived 'destiny' of the nation. Thus, any history composed to articulate that destiny is subject to a 'big picture' of the past perpetuating an agreed-upon socio-political rhetoric; which is by extension subject to the "bounded horizon" resulting from purposeful 'forgetting' and encapsulating the identity of a people.[55] It is precisely this observation which calls for a reappraisal of historiography in terms of understanding the motivations for its production; and, by approaching the Bible as an historiographical work concerned with the perpetuation of Israelite identity, we can move towards a better understanding of the historical context within which these texts were produced. For my purposes, this understanding of the biblical texts bolstering a particular identity identifies Exodus as a cultural memory central to that end. Before moving on to consider the 'memory contexts' relating to the development throughout the history of 'Israel' of this tradition of migration, it will be necessary to relate what we have covered here to matters of the composition of the biblical texts and of their value for the reconstruction of said contexts.

1.2 The Value of the Biblical Texts for Reconstructing Ancient Israel

> Through an uninterrupted chain of oral and, subsequently, scribal transmission, traditions from almost a millennium about the vicissitudes of the people of Israel, its history, its culture and its belief, have come to us. As, in its present form, it still witnesses to this long, complicated and, at times, frustrating process, it should not be degraded to a secondary source: it has a specific longue durée of its own, which makes it a primary source for writing its own history, the history of ancient Israel.[56]

At this point, two questions require consideration. Firstly, did the people of ancient Israel and Judah believe that stories told to perpetuate their sense of unity were accurate accounts of past events experienced by their ancestors? While scholars might refer to Exodus as a 'foundational', 'formative' or 'mythical' tale, this is modern language projected upon ancient worldviews about which we can only ever speculate, leading us often to dismiss such stories as

[55] Nietzsche, 2011: 79

[56] Koster, 2010: 127

completely unhistorical.[57] It is difficult to imagine an ancient Israelite or Judahite dismissing the migration tradition as a myth intended not to preserve an account of the past, but simply to deal with matters in his or her present.[58] Of course, as with any history, retrospective is the guiding force, and when it comes to the Bible, we have a version of events viewed not only from a particular point in time, but also by a particular group of people: those in authority over the 'silent majority' about whose lives history was rarely ever concerned in ancient times.[59] The issue, then, is one of ideology, where its manifestation (propaganda) serves "not to integrate nor to distort reality but rather to legitimize [...] the authority of the ruling group".[60] This understanding of ideology as a contributing factor in historiography envisages a challenge to the historical picture underpinning the existing authority; a challenge correctly extending to the historicity of the biblical accounts of the past insofar as it is necessary to speculate upon the motivations of the authors. Brettler argues that this matter of "intentionality" should not assume centre stage in a reconstruction of the contexts in which the biblical historical narratives were composed, despite acknowledging that "[a]ny understanding of history which depends on historicity cannot be profitably applied to the biblical corpus".[61] Yet if we conclude that propaganda or polemic or identity (re)construction are characteristic elements of texts identified as 'goal-oriented', then can we not extrapolate that these characteristics relate to the intentions of the authors? We can see in the Bible the evidence for the (perceived) existence of and conflict with other worldviews and religions seen as the antithesis of the

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[57] Averbeck (2004: 333) addresses our modern concerns: "The mythical analogical character of the story does not eliminate the fact that the realities upon which the story is based did exist and were important to the ancient people [.] Yes, there is fiction here, but not *just* fiction."

[58] Cf. Niditch, 2010: 12: "[B]elievability is not incompatible with conventions of content, language and plot." Rather, what has passed into cultural memory rests atop a foundation of cultural expectation upon which religious experience is more potently affirmed (Cf. Niditch, 2010: 12). On the 'Exodus' being accepted as factual by its ancient audience, see Dever, 2003: 232-234.

[59] Exceptions in the Bible can arguably be found in the prophetic books, wherein the 'words' we might ascribe to these elusive figures in their original setting are concerned solely with that setting; and thus provide us with a unique snapshot of life in ancient Israel and Judah otherwise distorted by the contextual narrative into which their 'words' were later set. See for example, Moore, 2006; and Section 3.3, below.

[60] Mayes, 2000: 460. On the functional distinction between ideology and propaganda, I follow here Brettler's definitions, whereby "ideology [...] refer[s] to a specific type of sets of beliefs [and] propaganda [...] refer[s] to the methods used to disseminate [...] those beliefs" (1995: 14). My application, therefore, of the word 'propaganda' throughout this thesis will not by any means imply judgement as to its purpose.

[61] Brettler, 1995: 11-12

'Israelite' ideal; and there are plenty of polemical texts whereby condemnation of other religious practices – as well as the appropriation of divine characteristics and epithets – implies the participation of much of the general population in those religions (even Exod. 20:3-5 implies fear of apostasy).[62] The practice of idol worship reminiscent of that famous scene in Exodus 32 – which is itself ideologically associated with the 'heresy' of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12:25-33 (see 3.2, below) – is alluded to through the words of YHWH, here in the mouth of the prophet Isaiah (46:5-7):

> To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, as though we were alike? Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales – they hire a goldsmith, who makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries out to it, it does not answer or save anyone from trouble.

This fear of 'regression' to other forms of worship is a matter to which I will return, but it can be safely concluded that there was a general setting for ideological conflict, and with it conflict in the realm of History; for if history champions identity, it is necessarily on the front lines of socio-religious conflict.[63] To think, then, that everyone in ancient Israel and Judah believed and accepted their ancestor narratives *in the form we have them today* as authoritative, singular versions is somewhat naïve, completely overlooking the internal evidence of the Bible itself.[64]

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[62] Peckham, 1987; McCarter, Jr. (1987: 137): "[T]he biblical writers themselves indicate that the branch of preexilic [sic] religion they are embracing was a dissenting viewpoint [...]". Similarly, Coogan (1987: 115): "[I]t is essential to consider biblical religion as a subset of Israelite religion and Israelite religion as a subset of Canaanite religion." See also Walton, 2006: 23-25, although he appears to understand biblical polemic as something always externally – rather than sometimes internally – focused. On whether or not Gen. 22 constitutes a polemic against child sacrifice practiced by the people of Israel or Judah, see Boehm, 2007.

[63] If, as per Ricoeur (1986: 259), ideology is the product of a conflict of ideologies, then the history constructed to promote a given identity envisages a post-conflict situation as synonymous with the presentation of the ideal society.

[64] Hoffmeier (2012a: 19-20) refers to some of the internal biblical references to the 'Exodus' tradition (Jos. 2:9-10; Hos. 11:1; Amos 3:1) and concludes that it is "abundantly clear that ancient Israelites believed the Exodus to be an actual event that served as the basis for their religion and self-understanding". As will be shown in Chapter 3, references such as those found in the 8th century prophets reveal a conception of the tradition at odds with the received form; while those in Joshua are

In saying that, I think it safe to presume that a great majority of the intended audience of the texts *in the form we have them and at the time they reached that form* accepted their veracity, with any doubt tempered by the "limited temporal horizon" of communicative memory (roughly one hundred years).[65] The segregated nature of society, particularly with regards to access to and the ability to read royal and temple records, maintained a social disconnect supporting the authority of the scribal establishment.[66] The power of the scribes, according to Karel Van Der Toorn, "resided not so much in their possession of a secret as in their position as mediators and brokers of a body of knowledge that was [...] inaccessible to those not initiated into the arts of writing and interpretation".[67]

The general population, then, did not have the wherewithal to formulate a concerted challenge against the scribal authorities promoting these stories of origin, partly because no one was alive who remembered the details of any earlier versions; but also because any who were sufficiently educated to read or debate the texts were likely part of the scribal establishment![68] Most importantly, very few stories in the Genesis-2 Kings narrative, thought by the majority of scholars to have reached its 'final form' in the Persian period (see further below), were *overtly* recent insofar as their historical setting was concerned; so the apparent

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ideologically connected with the seventh century reign of Josiah and his (apparent) attempt at religious and political centralisation.

[65] Assmann, J., 2011b: 213; Mayes, 2010: 140. Indeed, any narratives we might identify as central to the cultural memory of a people have necessarily transcended this 'temporal horizon'.

[66] Literacy in modernity maintains a similar 'control' over the past, in that "being able to read and write fundamentally alters what we remember and how we remember it; societies that keep written records have a *different relationship* [italics mine; this is not a qualitative judgement] with the past than ones that do not" (Olick et al., 2011: 6). This point is echoed by Aleida Assmann in the same volume (337), who also refers to Plato's lament over the availability of knowledge to the "non-initiated" (336). We can compare this to Jeremiah's attack on the integrity of the scribal establishment (see 1.3, below; and further in 3.4).

[67] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 108. As we shall see below and further in Chapter 3, this understanding of the scribes as 'mediators' would have placed them in direct opposition to the prophetic establishment, who had long occupied this position in Israelite consciousness.

[68] On royal and temple scribes, their education and their status, see Van Der Toorn, 2007: 82-108. Also on pp. 148-149, Van Der Toorn suggests that a new 'master text' (he is referring specifically to Deuteronomy) was produced every forty years, thus allowing for expansion, embellishment and redaction roughly every generation. His analogy of 'replacing' the cult image while maintaining its essential authority as representative of the deity is particularly apt. The matter of competing histories will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 4 with regards to the ideological conflict between Genesis-Kings (or Samuel-Kings) and Chronicles. See Person, 2012.

antiquity of the stories kept them safe from contemporary challenge.[69] While I have no doubt that many aspects of the *biblical history* of Israel and Judah (the *biblical* account of Israel's and Judah's past) were invented, I think it highly unlikely in the context of needing the acceptance of the people of Persian period Judah that comprehensive histories and traditions were invented wholesale with no basis in truth or collective memory.[70] The repeated revision of stories – a fact long recognised by biblical scholars – implies the 'layering' atop previous versions of newer ones relevant to the circumstances at hand; and the fact that the stories were (eventually) accepted as historically accurate and fundamental to (what became) Jewish identity indicates that there was at least some measure of appeal *at each revision* to earlier versions whose veracity was in turn incontestable by similar means.[71] Without an appeal to earlier versions, continuity would be lost, and with it authenticity and authority; and it is with the respective versions of the migration tradition that this thesis is concerned, with a view to

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[69] While the 'final form' may indeed be a "heuristic construct" (Greifenhagen, 2002: 16-18) enabling scholarly deconstructions of composition, it is nonetheless a necessary methodological point of departure. In saying that, I will argue in my conclusion for a slight flexibility of this term, in that while the great majority of the Primary History would have been completed during the Persian period, this by no means negates the possibility of further (minimal) redaction prior to 'canonisation'. On the anachronistic understanding of 'finality' for an ancient text, see for example, Mason, 2005: 78-82.

[70] Cf. Na'aman, 2011a: 40. Finkelstein (2007a: 18-19) echoes a similar point, although his views are anchored in a late 7th century (Josianic) context. While he recommends – as I would – reading the biblical texts "in reverse", I think it is necessary to speak of the received form as the starting point and recognise its distance even from the ideologies of the Josian 'Reformation'. See also Redford, 1992: 430ff. for the historical context in which Judah interacted with Egypt in the seventh century BCE. On if and why the historicity matters(ed), see further below, n. 138. I use the term 'biblical history' here to speak of the combined history of Israel and Judah preserved in the Hebrew Bible, something very different to a scholarly rendering of the history of Israel and Judah extrapolated from those texts. I believe that this is the most appropriate way to use the term 'biblical history', contra, for example, Edelman (1991: 13), who suggests that "biblical history would be an investigation of the process that led to the formation of the Bible". It might seem pedantic to press the matter, but I think that any term beginning with the word 'biblical' should qualify the following word as something pertaining to the worldview of the people responsible for writing the Bible – ultimately something upon which we can only speculate through critical deconstructions of the process from which we draw conclusions as to how the 'biblical history' came to be. In short, 'biblical history' is not what *we* do; it is what *they* did.

[71] Discussed further below are the literary restrictions determining the form of such revisions. Smith (1991: 177-178) explains how those responsible for these "recombinations" of latent memories and 'histories' must adhere to "the existing criteria of historiography of the time". He also argues (*idem*) against the notion of complete fabrication with regard to these revisions of pre-existing traditions.

envisaging versions populating a hypothetical timeline (or 'Time Map', to borrow a term from Eviatar Zerubavel) charting the evolution of Israel's story of its origins in Egypt.[72]

Now to the second question: Do modern scholars believe these stories? Tackling this question is fundamental to the deconstruction of the transmission history of Exodus to be undertaken in this thesis, indebted as it is to past critical analyses of both the composition history of the biblical texts and the historicity of the stories therein. The purpose of this section is to present a synthesis of selected works dealing with both matters, with focus fixed solely upon the stories of the origins of Israel. The shelves of biblical scholarship are as full of works related to the origins of Israel as the pages of those works are full of summaries of that scholarship.[73] There are simply too many volumes to deem all of them significant, and one finds a point at which a veritable 'Mobius Strip' of scholarship leads to nothing short of "self-referential scholasticism".[74] In saying that, the past three decades or more have witnessed attacks against the prevailing consensus born in the early twentieth century that the biblical stories of Israel's origins in Egypt and its infiltration into Canaan (devoid, of course, of divine intervention) were accurate and reliable. The driving factors contributing to this erosion of consensus were the redefining of history in general and 'biblical history' in particular; as well as the demise of 'biblical archaeology' as a result of developments in archaeology necessitating its autonomy from preconceptions born from literal readings of the Bible.[75]

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[72] Zerubavel, E., 2004, whose chapters on historical continuity and discontinuity are particularly relevant for the manufacturing of both broken and unbroken connections with the past. He emphasises that we regularly – if not always – apply methods of 'legato' (continuous flow) and 'staccato' (discontinuous; broken; *episodic*) phrasing as we remember and re-present the past (34-36).

[73] Although his article is composed in the context of maintaining a 15th century BCE date for the Exodus (led by a conservative reading of the Bible's internal chronology), Bimson, 1989, presents a helpful overview of the theories on the origins of Israel up until that time. Despite the obvious age of Bimson's review (and his challenge), the picture has not changed significantly amongst those still maintaining the historicity of the 'Exodus' and 'Conquest'. A more recent synthesis can be found in Grabbe, 2007: 100-104, who notes (101) that Bimson's attempt (in 1978) to "undermine Albright's dating" did not gain much support. See also Redford, 1992: 263-269; Hoffmeier, 1996: 25ff.; Dever, 1987: 209-217.

[74] Utzschneider, 1996: 2

[75] On the demise of the approach to the biblical narratives as historically accurate, see Brettler, 1995: 2-7; Hoffmeier, 2012b: 101-105. On 'biblical archaeology', see the opening chapter in Alpert et al., 2012; Davies, Philip R., 2008: 60-66; also Mazar, 2007a. A good example of an outdated approach is found in Philip J. King's 1988 'archaeological commentary' on the 'eighth century prophets'. Oblivious to any semantic issues, he describes 'biblical archaeology' (13) as "a biblical, and *not an archaeological* discipline..." [emphasis mine] "...whose purpose is to gain insight into the Bible [through a] process of correlating archaeological evidence with the *biblical record* in order to illuminate the text" (15; emphasis

On the archaeological side of the debate, the so-called Albright-Wright or Baltimore 'School' represented the 'maximalist' position from the 1940s and dominated the field for some time, with John Bright defending those conclusions into the 1980s; while the source-critical scholars indebted to Wellhausen's conclusions of 1877 upheld the textual contingent with theories of reconstructed (a rather generous term) and purely hypothetical 'source documents' from which the biblical texts as we have them were compiled.[76] Although this 'Documentary Hypothesis' still holds some in thrall, it has gradually lost its appeal as a singular solution to the literary inconsistencies and discontinuities evident in the Pentateuch (or *Hexateuch*, upon which it was initially focused), and can no longer be applied as a model for reconstructing earliest Israel.[77] As for the Albright-Wright 'Conquest' model of Israelite origins, discoveries in the Palestinian highlands and developments in archaeological theory contributed not necessarily to its complete collapse, but to some creative reassessments required to continue its defence, usually by "support[ing] one aspect of the biblical tradition by surrendering another".[78]

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mine). In his defence, he concedes (19) that "[a]t the same time, the text must be subjected to form-critical, tradition-historical, and other kinds of analysis", but this is one of the main reasons the term 'biblical archaeology' is considered so leading. On the debate as to whether the term 'Syro-Palestinian Archaeology' should be adopted instead, see Zevit, 2004.

[76] Albright, 1935; Wright, G. E., 1957 (cf. Bunimovitz et al., 2009: 117, on Wright: "Wright's great achievement was in bringing order to chaos, yet whenever the archaeological record did not concur with relevant biblical passages, he tried to reconcile the two, occasionally at the cost of coherency".); Bright, 1960, 1981; Wellhausen, 1877

[77] For an overview and critique of the Documentary and other literary hypotheses related to the composition of the Pentateuch, see especially Whybray, 1994, who cautiously reminds us that "[i]t is easier to cast doubts on earlier theories than to offer a satisfactory alternative" and that "[i]nability to do the latter does not necessarily invalidate the former" (9). See also Hoffmeier, 1996: 7-10; Römer, 2006; Schmid, 2006. Blum (2006: 89-90) explains that the disintegration of the DH is not so obvious in scholarly circles, where some still use the designation 'J' or 'Yahwist' despite meaning a hypothetical composition quite different from that posited by Wellhausen. Retention of the designation is defended (in the same volume) by Van Seters, 2006.

[78] Bimson, 1989: 7. With the discovery, for example, that the majority of sites in LBA Palestine lacked fortification and thus contradicted the biblical picture of the conquest (instead, the lack of fortification reflects Egyptian policy in the region "intended to weaken [...the...] semi-independent city-states and to prevent uprising and revolts"; Gonen, 1984: 69-70), Yadin (1984: 23-24) set aside the biblical image of fortified cities and instead posited a swift conquest of "[d]ecaying Canaan" by the Israelite tribes as if that element of the tradition was enough to maintain his argument.

With absolutely no archaeological trace of the mass migration from Egypt or the annihilation of the Egyptian army narrated in Exodus (and the date of the 'Exodus' would need to correspond with the death of whichever Pharaoh was suggested); or of any direct link between the ancestors of the northern kingdom Israel and an extended stay in Egypt (see Chapter 2), those maintaining the historicity of Exodus were forced to direct their attention upon the land loosely termed 'Canaan' in an attempt to posit evidence for the particularly hostile arrival of the Israelites described in Joshua.[79] Joshua picks up where the 'prologue' of Exodus draws to a close: the Hebrews or 'Israel' *as a nation* are on the verge of entering the Promised Land; Moses is dead but there is hope for the future – except for the small matter of the 'Land' being already occupied.[80] The question of how 'Israel' – the *twelve tribes acting together* – came to possess the land in which the kingdoms of Judah and Israel later developed seemed obvious. By military force, these *Israelite tribes* descended upon the territories, razing towns and cities and massacring entire peoples. It was not long before this picture was crumbling, however, and occupying centre-stage in this gradual collapse were the biblical sites of Jericho and Ai. The destruction level at Jericho (Tell es-Sultan), once thought to correspond comfortably with the *internal biblical dating* for the 'Exodus' (c. 1446/7; that is, 476 years before Solomon came to the throne [1 Kings 6:1]), was subsequently dated to a period over a century earlier when Egyptian armies ravaged the region at the end of the Middle Bronze Age in pursuit of the so-called 'Hyksos' rulers.[81] A similar problem arose for Ai (Khirbet Et-Tell), where it was concluded that there was "no city for Joshua's forces to attack", and these conflicts with the biblical picture forced some scholars to jostle their calculations and argue for an earlier date for the 'Exodus', whereby solace was found in the stories of the sixteenth century BCE Hyksos expulsion and an analogy with the flight of the Hebrews from Egypt.[82] This

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[79] Objectivity is often an early casualty in these attempts, falling foul of preconceived notions of the authenticity of the biblical accounts. For example, in his *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (1981), Bimson asserts from the outset that the "historical essence of the [Exodus] tradition" preserves memories of a "miraculous" escape from Egypt with a "considerable body of people" leaving the country and travelling to "the area south of Canaan" (10). It is quite telling that "the numbers involved" in the migration; the "exact route taken"; and "the events underlying the present accounts of the plagues and the 'Reed Sea' incident" (12) are specifically avoided, considering how troubling such matters would be for anyone arguing for the historicity of the event.

[80] The problem posed by the survival of 'foreign' peoples in the aftermath of the conquest is the basis for Gordon Mitchell's *Together in the Land: A Reading of the Book of Joshua* (Mitchell, 1993), which constitutes an investigation into the redaction history of the material in that book.

[81] Kenyon, 1957. This dating is by no means accepted by all (cf. Hoffmeier, 1996: 6-7).

[82] Bimson, 1989: 5

'solution' came with an entirely new collection of problems, however, not the least of which was competing with a late thirteenth century date for the 'Exodus' incorporating the transition in power between Ramses II and Merneptah.[83]

As the archaeological debate was progressing, the historical-critical approach to the texts evinced its own developmental trajectory, and another model was born. Albrecht Alt's model of 'Peaceful Infiltration', first posited in 1925 (*ET* 1967) and founded upon deconstructions of the Hexateuch, advocated for the gradual immigration into the Canaanite territories of the tribes of Israel.[84] This seemed more in line with the lack of evidence for the destruction of Canaanite cities by Israelite tribes as a homogeneous entity. As observed by Hoffmeier, however, this model failed to adequately account for the destruction of those same cities at the end of the Late Bronze Age.[85] This major regional event was an indisputable fact, and the decisive blow to those upholding a connection with Israelite infiltration or immigration in any form came once again from the field of archaeology. It became obvious that the people who settled in the Palestinian highlands in the wake of the collapse of the LBA city-state system possessed a material culture no different to that of the Canaanite inhabitants of that same system. In other words, the people of those settlements – who had long been identified as Israel and as ethnically distinct from those around them (in line with biblical ideology) – had not simply been living amongst Canaanites; they were Canaanites.[86] Certainly, external parties arrived into the region, and there is plenty of evidence for the arrival across the entirety of the

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[83] Cf. Kitchen, 1966: 60: "[T]he Exodus and first phase of the Israelite conquest must be earlier than 1220 BC as well as later than 1290 [...] BC (earliest date for Ra'amses)". On the obvious conflict between the 16th and 13th century dates, see, for example, Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 56-57. Both matters will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2.

[84] Alt, 1967

[85] Hoffmeier, 1996: 5. For more on the 'Systems Collapse' at the end of the LBA, see Van De Mieroop, 2007: 190ff.; Dickinson, 2006: 24ff. and 2010: 483ff. (focused primarily on the Aegean context); Joffe, 2002: 429-431.

[86] Finkelstein, 2007c: 83; Joffe, 2002: 437. Dever (1995: 204), in identifying continuity with 'Canaanite' material culture in more than three hundred highland settlements, labels all of these settlements "Proto-Israelite", although he goes on (207) to define the term as merely a "heuristic device", recognising the "diverse origins" (211) of the constituent groups. Finkelstein (1996: 198) wonders how archaeologists can identify a *new* ethnos in the highlands if such continuity is evident between 'Canaanite' and 'Israelite' material culture. Approaching the matter of early Israelite ethnicity, Miller, Robert D. II (2004: 63) argues that it is the continuity between the Iron I and Iron II material culture which calls for a temporal line to be drawn between Merneptah's Israel and monarchic Israel, stating that "it makes no difference what the Iron I highlanders called themselves". For more on the problems of identifying distinct 'ethnic' groups based on the archaeological evidence, see Mazar, 2007c: 91-93.

Eastern Mediterranean seaboard of peoples referred to collectively (and conveniently) as 'Sea Peoples'; but the Israelites were not amongst them.[87] The vast majority of scholars nowadays would agree that the biblical picture of the development of Israel goes to great lengths to avoid the historical reality of some kind of *formative disassociation* from the wider context of their 'neighbours', instead portraying themselves as ethnically autonomous; but this is where Mendenhall's 'Peasant Revolt' theory comes in.

Growing consensus on locating the origins of Israel within a decisively Canaanite matrix led to the tempering of both the 'Conquest' and 'Peaceful Infiltration' models, facilitating the proposal by G. E. Mendenhall in 1962 that the emergence of Israel was the result of a retreating underclass from the Canaanite city-states at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Mendenhall applied the consensus that the biblical writers were concerned with asserting ethnic distinction from Canaanites to conclude that the Bible preserved memories of this 'withdrawal'; and even that Israelite memories of slavery and escape belonged to a context of Canaanite oppression.[88] Apart from Mendenhall's ready acceptance of the biblical polemic against all things 'Canaanite' as reflecting an actual socio-political clash belonging to earliest

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[87] Even if some scholars are correct to connect the name of one group of 'Sea People' – Denyen – to the 'Israelite' tribe Dan, this would only account for one element in the earliest memories of the people who became 'Israel'. Of course, with no allusion in the Bible to any tribe having arrived by sea, the correlation is tentative at best (cf. Van De Mieroop, 2007: 204). Grabbe, 2007: 88-93 argues that the numbers of people arriving over a protracted period were relatively minimal, with retrospective Egyptian inscriptions exaggerating for propagandist ends; a conclusion echoed by Van De Mieroop (2007: 195-196). See further, Redford, 1992: 241-256; also, Bloch-Smith, 2003: 415-416, on whether we can identify Israelites amongst the peoples shown on the Medinet Habu relief.

[88] Mendenhall, 1962: 77. Bloch-Smith (2003: 424-425) argues that the biblical 'memories' of 'Canaanite' peoples were displaced, reflecting Iron II (rather than Iron I) realities; although she entertains the possibility (via Van Der Toorn, 1996) that the Bible might "faithfully [record] religious beliefs as the sole feature distinguishing Israelites from Canaanites", despite remaining "ignorant of the late Iron I disruptions". In this context, she concludes that the biblical 'memories' of the development of Israelite ethnicity are concerned with an Israelite-Philistine matrix as opposed to Israelite-Canaanite (cf. also Finkelstein's suggestion [2007e: 148-149] that the death of Saul in 1 Sam. 31 has relinquished memories of an Egyptian attack on the highlands [Shoshenq I] with Philistine assistance in order to present the Philistines as a greater threat at the time than they would have been). Indeed, Bunimovitz et al. (2009: 124): "Israelite identity seems to have been forged, at least to some extent, under a Philistine hammer". In the context of the biblical "prescriptions for dealing with the Canaanites", Assmann, J. (2010: 12) suggests (in what might be considered a slight development of Van Der Toorn's position) that 'Canaan' might be a narrative symbol for "the heathen, the unconverted, and the apostates among the Israelites' own ranks". See also Niehr, 2010.

Israel and not an idealised situation projected back upon Israelite origins, critics of this model also drew attention to the anachronistic application of contemporary observations arising from the social sciences, the most significant elaboration of which was articulated – much to the chagrin of Mendenhall himself – through Marxist ideals in Norman Gottwald's 1979 publication, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE*.[89]

The problem with all of the above theories or 'models' is that they considered the origins of Israel in terms of a relatively homogeneous identity group extant at approximately the same time; with that time based upon one piece of archaeological evidence. Like Alt's concept of gradual infiltration, they essentially require an 'Israelite' identity encompassing all of the tribes (as portrayed by the biblical picture) coalescing in time for their correlation with the 'Israel' attested on the late thirteenth century BCE 'Merneptah Stele', so that conclusions might be more comfortably made regarding the ethnogenesis of Israel (see below).[90] The 'corollary' attached to the 'Peasant Revolt' model that traditions belonging to external groups *later absorbed* into Mendenhall's 'Israel' preserved memories of origins outside Canaan (which is how they were introduced into the greater narrative of origins) presumes to pick and choose those memories and allocate them to hypothetical 'tribal' elements of whatever 'later' Israelite identity is imagined.[91] Who is to say that whatever truth lay behind the memories of or allusions to oppression at the hands of Egypt belongs to whatever group 'originally' bore the

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[89] (See Gottwald, 1979 in Bibliography) Sparks, 1998: 9-10. For a defence of Gottwald's approach and Marxist approaches to the Bible in general, see for example, Boer, 2002. On Marxist archaeology, see Renfrew and Bahn, 2006: 479-480; also Trigger, 1996: 326-353

[90] Dever (1995: 209) advocates locating Merneptah's 'Israel' amongst the highland settlements, but cautions against correlating it (as a developed ethnic group) with the 'Israel' of the Bible, which he says belongs at the earliest to the period of the 'United Monarchy'. Finkelstein (1996: 200) goes further, cautioning against equating Merneptah's Israel with "the entire Iron I population". A more profound problem seems to me to be overlooked in both cases (if not all concerned with the Merneptah stele), and that is the propensity to take the appearance of the name 'Israel' on the stele as a *terminus post quem* for an ethnos bearing that name (cf. Redford, 1992: 266). In this regard, it is necessary here to pay heed to the undesignated granite slab discovered in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin by Manfred Görg, who claims it contains the name 'Israel' and dates to almost two centuries before the Merneptah stele (see Shanks, 2012). I recognise that consensus would have significant implications with regard to (re-)dating the Exodus and Conquest for those advocating the historicity of the same; as well as for the inception of the earliest collective (and cultural) memories (true or 'false') of these 'events'. Until further critical scholarship on this item emerges, however, I will proceed on the basis that the Merneptah stele contains the earliest extra-biblical reference to 'Israel'.

[91] Cf. Redford, 1992: 266.

name 'Israel'? It could just as easily be the case that these are part of later traditions introduced into a group previously known as 'Israel'. On this, Graham Davies comes close when he suggests "a more 'fluid' approach to the biblical narrative", but he posits a scenario wherein the 'Hebrews' arrive in Canaan and attach themselves to an already developing 'Israel' (Proto-Israel) "in time to be attacked and defeated by Merneptah".[92] So does this mean that the 'Hebrews' were distinct from the 'Proto-Israelites'?[93] With regard to the ethnogenesis of Israel, where does that leave us? Were not all the descendants of Jacob (Israel) down in Egypt, so that they could be subsequently embraced under the ethnic label 'Hebrews'? This rhetoric is precisely what we need to deal with, because it is now much more widely accepted that whatever truth lay behind the absorption into Israelite cultural memory of the 'Exodus' did not belong to the twelve-tribe 'Israel' attested in the Hebrew Bible (see Chapter 2). To confuse matters even more, Abraham Malamat has recently argued that "the search for a specific date for [the 'Exodus'] is futile", advocating instead for a number of 'exoduses' "or even a steady flow of Israelites from Egypt over hundreds of years".[94] For Malamat, these 'exoduses' would all need to have occurred prior to the presence of 'Israel' in the highlands as attested on the Merneptah stele, as he locates the *climactic* 'exodus' in the late 13th century.[95] So, unlike the 'Peasant Revolt' model which certainly allows for the incorporation of disparate traditions relating to separate ethnic identities, Malamat has all of his 'tribes' bearing an Israelite identity (which presumably, for him, crystallised in Egypt)!

Into the breach of uncertainty come other theories of the origins of Israel echoing Mendenhall's and Gottwald's views whereby earliest Israel was (predominantly, at least) indigenous to Canaan. There are significant differences, however, when it comes to identifying the socio-economic status of the constituent elements of Israel. Coote and Whitelam embraced, it seemed, all of the earlier theories in this regard to describe earliest Israel as "a loose coalition of bandit and nomad groups [...who...] drew the political backing of some peasants" and were subsequently bound together by their ideologies; while Finkelstein put forward the theory that the coalescence of early Israelite identity was the result of a long and protracted process of sedentarisation attached to the 'ebb and flow' of population movements and changing socio-economic practices related to the rise and fall of the city-state system across the Middle to Late Bronze Ages.[96] A fundamental problem at this stage of biblical

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[92] Davies, Graham, 2004: 36

[93] Frendo (2004: 52) certainly thinks so.

[94] Malamat, 2012: 22

[95] Malamat, 2012: 30

[96] Coote and Whitelam, 1987; Finkelstein, 1988

scholarship concerned the semantics, as scholars began to deconstruct the biblical picture of earliest Israel as a homogeneous entity. No consensus existed as to when to locate in both space and time the crystallisation of the ethnic identity 'Israel', a matter which invariably forced archaeologists and scholars to choose a position: i) did 'Israel' *begin* at the close of the LBA, a position which would require that there was no further influx of ethnic groups and their traditions; or ii) did 'Israel' continue to evolve into Iron I and welcome immigrant groups whose traditions were continuously being absorbed? The latter is important if conclusions based on the coalescence of Israel in the LBA depend upon the earliest reference to that entity. Once again, we are at the point where the Merneptah stele is seen as either the *terminus post quem* of the fully developed Israelite identity, or simply a record of the name 'Israel' used for a dynamic ethnicity still open to external influence. Only in relatively recent biblical scholarship can we speak of exilic or post-exilic ideologies projected back across memories of earlier stages of the development of Israel to blur the lines between historical accuracy and subjective memory (although this is admittedly not the voice of greater consensus).

This quagmire of speculation also has to bear the weight of the so-called Israelite 'amphictyony', initially posited by Martin Noth in 1930, requiring that a pre-monarchic ethnic entity referring to itself as 'Israel' was coeval with the one imagined by the writer(s) of the book of Judges. This overlooks not only the deconstructions of the stories in Judges which suggest that we are dealing with disparate folk tales, heroic narratives and etiological myths; but also the problems arising from the inclusion under the eponym 'Israel' of Judah and Benjamin, tribal names which the Bible specifically disassociates from the northern kingdom of Israel in its foundation myth in 1 Kings 11-13.[97] This pericope and its implications will receive further exploration in Chapter 3, but I will say this here: if, according to the biblical picture, Israel was the result of the breakdown of a kingdom (some would read 'empire') ruled from Jerusalem by Solomon, why is it that all of the external evidence indicates that Israel was both

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[97] On the amphictyony, see, for example, Mayes, 1973; and Hauser, 1979. On the possibility that Saul unified the tribes through the promotion of his family religion, see Van Der Toorn, 1993 (esp. p. 536). An unusual article by Sean M. Warner in 1978 argued for a 14th century BCE date for the 'Period of the Judges', suggesting that whatever the 'conquest' entailed, it brought about the downfall of "the old tribal structure" (463) and was the catalyst for the (religious) unification of Israel. Sparks (1998: 7-8) observes that the very nature of an amphictyony is misleading with regards to the biblical picture, particularly in relation to the centrality of a single cult (which Wright, G. R. H., 1971, identifies at Shechem). On the name 'Israel' and to whom it might have referred in post-exilic Judah (the generally agreed-upon *terminus post quem* of the received texts; see below), see Davies, Philip R., 2005a. For a (rather complex) deconstruction of the biblical picture(s) of the tribal system(s), see Kallai, 1997. On the biblical concept and evolving application of 'tribal' Israel, see Coote, 2005.

the earlier and the greater kingdom in terms of territory, wealth and economic and military influence; while the picture of Judah at the time claimed by the biblical writers as marking the inception of Israel is one of relative weakness, poverty and obscurity?[98] Jerusalem was no more than a small town whose people could only dream of controlling a territory as vast as Israel and Judah combined, yet the Bible presents it as a place of majesty and might dominating the region; as well as a central place of worship for the people of 'Israel'.[99] This is not yet the place to get weighed down with questions regarding the so-called 'United Monarchy', but it is this very problem of identifying the 'Biblical Israel' which calls for debate concerning the ideology present in the texts. The realisation that in the Bible we are reading the products of a scribal community based in Jerusalem asserting not only the supremacy of that city in Persian period Judah (Yehud) but also the supremacy of Judah over pre-exilic Israel constituted a major shift in scholarly approaches to the Bible.[100] It is with this awareness of the ideological character of the texts, combined with modern developments in archaeology, that Israel Finkelstein refers to the past century of biblical scholarship as one "wasted [...] on futile research", and he is one of the main proponents of the theory that the biblical picture of Judah's political and military ascendancy in the region belongs at the earliest to a seventh century BCE context.[101]

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[98] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 162, 325. Cf. King (1988: 29) for an example of the ready acceptance of the biblical picture: "Only after the death of King Solomon in 922 B.C.E. did Israel and Judah become separate political entities. Previously the name Israel designated the United Kingdom. After the schism of 922 B.C.E., the Northern Kingdom became known as Israel [...] and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah." I find the sentence immediately following rather revealing: "When the modern Jewish state was established in 1948 following the partition of Palestine, it too was called Israel." How is that observation of any relevance to a reconstruction of events in antiquity?

[99] Finkelstein, 2007d: 112-113; although cf. Mazar, 2007d: 125-127, particularly on the 'Stepped Stone Structure' at the heart of the debate concerning the status of Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE (see also Grabbe, 2007: 72). Grabbe (2007: 121) suggests that the 'kingdom' under David might best be understood in terms of a city-state, whose "limited territory [...] might have overlapped with territory earlier controlled by Saul", giving rise to the biblical picture which sees David acquiring all of the northern kingdom.

[100] Finkelstein, 2007c: 73. Cf. Noll, 1998: 12: "[L]inguistically, the Hebrew anthology is to be assigned to the Persian period". Nicholson (2004: 19) cautions against dismissing the antiquity of the biblical traditions based on extreme applications of the Persian period dating of the received texts. The recognition of the "Jerusalem bias of the Old Testament" is not as recent a discovery as it may appear (Anderson, 1957: 10).

[101] Finkelstein, 2007a: 19-20. I find Finkelstein's remarks rather dismissive of the socio-historical context within which said research was undertaken. As Iain Provan reminds us (2003: 8): "We cannot help but be shaped [...] by our context, regardless of whether we consciously strive to be aware of that context".

Apart from the problems posed by the ready acceptance of the Bible's portrayal of earliest Israel as a twelve-tribe system evolving into the 'United Monarchy' centred upon Jerusalem, there was also the matter of Egypt's control over Canaan for over three centuries. The omission of this fact from the Bible is considerably troublesome for anyone maintaining the historicity of the conquest narratives, but Nadav Na'aman has recently put forward an hypothesis regarding the reasoning behind this glaring biblical oversight.[102] He suggests that the shift in focus from Canaan to Egypt as the location for the oppression and liberation portrayed in Exodus was the result of the reimagining of events by the 'early settlers' in the Highlands: they had escaped from Egyptian dominance of the region – as opposed to escaping from Egypt itself – and the destruction of Canaanite City-States was the result of the escapees own military action upon reaching their 'Promised Land'.[103] For Na'aman, the very real withdrawal of Egyptian forces was recalled as a kind of miracle and, although I would not agree with his association (albeit tentative) of the figure of Moses with early oral versions of the migration tradition (see further in Chapter 3), I fully agree that the dismissal of Exodus by scholars as valuable for positing the concerns of earliest Israel is a mistake.[104] The words of Niels Peter Lemche are representative of this approach:

> [T]he Israel found on the pages of the Old Testament is an artificial creation which has little more than one thing in common with the Israel that existed once upon a time in Palestine, that is, the name.[105]

Recent decades have seen counter-attacks against such 'minimalists' who dismiss the value of the Hebrew Bible completely for the reconstruction of earliest Israel, resulting in the world of

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Such an enlightened approach should be afforded those archaeologists and historians the evolution of whose research has become the foundation for our own.

[102] Bloch-Smith's suggestion (above, n. 86) regarding the displacement of memories of the Canaanite city-state system is also relevant here.

[103] Na'aman, 2011a: 64ff. Although it might have lent weight to his argument, Na'aman is prudently silent on the matter of whether four centuries' sojourn in Egypt might correlate with roughly the same amount of time Egypt dominated Canaan. The matter seems too obvious to be ignored in this regard, despite its being problematic in light of the 'schematic chronology' at work in the Bible. Cf. Davies, Philip R., 2008: 21ff.; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 70-71; Hoffmeier, 1996: 125.

[104] Na'aman, 2011a: 68-69. The concept of reducing Egypt to a characteristic symbol or stereotype of its own behaviour is one which will contribute to the understanding in this thesis of the development of the tradition of migration from Egypt.

[105] Lemche, 1998: 165

biblical scholarship being populated by an array of conclusions ranging from a second millennium BCE context for the Patriarchal period to a second century BCE retrospective wherein 'Israel' is a literary-theological construct emerging in response to Hellenisation; with the latter dismissing the value of the texts altogether for the reconstruction of the great antiquity of Israel claimed therein.[106] There is a 'middle ground', of course, especially when it comes to Exodus:

> Between the two extremes lie scholars who accept the historicity of a few details in the story and suggest that the story includes a nucleus – albeit small – of historical events that took place on Egyptian soil.[107]

That later revisions of the story were prompted by events which most certainly did not take place on Egyptian soil is an underlying factor of this thesis, but even before moving on to that discussion, there are facts to be considered: 'Israel' is mentioned on the Merneptah Stele at the close of the 13th century BCE; and one would be hard pressed to deny the existence of the northern kingdom Israel from at least the 9th century BCE onwards until its annexation by the Assyrians towards the end of the 8th century. 'Israel' existed and experienced development from peoplehood to statehood; that is not open to question, unless one envisages the supernatural materialisation of either Merneptah's 'Israel' or a kingdom of the same name arising coincidentally in the immediate vicinity without any socio-political precursor![108] The details of this development insofar as the biblical account correlates with the archaeological evidence are most certainly open to question, yet in light of the former assertion, modern

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[106] On the Nuzi tablets through which scholars such as Ephraim Speiser drew correlations with the Patriarchs, see Finkelstein, 2007b: 44-45. Cf. also Walton, 2006: 34-36. See Thompson, 1999, for a setting in the Hellenistic period. In their 2002 volume, *The Bible Unearthed*, Finkelstein and Silberman lay their cards on the table from the outset with regards to their seventh century BCE setting; the title of their opening chapter is: "In the Days of King Josiah". Lambert, 2004, in his defence of an Assyrian period origin for the accounts in Kings, argues (356): "The fact that the text of the Old Testament was not firmly established before the first century CE does not [...] throw doubt upon the historicity of the books concerned." He goes on to state that "[n]o one will doubt that some of this editorial activity was taking place after the exile, but its occurrence does nothing to prove post-exilic origin of the books." For a similar 'assault' on the 'revisionist' approach, see Nicholson, 2004. See also, briefly, Middlemas 2007: 9-10.

[107] Na'aman, 2011a: 40

[108] Dever, 2004: 86: "That these earliest Israelites are not identical to the *biblical* 'Israelites' is true, but irrelevant. They are their direct ancestors, their authentic cultural progenitors."

attempts to 'silence' early Israel are embroiled in the propagandist world of Middle Eastern politics in a way analogous to the biblical writers 'silencing' the Canaanites – both are 'revisionist' histories.[109]

With an understanding of biblical history as outlined above, however, it is clear that the matter of the authenticity of the biblical narratives is not as black and white as scholars at either end of the spectrum posit in defence of their positions. Any claims to the authenticity of the accounts in terms of the 'big picture' they present should focus only on the same insofar as that picture reflects the concerns of those responsible for composing the texts *as we have them*. Claims to the authenticity of any biblical narratives *in their entirety* necessarily require an understanding of these accounts of the past as having remained unchanged since the composition of versions more ancient than those we have, which are of course entirely speculative and which would bear little relevance for the audience of the received form (and which would arguably stagnate their identity). Even within the framework of source-critical approaches to the Bible positing various 'authors' behind eternally indefinable 'parent' versions which were redacted and combined is the inherent recognition that the repeated reinvention of older traditions is characteristic of their evolution. This, by extension, is testament to the constant 'drifting away' from any 'original' versions posited, and we once again find ourselves back in the paradigmatic realm of collective memory. As Ronald Hendel explains:

> For the collective memories of the exodus [sic], the Bible is our primary written source [...], but we may plausibly assume that the written texts depend in various ways on earlier discourses, both oral and written. The collective memory of the exodus is, in this sense, situated in a history of discourses.[110]

Hendel clearly allows for the existence of pre-biblical sources, but recognising the harmonisation in the Bible of variant versions of the same story does not require that any such versions preserved in the Bible be placed in chronological sequences based upon hypothetical contexts for their composition. They might just as easily have existed alongside each other as competing histories or cultural memories gradually combined to facilitate the formation of a new, accommodating identity; the identity we might call 'Biblical Israel'. Unless we perceive such 'narrativisations' existing alongside each other and competing for special status at the

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[109] Cf. the politically-oriented *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* by K.W. Whitelam (1986), which Dever (2003: 240) refers to as the "Bible of the Palestinian revisionists". See also Dever, 2004, for an attack on 'Revisionism' as an ideological and thus biased approach to the Bible.

[110] Hendel, 2001: 603

time of the composition of the received form, the alternative deriving from any theories of variant authorship over time is that certain elements of older stories were left behind with each subsequent literary incarnation. Admittedly, neither theory negates the historicity of either the received form or of any memories of earlier versions, but whichever way we choose to look at it, the decision to alter the content of the tradition at each or any point of revision is evidence of a concerted program of 'forgetting' within the structure of the texts: what was preserved is what was deemed worth remembering, and what was discarded was deemed important to forget.[111] This means that what survives contains at most only a remnant of the earliest 'narrativisation' and, in the case of the 'Exodus' tradition, this already has a footing in the collective memory of the people of the northern kingdom within which it first takes shape; a matter to be expounded upon in Chapter 3.[112]

As outlined above, there was a significant development during the past century in the understanding of the value of the biblical texts for reconstructing the history of ancient Israel, and it was driven by a shift in the understanding of historiography itself (indeed, history 'became' historiography). No longer could it be asserted that the Hebrew Bible contained accurate accounts of events in the history of Israel and Judah; rather those accounts were being read as products of creative authors acting within a particular socio-political or socio-religious context, shaping their presentations of the past within the constraints of relevant ideologies. Yet now that this shift in focus has occurred, the historical contexts posed by scholars for the composition of the biblical texts must pay heed to the ideology therein. In this regard, another significant change is evident: the form and content of the received texts are being dated to considerably later periods than would have been acceptable in recent decades. Despite some scholars, as noted above, advocating for a Hellenistic context for composition, the period which has won greater consensus is that of the Persian Empire and its control over a vast region of the Ancient Near East. It is widely held that the rise to power of Cyrus, hailed in the Bible as facilitating the return(s) of Judeans to what was then called Yehud, provoked a concerted ingathering of traditional stories and the composition of literary manifestations of collective memories designed to reassert Israelite identity and hope for the future of this new

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[111] Interestingly, Hendel (2001: 620) suggests that the 'forgotten' location of Moses' burial site is a necessary element designed to attach relevance to the story for all; that is, not just those within or close to a single geographical area. Of course, whether this constitutes deliberate 'forgetting' or it is simply a literary device to avoid contention, we cannot be entirely sure. The former would require that there was an historical Moses, and Hendel is cautious in this regard (621).

[112] Cf. Albertz, 1994: 142.

'Israel'.[113] Without inherently dismissing the existence of versions of the biblical narratives (oral or written) prior to this 'final form' (even advocates of a Hellenistic context should embrace this possibility and its ramifications), this approach nonetheless requires that their content be understood as subordinate to the ideologies of that form and likely redacted within their constraints. I will return in Chapter 4 to the Persian period ideologies informing the received form not only of Exodus but of the relevant 'Exodus-themed' narratives *the original 'memory contexts'* of which this thesis aims to reconstruct; but it is of the utmost significance to emphasise here that history in the ancient world was created within a context of literary expectations (evolving as it did from the 'rules' of oral storytelling), and that those expectations were determined by the world within which the writers lived, and the scribal establishment to which they belonged.

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[113] Berquist, 2008, 2012; Steussy, 1999 (who speaks of an ideological connection between Chronicles' David and Cyrus; thus creating a sense of continuity between monarchic Judah and Persian period Yehud; 126). See also Wesselius, 2000 (and especially 2002), on the influence of Herodotus' *Histories* on the writer(s) of the Primary History. It is simplistic to argue for the conquest of Alexander as a *terminus post quem* for the composition or compilation of any texts based solely on the identification of Greek (Hellenistic) influence therein, because this presumes that there was no interaction between Greeks or Judahites prior to 323 BCE (cf. Perdue, 2007: 176ff.). On the Persian period literary activity with regards to identity construction, see, for example, Berlin, 2010; also the essays in two volumes edited by Louis Jonker: i) *Historiography and Identity (Re)Formulation in Second Temple Historiographical Literature*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2010; and ii) *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

1.3 Historiography and Literary Convention in the Hebrew Bible

> One of the chief difficulties we encounter as modern readers in perceiving the artistry of biblical narrative is precisely that we have lost most of the keys to the conventions out of which it was shaped.[114]

Any conclusions regarding the relationship between identity reformulation and the evolution of the traditions in the Hebrew Bible should not be reached without acknowledging the literary characteristics of the texts embodying the *received form* of those traditions. In this regard, a reading of the biblical texts relevant to this study as *historiographical literature* will contribute greatly to the theoretical framework of this thesis. My use of the word 'literature' here may invite contention, and one only has to read the critique of Mark Zvi Brettler against seeing the biblical historical narratives as literature to appreciate why this may be the case.[115] What strikes me from his arguments is that the definitions of literature given by the scholars with whose work he engages appear more often than not to have been articulated after the fact; that is, a decision has been made that certain works are literature, and then the definition has been formulated which expands the (usually artistic or aesthetic) criteria of literature so as to accommodate the characteristics of the work(s) in question. Brettler moves away from these 'structural' definitions to conclude that literature is defined in terms of its functionality; and that it is "socially determined, in contemporary times, often by the universities".[116]

Now, while this may have been a delimiting factor under the auspices of "the classical curriculum" of a century ago, I think there is a greater appreciation nowadays of the value of a much larger and varied body of literary works for understanding the societies within which they were produced.[117] As I noted in my introduction, fictional works with no pretence at historiography can yield information relevant to their contemporary context; and they can be used to speculate upon past events and eras. This is why they are selected for study, and I do not believe labelling them 'literature' portrays any particular bias other than this inherent

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[114] Alter, 1981: 47. Cf., for example, Utzschneider, 2010. In his comparative analysis of texts from ancient Israel (or Judah), Egypt and Athens, he cautions against the "cross-cultural application [of] concepts of genre" (63), but concludes that his chosen texts are rightly subsumed under the (universal) genre of 'drama', in that their functions are identical, observing that the motivations behind their production conform to "basic human needs and ideas" (78). Of course, 'basic human needs and ideas' may vary from one culture to another, and is thus a subjective criterium by which to categorise a given text.

[115] Brettler, 1995: 14-17

[116] Brettler, 1995: 17

[117] Brettler, 1995: 17

value. In this sense, and returning our attention to the biblical historical narratives – for which Exodus is a binding element, as I will show – I would argue that this is, indeed, literature, precisely because it is peculiar to its cultural context and allows us to speculate upon the same.

I have already argued for seeing these texts as historiographical – in that they articulate a particular perception of the past – and that they have an inherent value for reconstructing the events to which they allude; but history can also help us to speculate upon the cultural context of its authors. This is where the terms conflate, and it is why I refer to the biblical historical narratives as historiographical literature. I will leave it to others more versed in literary theory to debate as to whether all history is literature; but I think it is clear that not all literature is historiographical. Further, while I agree that literature is socially determined, I do not agree that this is a contemporary – or even necessarily retrospective – phenomenon. In fact, in recognising the significance in the formation of Judaism afforded the biblical historical narratives – in that they preserved both structural and functional written works peculiar to their authors – I think it safe to say that those who compiled these works would have understood them as literature in the sense that I have outlined above. In seeing Exodus as the binding element of the Primary History from a literary-ideological point of view, this aligns the admiration for the received form *in its literary sense* with its crystallisation as the cultural memory *par excellence*.[118]

Identifying something as literature is not, of course, simply a matter of identifying artistry and aesthetics at work (the 'structural' aspect), but apart from those who might fear a reductionist approach to the Bible in terms of demystifying its authorship, I can find no convincing reason not to refer to the biblical prose narratives as *literature*. For the most part, modern historiography is unconcerned with bringing to life in any tangible, relatable form the characters associated with past events. Traditionally, that has been the purview of playwrights, novelists and, in more recent times, producers of 'historical' movies and 'docudramas'. Yet the melodrama characteristic of most, if not all of these attempts to reproduce and re-present the past is most certainly evident in the biblical narratives. They are written in such a way that we can stand with Moses as he implores Pharaoh to let the people go; we can exult in David's triumph over Goliath; we can even sympathise with the prophet Amos as he is scorned and

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[118] The foregoing sections have argued for seeing biblical historiography as a product of the ideology of its authors, and this thesis seeks to relate the *evolution of a specific ideology* – central to the identity of 'Biblical Israel' – to the *evolution of a specific tradition* which champions the antiquity of that ideology. Ideology requires a medium through which it might be expressed and the reverence for the migration tradition provides the perfect foundation upon which to articulate ideologies central to 'Israel' within a literary framework.

later denounced by Amaziah. These are no dull, scientific renderings of the past; instead, they are passionate, inspired (albeit of the human kind) and insightful compositions. Their author(s) play with language in a way which we as modern people so detached across space and time, culture and, of course, language, can only hope to fully appreciate.[119]

Across the chapters to follow, this thesis will adopt a *literary-ideological* approach to Exodus and the texts which allude to and presuppose it, in that the ideologies informing the repeated revisions of the tradition of migrating from Egypt which eventually become Exodus – albeit operating in tandem with the agendas of mnemonics – are subordinated to long-established conventions of storytelling which find their way into written history:[120]

> [A] web of interrelated, connective ideas provided the fertile ground out of which substantially different works arose and without which they would not have been generated[.] [...] [L]iterary works informed literary works; the literati drew water from a shared sea of literary genres, individual texts, expressions and images when they wrote or rewrote their works. An important corollary is that the literati were fully immersed in that shared sea when they read and reread the works that existed in their authoritative repertoire. [...] [E]ach of these ideas was deeply interwoven with others and [...] played a governing role in the intellectual production of literary works such as the Pentateuchal, the historical and the prophetic books.[121]

This is where claims to historicity initially begin to break down, in that what is concluded from the deconstruction of ideologies occupying the subtext consists "less of discrete items such as datable events and persons, and more of broader insights into [the] social and cultural worlds" of the biblical writers.[122] Without necessarily learning what happened, still we can postulate as to the socio-cultural (and religio-political) contexts in which these stories were composed; as well as speculating upon the real-world application of these stories. If this is to be deemed a 'mnemohistorical study', then what is intended herein is certainly in line with Jan Assmann's definition:

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[119] Despite the revival of the Hebrew language for the day-to-day communication of modern Jews in Israel, disconnection from the culture(s) of ancient Israel and Judah means that complete immersion in the texts is at best illusory.

[120] I am very much in agreement with Ronald Hendel (2010: 251), who advocates methodologies of disciplinary integration rather than distinction.

[121] Ben Zvi, 2009a: 17-18

[122] Greifenhagen, 2002: 16

> The aim of a mnemohistorical study is not to ascertain the possible truth of traditions [...] but to study these traditions as phenomena of collective memory.[123]

A history deemed important for all to accept as foundational to their sense of self and community would have little effect if it were presented in a form alien to its intended audience, and so it could be said that any written account of the past is first and foremost subject to the literary conventions of the time and place within which it is composed; conventions determining form, content and everything in between.[124] While there may be room within a framework of convention for variations in style and the adaptation of popular motifs, the Israelite articulation of YHWH's presence in and revelation through history so paramount to understanding their place in the world and their relationship with the divine was central to their identity. In the wake of the discoveries over the past two centuries of more and more texts from the ruins of Ancient Near Eastern sites, it has become quite clear that biblical literature evolved within an international milieu of social, political and religious literary expression.[125] Despite this, in identifying themselves over and against those around them, the Israelite 'historicisation' of stories once transmitted in mythical form manifested an ideological shift away from surrounding cultures insofar as the relationship with YHWH was concerned (YHWH was the god who acted in and through history). Claims by biblical scholars to have identified a general context of literary convention is thus tempered by this shift, in which a newly-emerging way of presenting the past must have marked a break from international norms. Perhaps this is why Robert Alter extrapolates literary conventions to which the biblical writers were beholden based on an understanding of oral tradition and audience expectation,

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[123] Assmann, J., 1998: 9

[124] Walton, 2006: 19-22, 217-219. Conversely, in the words of Henry Glassie (1994: 964), "[w]hat is missing [from an account of the past] is that which does not move in time with the developmental conventions of narration". Smith (1991: 26) reminds us that the "heroes and heroines" of a 'history' designed to promote social unity "must embody the virtues held precious by the community and conform to its stereotypes".

[125] See especially Shinan & Zakovitch, 2012; also Fenton, 2004; Walton, 2006; Keel & Uehlinger, 1998; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 70-72. The main collections of texts used in this thesis are: i) Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005); and ii) the 2011 edition of James B. Pritchard's *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), which brings together material from related publications spanning 1950-1975, beginning with the seminal *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to The Old Testament*. Where texts from the 2011 edition of Pritchard's work are cited, I have retained the use of 'ANET' synonymous with the original 1950 edition.

models of which are indebted to scholarship on the Homeric epics.[126] In this, we must imagine the 'genesis' of the written articulation of traditional stories, wherein the 'type-scenes' and "a fixed constellation of predetermined motifs" were adapted from oral tradition so as not to alienate the audience; that is, in written narrative as in oral storytelling, the same progression of events accommodated audience expectations.[127] The preceding pun is quite intentional, and Yerushalmi's interpretation of the Eden story as the dramatisation of the transition between oral and scribal authority brought to life by the emergence of Adam and Eve into the world of unfolding history is thus rather apt.[128] It is almost as if the scribal establishment claimed greater understanding of the world within which YHWH operates, something vehemently disputed in Jeremiah 8:8:

> How can you say, "We are wise, and the [Torah of YHWH] is with us,"
> when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie?

Indebted as we are to their triumph, the scribal establishment clearly came out on top, and the written word was imbued with the authority of YHWH through the clever incorporation in the biblical narratives of the motif of prophetic mediation. Through the *literary Moses*, representing the interests of institutional scribes, the status and influence once enjoyed by prophets mediating the word of the divine was appropriated by the authority of the text.[129] It is this phenomenon of replacing the old ways of conveying the word of the deity which consolidated the cultural memory of 'Biblical Israel', for the text itself became the untouchable, unchangeable vehicle of identity. Further, it is likely that the formation of a canon aligned itself

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[126] Alter, 1981: 50. In a synthesis of the relevant archaeology, Yamauchi, 2004, also recognises the parallels in methodological approaches to deconstructing both the Homeric epics and the biblical narratives. Jan Assmann's understanding of the Homeric epics as perpetuating in each recitation "a pan-Hellenic group consciousness" (2006: 29) ostensibly transcending historical inquiry as it evolves is considerably apt.

[127] Alter, 1981: 51

[128] Yerushalmi, 2011: 202

[129] Note also that Exodus bears the authority of written revelation which, as Van Der Toorn observes, is as much a construct of the scribal community responsible for its composition as is the narrative itself. On the development of a "paradigm of revelation" in the Ancient Near East (which shifted authority from "religious specialists" to written texts), see Van Der Toorn, 2007: 205ff.; and Section 3.4, below. See also Fishbane, 1985: 23-43.

with the concept of unchangeable identity – this is who 'Israel' was, is, and ever shall be.[130] For Rabbinic Judaism, *History* (that is, an official account of the past that unifies and informs identity) had drawn to a halt with the closing of the canon, as focus was maintained on the historical narratives in the Bible which told the people who they were.[131] The future was, of course, not set in stone as the scribes might have liked, and despite the immortalisation of narratives inherent in their canonical status, it was recognised quite early on that the changing requirements of the present were not necessarily met by appealing to a static set of texts; interpretation was thus par for the course.[132] So despite Yerushalmi's observation that the Rabbis might have known all they 'needed to know' from the 'official' History of Israel, they were not averse to adapting seemingly timeless 'truths' to meet the socio-political needs of the day.[133] The integrity of the written word was arguably tempered by common sense, while maintaining the dichotomy of its authority. *Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide*; or at least, once it had been *interpreted* by those with the authority to do so. The appeal to authority through the constructed antiquity of the Torah seemingly promoted during the Josian 'Reformation', for example, was part of a program not of 'returning' to ancient religious practices but of elevating the written word above all human – and thus fallible and transient – authority (see further, 3.4, below). Yet when we deconstruct what was written in light of modern understandings of literary convention and ideology, the genius of the human authority behind that written word can be revealed.[134]

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[130] On the crystallisation of a Hasmonean 'Jewish' identity as it relates to the canonical 'Hebrew Bible', see especially Davies, 2010.

[131] Yerushalmi, 2011: 204; also Brettler, 1995: 1-2. In this context, Assmann, A. (2011: 337) offers an excellent understanding of the canon as representative of "the active working memory of a society that defines and supports the cultural identity". On the formation of the 'canonical' Hebrew Bible, see Davies, Philip R., 1997.

[132] Cf. Dever, 2003: 233. Ricoeur (1976: 38-40) highlights the ancient distrust of writing, suggesting that it was seen to invite a certain apathy when it came to the acquisition of knowledge. The individualisation of philosophical inquiry was thought to suffer with the "intentional exteriorization of discourse". No surprise, then, that 'canonical' texts are interpreted, when they embody the antithesis of intercourse as they are unable to "rescue themselves" in a way permitted by speech.

[133] On the background of 'Rabbinic Judaism', see, for example, Kugel and Greer, 1986: 63-72. Cf. Whybray, 1994: 178.

[134] While Dever (2003: 236) observes that "an attempted reformation [...] must call believers back to *some* original, 'pure' version of religion", this does not mean that such a 'call' is beyond historical-critical scrutiny.

What has often troubled the conservative approach to the Bible, as well as fuelled the deconstruction of its historicity, is the clear evidence of *repetitions* and *duplications* throughout the biblical narratives. Yet, in the hands of such scholars as Alter or Whybray, the logic behind the composition of these stories comes to light within the context of the conventions of storytelling in general, and literature in particular.[135] Where questions were posed as to why particular social norms were valued in personal, political, religious or even economic interaction, the difficulties in maintaining the legitimacy of established ways of life were alleviated through the appeal to personalities, events and places in tradition long associated with the identity of the people and central to their collective memory.[136]

I think it is of the utmost importance to consider the 'credibility factor' of these stories, especially if we are to accept that composition occurred within an international context of literary convention. Discussed above was the likelihood that these stories were believed by their audience and remained for the most part beyond challenge, but when we look at them within the context of the literary heritage of the Ancient Near East, the question is somewhat altered: what sort of credibility (from the point of view of perpetuating an ethno-religious distinction) could a story possibly have if the participants in the commemoration of the events alluded to were aware of numerous other stories in their international context evincing identical motifs? To suggest that audiences in Israel or Judah were unaware of such stories requires envisaging *a socio-cultural disconnect* from the rest of the Ancient Near East which stands in direct opposition to any argument as to the commonplace nature and the "generic character" of the biblical stories.[137] Instead, it is more helpful to see the major biblical narratives professing the antiquity and authenticity of Judaism as preserving memories of actual historical events which have been articulated in accordance with established literary convention.[138] This recognises the artistry inherent in the biblical texts without dismissing their

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[135] For an introductory deconstruction of the 'criterion of consistency' behind the 'Documentary Hypothesis', see Whybray, 1994: 50-51.

[136] The literary justification of said norms implies contestation as a leading motivation for their composition. Although Alter (1981: 27) argues that "the suppleness of prose as a narrative medium was indispensable [...for articulating...] the uncertainties of life in history", I am not convinced that oral authority (such as that held by the prophetic elements in Israel) was devoid of the language required to respond to such contestation.

[137] See further on comparison and genre, Sparks, 2005: 3ff. (who states – on p. 8 – that "[g]enre is an essential ingredient in communication because it establishes the ground rules shared by authors and readers); Walton, 2006: 219ff.

[138] On the question of why the historicity of the texts matters, see Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 34-36; Dever, 2003: 223ff.; Younker, 2004; Hoffmeier & Magary, 2012. Cf. Oswalt (2009: 31): "If the

value for reconstructing the history of Israel. The alternative, as far as I can see, is to dismiss altogether any debt to international literary convention. It will become increasingly clear throughout this thesis that literary convention was employed in composing the central narratives of identity construction which repeatedly incorporated the Israelite tradition of migrating from Egypt; but before delving into the world of repeating motifs and literary parallels *within* the Hebrew Bible, what can be deduced from stories surviving in the Hebrew Bible for which we have evidence of parallels amongst other cultures? One which comes to mind – probably because it had always fascinated me as a child – is that of Noah and the Flood.

Since the 19th century, it has been recognised that the biblical story of the 'Great Flood' was not unique in the Ancient Near East. Coming closest in content was the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in which the eponymous hero meets Utnapishtim, whom the god Ea had instructed to build a vessel so that he and his family might survive the coming deluge. There is very little core variation in these two Flood stories; one difference is that Utnapishtim was granted immortality whereas Noah and his family are tasked with restarting the human race.[139] The biblical story of the Flood is not necessarily about destruction and judgement. In fact, similar to much later apocalyptic literature, it is about renewal through purgation. The interpretation is irrelevant at this point. Instead, the issue at hand is the 'credibility factor'; and with Noah paralleled with the likes of Utnapishtim – and the people of post-exilic Judah (Yehud) being painfully aware of the Babylonian Empire and its culture – is it really likely that they asserted the historicity of the story? I think it is fair to say that, if the people of Israel knew that the Flood story was not unique to their own culture, they did not believe it to be true (in the sense of it portraying historical fact). Rather, the recognised antiquity of the story ensured its authority as a platform for explaining and legitimising cultural norms (see further below on

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historical basis on which the supposed revelation rested was false, then why should we give any special credence to the ideas resting on that basis?" Also p. 153: "[T]he biblical message [should not] be abstracted from its historical substructure"; a sentiment echoed by Hoffmeier, 1997: 88. See also Rodríguez, 2001. While his arguments are steeped in Adventist apologetics, he cautions against exaggerating the implications of the similarities between the material in the Hebrew Bible and the institutions and practices of Israel's neighbours, to the point that the biblical material is stripped of its revelatory character (62).

[139] See further, George, 2003. For a recent publication dealing with the parallels between the biblical accounts and a c. 1800 BCE cuneiform tablet (the 'Ark Tablet') from Mesopotamia, see Finkel, 2014. As well as instructions as to how to build a circular 'ark', the tablet also features the oldest known record of the motif of the animals entering 'two-by-two'.

Sparks' remarks concerning the Code of Hammurabi).[140] What allowed that antiquity to supersede that perceived of the same story told in other cultures was the eventual position it was given amongst the other stories of the primeval fathers; it occupied a position in an imagined past which served only to archaise the story itself, and not its content. Precedence over other cultures was thus the concern of the scribal establishment in Judah, and these allusions to great antiquity are indicative of cross-cultural competition. What can any of this tell us, however, about the possible historicity of other biblical narratives? Is it safe to say that those for which we have no evidence of international parallels are those which are unique to Israel, and thus are more likely to be based on historical fact? Granted, that is quite a leap, and yet stories unique to a particular people must bear specific relevance for their identity. Surely the same is then true of the reverse; that is, that stories pertaining to group identity must be unique to that culture?

In this regard, it is ironically in another ancient 'Flood' story that we find a number of parallels with Exodus, that same narrative in which scholars for centuries have recognised the characteristics of a literary manifestation of cultural memory (even without such contemporary vocabulary). Tentative correlations they may be, but the Akkadian *Atrahasis Epic* features oppressive labour and a heroic figure who escapes the attempted destruction of mankind.[141] If Exodus contains echoes of this story, are the 'Hebrews' to be seen as the labouring gods of the Epic, or are they the people created to take up the work of gods? Are the 'Hebrews' representative of all mankind? Does this mean that Pharaoh is cast as an evil deity as he decrees the destruction of his slave population? Should we push it so far as to say that Moses is analogous to Atrahasis? Perhaps we have some embryonic influences in Atrahasis, later developed to greater effect and in a different context so that Exodus is so far removed from the Akkadian Epic as to deem its influence negligible. What then can be said of the Egyptian *Tale of Sinuhe*, whose parallels with the Moses story are much clearer?

The *Story of Sinuhe* is often called a classic of the ancient world, and the general consensus in biblical scholarship is that it predates the form of the Bible as we have it by approximately 1,500 years.[142] It is a wonderful, enigmatic tale from Middle Kingdom Egypt, thought to have been written around the 20th century BCE, shortly after the death of Pharaoh Amenemhat I and

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[140] On the adoption of the international motif of the 'flood survivor' and the 'discomfort' it might cause for claims of distinction, see, for example, Peters, 2008: 13-14, 26-28.

[141] Clifford (1985: 14) sees the *Epic* as being quite similar in form and content to Gen. 2:4-11:26. The earliest known copies date to the Old Babylonian Period (early second millennium BCE; Walton, 2006: 51).

[142] For more on *Sinuhe*, see especially Parkinson, 1999. On *Sinuhe* and Egyptian identity, see Sparks, 1998: 79ff.

the subsequent succession of Senwosret I (or Sesostris I). Although constituting a reversal of the themes in Exodus in terms of geography, *Sinuhe* includes the transition in political power provoking the actions of the protagonist. Upon hearing that the king has died, Sinuhe flees Egypt – his reasons are unclear, but assassination and fear of the ensuing chaos are likely – and he goes to Canaan, the general area within which Israel is later formed.[143] Like Moses when he reaches Midian, he is welcomed by a man of considerable power and influence and he ends up marrying this chieftain's daughter. He becomes wealthy and powerful in his own right, but he has a yearning for his homeland. The motif of supplication in this story, unlike Moses' request of Pharaoh, is made in prayer to the divine, and eventually Sinuhe is called upon to return home; whereupon the motif of the king finding favour with his subject comes into play.[144]

The *Tale of Sinuhe* clearly resonates in Exodus in terms of some of its themes and motifs, and a dilution of the uniqueness of such core elements of the story of Moses surely troubles its historicity. The motifs in the 'sub-plot' of Moses' development, however, are also evident in the overall structure of Exodus. The 'Sons of Israel' are the subject of liberation, but the articulation of the liberation of this collective entity is built upon a long established motif of the 'hopeless hero', and one does not have to look too hard to find the same motifs elsewhere in the Bible. The story of Joseph's rise to power in Egypt certainly comes to mind, as do those of Daniel and Esther in Babylon and Susa, respectively; and although Moses' flight from Egypt sets up the tale for his triumphant return and his rise to significance as the mouthpiece of YHWH, the scheme to which his story adheres is the backbone of a much more elaborate extrapolation of the motif, for the Hebrew slaves themselves are collectively the 'hopeless hero'.[145] They are downtrodden, oppressed and demoralised, but through faith in the interventionist power of their protector deity, they achieve liberation and victory over their enemy; and they find themselves – at least those deemed worthy – rewarded with the 'land of milk and honey' to which they travel with no little adversity. Triumph for this 'hero' is as much one of spiritual justification as it is of physical renewal. What does this mean for the historicity of the Exodus narrative? Further problems arise when we consider the themes of flight from danger, or of seeking refuge, and prominent examples for my purposes are those which focus upon Egypt.

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[143] Evidence of overlapping reigns (co-regency) suggests that perhaps Senwosret I was not entirely devoid of blame, but Jan Assmann (2003: 138-142) reads the story in terms of political rhetoric and monarchic propaganda. The point, then, is not what Sinuhe ran from; but to what he returned.

[144] This motif is a favourite of the biblical writers; most famously, it is prominent in the stories of Joseph (to which Sinuhe can also be compared) and Daniel. The former is considered to be a Persian period story, while the latter (in its received form, at least) belongs at the earliest to the Hellenistic period (see Chapter 4).

[145] See Alter's scheme of the hero (1981: 51); and cf. Miller & Hayes, 2006: 72.

The stories of Joseph, Moses, Hadad and Jeroboam employ the stock motif of seeking refuge from or in Egypt (the Moses story reverses the motif) so that they are thematically connected for reasons which may point us to the time and context of their composition; but it is important to note here that these stories also echo motifs featured in the *Tale of Idrimi* from ancient Syria or that of *The Doomed Prince* from Egypt.[146] The adherence of the biblical writers to ancient literary convention causes problems for the claims to historicity of any narrative which has parallels of form and content within the Bible; but what are we to do with *historical narratives* (unlike that of Noah) for which we have parallels outside the Bible?[147]

Firstly, to the former, and a brief introduction to the story of Jeroboam and the foundation of the northern kingdom Israel will suffice. This story contains motifs almost identical to those used in the Exodus narrative, and so – unless we wish to dismiss all of this as mere coincidence and maintain the historicity of both (and I do not) – we must posit questions regarding the direction of dependence. Which story was composed first? Surely Exodus, for it comes earlier in the Bible! Yet that beleaguered tale is losing more and more of its credibility as the years go by, so perhaps the more 'likely' tale of Jeroboam's foundation of Israel, in which he flees from Solomon's oppressive regime, sojourns in Egypt and returns the conquering hero is the earlier story; it certainly sounds more credible (we know that a kingdom called Israel existed)! Of course, if we are to take the implications of literary convention seriously, it is entirely possible that both tales were composed at the same time, using the same motifs; and, subsequently, neither is completely true. Both may still be based on some kernel of fact, but adherence to literary convention has distorted whatever truth lay beneath the polished composition. Still,

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[146] Note that the stories told in rapid succession of Hadad, Rezon and Jeroboam – all featuring motifs of refuge and return and following hot on the heels of the condemnation of Solomon's heretical acts (1 Kgs. 11:1-13) – are designed to prepare the audience for the climactic creation of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. Just like the downfall of Solomon, however (the division of his kingdom following his death), the retrospective on Jeroboam's heresy as he rejects the centralised worship of YHWH in Jerusalem justifies not only the judgement against his 'house' (1 Kgs. 14:7-15), but also the later destruction of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians. For more on these biblical stories, see Galvin, 2011: 65ff.; also 19-27 on Sinuhe and Idrimi. For comparisons of the stories of Idrimi and the 'Doomed Prince' with modern fairy tales, see Liverani, 2004: 85-96.

[147] *Historical* narratives relate "traditions or beliefs held by a particular people about supposed *events in its past history*" (Whybray, 1994: 137). As explained above, I do not believe that the Noah story falls into this category.

one story echoes the other, and each story is a foundation myth: one of the *people called Israel*, the other of *the kingdom called Israel*.[148]

Literary convention in this case is being applied to instil a sense of continuity; that is, to connect 'Biblical Israel' with the geopolitical entity which has ceased to exist by the time these stories reached their 'final form'.[149] The motif, for example, of the 'changing of the guard' as one ruler dies and the next is more ruthless than his predecessor connects these two stories thematically, so that reading one either reminds the audience of the other or prepares them subconsciously for hearing it.[150] Yet what happens if we are forced to make a choice between the two stories based solely on these motifs? Could this mean that Rehoboam did not succeed Solomon in the manner suggested by the story in 1 Kings? Could it mean that whatever historical truth *might* lie behind the Exodus story, it does not include the rapid succession of (nameless) Pharaohs? Could it even mean that scholarly reconstructions of the reigns of kings in Judah and Israel are based on 'facts' warped to accommodate literary convention? It is a challenge to the historicity of these stories in terms of this specific motif of transition in power that those specifically recorded outside the biblical texts concern i) the death of Shalmeneser V in 722 BCE, and the accession of Sargon II (the latter overseeing the annexation of Israel to become the Assyrian province of Samaria/Samerina);[151] and ii) the change in control of Babylon incorporating the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar II to Cyrus (an event which facilitated the returns from Babylon).[152] In Chapter 4, I argue that this return by Judean elites bent on returning

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[148] On the relationship between the stories of Jeroboam and Moses as foundation narratives, see Mayes, 2006.

[149] Here, as a matter of necessity as much as anything else, I refer to the MT tradition, recognising the difficulties inherent in the use of the term 'final form' (see further, Greifenhagen, 2002: 16-20). The mnemohistory to be plotted in this thesis envisages the 'crystallisation' of the major elements of Exodus tradition prior to the production of the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch.

[150] For an analysis of the structure of the Hebrew Bible insofar as it 'leads' the reader and influences a particular understanding of the texts, see Goswell, 2008. On the possible literary reasons for 'duplication' (for example, that similar stories with less detail presuppose an earlier version), see Whybray, 1994: 178-180.

[151] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 383-389, 404; Van De Mieroop, 2007: 251. On the activity of Sargon II, see *ANET* 284-287 (Pritchard, 2011: 266-268).

[152] On the associated motif of supplication (cf. Neh. 2:1-7; see further in Conclusion, herein), Malamat (2012: 28) relates external epigraphic evidence to the Exodus story and suggests that the repeated pleas of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh are connected with the strict border control in New Kingdom Egypt (as indicated by the Anastasi Papyri). Apart from this all too literal reading of the biblical account, this also overestimates the ability of any nation in the ancient world to control every possible entry and exit point

centrality to Jerusalem under the eponym 'Israel' is the determining factor not only for the traditions gathered together to legitimate the claims to authority of these 'returnees' (and to accommodate those who had remained in the land), but also for the literary motifs connecting ideologically formative tales in the Hebrew Bible and asserting the continuity of the ethnic identity 'Israel'. In this sense, there is a direct link between an historical event (and in this I am accepting the historicity of some sort of 'return' from Babylon) and biblical historiography, even if the latter obscures the former by way of analogy.

What should we make, then, of *external* texts troubling the historicity of the biblical stories? Take, for example, the so-called 'Negative Confessions' found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. These statements of innocence made in the presence of Osiris are often compared with the 'Ten Commandments' of Exodus 20.[153] Similarly, many of the biblical laws concerning property, slaves and other aspects of social and economic conduct are compared to the ancient Babylonian 'Code of Hammurabi'.[154] In both cases, these extra-biblical texts are seen as the antecedents of the biblical 'versions' and thus the latter are stripped of their originality, uniqueness and authenticity. For example, Sparks suggests that the similarities between the 'Code' and the biblical account of Moses receiving the Commandments is best explained by the author of the latter "intentionally shap[ing] his work so as to mimic the older, more venerated text".[155] Yet this comparative analysis is not always damaging to biblical historicity, and sometimes external parallels appear to support the authenticity of the stories in that they provide an historical context for actual events which found their way into Israelite collective memory. Abraham Malamat refers to two texts which he finds promising in this regard, one referring to a coalition of 'chiefs' in Egypt who had bribed a group of 'Asiatics' in a bid to overthrow Pharaoh Sethnakht (the account survives on the Elephantine stele of Sethnakht, c. 1190 BCE); and another of an 'Asiatic' usurper who dominates Egypt and defiles the traditional deities. The first Malamat relates to the imagery in the 'Exodus' story of i) the fear of the anonymous Pharaoh that the Hebrew slave population would rise up against him (Exodus 1:10);

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along its periphery. If this is impossible in our own time, I think it is safe to conclude the same for an ancient context.

[153] David, 2002: 245; although cf. Assmann, 2003: 163-164, on the contrast between the conceptual bases for judgement in Egyptian and 'Israelite' religion; noting particularly that judgement after death is a later, Christian concept more in line with Egyptian theology.

[154] For a detailed comparison, see Pritchard, 2011: 155-179; Walton, 2006: 287ff.; Sparks, 2005: 423. See also Fitzpatrick-McKinley, 1999, on the development of 'Israelite' law.

[155] Sparks, 2005: 423

and ii) the taking of silver and gold from the Egyptians in Exodus 12:35-36 (foreshadowed in slightly different terms in 3:22).[156]

As will be made clear in Chapter 2, this ready application of the etic term 'Asiatics' to Hebrews or Israelites affords far too much specificity to the commonplace, derogatory and often misplaced use of the term in ancient Egyptian records. As with the account of the Hyksos, we just cannot be certain that Egyptian history provides us with accurate and unbiased reports of what occurred. How strange it is that some can presume to deconstruct the historicity of the Bible as containing distorted memories and ideological representations of past events, yet when confronted with extra-biblical similarities, these are quickly taken as historically accurate and held up as 'evidence' of the authenticity of the biblical stories![157] Conversely, the dismissal of Israelite laws or customs simply because we find evidence of the same concepts in other cultures is misleading, because all this tells us that customs presented as 'Israelite' in the biblical narratives preserve memories of the international milieu from which they were adopted. While this presentation was the purview of the scribal establishment under the auspices of first the Palace and then the Temple authorities, the preservation of such memories could also just as easily point to an actual historical figure in early Israelite society adapting laws and customs to accommodate his society so that they later become 'uniquely' Israelite. Following the logic of those who would negate the historicity of the giving of the 'Ten Commandments' by one or more historical figures, we might imagine archaeologists a thousand years from now uncovering a legal text amidst the ruins of a particular city in Europe and dismissing its authenticity and uniqueness to that culture because of evidence of the common legal heritage of the Western world (ironically a legal heritage based upon the precepts of the biblical 'Ten Commandments')![158] Despite the analogy being anachronistic, it is nonetheless pertinent to point out that despite claims to the homogeneity of modern Europe in many aspects of its culture milieu, it is far from it. Yet modern European states share a common heritage in many of those same aspects, just as ancient Israel must have done with its

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[156] See further, Malamat, 2012.

[157] On Malamat's (and De Moor's) treatment of the story of Beya and the texts cited here, see Davies, Graham, 2004: 34-36.

[158] Cf. especially Berman, 2006: xii: "Anthropologists have shown that the last six of the Ten Commandments have counterparts in every known culture." Berman goes on to state that his book "is written [...] in the belief that the rediscovery and revival of the historical connections between the Western legal tradition and the Western religious tradition will not only strengthen both but also facilitate dialogue and cooperation among adherents of the major cultures of the world in the development of universal legal standards and common legal institutions."

neighbours. So while the international context of literary convention cannot by itself be used to negate the historicity of biblical stories, it certainly enjoins us to approach them cautiously.[159]

It is important, finally, to comment on the weight in this thesis aforrded the *cohesive aspect* of literary convention, particularly as it is evident *within* the Hebrew Bible itself. I say this because envisaging scribal adherence to literary convention carries implications not only for the historicity of the narratives in question, but also for postulating a horizon of redaction connecting the 'final' presentation of the historical contexts within which each narrative originally emerged. Whether the major historical narratives of the Hebrew Bible were composed over a matter of centuries or brought to a 'final form' around the same time, the adherence to literary convention *connecting them ideologically* and marking them as inter-related and interdependent incarnations of each other subordinates their historicity to concerns of their presentation.[160] With this in mind, we might look at the evolution of these narratives in one of two ways. Either i) they were repeatedly revised over centuries, with those responsible for doing so maintaining their ideological links by way of the language and the motifs used; or ii) they were composed in a relatively short time (perhaps over a number of months or years), with the authors 'threading' them together by way of the same method. I rather think there is a third option, and while it is close in nature to many of the literary hypotheses over which scholars have argued for centuries, I have always found the names, titles and labels given to imaginary authors and their equally imaginary 'documents' too leading and open for ready exploitation. Certainly, as this thesis progresses, I will be guilty of postulating the existence of faceless scribes constructing 'official' histories, but I have no intention of characterising them as if they occupied a period drama (that is the purview of the novelist). I certainly envisage scribal work in which the stories were revised over centuries; but each new incarnation was composed in such a way that it alluded to its predecessor through its application of stock characters and literary motifs. These are the things which keep stories alive, meaningful and authoritative. Unlike the polarisation of my two suggestions above, however, I think we can claim a combination of the two: the stories evolved over time and their form *crystallised in accordance with the literary conventions* current when the 'final' (major) redaction took place.[161] I believe it can be claimed with great confidence that that redaction

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[159] On the international context within which the biblical writers composed their history, see, for example, Thompson, 1999: 267ff.

[160] See Liverani, 2004: 96.

[161] I think, for example, that Widengren's concerns (1984: 227) can be addressed by my methodology: "Old Testament research in our time is so preoccupied with form criticism and literary genres that what is expressed in these literary genres is in danger of being neglected." By combining literary-ideological

occurred during the Persian period, when the *legendary and literary figures* Ezra and Nehemiah (see further in 4.2) oversaw the codification of the socio-religious regulations of Second Temple Judaism. There is room in this hypothesis for minor redactions occurring into the Hellenistic period (as noted above), but I think that the concerns of the restoration community in Persian period Yehud are most vehemently articulated through the allusive and analogous motifs of 'exile' and 'return' dramatised in Exodus. Therefore, and with that same confidence, I will proceed to deconstruct the transmission history of that 'grand narrative' of identity (re)construction, with the understanding that the biblical texts with which I will deal preserve memories of previous incarnations of each respective narrative as well as the historical circumstances within which each was composed.

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and historical-critical concerns, a much fuller picture of the symbiosis between the socio-historical contexts of the respective authors and their literary environments is possible.

1.4 Summary

It is a fundamental presupposition of this thesis that the migration tradition *crystallised as Exodus* in Persian period Jerusalem; and that the Babylonian 'exile' and the subsequent return to Jerusalem of descendants of the deported Judean elite was *alluded to* through the enduring metaphor of oppression in and liberation from Egypt. It is one thing to suggest, however, that the Babylonian 'captivity' inspired the retelling by the 'literati' of Jerusalem of an ancient tradition of migration from Egypt (see Chapter 4), but it is quite another to envisage a situation in which the received form of Exodus marks the first time this ancient tradition was dramatised by gathering together dislocated memories of such a migration. In light of the foregoing discussion on the contemporisation of past events in historiography, such a scenario attaches to every element of the received form of Exodus significance and relevance *pertaining solely to the time in which that form was composed*, thus completely dismissing the value of that form for the reconstruction of earlier contexts of the retelling of the tradition. The deconstruction to follow of the received form of Exodus applies the theories addressed above, in that i) crises of identity prompt the re-appraisal of the past so that a new or reimagined (often presented as 'reforming') identity is constructed and legitimated; ii) latent memories – afforded significance theretofore overlooked – influence and help to authenticate such programs of identity construction; iii) conventions of literary and conceptual expression govern the form taken by 'histories', revealing levels of 'truth' from which factual contexts can be postulated; and iv) 'histories' must at the very least contain details – or allusions to details – of events preserved in the collective memory of the people if they are to have any effect in terms of identity construction. In this thesis, the contexts posed for the resurfacing of the 'migration tradition' envisage a symbiosis between the 'histories' undergoing revision and the expectations of the people to whom they were addressed *at the time of their composition or transmission*. Only by recognising the necessity of accommodating at least some significant aspects of the collective memory of the audience can a foundation be laid for positing the circumstances within which these revisions of 'historical' *traditions* occurred. I use the term 'historical' tentatively and emphasise that it is the traditions which preserve the collective memories in question, particularly to highlight the misguided attacks on the historicity of these stories founded upon modern concepts of historiography. Lemche's assertions, for example, that pre-Hellenistic Israel cannot be reconstructed from the Hebrew Bible because its presentation of said period(s) "is simply an invented history with only a few referents to things that really happened or existed", completely dismisses the long history of the transmission and evolution of traditions – and the potential for the survival of facts therein – upon which the biblical narratives were

based.[162] Rather than assume such a nihilistic approach, this thesis argues for the evolution over time of a tradition of migration from Egypt developing parallel to the symbiotic relationship of collective memory, identity construction and (in later periods) historiography suggested above.

Whatever the truth of how the ethnic identity 'Israel' first came to be, there are clearly polarised views occupying the extremes of the debate: the biblical version of events is either completely true or completely false. Yet even between these poles, the views of those who might call themselves 'moderates' sometimes read rather tentatively, as if cautious concession to both extremes is necessary. This thesis could be seen, then, as an intermediary solution, wherein the deconstruction of the tradition-history of a central story like Exodus accommodates most of the above (those upholding the extreme conservative view that the received story relates events *exactly as they occurred* will not be placated). However, even when the value of a mnemohistorical approach to Exodus is recognised (wherein it is acknowledged that the received version contains memories of a real historical event), still there is a tendency amongst scholars to read Exodus in terms of a late rendition preserving vague memories of events in a distant past. The words here of Nadav Na'aman also fail to credit the guardians of Israelite tradition with knowledge of their actions:

> It is clear that the late authors *unintentionally* integrated into the story many details of the reality of their time and thereby considerably distanced it from the reality prevailing in Egypt in the time of the New Kingdom.[163]

Rather than opting to defend a position which sees the literary composition or simply the 'first narrativisation' of such stories within a single historical context (New Kingdom Egypt or otherwise) – wherein memories or tales of ancient events were gathered *for the first time* to respond to one specific set of circumstances – this thesis adopts a '*longue durée*' approach to the migration tradition, so that a connection might be drawn between the earliest memories of interaction with Egypt resulting in the birth of that tradition right through to its received form, paying attention to the memory 'way stations' at which point it was revised to suit the circumstances of the time.[164] In other words, the story as we have it need not belong only to

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[162] Lemche, 2000: 14

[163] Na'aman, 2011a: 60; emphasis mine.

[164] Cf. Hendel, 2001: 621-622; also Maeir, 2013: Time 2:40. In relation to the application of Exodus for understanding the origins of Israel, Maeir (*idem*: Time 19:40) argues that the narrative "reflects the diverse, complex and multi-period origins of the Israelites." From the point of view of the conflation of

the context posited for its initial composition; instead it belongs to every context within which it resurfaced as a tool for (re)asserting or (re)constructing identity. This is the value of postulating a mnemohistory of Exodus, for it provides us with an opportunity to appreciate the development not of the geopolitical entity Israel; nor that of Judah; but of the ethnic identity 'Israel'. Insofar as the centrality of Exodus for maintaining that identity is concerned, Na'aman articulates well the mistake of dismissing some sort of historical background to the story:

> Scholars' conclusion that the Exodus tradition is mainly myth devoid of historical foundation does not take into account the antiquity of the tradition, its centrality in the historical memory of the Northern Kingdom and its central place in biblical historiography from the seventh century BCE onward. It is reasonable to suggest that such a fundamental claim of establishment would have emerged from a particular historical experience. Most likely, we should assume that it is rooted in a highly memorable past event of the people of Israel or at least some of them. The 'second Exodus' in the Persian period considerably influenced the intensification of the biblical tradition and encouraged the reshaping of the biblical story, as it might have served as a useful paradigm for its readers and hearers. However, the intensification of the tradition in the late period does not really help explain the background of its emergence.[165]

As outlined above, it is with said background that this thesis is concerned, but it is also by focusing upon the literary activity prompted by the so-called 'second Exodus' and the subsequent return to Judah in the wake of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem that our very own Mobius strip of composition will be sealed. Like Na'aman, I see this historical event as the catalyst for the *last major revision* of the tradition of a migration from Egypt, and it is upon the combined foundations of biblical historiography, mnemohistory and literary convention that Exodus will be deconstructed. I see the very real transition between Babylonian and Persian dominance of Syria-Palestine – a transition facilitating the return(s) to Jerusalem – as a sort of

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memories, this is partly true, for I would argue that what it reflects is a combination of both the origins and the (continuing) evolution of the 'Israel' identity. Lanfer's concern (2012: 165) that the biblical texts should not be read as "fixed or static compositions at any point in antiquity" reminds us of the importance of recognising the potential for literary and ideological evolution occurring with each retelling of biblical stories. Yet it must be conceded that we may never know the origin of any of them. The word 'origin' may not even be appropriate if we are dealing with literary compositions with a long history of oral transmission, because no matter how much we hope to 'deconstruct' these stories, it is quite possible that we are in possession of very little belonging to the earliest version(s).

[165] Na'aman, 2011a: 60

'Eureka' moment retrospectively validating and legitimating ancient and latent memories of a migration from Egypt in terms of their authority and their ability to determine and maintain the identity of 'Israel'. Unlike Na'aman, I maintain that the guardians of the tradition *intentionally* adapted pre-existing versions – each with their own antecedent – in order to maintain the significance of the tradition in their own time and in order to utilise it for the preservation and legitimation of their identity. Over the next two chapters, the origins, the evolution, and the contextual application of that tradition will be explored.

CHAPTER 2

'Israel' in Egypt: Biblical Memories of Cultural Interaction?

> "The historian is, among other things, a historian of cultural memory itself, concerned to show how what is recollected about the past changes with the collective identity itself, adapting the past to the present."[1]

2.1 Introduction

As the task ahead is to plot a biblical mnemohistory of Egypt, my initial point of departure will be to explore the historical interaction between Egypt and 'Palestine' in general, relating it to the question of the historicity of Exodus. In this chapter, I will focus upon historical contexts about which the biblical writers appear to have known little or nothing, highlighting the possibility that any perceived correlations between said contexts and the biblical narratives are the result of latent memories resurfacing in relation to the motivations of the writers in their (much later) contemporary setting(s). This approach will lay the foundation for seeing the bulk of the details in Exodus as contextually isolated from the period to which the story as a whole alludes, while also presenting an opportunity to propose later historical contexts to which each respective 'layer' of the story belongs (see Chapters 3 and 4). It has become increasingly popular in biblical scholarship to locate the initial formulation of the elaborate Mosaic drama somewhere between the seventh century BCE Josian 'Reformation' and the late Persian period, with some advocating for the continuing evolution of the tradition(s) into the Hellenistic period.[2] For reasons which will become clear, I would disagree with the latter, rather advocating for the cessation in the Persian period of any significant evolution of *the biblical*

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[1] Davies, Philip R., 2008: 106-107

[2] See, for example, Redford, 1992 (408ff.); Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002 (also Finkelstein and Mazar, 2007) for the seventh century position. Davies, Philip R. (2005a), points to a "burst of [...] literary activity" related to "the religious discourse [...] of the sixth and fifth centuries." Similarly, Mullen's study of the Pentateuch (1997) focuses on the Persian period. Whybray, 1994, argues not only for a sixth century date for the initial gathering of sources leading towards the composition of the Pentateuch, but also that this was the work of a single author. For a Hellenistic *terminus post quem* for the Pentateuch, see, for example, Lemche, 2000; Thompson, 1999. Despite not agreeing with all of Dever's conclusions, I certainly agree with the sentiment (2004: 66-67) that a Hebrew Bible, written in the second century and deliberately archaised "without exhibiting a single anachronism [...] would be the greatest literary hoax of all time."

representation of Israel's origins, the time in which many would place the roots of formative Judaism (see further, Chapter 4).

As for locating the initial impetus for composition during the reign of Josiah, I will refrain from comment until this period is reached in our chronological journey through the evolution of the 'Exodus' tradition (3.4, below). This, however, I will note: if it is indeed the case that the tradition did not take narrative form until the seventh century, then the *explicit* references to the same in the writings attributed to the 'eighth century prophets' (see 3.3, below) envisage a version considerably variant to the one we have; a version of which we will likely never come into possession.[3] Our concern from the outset of this chapter is with the *implicit* allusions to whatever early versions of the tradition might have existed, and the forms taken by those allusions in the Bible.

The problem with arguing for the wholesale composition of any biblical narrative solely in one historical context is that it can over time erode the value of its contents for identifying earlier strata of a tradition informing the 'final' product. While 'oral tradition' might be seen as a somewhat loose concept not to be trusted, refusal to recognise the existence and implications of this phenomenon in pre-literate societies risks dismissing the contribution of collective memory to pre-literate expressions of the past. While this is not the place for debating the value of a system of remembering detached from literary expression, it is necessary by extension to recognise the contribution of 'old reminiscences' to traditions surviving over time to become normalised in textual form.[4] Their preservation in this form, leading to their status as 'normative' and 'formative' (or, together, 'cultural') texts, is testament to the significance and resilience of the strata behind them for the group advocating their preservation.[5] In other words, the fact that traditions were preserved in writing and eventually given 'canonical' status from the point of view of socio-religious identity – even if they continued to be 'reinvented' and contemporised through redaction – tells us that at the moment they were first articulated in literary form, they most likely bore established significance in the collective memory of the respective group. This group – this 'Biblical Israel' – valued these stories and the memories they evoked prior to preserving them in writing. Without such inherent value, such literary presentations would bear little credence insofar as

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[3] The possibility should always be borne in mind that the people of Israel and Judah had in their possession variant tales and traditions which never made it into the 'canonical' text (cf. Whybray, 1994: 238).

[4] The term 'old reminiscences' was conveyed to me in conversation by Prof. A. D. H. Mayes in relation to possible earlier versions of the migration tradition.

[5] See Assmann, 2006: 38ff.

their authority was concerned. The question before us is twofold: firstly, what memories did they evoke (and continue to evoke as they evolved); and secondly, to what historical context(s) do these memories belong?

To reconstruct the transmission history of the tradition of a migration from Egypt, it is necessary to start not at the beginning (that is, Exodus 1), but before the beginning; for it is in Genesis that the foundations are laid not only for the deliverance from Egypt of the oppressed Hebrews, but also for the biblical understanding of who these people were. Genesis is a book of beginnings in every sense of the word, dealing with the origins of the world, the nations, languages, cultural norms and, of course, Israel. Through the construction of genealogies comprising eponymic representations of the ethnic groups and nations of the Ancient Near Eastern world (that is, those with whom the biblical writers *were concerned*), the writers 'zoom in and out' on the temporal map to tell stories in which significant ancestral figures deal with the world around them and the people they encounter. With the emphasis ostensibly on the past but in reality on the present in which they were writing, the intended audience was called upon to either emulate or reflect upon the actions and interactions of their ancestors and to recognise the antiquity and authority of Israelite cultural norms and the primordial bond between YHWH and humankind in general, and Israel in particular. This unfolding epic eventually 'slows down' to focus on the family of Jacob, who is given the name 'Israel', and it is within this subplot of origins that Israel (the family) finds its way to Egypt.

An historical-critical evaluation of this account of the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt occupies an important position in the debate concerning the historicity of Exodus, especially since studies of the origins of Israel understand this ethnic group as an offshoot of 'Canaanite' culture (see 1.2, above). The story or *Toledot* ('generations') of Jacob is the biblical story of the origins of Israel from a chronological point of view, but a dichotomy arises in assessing the evolution of Israelite collective memory in the wake of the general consensus that the eponym 'Israel' originated in the hill settlements of northern Palestine around the thirteenth century BCE (see further below, 2.2.5). The 'solution' to this quandary of Jacob going down to Egypt, and Israel *as a nation* emerging over four centuries later (implying that the ethnic group 'Israel' were not in Palestine in the interim), is to push the date of the descent into this land of oppression far enough back in time so as to accommodate a date for the Exodus event already preconceived (in other words, the proponents of the 'solution' are anchoring the received form of Exodus in a specific point in time and working back from there).[6] Starting with

[6] In exasperated tones, Redford (1992: 257-260) summarises the lengths to which some scholars will go to maintain the validity of their preconceptions on the historicity of the Exodus, concluding most aptly that "[i]t all boggles the mind" (260, n. 11). Cf. Maeir (2013: Time 17:40) who stresses that while we can

the earliest relevant extra-biblical evidence, I will assess chronologically the most ancient information occupying the debate.

2.2 17th-13th Centuries BCE – The Hyksos and Other Usual Suspects

> "[T]he report of the Exodus stems from an authentic account of a sojourn in and departure from Egypt, but those events were experienced not by the Hebrews but by the Hyksos, whose traditions the Hebrews inherited."[7]

There are a number of ethnic groups and historical figures to whom the Bible does not refer. Whether this is because the writers were unaware of them or simply did not see them as relevant to their ends we cannot be entirely sure, but they certainly belong in a discussion concerning the memory of Israel's interactions with Egypt and *all things deemed Egyptian*. Examined here below are those groups and figures with whom generations of biblical scholars have found solace when it comes to defending their historical reconstructions of early Israel. The aim is to show that rather than the faithful and rigorous preservation of the details of historical events, it is the *memories* of historical events, ethnic groups and even specific people (distorted over time as they may be) with which the biblical writers were concerned in their purposeful reconstruction of the history of 'Israel' within the context of continuity and antiquity.

2.2.1 *The Hyksos – Joseph, Jacob and the 'Asiatic' Fifteenth Dynasty*

A popular correlation for proponents of the historicity of the transition between Genesis and Exodus – the Joseph story – is to see the so-called *Hyksos* rulers of the Egyptian 15th Dynasty (c. 1640-1550[8]) as ethnically analogous with the earliest 'Israelites', thus placing the 'Sons of Israel' in Egypt in preparation for the 'Exodus' and seeing their subsequent migration from

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find archaeological evidence for ancient hunter-gatherers, we cannot find any such evidence for at least six-hundred thousand people fleeing Egypt across the desert!

[7] Assmann, 2003: 283

[8] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 46. Grabbe (2007: 62-63) gives a date of 1650-1550, while Mazar (2007b: 58) locates the 15th dynasty a century later. Based on the textual and archaeological evidence, O'Connor (1997: 48-56), while noting the presence of 'Hyksos' characteristics in the archaeological record prior to their rise to power, is more precise, suggesting c. 1648-1540. Van De Mieroop (2007: 131-132) states that the mid-seventeenth century saw the Hyksos ruling some of "a number of principalities" into which Egypt had been split. Finkelstein (2007b: 52) dates the expulsion of the Hyksos to the 16th century.

Egypt in terms of a memory of the historical expulsion of the Hyksos recorded in ancient texts.[9] This correlation is far from modern, for the Hyksos had entered ancient discussion on the origins of Israel as early as the 1st century CE; and possibly earlier.[10] Flavius Josephus dealt with these 'shepherd kings' rather contentedly, considering that their alignment with his ancestors (*C. Ap.* 1.74) upheld his claims of antiquity for the Jews.[11] Despite 'quoting' Manetho's (mis)understanding of the word *Hycsos* (*Hyc* meaning 'king' and *Sos* meaning 'shepherd'; 1.82), Josephus favours his own interpretation, 'captive shepherds' (now with *Hyc* meaning 'shepherds'), for the sake of accommodating the biblical narrative or "ancient history" (1.83) within which context Manetho's account is assessed.[12] The term Hyksos, however, is best

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[9] See, for example, *ANET* 233-34, relating to the participation of Ah-mose, captain of a vessel on the Nile, in the campaigns to defeat the Hyksos (Pritchard, 2011: 226-228); also Redford, 1997: 11-20 (a collection of texts contemporary to and following the expulsion).

[10] Josephus' polemic (*Contra Apionem* passim) against the details of Jewish origins in Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* is the oldest surviving testament to the existence of the latter. Without contemporary texts confirming the contents of Manetho's writings, we cannot be completely confident that Josephus was recounting precisely what Manetho wrote. Redford, 1992: 101 suggests a fourth century BCE date for Manetho's sources, and even goes so far as to say (98) that Josephus' citations constitute "a fortunately surviving excerpt quoted *in extenso*". For a discussion on the veracity both of Manetho's words and Josephus' citations of the same (cf. also Van Seters, 1966: 121 ff.), see Raspe, 1998, who locates Josephus' polemic within a wider context of Graeco-Roman attacks (and Jewish apologetics) on the antiquity and credibility of Judaism.

[11] Raspe (1998: 124-125) cautions against concluding that Manetho actually referred to the Jews in his original text (which we do not have); thus the alignment of the Hyksos with the Jews may be down to Josephus himself. I rather think that the truth is somewhere in between the two, with Josephus dealing with a *widely-held belief* that Manetho (whose 'history' likely bore authority; cf. Rodgers, 2006: 11) had actually referred to the Jews. Using Manetho's account of the Hyksos as Josephus does allows the latter to maintain the biblical claim that the 'Israel' which came up out of Egypt was previously in the land. His assertion, however, that this 'deliverance' "preceded the siege of Troy almost a thousand years" (*C. Ap.* 1.104.) is decidedly anachronistic.

[12] Josephus cites "another copy" as his reasoning behind this alternative translation (*C. Ap.* 1.83), without clarifying the reference. Is this another copy of Manetho, or just another Egyptian history? Josephus deals with this interpretation of Jewish history within the constraints of the biblical text (and, of course, his own *Antiquities*); so it is acknowledged that the Israelites came from another country into Egypt (1.104, 223; cf. *Ant.* 2.177). Amidst what appears to be the intellectual jostling for the greater antiquity of one's nation (or simply the need to tackle established opinions regarding that of the Jews), Josephus has to (in this matter, at least) 'stick to the script'. Mason, 2005: 91-95 (in arguing for a specifically Roman audience for the *Bellum Judaicum*), relates an awareness of 'presumed' information (that which is *excluded*) to matters of audience identification.

understood as 'foreign ruler' or 'ruler of foreign lands', and was in use as early as the Middle Kingdom (c. 2040-1650 BCE) to designate "foreign princes", primarily Amorites or 'Canaanites'.[13] As such, it was not a term associated with a specific ethnic group who descended into Egypt from Syria-Palestine; rather, it was a common designation which came to be used to describe this new *regime* – and not the people – so that their status as outsiders was maintained.[14] The term 'Asiatics' appears to have been used for people who had descended into Egypt and either took control after a long period of gradual settlement or in the wake of a sudden invasion, but 'Asiatics', 'foreign rulers' and 'princes of Retenu' are terms which maintain a sense of cultural disconnection and are contrary to a theory of integration or acculturation over a long period of time. The evidence shows that these people, although 'Egyptianised' in their behaviour, did not see themselves as Egyptian.[15] In this light, Manetho's (or Josephus') claim that the Hyksos dominated Egypt for five hundred and eleven years (*C. Ap.* 1.84) is either drawn from a misunderstanding of Manetho's schematic king list or a need to accommodate biblical chronology.[16] It would appear, rather, that little more than a century

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[13] Oren, 1997: xxi. 'Hyksos' is a Greek translation of the Egyptian term *Heqau-Khasut* meaning "Rulers of Foreign Lands" (Bietak, 1997: 113). Transliterations of the Egyptian term vary, but the phonetics are relatively consistent. Bietak (1997: 113) also concludes that "an Amorite attribution of the dynasty is far more likely [than Hurrian]." Cf. Van Seters, 1966: 188, based on the use of 'amu (for *Amurrite*) to "designate the foreign population of Egypt in the Hyksos period". See also Speiser, 1931: 34.

[14] Van Seters, 1966: 187; Redford, 1992: 100; Grabbe, 2007: 45. The titles of the Hyksos rulers conflated Egyptian royal epithets with Semitic personal names. Redford (1997: 20-21), in presenting the Hyksos Onomasticon, suggests that the condition of the script may be testament to the scribes' lack of knowledge of these "strange names".

[15] Redford, 1992: 102. Notably, Retenu, or *Retjenu*, is used of the tribal chief under whom Sinuhe finds success in a foreign ('Canaanite') land. The *Tale of Sinuhe* seems concerned with asserting that there is 'no place like home', and as such *Retjenu* may be a generic appellation to refer to people in the Syria-Palestine region. In other words, the story is not about where Sinuhe has been, but where he has come from and, ultimately, to where he will return (see further Parkinson, 1999; Galvin, 2011: 21-22). The *Tale* is echoed in the stories both of Joseph's success in Egypt and that of Moses in Midian, but the sentiment of belonging is quite poignantly expressed in Jacob's request that his bones be brought up out of Egypt (Gen. 47:29-30).

[16] Redford (1992: 107) notes the difficult situation within which Manetho found himself. The Egyptian priest listed 'Shepherd Kings' for two dynasties (16th and 17th) following Hyksos dominance, rather than presenting them as contemporaneous regimes; and thus he was forced to expand his linear scheme. The 16th and 17th Dynasties – although O'Connor (1997: 52) is unaware of a reason to distinguish the two – ruled from Thebes and produced the kings (Kamose and Ahmose, respectively) who besieged and eventually expelled the Hyksos from Avaris (O'Connor, 1997: 45).

passed between the ascension of the first 'Hyksos' king (of which there were six) and the expulsion of their dynasty.[17]

There were 'Asiatics' in Egypt before the Hyksos came to power (the archaeological record has preserved architecture at Tell el-Dab'a/Avaris synonymous with Syro-Palestinian culture), with people living there from the late Twelfth Dynasty onwards who were likely "subordinate to Egyptian officials".[18] The Thirteenth Dynasty palace constructed above the earlier 'Canaanite' settlement at Tell el-Dab'a appears to have accommodated officials favouring 'Asian' burial customs,[19] yet despite another 'Canaanite' settlement atop the abandoned palace, Bietak argues against seeing the officials at Tell el-Dab'a at this time as the predecessors of the Hyksos.[20] This settlement ended abruptly with an epidemic of what appears to have been bubonic plague (Egyptian texts refer to it as the 'Asian disease'), and the Fourteenth Dynasty seems to have begun following this, with Nehesy taking control.[21] Nehesy appears to have been Egyptian, but Asian cultural influence played a significant role in his court. His short reign was ended by a "local Asian dynasty", following which the Fifteenth (Hyksos) Dynasty came to power.[22]

When all of this information is aligned with the biblical story of Joseph's rise to power and the descent of Jacob (Israel) and his family into Egypt (and the subsequent migration of the Hebrews), the temptation to assign at least some level of credence to the biblical narrative is wholly understandable. We should ask, however, whether the Joseph story reflects memories of the Hyksos rise to power, for it has been suggested that this corresponds to an authentic Israelite memory of "a Semitic prince in the Egyptian court".[23] Some immediate problems from a biblical point of view is that Joseph's rise to power occurred prior to the descent of his father and brothers into Egypt, and there is no corresponding (extra-biblical) evidence for a Hyksos boy being sold into slavery and ending up in Egypt as a precursor for an invasion thirteen years

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[17] 108 years, according to the Turin Canon of Kings (O'Connor, 1997: 48). Also Grabbe, 2007: 45; Redford, 1992: 107; and Bietak, 1997: 114.

[18] O'Connor, 1997: 56. For a discussion of the 'Canaanite' settlement in the late Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1800 BCE), see Bietak, 1997: 97-100; Hoffmeier, 1996: 63-65; and Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 55.

[19] Bietak, 1997: 103

[20] Cf. also Hoffmeier, 1996: 63. This does not mean, of course, that the presence of Semitic peoples did not facilitate the peaceful 'infiltration' of the Hyksos rulers at the site, considering that there is no evidence of military conquest at the crucial transitional phase (Hoffmeier, 1996: 65).

[21] Bietak, 1997: 105, 108; O'Connor, 1997: 56

[22] Bietak, 1997: 109

[23] Mazar (2007b: 58-59) maintains that such a story may "contain kernels of old traditions [...] rooted in second-millennium B.C.E. realia." See also Hendel, 2001: 607; Redford, 1992: 422-429.

later (which would certainly have made a wonderfully romanticised narrative reminiscent of the impetus for the 'Greek' war against Troy).[24] The biblical text also maintains that Joseph's position, while seeing him taking charge of "all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:41), still kept him second to Pharaoh with regards to the throne (41:40b).[25] Thus we are dealing with a solely administrative position, and not one to be aligned with Hyksos rule.[26] The evidence for 'Asian' influence in the administration of the Thirteenth Dynasty palace at Tell el-Dab'a (above) tells us that the *Egyptian* elite permitted the elevation of 'Asiatics' to such high positions. To argue that the memory survives for over a thousand years of one specific (named) ancestor holding such a position is something of a stretch, for the archaeological record serves to show how relatively commonplace the appointment could be.[27] Moreover, even if this is the survival of something so specific, the details are so skewed as to render the alignment tentative at best.

Then there is the matter of ethnic differentiation, for if Joseph's rise to power corresponds to that of the Hyksos, why should we read his subservience to a clearly Egyptian king in the biblical narrative as corresponding to Hyksos administrative control if Joseph were ethnically identical to the ruling elite (as the Hyksos alignment would require)? Instead, the distinction is made clear in the Bible when it is stated that the Egyptians 'abhorred' shepherds (Genesis 46:34; where the Hebrew term translated as 'shepherds', רֹעֵה צֹאן, shares no phonetic affinity with 'Hyksos'). This strange statement might be part of the biblical writers' construction of the Egyptian perspective on the Hebrews in preparation for the shift away from Egyptian favour which opens Exodus.[28] Equally, it might belong to a context of socio-political debates regarding

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[24] Joseph is seventeen when he is sold by his brothers (Gen. 37:2) and thirty when he is elevated to his high position under Pharaoh (41:46).

[25] Gen. 44:18 should be read in the context of a supplicant addressing an obvious superior. What the brothers see is a man equally as powerful as Pharaoh (and what would they know of the Egyptian court?), but the comparison is part of the ideology of the tale. As for 45:8, while Joseph appears magnanimous in his forgiveness, he also appears to be enjoying his success in front of his brothers, for now he can provide everything for them in the role of a father (see esp. 45:13).

[26] The BDB suggests that the noun in Gen. 42:6, derived from the verb שָׁלַט ("having mastery, domineering"), is a later interpolation of an earlier (unknown) word. JPS renders 'vizier', while NRSV uses 'governor'. Still, it is a leap to read Joseph's position as a memory amongst 'Canaanites' of the "political primacy" of an ancestor (as Redford, 1992: 412).

[27] Hoffmeier, 1996: 93-95

[28] The new king of Exodus 1 either does not know anything about the favour shown to the ancestor(s) of the Hebrew slave population, as suggested by the text, or simply does not care.

immigration, or a more specific sociological clash between urban life and nomadic culture.[29] No matter the reason, distinction – even cultural polarity – informs the biblical text, and despite the hints that Joseph had been Egyptianised during his time in Egypt (Genesis 41:42-43, 45; 42:23; 43:32),[30] the Bible clearly maintains his status as a son of Israel, with Jacob asserting his patriarchal dominance from his death-bed. Even the children of Joseph, 'adopted' by Jacob prior to bestowing his blessing upon them (Genesis 48:5-6), bear Hebrew names (Genesis 41:51-52), despite the apparent disassociation from Joseph's homeland implied by their accompanying etymologies (and this also despite Joseph's inability to understand Hebrew in Genesis 42:23!).[31] With all of this going on, there is no hint in the biblical text that the family envisage a rise to power over Egypt or that Joseph heralds the coming invasion of Jacob and his family/army. Subservience and indebtedness to Pharaoh as a result of his permitting their immigration and settlement cannot correspond to an influx of 'Asiatics' who rise to dominate Egypt for a little more than a century prior to their expulsion, especially when the biblical text would have the 'sons of Israel' living (or *dwelling*, from the verb יָשַׁב) in Egypt for either four hundred (Genesis 15:13) or four hundred and thirty years (Exodus 12:40) prior to the 'Exodus.'[32]

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[29] Grabbe (2007: 40) notes that the first half of the second millennium was a time of great urbanisation (esp. in Palestine), with urban populations outnumbering those in rural settings. Greifenhagen (2002: 39; and n. 5) reads Joseph's instruction to his family in the context of ensuring Israel's separation from the Egyptians by settling his family outside Egypt proper (i.e. in Goshen), although he goes on (40ff.) to deal with the problem arising from Pharaoh instructing the family to settle 'in the land of Rameses', 'in the land of Egypt' (Gen. 47:11; directly contradicting 47:6; although cf. Hoffmeier, 1996: 121) and the subsequent ideological dichotomy of separation and assimilation.

[30] Note especially Gen. 42:23, in which Joseph understands the conversation between his brothers only through an interpreter.

[31] Many factors stand out as contradictory, highlighting for the most part the irrelevance of many details of a story concerned less with historical fact than didactic theology (YHWH will provide and bring success in a foreign land). The problems with the chronology of the story can sometimes elicit humour, especially when we note that Joseph's sons were born "before the years of famine" (Gen. 41:50), Jacob spent seventeen years in Egypt before he died (47:28) – counting them at least from the time the famine began – and Joseph's sons, at least in their late teens, sat on poor old Jacob's knees (48:12) as he blessed them (he was 147 years old; 47:28)!

[32] Granted, the maintenance of cultural disassociation from the Hyksos on the part of the Egyptian sources is also found in Exodus, not only in casting Egypt as the 'other', but also in Egypt separating itself from the 'people of the sons of Israel' (Exod. 1:9), a clear affirmation of ethnic distinction. Ascribing this act of separation to the nameless Pharaoh (representative of Egypt) lends weight to having Israel *as a*

Other anachronisms arise concerning the use of chariots in Genesis 41:43 and 46:29, with Pharaoh using one in the earlier verse and Joseph in the latter. If the Hyksos first introduced the chariot into Egypt;[33] and its appearance in the archaeological record is to be aligned with the Hyksos invasion, what are we to make of Pharaoh using one prior to Joseph's appointment and, more importantly, prior to Jacob's descent into Egypt? Of course, the biblical writers may simply have had no memory of an Egypt without the chariot, and so it is possible that all we are seeing here is a vision of Egypt from the time of the composition of the Joseph story (a solution which can apply to practically everything in the story, for there is no prohibition on using names and places long after either cease to exist). The anachronisms are not restricted to the biblical account, however, for even Josephus' defence of the antiquity of his people with regard to the Hyksos expulsion and the 'Exodus' leaves much to be desired when it comes to relative chronology. It serves the chronological pattern of Josephus' argument to have the Hyksos (kings) establishing Jerusalem following their expulsion from Egypt, but letters from the Amarna period (14th c. BCE) mention a king of Jerusalem with a Hurrian name (Abdi-Heba); a king clearly subordinate to Egyptian rule.[34] If it was the Hurrian expansion into and dominance of Syria-Palestine which had initially created these 'Hyksos' in forcing some of the indigenous people southward into Egypt (see below), it is highly unlikely that the Hyksos are to be equated with the progenitors of Israel from the point of view of their establishing Jerusalem if we encounter a Hurrian king in the city some two centuries later. This would suggest a hiatus in the

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nation recognised – and thus legitimised – by another (nation). Pharaoh's "rhetoric of differentiation" (Greifenhagen, 2002: 53) sets the stage for enslaving the entire עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

[33] Hoffmeier, 1976: 43; 1996: 64. Redford (1992: 99) notes the 'fixation' with the use of the chariot with regard to arguing for the Indo-European origins of the Hyksos. Cf. Van Seters (1966: 185), who argues that "[t]he question of chariots [...] ought to be dropped from the discussion." Wapnish (1997: 355) states that "[t]he role of Asiatics [...] in the introduction of the horse and [chariot] to Egypt is still an open question." Despite a number of equine burials in Egypt during the Hyksos period (idem), however, it appears (at present) that there were no chariots buried with them.

[34] EA 286 and EA 287 both have Abdi-Heba stating that it was the Egyptian king who put him in power in Jerusalem. See further, Miller & Hayes, 2006: 32-35; Grabbe, 2007: 42-43; Redford, 1992: 270; and Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 238-240. The Jebusite rulers of Jerusalem, to whom the Bible refers (Josh. 15:8, 63; 2 Sam. 5:6; 1 Chron. 11:4) are likely to have been descended from the Hurrians. Cf. Craigie, 1983, 160-161; and Collins, 2007: 154-155. Notably the Bible claims that the 'Judites' lived alongside the Jebusites in Jerusalem, because the Judites could not remove the former inhabitants from the city (Josh. 15:63). This would not correspond to the descendants of Jacob leaving Egypt and attacking Jerusalem as well as the Hyksos *establishing* Jerusalem, but this matter will be explored further below in 2.2.4.

continuity of Israelite control of Jerusalem (either that or Israelite descent from Hurrians) to which no ancient source refers and to which archaeology bears no witness.[35]

There are also some hints in Josephus' 'Manethonian' quotations that the latter's historical retrospective was chronologically askew. Take, for example, the account of Salatis, first of the Hyksos kings, foreseeing the ascendancy of the Assyrians (*C. Ap.* 1.77). To which period of Assyrian expansionism was Manetho referring? Assyrian military power in the thirteenth century was significant, but it had not brought them near Egypt.[36] Not until the seventh century were there successful incursions which saw first Memphis and then Thebes fall into Assyrian hands.[37] Clearly, any reference by Manetho to the Assyrians disrupts the chronology with regard to the Hyksos and "casts suspicion on the whole account."[38] In a similar vein, a lot of the sacrilegious activity Manetho uses to demonise the Hyksos – thus directed (for Josephus, at least) at the Jews – belongs at the earliest to a fifth century BCE context in the wake of the Persian conquest of Egypt.[39]

It would appear that the alignment of the stories of Jacob and Joseph with either the Hyksos invasion of or expulsion from Egypt entered the debate as a result of Josephus having to deal with the details of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* which appeared to both corroborate and contradict some elements of the biblical narrative. If we are to take Josephus' Manethonian quotations as genuine, however, we should consider the direction of dependence. For example, comparing Manetho's claims that "those who came from Jerusalem [...] got the granaries of Egypt into their possession, and perpetrated many of the most horrid actions there" (*C. Ap.* 1.275) brings to mind Joseph's control of the grain rations and the ensuing debt-slavery of the Egyptians (Genesis 47:19). As well as the confusion arising from attempting to align the biblical chronology with Manetho's clearly muddled attack on Jewish history (in the Bible, Joseph was put in charge of the grain *before* Jacob and his family came down to Egypt; and, according to Manetho, the Hyksos had been expelled, they established Jerusalem and then came back down to Egypt!), Manetho's account appears suspiciously dependent upon the biblical narrative in his reconstruction of this period in Egyptian history, almost as if he purposely sought to find a period in Egyptian history best suited to his cause. We might imagine Josephus' frustration with

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[35] Although cf. further below on 'Hurru' on the Merneptah Stele.

[36] Van de Mieroop, 2007: 181-182

[37] Van de Mieroop, 2007: 256-257

[38] Van Seters, 1966: 123

[39] Raspe (1998: 153) suggests that the tensions between the Jewish soldiers at the Elephantine garrison and their Egyptian counterparts belong to this context. Redford (1992: 101) notes the successive invasions of Egypt by the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians which likely influenced Manetho's historical reflection (also Van Seters, 1966: 123).

the whole matter, but his acceptance of the veracity of Hyksos ancestors for the Jews may rightly be called a "fortunate mistake" for our concerns.[40]

He is not aware, however, of the most interesting onomastic correlation regarding the name of one of the kings of this period. Scarabs bearing the name *Ya'acov-har* have been found in Egypt, Nubia and Palestine, a fact which would surely prompt proponents of the Jacob-Hyksos alignment to boast of triumph.[41] Granted, we should not be so swift to dismiss as mere coincidence the presence of a king in Egypt during the Second Intermediate (Hyksos) period bearing amongst his royal titles the (West) Semitic name 'Jacob'. When combined with all of the pertinent data, the memory preserved in the Bible of a Semitic '*Ya'acov*' in Egypt could be for some a keystone to the historicity of the presence there of the family of 'Israel', but it could just as easily be argued that Jacob is a name so common in Syria-Palestine that to find correlations with the Hyksos is presumptuous.[42] One name does not win an argument (and, by comparison, the name 'Joseph' is not found in the Egyptian record at this time), and the biblical writers not only show no awareness of a '*Ya'acov*' assuming power in Egypt – they do not even imagine such a thing.

As for the presence of people from Syria-Palestine – or 'Asiatics' – in Egypt at times which would accommodate the Hyksos correlation, there is so much evidence of the presence of such people in Egypt throughout the second millennium that the thread of certainty unravels.[43] The Syro-Palestinian population of Tell el-Dab'a (Avaris) may have maintained its distance from its

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[40] Sayce, 1903: 349

[41] Redford, 1992: 108, 113. Other titles with the personal name 'Ya'acov' appear in the record, but this form, belonging to a king and containing the epithet meaning 'mountain deity' (Redford, 1997: 20) is of particular interest for our concerns (see further below on the origins of YHWH). Interestingly, Bietak (1997: 115) suggests that the name *Yʿakub-Haddu*, found on a scarab in a grave near Haifa and thought to pre-date the Hyksos period, should be seen as "an actual forerunner of the Hyksos dynasty". If this is the case, then a Semitic ruler named Ya'acov in Egypt might mark the latter stages of the fourteenth dynasty (cf. Ryholt, 1997: 96). Redford (1992: 110), on the other hand, positions *Ya'kob-har* as the second (Hyksos) king of the fifteenth dynasty, attaching the *praenomen* 'Merusere' which Ryholt uses to argue against such a conclusion. While Redford (idem) aligns Sheshy with Manetho's Salitis, Assmann (2003: 480) begins his king-list with Salitis and follows with Sheshi (*sic!*), placing *Yaqub-Har* (*sic!*) third in Dynasty Fifteen.

[42] It is also interesting to consider whether the proponents of the Jacob-Hyksos alignment would spend any time trying to identify historical contexts for any of the other eponymous ancestors of ethnic groups and nations featured in Genesis, for to dismiss these ancestors as mere personifications of those groups, nations or cultural norms would conflict with their own refusal to see the biblical Jacob in this light.

[43] Mazar, 2007b: 59; Grabbe, 2007: 85; Hoffmeier, 1996: 52-68

Egyptian neighbours,[44] but this does not necessarily fit with the segregation of the Israelite (Hebrew) population in Exodus, particularly when the Hyksos were in political ascendancy and the 'Hebrews' were slaves of the regime; and the Hyksos dominated the region for over a century while the 'Hebrews' 'sojourned' as a subservient people for over four hundred years. The main problem with the alignment of Joseph's rise to power, Jacob's descent into Egypt and the Hebrews' sojourn with the Hyksos period stems from the Bible itself, and not only from a chronological point of view – the writers simply do not recall this period as proponents of the alignment would prefer. That does not mean, of course, that we cannot see in the biblical text some faint echoes of the Hyksos period. Regardless of the chain of events which led to the Hyksos era and the Fifteenth Dynasty, forces external to Egypt clearly rose to ascendancy.[45] Yet in light of the Bible's obvious demonisation of Egypt from Exodus onwards, should we not expect awareness on the part of the biblical writers of this dominance over their (perceived) ancient arch-enemy if indeed we are dealing with the earliest components of 'Israel'? Is it really likely that the biblical writers (clearly concerned with telling stories of ethnic differentiation and great antiquity) would not eulogise both a conquest over the greatest enemy their ancestors had ever known and their dominance over that land which their ancient neighbours (not to mention the historical and archaeological record) could verify?[46] Instead, there is no evidence of Egypt being defeated by 'Israel' or the 'Hebrews', while Hyksos dominance over

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[44] Redford, 1992: 115

[45] Redford (1992: 111) advocates for the 'invasion' hypothesis. Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 55) suggest that Manetho's memories of the seventh and sixth century invasions of Egypt prompted a presentation of the Hyksos rise to power in terms of an invasion. Van De Mieroop (2007: 123) sees the 'Asiatic' incursion into Egypt in terms of the movement southwards of people from Syria-Palestine in the wake of the military campaigns of the Hurrians, but does not clarify whether he understands this as long-term immigration permitting gradual political ascension (cf. Grabbe, 2007: 45) or the rapid influx of a hostile force.

[46] We will examine the 'Song of the Sea' further below in this context, concluding that it does not in its earliest manifestation recall a crossing of the so-called 'Sea of Reeds' or a defeat over Egyptian forces, but rather refers to crossing the Jordan and entering 'Canaanite' lands. In this sense, the conquest tradition informing the final form of Joshua also informs later reflections on the tradition of a migration from Egypt. Loewenstamm (1992: 233) marks the parting of the sea and the defeat of the Egyptians as the point at which "the Exodus from Egypt [becomes] a permanent and irrevocable fact". It is in this light that he notes the biblical omissions of Merneptah's 'destruction' of 'Israel', the continuing presence of Egyptian control in Canaan into the 11th century BCE and "any other historical data which might [...] detract from the Exodus", for if all of this had been remembered in the biblical text, Israel could not have been rendered so permanently separate from Egypt.

Egypt actually occurred, could be verified, and was preserved by the Egyptians themselves.[47] Is this not a story great enough to claim for one's ancestors? Why would the people who became 'Israel' not shout this tale from the rooftops for generations to come? Perhaps a detailed preservation of the expulsion would have meant an embarrassing or shameful end to a triumphant tale, but the biblical writers appear to have had no problem justifying other 'shameful ends' when it came to reflecting upon the conquests of Samaria and Jerusalem. If the expulsion of the Hyksos was in fact the *wholesale expulsion* of a population of 'Hebrews', the skilled writers of the Bible could easily have justified the event. Redford suggests a *subconscious* modification of the details of the domination of Egypt by the Hyksos and their subsequent expulsion so as to disassociate from a memory of conquest as opposed to a "peaceful descent" into Egypt leading to political control.[48] The semantics somewhat disarm the biblical writers in their literary retrospective, in that he would have them slaves to monolithic collective memories rather than affording them the ability to shape them accordingly.

So while Redford may be correct to suggest that "face-saving" plays a part in the biblical recollection, we can only be certain of locating the modification of any details remembered (that is, remembered by 'Israel') in a much later historical context than Redford suggests;[49] and we should consider the likelihood that we are witnessing in the Bible the *purposeful recollection* of only one (major) aspect of the Hyksos story – expulsion. So while it may appear that the biblical writers had no awareness of the domination of these 'ancestors' over Egypt – and I am not averse to this possibility – all of which we can be certain is that their concern was with a (dislocated) memory of expulsion. To assert that the story of Joseph's success relates a memory of the precursor to the Hyksos conquest is to misinterpret the story of Joseph, which – as well as being concerned *in its ideological context* with the dichotomous circumstances arising for Diaspora communities regarding the potential for success and a perceived desire to

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[47] Assmann (2003: 197-199) marks the "wars of liberation" to expel the Hyksos as foundational for the foreign policy of the New Kingdom (also Sparks, 1998: 84-85). Similarly, Sarna (1986: 70) observes that the Hyksos experience "had a profound effect upon the national psychology [of Egypt]". In contrast, the biblical claim that close to half the entire population of Egypt left that country occurs without note! Cf. Redford, 1992: 408.

[48] Redford, 1992: 413

[49] Of course, Redford (1992: 412-413) is speaking generally of a survival of these memories "in the folklore of the Canaanite population of the southern Levant" (413), and he refers to the 'Phoenician' legend of Io (significantly preserving a connection with the last Hyksos king, Apophis) as well as other relevant stories preserved by, for example, Strabo and Diodorus.

return to their ancestral home – is best understood *in its literary context* as a device bolstering the motif of political (and historical) transition (see Chapter 4 and, further, Conclusion).

What the writers are concerned with 'remembering' is a migration from Egypt, recast in terms of divine intervention and liberation from oppression. This is clearly not the story of driving out the Hyksos kings of the 18th dynasty, something which must have been a tumultuous event for the people both of Egypt and of Palestine (especially in light of its aftermath in Palestine, as we shall see). What became important for the 'Asiatic' (or 'Canaanite') elements who became 'Israel' was the act of leaving Egypt – no matter the reason – and settling in the highlands of Palestine (a settlement to which conquest narratives were later attached).[50] This is the only 'truth' that resonated, especially when Egypt came to dominate the region for centuries afterwards.[51] Perhaps in this context any idea of reversing the situation in earthly terms (that is, physically dominating Egypt) faded away until it was 'relegated' to the realm and the will of the divine – although this idea certainly does resurface on the worldly stage, as we shall see in 3.4, below) – but when it comes to the biblical recollection of leaving Egypt, we are dealing with a composite retrospective of a number of identifiable historical contexts in which the (latent) memory is purposefully recalled and shaped in a specific way to complement the context of recollection. In other words, it is the combination of many (later) contextual reflections historically (and ideologically) disconnected from the Hyksos experience, an experience which is simply one of the pieces contributing to this composite retrospective.[52] Faint and piecemeal memories of the Hyksos rise to power in Egypt may certainly have survived in general terms amongst the people of 'Canaan' (who would have reason to appropriate stories of 'Asiatics' dominating Egypt), but any transmission to

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[50] It is certainly possible, as Redford (1992: 412) suggests, that it is to the memory of the expulsion of the Hyksos that we owe many legends not only of military encounters with Egyptian forces but also of origins in Egypt; but while the former may be memories of any number of encounters with Egypt spanning the 15th-12th centuries' dominance over Canaan, the latter may be interpreted within the contexts of popular claims to Egypt's great antiquity, particularly from the times of Hellenistic and Roman hegemony over that ancient nation (see, for example, Gruen, 2011: 90ff. on Diodorus). It should also be borne in mind, however, that when it comes to external reflections during later these periods on the origins of 'Israel' or 'the Jews', there might be some dependence on the (earlier) biblical traditions themselves (cf. Gruen, 2011: 251).

[51] It is within this historical context that Ronald Hendel would locate the origin of memories of subordination to Egypt. As he states in a recent lecture (Hendel, 2013: Time 13:58): "Everybody in Canaan was a slave to Pharaoh."

[52] Cf. Redford, 2011: 309: "References to the Hyksos ought to be treated as tangential and in no way indicative of anything other than false association."

'Israelite' lore which may have occurred is conspicuously ignorant of their very own *'Ya'acov'* as a king or any sort of political or military leader.[53] This would be a momentous omission for the biblical writers to make of the man who assumes the eponym 'Israel' and is father of the twelve tribes.

If it is indeed the considerably hazy memories of the Hyksos control of and expulsion from Egypt which were incorporated into the biblical story of Joseph's rise to power and Jacob's descent into Egypt, then I would argue that this was purposefully done with a view to lend credence to a story of Israel's origins for which there was no other evidence in the ancient world. The historical 'truth claims' of the writers would have needed something of note to which they could attach their foundation myths, and the fact that we can see in these stories the echoes of the Hyksos experience suggests the resonance of a memory of the same in the collective memory of the people of Palestine. The details were surely lost (they would otherwise have been of considerable ideological weight for biblical writers), but there was enough information of which to assume ownership in the right context. In this regard, there is ample reason to identify the Hyksos 'sojourn' in and subsequent expulsion from Egypt as contributing to the biblical mnemohistory of Egypt – indeed, as the point of origin of the same – but only in the shadowy realms of embryonic memory. The Hyksos experience in Egypt was an event completely irrelevant to the composers of the Jacob *Toledot*, and one completely unknown to their mid-first millennium BCE audience, for had they been aware of it, it would have both disrupted the chronology of the Pentateuch and overshadowed the didactic and theological purpose of stories relevant to their contemporary experience(s). It is to Josephus that we owe the *explicit* alignment of the 'Hyksos' in Egypt with the ancestors of 'Israel' (although later 'compilers' of Manetho's work might have drawn the same conclusions independently). Certainly, the evidence of this 'Asiatic' dynasty in Egypt would have been uncovered in due course, but without either a Bible or a copy of Josephus in one hand, the motivations for excavation and the ensuing interpretations of finds would likely have been quite different. The expulsion of these 'Asiatics' will continue to be important throughout this section, for we take questions of their ethnic and sociological identity with us as we examine the next suspicious group: the *Habiru*.

[53] Cf. Assmann, 2003: 198.

2.2.2 *Habiru and Hebrew – Continuity or Coincidence?*[54]

On the phonetics alone, the temptation for correlation is immediately clear, for Exodus speaks of *Hebrews* oppressed by the Pharaonic regime, while ancient texts from the period to which the internal chronology of the Bible refers (see below) attest to the activity of nomadic groups called *Habiru* during this time and in the region(s) with which we are concerned.[55] Of course, phonetic similarities are insufficient to draw conclusions, and one should be wary of presuming that the former automatically equals the latter.[56] Instead, it is to the sociological aspects of these people that our attention is primarily drawn, for the term variously rendered amongst scholars as *ʿApiru*, *Ḫapiru*, *Ḫabiru* or *Ḫaberu* was an etic appellative used to describe migrants, refugees, brigands, mercenaries, nomadic pastoralists or generally "uprooted people".[57] It is sometimes suggested that the activities of David and his men in the Bible reflect early folk stories of "a group of Apiru who were active on the fringe of Judahite society",[58] with Mazar suggesting a comparison between these stories and the activities of Lab'ayu, a *Habiru* leader

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[54] The term will be rendered throughout as *Habiru* solely to maintain the phonetic connection to 'Hebrew' (despite the likelihood that this is erroneous) which has long played a major role in maintaining the correlation between the two. Where the word is rendered otherwise, this is to remain faithful to the work of the authors cited. The Egyptian term is usually transliterated as something like *ʿprw* (Hoffmeier, 1996: 124).

[55] The so-called 'Amarna letters' attest to the activity of these people "[l]iving outside mainstream Canaanite society" (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 102). EA 290 refers to them as "the 'Apiru people" and EA 298 and RA, xix, p. 106 (see Pritchard, 2011: 435) mentions a "chief" of the 'Apiru; but see below on the likelihood of their heterogeneity and the term as an etic appellative.

[56] For example, while Grabbe (2007: 48) observes that "[m]any modern scholars agree that the term 'Apiru and Hebrew are cognate" (cf., for example, Miller & Hayes, 2006: 37), Mayes (2006: 61) cautions that "the linguistic connection between *'apiru* and Hebrew is by no means established." Cf. also Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 103): "The widespread use of the term over many centuries and throughout the entire Near East suggests that it had a socioeconomic meaning rather than signifying a specific ethnic group". Gottwald (2008: 14) observes the "affinities" between some aspects of the behaviour of the biblical 'Hebrews' and the extra-biblical *Habiru*, referring especially to Abraham leading a war party in Gen 14:13-16. For an argument in favour of finding a Syrian connection through the word *'ibrum* in the Mari texts, see Fleming, 2004.

[57] Finkelstein, 2007a: 18. Sparks (2005: 47) refers to the *hapiru* (*sic!*) as "social outlaws" (in the fourteenth century). Cf. the stories of David's flight from Saul and his gathering "desperate" men (1 Sam. 22:2).

[58] Finkelstein, 2007f: 186. Finkelstein (2007a: 18) is adamant that these stories are earlier than the monarchic period (in Israel), because of the density of settlement at that (later) time.

who controlled much of the central hill country from Shechem in the fourteenth century, so it is clear that being *Habiru* at one time in one's past did not negate the possibility of sedentary life or political aspiration.[59] In saying that, Lab'ayu may have sought to shake off the label, for it is clear that it was a pejorative used by many rulers across the Near East to speak of troublesome elements outside their territorial and sociological sphere of influence.[60] Perhaps Lab'ayu came to see such elements outside his control as *Habiru* even while others continued to see him in the same way. In this sense, the marginal status implied by 'being' *Habiru* might be understood as temporary, envisaging a return from whence one came.[61]

Just as 'Asiatics' was a generic term used by Egyptians, so too, then, was *Habiru* applied (apparently across a variety of socio-linguistic contexts) to a group (or groups) of people based on their behaviour and their interaction (or lack thereof) with the urbanised peoples to whom we are indebted for preserving the term. The difference between the *Habiru* and the Hebrews is that the latter is claimed as an emic term – that is (according to the Bible, at least) these people *called themselves Hebrews* (and constructed genealogies featuring an ancestor named עֵבֶר, from which the word עִבְרִי is derived) – while we have no evidence to suggest that wandering bands of people, regardless of their purpose, called themselves *Habiru*.[62] One of the

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[59] Mazar, 2007d: 139. Cf. also Redford, 1992: 269-270. It should be borne in mind that while the David stories may be memories of a time "free of intervention by the Egyptians or any other foreign power" (idem), they may also be aspirations of the same conjured up during times of oppression by said power(s). EA 289 has Lab'ayu giving "the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru". Such activity on the part of a former *Habiru* leader may have been remembered as part of the ideal attributes of a heroic leader or liberator, yet how can we know the motivations of Lab'ayu in giving these people (with whom he is only etically associated) land within his sphere of influence? Perhaps he sought merely to placate them.

[60] Grabbe, 2007: 48; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 103. If it is correct to read the term as derived from the Semitic verb עבר, meaning "to pass or to trespass" (Brooks, 2001: 65), then *Habiru* is an etic term directed at external forces threatening stability; but see further below on the Song of the Sea.

[61] Brooks, 2003: 66. Cf. EA 288, in which Abdu-Heba (or Abdi-Heba, discussed above), king or 'prince' of Jerusalem (a vassal of the Egyptian king), in his despair at the chaos surrounding him, claims to "have become like an 'Apiru" and "like a ship in the midst of the sea", because he is on the verge of losing everything. Notably, he still refers to the 'Apiru as if they are a homogeneous group, capturing cities all around. Abdu-Heba also mentions "the townsmen of Lachish" who have risen up against their overlord and "had become 'Apiru".

[62] Despite Idrimi (who became king of Alalakh) claiming that he lived with the "Hapiru-people" for seven years as a political refugee from Aleppo/Helab (ANET 557), the term should be seen as an etic label in the context of a declaration of distinction and Idrimi maintaining his desire to return to a position of power. For an analysis of the story of Idrimi and the literary context to which it belongs, see Galvin, 2011: 23-27; also Sparks, 2005: 287-288.

problems, then, with aligning *Habiru* with Hebrew is not simply that one does not equal the other; instead, it is that the former was not an ethnic term.[63] The biblical narrative is concerned with ethnic distinction and the formation of Israel in cultural isolation and, as such, there can be no more Hebrews wandering around the Ancient Near East (in disparate groups, as the *Habiru* appear to have been) than those kept as slaves in Egypt.[64] So while there is plenty of evidence for *Habiru* being taken captive and put to work in Egypt, this does not equal the absence of *Habiru* elsewhere.[65] Conversely, the wandering of the Hebrews in the wilderness following the Exodus should not be equated with the activity of disparate groups, for no mention is made in the Bible of anyone attaching themselves to the 'Exodus' group after leaving Egypt.[66]

With regard to the texts in which the term *Habiru* is found, they cover a period of some seven hundred years (19th-12th centuries BCE), remaining in the archaeological record long after the Hebrews are supposed to have established themselves as a homogeneous nation in the Promised Land, and after the name 'Israel' shows up in Palestine.[67] If the people of 'Israel' are *Habiru*, why is this etic term, long known to the Egyptians, not used on the Merneptah Stele to describe them?[68] Or to put it another way, if the Egyptians referred to the people of 'Israel' as

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[63] Mayes, 2006: 62; Hoffmeier, 1996: 124. Redford (1992: 195) refers to the *'Apiru* as a "separate group" occupying a socio-political and geographical space outside "polite" society, but he clarifies further that they were heterogeneous in nature, citing a census list from Alalakh in which "one *'Apiru* band include[d] an armed thief, two charioteers, two beggars, and even a priest of Ishtar". Brooks (2003: 66) states that the *Habiru* "throughout the Western Asiatic region [...] had nothing necessarily in common with each other, except for their social status."

[64] It is this need in the Bible to maintain cultural cohesion at the same time as ethnic distinction that saw Josephus speaking of the 'Hyksos' as the entire people of Israel (cf. Van Seters, 1966: 187) at one given time so as to retain a more manageable historical trajectory for his nation.

[65] Texts such as Papyrus Leiden 348 and 349, and the Memphis Stele are discussed in Mayes, 2006: 63-64; and Hoffmeier, 1996: 113-114; 124.

[66] A 'mixed multitude' joins the escaping 'sons of Israel' in Exod. 12:38, but there is no further incorporation of external groups. Hoffmeier (1996: 114) sees these people as "other enslaved workers who joined the Israelites in their flight from Egypt", but this is a conclusion dependent upon the historicity of the Exodus account.

[67] The Merneptah stele (which features the name 'Israel'), dates to c. 1207 BCE, and the latest mention of *Habiru* comes from c. 1160 BCE (Brooks, 2003: 65). Cf. also Hawkins, 2013: 68.

[68] Hoffmeier (1996: 124) observes that the listing of *Habiru* (on the Memphis Stele) "alongside other ethnic groups [...] suggests that the Egyptians may have viewed the *ḫabiru* [sic] as a distinguishable ethnic group". If this was the case, then their listing of 'Israel' on the Merneptah Stele implies the same practice, by extension telling us that they did not see 'Israel' in the same light as *Habiru*.

'Hebrews' (as the Bible would have us believe), why does the Merneptah Stele – or any other Egyptian text, for that matter – use a term with no linguistic affinity to 'Hebrew'? It cannot be because the people of 'Israel' called themselves 'Hebrews' while others called them 'Israel', for this would be completely out of sync with both the biblical and extra-biblical evidence. The problems concerning etic and emic uses of either term and the issues of continuity and discontinuity which arise lead us towards a conclusion which views an attempt at correlation as tentative at best, but there is something else worth considering.

It was noted above that the activities of David and his men are often seen as characteristically *Habiru*, and it is within the stories of Saul's struggle against the Philistines and David's subsequent 'defection' that the certainty with which we might speak of the emic use of 'Hebrew' amongst the people of 'Israel' (in the Mosaic drama) begins to crumble. In 1 Samuel 13:3, following Jonathan's successful attack on Geba/Gibeah, Saul ordered that "the Hebrews" should hear about the victory, something which is immediately followed by confirmation that "all Israel" heard about it (13:4). Now we know that Saul "reigned over Israel" (13:1),[69] but could it be the case that the 'Israelites' whom he calls to arms (13:2) are to be seen as constituting a kind of 'citizen army', chosen from amongst a population of 'Hebrews'?[70] Compare this to 13:19, in which "[n]o smith was to be found *in all the land of Israel*, for the Philistines were afraid that *the Hebrews* would make swords or spears", a statement immediately followed by "all Israel" having to go to the Philistines to have their farming implements sharpened. These are not elite fighters, but farmers forced into war by the circumstances, standing on a battlefield without sword or spear (13:22). Hyperbole aside, the interchangeable nature of 'Hebrews' and 'Israel' might tempt some to see the terms as ethnically analogous, but moving on through 1 Samuel tells another story. 14:21 reads: "And *the Hebrews* who previously had been with the Philistines and had gone up with them into the camp turned and joined the *Israelites* who were with Saul and Jonathan." Now this is a troubling verse indeed for those who would equate 'Hebrews' with 'Israelites' (let alone *Habiru* with 'Israel'), for it shows that these עִבְרִים were not under the control of the recently crowned king of Israel. Could it be that 'all Israel' did not support the new king? Perhaps, considering that there were some "worthless fellows" (1 Samuel 10:27) in disagreement with the

[69] Note that this verse is lacking in the Septuagint.

[70] A common practice in the ancient world was to use an ethnic label not as a qualifier implying the entire community, but only its men or the heads of households (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 306; cf. Redford, 1992: 276; Smith, 1991: 31), and so it should be borne in mind that the distinction between these two groups in the Bible may only refer to males beyond a certain age and of a certain status. For example, when the notion of Israel asking for a king arises in 1 Sam. 8, the initial petition to Samuel is made by the (male) elders, who represent all of the people.

coronation amongst "all the people" (10:24) who appeared to accept Saul at Mizpah. There is no indication that a group of breakaway 'Hebrews' are behind this dissatisfaction, but when the Philistines later ask of David and his men, "Who are these Hebrews?" (29:3) – a question brimming with contempt[71] – are we to read this as David having 'become' *Habiru* because of his defection? If so, this emphasises the socio-political connotations of the term *without necessarily marking ethnic discontinuity*. So just as the Hebrews who switched sides to aid the people of Israel may indicate an echo of the practice (evidenced in extra-biblical texts) of calling upon *Habiru* mercenaries to fight (and their fleeting loyalties), David may have rendered himself *Habiru* because of similar behaviour. This by no means associates him with the earlier group of Hebrews (this is not implied in the text at all); it simply describes him in terms of his actions. Confusing as all this may be in terms of emic and etic uses of the word 'Hebrew', what is most significant to note is this: David could be part of 'Israel' (compare 1 Samuel 18:18); then he could be considered 'Hebrew';[72] and he could be reincorporated back into 'Israel' – as their king, no less. How could we not find echoes of the activity of Lab'ayu?[73]

Yet why consider the stories of David at all, when from the point of view of the Bible's internal chronology, they reflect a much later time than the 'Exodus'? The struggles against the Philistines certainly do not belong in a discussion concerning the 'Exodus' (despite their presence in the patriarchal stories; compare Abimelech, King of Gerar in Genesis 20, 26), when they did not arrive in Palestine until the twelfth century BCE.[74] It is, however, with the *memories evoked by the use of the word* 'Hebrew' that we are concerned, as well as with the creation – intended or not – of a sense of ethnic continuity (and antiquity) which arises from the ideological weight of its (re)appearance in the stories of the man who would become the

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[71] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 167

[72] It may be a statement voiced by an (imaginary) outsider, but it is written by an 'insider'. Hence, the connotations are perceived internally.

[73] Interestingly, despite comparisons between the Tale of Sinuhe and the beginning of the Moses story already observed above, Moses' stay in Midian, his success there and his subsequent return to lead his people echoes some of the elements of the Lab'ayu 'story', almost as if the activities of this historical figure (Lab'ayu) continued to resonate across the region of Syria-Palestine for a considerable length of time. Of course, his story may not be unique, and it may simply be a coincidental historical incident (about which we happen to know) reflected in generic stories of personal redemption and ethnic aspiration; a story which also influenced the biblical narratives featuring Jacob and Laban. Cf. De Pury, 2006: 57-58.

[74] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 324; Markoe, 2000: 25; Hoffmeier, 1996: 33. On the origins of the Philistines within the context of the incursions of the so-called 'Sea Peoples', see Grabbe, 2007: 88-93; also Miller & Hayes, 2006: 37-39.

most famous of 'Israelite' kings. Perhaps its use, then, amounts to no more than aligning David with Moses, who led his Hebrew 'kinsmen' out of their oppressive 'sojourn' in Egypt? Of course, the reverse could also be true, depending on the direction of literary dependence. Such questions, while not completely irrelevant to our cause, are unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.[75]

From the point of view of ethnic continuity and mnemohistory, then, the questions are: i) can we assert a correlation of the term *Habiru* with the biblical term 'Hebrew'; and ii) can we locate these *Habiru* (Hebrews?) amongst the generically termed 'Asiatics' inhabiting Syria-Palestine and orchestrating the infiltration or invasion of Memphis, thus 'joining the dots' between 'Hebrew' and Hyksos? Although it would seem so far that the first question has been answered (thus rendering the second one moot), perhaps all is not lost. Certainly, with regard to the *Habiru* actually being the biblical Hebrews, it is tempting to see the concept of being temporarily outcast (the sociological connotations of *Habiru*; as well as those we have seen in the David stories) as aligning both with the 'sojourn' in Egypt of the descendants of Jacob and of their liminal status as they wander in the wilderness for four decades, especially if one understands the word עִבְרִי to mean 'those who have crossed over', whether in a geographical or sociological context (see below on the Shasu). Yet can it be maintained that the biblical writers retained (or, indeed, *revived*) the use of the term 'Hebrew' *because it bore memories of being outcast* from one's rightful place and position by recalling the term *Habiru* and, by extension, evoking ideological (and perhaps theological) aspirations of redemption? This is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility, although if the two terms are cognate, then the biblical writers' understanding of the word עִבְרִי must have changed so that it bore ethnic connotations for the people of 'Israel'.[76]

It cannot simply be said that 'Hebrew' is the name afforded the 'sons of Israel' by Pharaoh, because it is not only in the mouth of Pharaoh that it is placed. As well as being in the narrative from the outset (Exodus 1:15), the midwives (MT is plural) speak of "the Hebrew women" and they say that they are "not like the Egyptian women" (1:19). A similar use of 'Hebrew' by a Hebrew occurs when Pharaoh's daughter finds the baby Moses and Miriam (Moses' sister) offers to get "a Hebrew nurse" to feed the child; and the same alignment of ethnic labels occurs when Moses sees "an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, *one of his kinsmen*" (2:11). Clearly,

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[75] A tantalising possibility with regards to literary allusion relates to the number of people led into the wilderness by both leaders: six hundred by David (1 Sam. 23:13) and six hundred thousand by Moses (Exod. 12:37). Presuming that the latter is an exaggeration of the former, it is clear that this aspect of the activity of Moses was magnified in light of earlier stories about David.

[76] Grabbe, 2007: 48; Van der Toorn, 1996: 186-187

this is an emic term used by the biblical writers of their own people (perhaps this legitimates the memory of its use) which occurs here in an ethnic sense alongside the ethnic label 'Egyptian'. So what can be said of the correlation between *Habiru* and 'Hebrew' is that any linguistic connection which may have existed (and the jury is still most definitely out on the matter) eroded over time so that the word 'Hebrew' – in the Exodus account, at least (the David stories are a different matter) – most likely does not refer to the connotations and implications of the word *Habiru*. The ethnic potency of 'Hebrew' marks a distinct disassociation from *Habiru*. Indeed, the entire purpose of the Mosaic drama, in that all of 'Israel' experienced the liberation from Egypt *as an ethnic collective*, requires that we read the biblical 'Hebrew' as something completely different from the extra-biblical *Habiru*.

This does not mean that people who were once *Habiru* could not have been brought into the social embrace of embryonic 'Israel' or that they could not have brought with them stories of captivity, enslavement and subsequent escape from Egypt; this is indeed likely. My point, rather, is that these memories were far from the minds of the biblical writers when they used the word 'Hebrew'. For them and for their audience, the word evoked memories of a past shared by an ancestral collective in *exclusive possession* of the ethnic and emic label 'Hebrew', and while it could be argued that the writers altered the meaning of the word *Habiru* over time, the memories across the ancient Near East of disparate bands of lawless *Habiru* – whom everyone clearly despised – were unlikely to have been the focal point of purposeful recollection in a bid to assert the continuity of one's nation. As we shall see below, it is much more likely that the biblical use of the word 'Hebrew' evoked memories of events very different both to those recounted in Exodus and to those associated with the temporally and spatially disjointed phenomenon rendered *Habiru* (as opposed to *'Apiru*) in a hope that the correlation will be maintained in scholarly consciousness.[77]

Our second question has yet to be answered, so before we move on to our next suspects, let us consider what has gone before, and rephrase said question as follows: can the *Habiru* be both the Hebrews and the Hyksos? After all, the expulsion from the debate of one extra-biblical correlation with the biblical narrative throws the entire affair into doubt. Opening this section was Assmann's suggestion that "the Hebrews inherited" the traditions of the Hyksos regarding

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[77] Based on the recognition of a long-standing mispronunciation of the second consonant as *b* rather than *p*, Hawkins (2013: 59) states that "[t]he words *Hebrew* and *'apiru* are [...] substantives of a different type and do not appear to have ever been related". Interestingly, Redford (1992: 195) infers "dust makers", an interpretation favouring the '*p*' of '*Apiru*. So rather than being derived from the Semitic root עבר (necessary to support the correlation of 'Hebrew' with *Habiru*), this evokes the biblical use of the word עָפָר (the *dust* from which man is formed) in Genesis.

"a sojourn in and departure from Egypt". Granted, he does not state that the Hyksos were the *sole* ethnic or genetic progenitors of the Hebrews, but the notion of 'inheriting' a tradition implies the incorporation into a community of a number of people representative of the original community to whom the tradition initially belonged. Had the Hebrews 'adopted' the tradition from another culture, there would be no continuity to speak of; instead, we could speak only of contact with and interaction between two groups and the pretence at continuity. I rather think that, just like the possibility of the survival of stories of oppression in and escape from Egypt told by *Habiru* elements incorporated into emerging 'Israel', it is possible that the fledgling 'Israelite' community or people who would later be incorporated into the 'Israel' collective encountered elements representative of the Hyksos dynasty (or, rather, their descendants) and were impressed by their stories of dominating Egypt and being expelled from the land. As noted above, however, there is no memory in Exodus of the Hebrews having dominated Egypt. Evolving over the centuries, the notion of dominating Egypt came to be irrelevant. Instead, those preserving the tradition of a *migration* from Egypt focused solely on that core aspect, and over time the story was altered from one of military expulsion to one of righteous liberation through divine intervention. In this way, 'Israel' would never be seen as the mighty conquering army devastating other nations beyond the sovereign soil of their own, for this would be the antithesis of their repeated struggle against expansionist powers all around them (a struggle which continued long after the composition of the biblical texts). No, for 'Israel', another perspective was conceived, one which saw them as the righteous and pious oppressed, the 'victim' of cruel and evil empires.

This argument may appear weak if it stood alone, for to take it as precedent would call for the inversion of countless stories from the ancient world so that their true origins were read as the polar opposite or some other distorted form of their later presentations, but the biblical perspective on the past does not discount the possibility of seeing in the events surrounding the historical Hyksos and the *'Apiru* the foundations of memories which evolved over time to be used as the creators and protectors of Israelite ethnic solidarity and national identity saw fit.[78] Too many coincidences exist for us to simply dismiss attempts at correlation as scholarly desperation advocating an antiquity for Israel which does not exist. What is often argued is that 'Israel' is a phenomenon much later than, for example, the historical Hyksos; or geographically or sociologically disconnected from the *'Apiru*, but 'Israel' was not conceived in a vacuum – it

[78] Such stories composed to emphasise solidarity and identity are always concerned with questions contemporary to their time of composition, and invariably look to the past to "inspire or guide collective action" (Smith, 1991: 25) with a view to the future. The appeal to objective, scientific and historical truths are secondary concerns for the writers and advocates of such myths of origins (*idem*).

required component elements to become an ethnic collective. The task in this section is to identify memories of past events belonging to and brought into the fold by those component elements, and there is no reason to remove the Hyksos or the *'Apiru* from the discussion simply because the name 'Israel' is not found in the archaeological record at a time coterminous to the Hyksos experience or because 'Israel' in the Merneptah Stele is (apparently) a collective while the *'Apiru* appear not to have been. As we proceed further with our discussion, it will become increasingly clear that the reasons some might see the evidence for ancient memory contexts as nothing more than coincidence are simply that they demand a lot more detail than the archaeological record can provide. Once it is borne in mind, however, that history is an ever-evolving retelling of past events shaped by the concerns of the present, we begin to see that i) the identification of real historical contexts for the re-presentation of memories of those events is an achievable goal, and ii) the question is not whether elements of the historical Hyksos were or became either *'Apiru* or the 'Hebrews' of the 'Exodus'; but rather, were the 'Hebrews' of the 'Exodus' created by the biblical writers so as to evoke memories of both of these ancient historical phenomena, inevitably creating a sense of ethnic continuity which leads us to ask these questions in the first place? If this is the case, then any scholars holding out for the correlation of specific details will have a considerable wait, because the only details the biblical writers were concerned with retaining are those found in the Bible: some people from 'Canaan' went down to Egypt; some people found success but it did not last; some people were expelled or were refugees; some people came back to 'Canaan' and 'became' a nation. Holding all of these 'details' together and forming coherent narratives are collected tales of ancestors whose names were remembered simply because they were prominent individuals. To ascribe to them specific historical experiences with which later audiences might find no affinity or from which they would learn nothing of the deeper 'truths' of their contemporary circumstances misses the point.

2.2.3 *Shasu and YHWH – Of Gods, Mountains and Crossing the River*

It should be clear by this point that none of the extra-biblical evidence occupying the debate around the historicity of Exodus can be addressed entirely in isolation, despite clear advantages for the reader. Of course, what this highlights is the need to consider the origins of any nation as an amalgamation of disparate social entities to form an "ethnie", appealing to a shared past to maintain a sense of solidarity in the present while also looking forward to a shared future.[79] The destiny of an ethnic group depends upon its ability not only to embrace a past with which

[79] See further Smith, 1991: 22-31.

it is comfortable *as a collective*, but also to negotiate the inclusion of historical truths from which internal conflict may potentially arise.[80] In this sense, collective identity can be seen as requiring such negotiation, a 'meeting of minds' making room for many different ideas brought to the group. This does not necessarily require conscious action, but it is worth noting that the act of consciously 'forgetting', or *ars oblivionis*, plays a considerable role in the shaping of something deemed worth remembering.[81] In the Bible, one of the most important aspects of Israelite collective memory is the revelation of *the name* of the deity, YHWH, to Moses. While the truth of the incorporation of this deity into Israelite society does not appear to have been completely forgotten, the details have been somewhat altered. Certainly, there is no mention in the Bible of the *Shasu*, the people to whom the worship of YHWH appears to be first attested in the archaeological record.

As with the term *'Apiru*, there is some disagreement amongst scholars as to whether 'Shasu' ('Shosu'?) was an ethnic term, despite the determinatives in Egyptian texts repeatedly associating the Shasu with specific geographical regions and toponyms.[82] Those drawing our attention here are Laban, Edom, Seir and, of course, Yahu or Yahwa (*yhw*).[83] Firstly, a brief consideration of the name Laban is warranted, to address any possibility of a correlation with the biblical Uncle of Jacob (from whom the latter obtains his wives). While it would be impetuous to assert an unambiguous connection between the *Ya'acov* of the Hyksos dynasty and a highly tentative familial association with the name Laban amongst the Shasu, a pre-

[80] Smith, 1991: 26

[81] Cf. Ricoeur, 2006: 412ff.

[82] Papyrus Anastasi I (cf. Redford, 1992: 269); Anastasi VI mentions 'the Shasu of Edom'. Finkelstein (2007c: 81) suggests that the term means 'plunderers', while Sparks (1998: 106) relates 'Shasu' to an Egyptian word meaning 'to wander'. For Mayes (2006: 64), the Shasu are "*a people* referred to beside the most powerful enemies of Egypt"; contra Levy at al. (2004: 65-66), who describe the Shasu as a "social group [or] class of nomads who reflect an ancient equivalent of the term *Bedouin*." The association of a group of people with a specific region usually suggests ethnic cohesion, and while the Shasu appear to be found (by the Egyptians, at least) in a number of different areas (they are also found in Mesopotamia), the main concentrations are in the region(s) south and east of the Dead Sea (Grabbe, 2007: 49-50; cf. Redford, 1992: 273, who speaks of a "homeland of the Shasu [...] in Moab and Edom"). See also the *Jabal Hamrat Fidan Project*, excavating near the Wadi Fidan in southern Jordan (ancient Edom; Levy et al., 2004).

[83] The phrase "the land of the Shasu (of) *yhw*"" is found in two separate texts; it appears twice on a 14th century BCE temple to Amun in Nubia, and in the following century on a list from Amara West (Day, 2004: 50). Prior to the 9th century BCE Mesha inscription (or Moabite Stone), this is the earliest extra-biblical reference to the name of the Israelite god. See further, Lemaire, 2004: 367-368; and Grabbe, 2007: 131.

emptive attack should offset such a conclusion. Considering that i) the personal name Laban, used in Genesis, appears as a place-name in Deuteronomy 1:1; and ii) the alignment of the biblical god YHWH with the toponymic form related to the Shasu is widely accepted, a maximalist reading of the Bible might favour lines of continuity between 'Laban in the land of the Shasu', the 'Shasu *yhw*' and the biblical 'god of the fathers' as he is worshipped by 'Israel' (Jacob).[84] There are many problems here, not the least of which is Jacob's sporadic use of the divine name YHWH, which is oftentimes aligned with 'El' or 'Elohim',[85] suggesting instead that the biblical attribution of YHWH worship to the 'fathers' is part of a much later Yahwistic (prophetic?) retrospective which seeks to subsume the memory of the worship of 'Canaanite' El prominent in pre-exilic Israel.[86] With regard to the name 'Laban' as it pertains to the Shasu, this is clearly a geographical area and, as such, it is not implausible that the biblical Laban may have been a demonymic allusion to the former in that a memory of the place survived.[87] If this is the case, there may be reason to associate the biblical *Ya'acov* with such a place (although any leap towards the Hyksos king of the same name overestimates the paucity of *Ya'acov* in the archaeological record), but then *Ya'acov* itself appears also as a demonym, with the name *Ya'acov-El* turning up on fifteenth century Egyptian lists of conquered cities.[88] The biblical

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[84] Mayes, 2006: 64-65; Redford, 1992: 272-273 (and n. 71); Thompson, 1999: 175-176; Grabbe, 2007: 150-153

[85] In Gen. 28:10-22, and again in 32:1-33:20, Jacob speaks both forms of the divine name. Gen. 29:1-31:54 sees Jacob and Laban using the names interchangeably.

[86] Of course, any reference to a 'Canaanite' El is simplistic indeed; rather, the recognition of an 'Israelite' El is more helpful for an understanding of the biblical alignment of YHWH with El occurring within the so-called 'second creation' story of Gen. 2 with the conflated title יהוה אֱלֹהִים. For a comprehensive discussion of the influence of neighbouring religions on that of developing Israel (and Judah), see Keel and Uehlinger, 1998 (esp. 177-281); also Thompson, 1999: 168-178. Grabbe (2007: 153) rightly observes that it would "be very surprising indeed" for the biblical writers to simply "dream up a period when Yhwh (*sic!*) was not known" by the ancestors of Israel, awkward as it would be for any claim to primordial association with their god. See further below in 3.3.2, regarding the possibility of a late alignment of YHWH with the 'Exodus' and the arguments regarding whether it was Baal (Mayes, 2006) or El (Chalmers, 2008) to whom the 'Exodus' was originally attributed.

[87] Redford (1992: 272) suggests "Libona, south of Amman", noting (n. 68) the biblical etymology of Ammon and Moab in Gen. 19. Of course, the latter is indicative of the enmity towards these two states on the part of the biblical writers, and may indicate a much later context for the etymology than any association with Laban.

[88] Mercer, 1923: 99. Harrelson (1957: 4) suggests that (either or both of) the sites Jacob-El and Joseph-El in these Egyptian lists might refer to Shechem, echoing the biblical association of both of these 'ancestors' with that city (and lest we forget, Shechem in the fourteenth century was controlled by the

association of Jacob with El – especially as it pertains to the etymologies of significant cultic sites – is somewhat diluted by this survival of a place name featuring both man and god, and so it is safe to conclude that any attempt to locate a man named *Ya'acov* in a place named 'Laban' is misguided. As for associating the biblical story of Jacob and his Uncle Laban with any of these places, one need only read carefully the text of Genesis 27:43 and 28:2-5 (in which Jacob is told to flee to Haran, in paddan-Aram, which would take him *north*) before moving on to the etymology of Bethel in 29:10-22 (in which Jacob headed *south* from Beer-sheba, despite having "set out for Haran") to realise that the biblical writers cared little for the harmonisation of geographical toponyms.[89]

Such toponyms in the Bible cannot be ignored when dealing with the Shasu, however, especially once the discussion turns to Edom and Seir and the origins of YHWH worship.[90] Some important biblical verses are i) "YHWH came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us" (Deuteronomy 33:2);[91] ii) "YHWH, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom" (Judges 5:4); and iii) "[...] you will be passing through the territory of your *kinsmen*, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir" (Deuteronomy 2:4). It is clear that memories of Seir and Edom have survived in the biblical understanding of the origins of YHWH and his relation to certain ancestral elements of 'Israel', and the association of YHWH with a mountain is an integral aspect of the biblical representation of the Israelite god; one brought most dramatically to life in the Moses story. It is arguably to the conflation of traditions (that is, those of Jacob and Moses) mentioned above that we owe the association of Sinai with these references (cf. Judges 5:5), so for now focus will remain on the regions echoed in extra-biblical

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'Apiru 'leader', Lab'ayu, aspects of whose stories appear to have survived in those of numerous biblical figures).

[89] Strangely, the English rendering of the land to which Jacob eventually comes is that of the "people of the East". The MT is literally 'sons of קֶדֶם', but the root קדם can also mean something pertaining to 'before times', 'beginning' or 'formerly', suggesting not a vague reference to a forgotten people but a literary device facilitating Jacob's marriage narrative, which itself may be dependent upon Hos. 12 (see De Pury, 2006: 59-62). If this is the case, then it is possible that the biblical writers overlooked the disharmony of the geography for the sake of preserving older (albeit incompatible) traditions. In this respect, and with regard to the home of Laban, it is worth noting the ethnically awkward 'credo' of Deut. 26:5, "My Father was a wandering *Aramean*", which here associates Jacob with the region. On the Persian period context of the 'credo' and how it relates to the Abraham tradition, see p. 279, n. 53, below.

[90] See Day, 2004: 50-51.

[91] NRSV; JPS reads: "YHWH came from Sinai; He *shone* upon *them* from Seir."

texts, highlighting as they do a correlation with the Bible with regard to the location of "an enclave" (in the fifteenth century BC) worshipping this mountain deity.[92]

Despite Redford's acknowledgement that the biblical account of the socio-political structure of formative Israel likely comprises later reflections upon the period; and that the archaeological record attests to continuity between 'Canaanite' (sedentary) society and what became 'Israel' (noting very little trace of the 'Shasu'), he still speaks of "nascent Israel" with regards to a "Shasu settlement in the Palestinian highlands" (prior to the thirteenth century), as well as of a "related group" coalescing "in the Judean hills to the south".[93] Any claim to continuity between the Shasu and 'Israel' cannot sidestep the evidence of material continuity between 'Canaanites' and 'Israelites'; so either the Shasu in question should be seen as 'Canaanite' or we would need to reconsider the use of the term 'Canaanite'. While a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth reminding ourselves that i) the biblical polemic against all things 'Canaanite' fits the pattern of a highly generic 'othering' insofar as the retention of an 'Israelite' identity is concerned;[94] and ii) argument still prevails in modern scholarship regarding the correct application in an extra-biblical context of the terms 'Canaan' and 'Canaanite'.[95]

While it is possible that *a single group* known *etically* as 'Shasu' are representative of embryonic 'Israel' – in that cultural parallels might be tentatively posited (à la Redford) – and the association of YHWH with *a single group* of Shasu could, by extension, be indicative of continuity between the two, seeing a single group of Shasu settled in the highlands as solely foundational for 'Israel' goes too far and dismisses the potential influence of any peripheral groups.[96] Instead, it is worth considering the following possibilities: firstly, that a group of YHWH-worshipping Shasu – there is no reason to conclude that all people referred to as 'Shasu' worshipped YHWH – may have come into the fold at a later stage in the development of

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[92] Redford, 1992: 273

[93] Redford, 1992: 275-280. Cf. also Na'aman, 2011a: 46-47. For an analysis of the long history of settlement in the highlands, see Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 107-118.

[94] Assmann (2010: 12) goes so far as to suggest that 'Canaan' may be simply "a narrative symbol for the heathen, the unconverted, and the apostates among the Israelites". On the significance of the literary practice of 'othering' in ancient historiography, see Mitchell, 2012; and Gruen, 2011.

[95] See further Sparks, 1998: 97ff.

[96] In relation to the etic use of the term 'Shasu', Sparks (1998: 106) suggests that the concept of this group as unified comes from the Egyptians linking "various Bedouin groups within an artificially unifying rubric on the basis of their common lifestyle and dress". He also notes that 'Israel', on the other hand, is neither an Egyptian term nor an exonym (106-107). It is with these observations that a direct correlation between the two terms is weakened.

'Israel'. This would certainly align with a critical reading of the Moses story, in that the revelation to Moses of the divine name, YHWH, appears to recall the usurpation of the (Canaanite?) religion(s) which had theretofore characterised the earliest elements of 'Israel'.[97] So, if the biblical references to YHWH coming from Edom and Seir – the latter being the mountainous region in Edom[98] – reflect a memory of *some* Shasu merging with other socio-ethnic groups to form 'Israel', they might be read as a memory not of the *earliest elements* of 'Israel', but as later arrivals to an established fold. The second possibility is that YHWH-worshipping Shasu were indeed part of the earliest stirrings of 'Israel', but the predominantly 'Canaanite' backgrounds of the people settled around them – with whom they might have coalesced to form the ethnic group 'Israel' (and the later kingdom of the same name) – saw them continue to worship Syro-Palestinian deities like El, Ba'al, Asherah and others, with YHWH either subsumed by or conflated with these deities or certain characteristics of them.[99]

For now, focus will remain on the highland settlement(s) seen as foundational for the kingdom of Israel, returning later to the question of ethnic affiliation between the early settlers in the Judean highlands, the 'related group' of which Redford speaks. It is the contention of the current author that a literary reinvention of the antiquity of YHWH worship amongst the people of Israel is an integral part of the ideological reconstruction of the history of Israel, so the first of the two possibilities above becomes embroiled in a debate concerning the composition of the biblical texts and the motivations of the authors.[100] What we can say about Israel the kingdom, however, is that YHWH was undoubtedly worshipped by certain people within the confines of its territory, albeit in an historical context much later than that with which we are concerned. The Mesha Stele (or Moabite Stone), an inscription discovered in the

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[97] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 536-537. Cf. Grabbe, 2007: 150, "Israelite worship looks very much at home among the other Semitic religions."

[98] Although see Dicou, 1994: 173ff., regarding the problems of identifying biblical Seir.

[99] Miller & Hayes (2006: 37) speak of the "complex population" in which the descendants of the Shasu in the Palestinian highlands would have found themselves. The accounts preserved in the Bible of tribal structure in Israel's earliest days likely allude to an amalgamation of disparate groups, each with their own ethnic identity. Of course, these cohesive groups may be imagined rather than remembered, based on (perceived?) ancient cultural attributes preserved by groups contemporaneous to the origins of the traditions. There is no need, then, to postulate conflict between YHWH worship and that of any other deity at this formative stage in the development of 'Israel', as the concept of "intercultural translatability" (Assmann, 1998: 3) likely facilitated the alignment of – and thus mutual respect for – gods and goddesses whose characteristics were generically applicable.

[100] Cf. Van Der Toorn, 1993: 531: "[T]he theological bias of the biblical records forbids us to accept their answer without further questioning."

northern territories of the ancient kingdom of Moab, was set up by King Mesha to mark (or claim) victory over Israel sometime around 840 BCE. What is interesting here is the claim of subduing the town of Nebo, likely a disputed "border town" marking the extremities of the kingdoms of Moab and Israel.[101] Here, according to the Stele, YHWH was worshipped, and some have taken this as evidence that YHWH was the national god of Israel not only at this time, but even from the inception of the state.[102] Taking the inscription in isolation, it is presumptuous to conclude from an extra-biblical – and non-Israelite – reference to a ninth century border town in which YHWH is worshipped that he was the *only god* worshipped there. The motivation to attack a temple in which YHWH was worshipped could be one of military concern; perhaps he was the primary deity of a garrison there and the victory would be interpreted as a bad omen for the soldiers.[103] Also, while the slightly later inscriptions found on pithoi (storage jars) from Kuntillet 'Ajrud in northeast Sinai refer to 'YHWH of Samaria', I am not convinced by Van Der Toorn's assertions that 'Samaria' is used here as a *nomen terrae* embracing the kingdom of Israel as a whole and not just the socio-political capital of the northern kingdom in which YHWH could have been one of many gods worshipped.[104] He certainly goes too far when he suggests that 'YHWH of Samaria' was used "to distinguish him [YHWH] from" 'YHWH of Judah', especially when i) Judah was by this time (presumably) a geo-political entity administered from the city of Jerusalem; ii) the parallel epithet 'YHWH of Jerusalem' (not appearing on an inscription until the sixth century BCE) would better suit Van Der Toorn's argument; and iii) 'YHWH of Judah' is attested neither in the Bible nor in the

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[101] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 532. Worth noting here is the closing scene of Deuteronomy, in which Moses surveys the Promised Land from atop Mount Nebo *in Moab* (Deut. 34:1), before he dies. The greatest of all biblical figures dies here and is buried "in the land of Moab" (Deut. 34:5, 6).

[102] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 531ff.

[103] The reference to Nebo in Num. 32:3, 38 can hardly be used as concrete evidence for the ancient worship of YHWH; rather that there was a perception of the Israelites having occupied that site since pre-monarchic times. Jer. 48:1, 22 appear to envisage a retaking of Nebo, implying that it belongs to Moab at the time of composition; likewise with Isa. 15:2.

[104] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 533-534; 1995: 377. Cf. McCarter, Jr., 1987: 139. Lambert (2004: 364) finds a parallel with regards to Babylon referring to both the "capital town" and the kingdom. On 'YHWH of Samaria' at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, see also Grabbe, 2007: 157; and Lemaire, 2004: 372-373. Note also for our purposes that 'YHWH of Teman' is also attested at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, with Teman (in the Bible) equated with or situated in Edom (Dicou, 1994: 179). See Obad. 1:9; Amos 1:12; Ezek. 25:13; Jer. 49:20, 22; and Hab. 3:3.

archaeological record.[105] As for Jeroboam and his bull (or calf) idols as representative of YHWH (to which Van Der Toorn also appeals with regard to seeing YHWH as the national god of Israel from an early stage), that is a matter to which we will later return.[106]

Of course, accepting Van Der Toorn's conclusions – that YHWH was the national god of Israel not only at the time of the ninth/eighth century evidence, but also from the time of Jeroboam and the tenth century foundation of the kingdom – would not warrant a projection back to the time of the initial settlement of Shasu in the northern highlands. The temporal gap between the two is such that an assertion of continuity regarding the worship of YHWH is highly speculative, but we can certainly ask questions regarding the spatial and temporal origins of YHWH worship. That is, we can, from a purely geographical point of view, postulate continuity between the 'Shasu yhw' and the YHWH attested on the ninth century Mesha Stele, thus confirming a memory of the ancient worship of YHWH amongst people incorporated into embryonic 'Israel' who came from a region later embraced by the elaborate Exodus narrative. In other words, the memories preserved in the bible of YHWH coming from (Mount) Seir in Edom – as above, the Sinai element of the 'wilderness' narrative is being overlooked as the incorporation of a tradition separate to those concerning Edom[107] – may actually give us a geographical starting point for the group responsible for their introduction to the 'Israelite' collective. It is here that attention returns to the text of Exodus; more specifically, to the crossing of the 'Sea of Reeds' and the destruction of the Egyptian army in Exodus 14.

Exodus 15, of course, celebrates this triumph, with the famous 'Song of the Sea' being a poetic elaboration upon the very short 'Song of Miriam' following hot on its heels in 15:21. Miriam's song is a call to prayer, her words strangely following the song of praise and pre-empted by Moses and the people (it is surprising that the text was not presented the other way around). Despite the likelihood of the greater antiquity of 15:21 (in that it is presupposed by the preceding text), it is regularly observed that the archaic language of the 'Song' is evidence

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[105] Hayes, 1998: ix. On 'YHWH of Jerusalem' in the Khirbet Beit Lei inscriptions, see Grabbe, 2007: 150-151.

[106] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 533ff. I would argue, rather, that while YHWH may have been the primary deity amongst Saul's family (and even this is debatable, considering the 'Ba'al' elements amongst his family names), seeing him as the national god follows the biblical stories of Saul – themselves mythologizing the earliest foundations of Israel the kingdom – to an extreme.

[107] This neither dismisses nor accepts the authenticity of the Sinai tradition; it simply emphasises its original independence from the traditions concerning Edom/Seir. In saying that, it should be noted that some scholars locate Mount Sinai in or near Edom (cf. Van Der Toorn, 1993: 538); and if this is the case, then the Sinai element of the Mosaic narrative might indeed reflect a close affiliation to Edomite traditions.

of its antiquity in comparison with the surrounding narrative.[108] This should automatically dilute any claims to the antiquity of the surrounding narrative, but there is also ample reason to believe that the 'Song' reflects an ancient context quite different to that envisaged by the 'Exodus' story, as if it was relocated to lend credence to the same.[109] Upon comparing the chapter preceding the 'Song' (the events of which are immortalised in cultural memory as a result) with the scene in Joshua 3 of the tribes crossing the Jordan, suspicions are invariably raised. In Joshua 3:14, we are told that the priests led the way, bearing the Ark, and as they stepped into the flowing water, "the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam [...], while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off."[110] This supernatural phenomenon allows the "entire nation" (3:17) to cross safely into enemy territory, following which they proceed to take the land. Of course, as per the discussion in Chapter 1, there is simply no archaeological evidence for the arrival into the highlands of any significant amount of people culturally disconnected from the adjacent 'Canaanite' settlements or cities. Yet why this emphasis on external origins when claims to ancestral land are also so important?[111] Granted, this is the internal contradiction of Israelite traditions which the biblical writers achieve through the 'second creation story' of Genesis 2 –

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[108] Davies, 2004: 31; Mayes, 2006: 50; Cross, 1997: 121. Were it the case that a deliberate 'archaising' of the text was occurring in order to claim great antiquity for the 'Song', one would expect that it did not stand out as such amongst the surrounding narrative, for which great antiquity is also claimed.

[109] Apart from Exod. 15:4-5, the 'Song' could be read completely disassociated from the 'Exodus'; and this is especially clear with the anachronistic references to the nations (15:14-15) with which 'Israel' had not yet come into contact (or should not have existed at this time, according to biblical chronology). Consider also Exod. 15:19 as an example of 'resumptive repetition' (Alter, 2004: 299; Edelman, 2005: 155) relating to 14:28-29 and indicating a break in the narrative flow. The 'Song of the Sea' has been inserted here to help with the claims to antiquity of Exodus. Cf. Cross, 1997: 123, 131.

[110] It is arguably to the imagery of creation that we owe this description of events, in that YHWH is seen to control the water. Numerous creation myths of the Ancient Near East see the respective deity parting or pushing back or settling the seas, or locked in mythological struggles with anthropomorphised bodies of water (see further below on Akhenaten). In Exod. 14:30-31, we read what *appears to be* a conclusion to the 'Exodus' event, and there is an air of confession to the words. The 'great work' of YHWH is seen by Israel (14:31a), and we must presume that it was as 'good' as the creation upon which Elohim looked in Gen. 1. In a similar allusion to creation, note also the 'strong wind' of YHWH 'dividing' the water in Exod. 14:21b to create dry ground upon which Israel can walk – the *salvation* of Israel is the *creation* of Israel, told using the same language as the creation of the world. Cf., for example, Mitchell, 1993: 40-42.

[111] Cf. Gruen (2011: 250), who observes that, far from Israel being embarrassed by assertions of their derivation from elsewhere, "association with Chaldeans or Babylonians remained a source of pride" and "[t]he Israelites were not an autochthonous people even by their own lights."

the ultimate ancestors are formed from the dust of the land, to which they will return – and the narratives of the primordial ancestors (that is, those prior to the formation of nations), but is it not possible that an authentic memory of coming from outside the land is at work here?

Consider the unusual route of the 'Exodus': travelling northeast out of Egypt and maintaining said course is what any sensible person would presume on a journey to Judah and then Israel (the Egyptians had a logistical and administrative network in Palestine since the nineteenth dynasty), yet the biblical story has Moses lead the people on a bizarre diversion to skirt Edom and then head north to Moab (Deut. 2) before preparing to cross the Jordan![112] I rather think that the biblical ideology keeping the people wandering in such a circuitous route speaks of the incorporation of ancient traditions borne by the descendants of people hailing from those regions – the harmonisation of memories of disparate origins surviving against any potential assertions of homogeneity.[113] Yet even where memories of Edom might be incorporated, the attitudes towards Edom preserved in the Bible are decidedly ambiguous. For example, despite the animosity between Jacob and Esau in Genesis, the territory of Esau (Edom) is respected in Deuteronomy 2:4-8 (and Edomites are specifically cited as the 'kin' of Israel in Deuteronomy 23:7).[114] The situation becomes more complex, firstly when we consider the prophetic references to and oracles against Edom (which vary from neutral to positive to vindictive); and secondly if we enter the debate concerning the antiquity of the alignment of Jacob-Esau with Israel-Edom.[115] If, however, the call to respect Mount Seir and the descendants

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[112] On the military road or 'north Sinai route' connecting Egypt to Palestine (or "south Canaan"), see Na'aman, 2011a: 45-46 and scholarship cited therein (n. 14); also Thompson, 1999: 150-154.

[113] The time this 'wandering' takes (forty years) is generally understood as representing a generation. In this sense, it can be argued that no one who actually experienced the 'Exodus' entered the Promised Land, dying in time for the new generation to become the new 'Israel' (cf. Josh. 5:4-6), legitimated by alluding to an 'historical' event the 'facts' of which they cannot contest with any credibility. Significantly, Van Der Toorn (2007: 149) suggests that forty years is the average life span of a papyrus scroll, and that scribes under the auspices of a priestly authority would take the opportunity to 'revise' sacred texts at such regular intervals. Thus, there is a very real 'disconnect' from what came before, with the 'revised' edition bearing relevance for the new generation.

[114] While 'Edom' refuses to accommodate wandering 'Israel' in Num. 20:14-21, Deut. 23:4 attacks Ammon and Moab for their lack of hospitality and appears unaware of the scene in Numbers.

[115] Cf. Isa. 34; Amos 1:11-12; Jer. 49:7-22; Obad. *passim*; Ezek. 35, 36. For a thorough analysis of the literary representation of Edom in the Bible, see Dicou, 1994, who suggests an evolution in Israelite thought of Edom as a 'type' which eventually comes to represent all enemy nations (pp. 112, 159-160). Echoing some of Dicou's conclusions, Mitchell (2010: 108-109) notes that, by the time of the composition of Chronicles, Edom had become a generic 'mirror' by which Israel defined itself.

of Esau in Deuteronomy 2 recalls an ancient respect for the (Shasu) people of pre-state Edom insofar as the origins of YHWH are concerned, then there is no better place to recall this respect than in the great drama in which YHWH is revealed and 'Israel' is truly created *as a nation* – a story which requires such allusions to antiquity to consolidate its (claims to) authenticity. An alignment of Esau – as the brother of Jacob (Israel) – with Edom made for the first time in a context where Edom was spoken of only with enmity (from the sixth century BCE on, when Edom took advantage of Judah's defeat at the hands of the Babylonians) would surely see Esau in Genesis presented as a much more aggressive and hateful figure, as opposed to the passive victim of Israel's deceit. For the Genesis text to have relevance for its audience following the destruction of Jerusalem, the people would have to envisage their revenge on Edom as underhanded and contemptible, an aspiration in stark contrast to the prophetic oracles of righteous destruction otherwise dominating the biblical attitude towards Edom. It is Edom personified who denies the Israelites passage through his territory in Numbers 20:14-21 – this reflects the later attitude (cf. n. 114) – but there is no reason to stop the reversing clock at the seventh century (as Dicou does) to identify an earlier context of affable relations between Judah and Edom (to which context Deut. 2 might originally belong); especially not when we are dealing with a northern (Israelite) ancestor tradition.[116] As Van Der Toorn remarks, "[t]here is reason to believe that the 'Edomite connection' was established in North Israel. It is not mere coincidence that the references to Yahweh's origins from the South occur predominantly in texts from the Northern Kingdom."[117]

Furthermore, the representation of Esau as the 'hairy' one is not necessarily showing him as barbarous and uncouth,[118] but rather might be a geographical allusion, connecting him 'aesthetically' to the ancestral home from which the people of Edom hail; Seir is the 'hairy' mountain.[119] Esau is disenfranchised, certainly – and by the trickery and cunning of both his mother and Jacob – yet still he is magnanimous in his ultimate defeat; he forgives his younger brother and reconciliation is made possible.[120] This does not fit with later contexts of the

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[116] Cf. Dicou, 1994: 170. Of course, issues arise here of the literary projection of continuity associating Israel with Judah from primordial times, but we will return to this later.

[117] Van Der Toorn, 1993: 540

[118] Cf. Alter, 1981: 43.

[119] Dicou, 1994: 161, who also connects Mount Halak (southwest of the Dead Sea) to Jacob; it is the 'smooth' mountain.

[120] Dicou, 1994: 159. Rather than focus on Esau/Edom as a threat to Israel (idem), I would argue that Esau is rightly aggrieved in Genesis; Jacob has done wrong. Jacob also faces "symmetrical poetic justice" (Alter, 1981: 45) after his morally uncomfortable actions here when Laban reminds him (Gen. 29:26) why he should not have Rachel, the younger daughter, over the eldest, Leah.

literary representation of Edom as the enemy nation or even as all of the nations. If it is correct to see the Jacob-Esau cycle as reminiscent of an ancient tradition of a fractured kinship – which I think it is – then we should read the supplanting of the older brother as indicative of a memory of the establishment of the people of Israel (personified as Jacob) disassociated from those occupying the land which would later be home to the nation of Edom.[121] More importantly, however, this is about claiming the right to worship YHWH by disassociating the deity from Edom (and Mount Seir) as his place of origin. In this sense, the supplanting of Esau (Edom) by Jacob (Israel) mythologises the movement of YHWH-worshippers from the vicinity of Mount Seir and the settlement of these people in the highlands of Palestine. It is here that the geographical aspect of commemoration resurfaces, for in the story of crossing the Jordan north of the Dead Sea (Joshua 3) and bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the highlands west of the Jordan, is it not plausible to suggest that an ancient memory survives in the biblical texts of the ancestors of the people of Israel making the journey from the lands south and east of the Dead Sea to resettle in the highlands on the opposite side? Is it not plausible to suggest that a memory of bringing YHWH into the Promised Land – as the Exodus-Joshua story maintains (although it seeks to convince us of YHWH *returning* to the land, rather than arriving there for the first time) – has survived here? Further, and more specifically, is it not then plausible to speak of a group of Shasu nomads moving out of the land which would later become Edom and into the highlands which would later become part of Israel?[122]

I believe it is, on all counts, but I would urge caution with regard to simply equating the Shasu with Biblical Israel or, as Redford does, referring to Shasu settlements in the northern highlands as 'nascent Israel', and would return to the suggestion made above that the introduction of YHWH into the socio-religious framework of *either* Israel or Judah is a later aspect of the development of Israel. The socio-religious elements introduced by the Shasu may be 'nascent' Yahwism, but they do not form the complete picture. As Grabbe suggests, the revelation to Moses of YHWH, implicitly recalling the introduction of *a new deity* into Israelite society, "conform[s] with extra-biblical data and...suggests memory of a time when YHWH was...introduced to [the Israelites] for the first time."[123] Of course, it could just as easily recall a time when YHWH was recognised as important enough to be included amongst the major deities, and it should be borne in mind that the revelation to Moses – as observed above – is concerned with usurping the other popular deities, and may reflect an early attempt at

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[121] On the antiquity of the Jacob-Esau layer and its "geographical element", see Dicou, 1994: 161.

[122] Van Der Toorn, 1993, concludes that the Gibeonites, with whom Saul is associated, were an offshoot of Edomites who journeyed northwards to settle in the highlands, bringing YHWH worship with them.

[123] Grabbe, 2007: 153

monolatry on the part of a 'YHWH-alone' group.[124] On the whole, it would appear quite likely that this group shared some sort of affinity with the descendants of the nomads referred to in Egyptian texts as the Shasu *yhw*; they moved into the northern highlands and brought their god with them.

The biblical writers' need to locate the origins of YHWH in their immediate vicinity was part of their theological agenda, but they could not escape the strong appeal in tradition to the dramatic aspects of crossing the Jordan and taking possession of the land in which one of the earliest elements of 'Israel' settled with their god. The Joshua stories may be a re-casting of this aspect of the origin traditions, with the realities subsumed by the fully fleshed-out story of the 'Exodus'. The parting of the 'Sea of Reeds' in Exodus 14 validates the 'Exodus' by way of the 'Song of the Sea', the cultic song of praise and triumph which evokes one of the earliest manifestations of cultural memory borne by the 'Shasu *yhw*'. It is also entirely possible that this crossing of the river is alluded to in the biblical name given to the earliest ancestors of 'Israel' – the Hebrews.

It was suggested above that the Semitic root עבר – from which the word עִבְרִי ('Hebrew') is derived – bears connotations of 'crossing over', possibly in both a geographical and sociological context. Significantly, it shows up in Joshua's granting land to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and (the 'half-tribe' of) Manasseh before the rest of 'Israel' crossed the Jordan to attack Jericho (Josh. 1:12-14). The land in which these tribes are to remain is called 'Across the Jordan', or possibly 'Beyond the Jordan', implying that it is a name assigned to land peripheral to that of the author, who lives west of the Jordan.[125] A literary and ideological connection is thus made between the land in which the people of Israel 'now' live and the land from which they came and in which some of their ancestors live. Yet does this mean that 'Hebrew' in the bible evokes memories of any 'Shasu' left behind following the 'dramatic' river crossing? Further, were the Shasu also 'Apiru, and can we relate any continuity with 'Israel'? If we wish to equate the Shasu and 'Apiru in the context of homogeneous entities (with one seen ultimately as the precursor of the other), the answer is unequivocally 'No'. The evidence shows that the terms *Shasu* and

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[124] There are many manifestations of the 'Canaanite' High God 'El' (found throughout Genesis) being embraced by this Yahwistic usurpation, and they may reflect ancient family deities or gods of local socio-political patronage. See especially Smith, Mark, 2002.

[125] The capitals heading 'Across' and 'Beyond' emphasise that these are names given to the territory (cf., for example, the Persian province, 'Beyond the River', referring to Syria-Palestine, on the opposite side of the Euphrates from the Persian perspective; Rainey, 1969). This approach to the phrase בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן translates the prefixed בְּ as the preposition 'in', as opposed to, for example, the JPS rendering of the phrase as "on this side of the Jordan". The NRSV overlooks the preposition, giving instead "the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan".

'Apiru, etic as they are and listed in Egyptian texts in contradistinction to each other, evince no regard for their heterogeneity and the likelihood that there are many different identities at play insofar as distinctive cultural traits might be concerned.[126] From the point of view of the Egyptians – to whose perspective we must ultimately defer – the Shasu are not 'Apiru, and while both terms continue to be used by the Egyptians, they do not appear to be associated with the etic term 'Israel' used by the Egyptians in the late thirteenth century. Ramesses II refers to 'Shasu Asiatics' only decades before the 'Israel' of the Merneptah Stele; this is surely not enough time for a socio-political entity to have established itself as distinctive from the generic 'Shasu' from Egypt's point of view, unless there was a rapid change in behaviour on the part of the people now being called 'Israel'.

On the matter of behaviour, we can turn to the 'Apiru, for if the stories of David and his men allude to the sociological connotations of the word *'Apiru*, the temptation arises (as discussed above) not only to see 'Hebrew' in these stories as recalling the 'Apiru, but elaborating upon that connotation to find continuity with the use of 'Hebrew' in Exodus, drawing temporal lines between the Shasu and the 'Apiru. Torn between taking these possible connotations of the biblical word 'Hebrew' and that discussed above regarding crossing the Jordan, I refuse to be agnostic, advocating for the etymological connotations of the Semitic root עבר, for it is the images and memories evoked by this word to which the biblical writers surely appealed. 'Crossing over' is what is happening in every sense, and in every narrative – physically (geographically), sociologically and even theologically; and with those connotations in mind, an understanding of the biblical word makes sense without any appeal to an ancient Egyptian appellative for people they cared little to understand. While the appropriation and inversion of a derogatory term on the part of the early Israelites is by no means implausible, to suggest that it is at the heart of the use of the word 'Hebrew' overlooks the literary-ideological links between the scenes of Exodus 14 and Joshua 3; this evocation of continuity is of the utmost importance for maintaining the authenticity of the entire myth of origins running from Genesis to Joshua.[127]

Returning to our purpose here requires a consideration of the interaction between the Shasu and Egypt. Without reason to doubt the claims of Ramesses II that he defeated the Shasu and took the mountain at Seir;[128] or that he also deported 'Shasu Asiatics' to "the western

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[126] Mayes, 2006: 63

[127] On how the Joshua 'crossing' ensures a connection between the 'Exodus' and the 'Conquest', see Mullen, 1993: 107-119.

[128] Grabbe, 2007: 49

land";[129] or that Egyptian outposts permitted the passage of the 'Shasu of Edom' at Succoth so that they could water their flocks;[130] or that Amenhotep II took Shasu prisoners in one of his campaigns (even if the numbers – 15,200 – are suspiciously high);[131] it is clear that memories amongst numerous 'Shasu' groups of decidedly negative engagements with Egypt would have influenced their collective perceptions of that nation. It is not difficult to imagine stories circulating of military engagements (in which deities would also be seen to compete), capture, imprisonment and forced labour. This is simply how Egypt dominated its captured territories and their inhabitants.[132] There was nothing special about 'Shasu' prisoners or those removed from any other region; what matters is what was remembered and how those memories evolved. In the same way that the aspects of dominating Egypt which we would expect in memories preserved by the descendants of the Hyksos fell away to be replaced only by the memories of an expulsion with the Egyptian army hot on their heels, memories of either fleeing Egypt or, indeed, just fleeing from their soldiers would have borne relevance for the 'Shasu' group(s) settling in the Palestinian highlands.

Before moving on to Akhenaten and his religious 'revolution'; and the question of whether or not it survived in formative Yahwism, it is worth reminding ourselves of YHWH worship amongst the 'Shasu', particularly as it pertains to assertions of continuity of the same amongst early 'Israel' (and, more importantly, as YHWH is remembered as the god of the 'Exodus'). As we move further through our mnemohistory of the tradition of a migration from Egypt, the antiquity of that 'memory' will be challenged, and it is actually from within the debate regarding the antiquity of the 'Exodus' that the challenge arises; for if the Hyksos are to be seen as the progenitors of 'Israel', then it is of great significance to consider the evidence for their worship not of YHWH, but of Ba'al, a deity whose cult was prevalent in Syria-Palestine throughout the entire evolution of Israelite religion.[133] In the Hebrew Bible, worship of Ba'al is thoroughly demonised – it is the ideological antithesis of YHWH worship. If the primary concern of the biblical writers was historical (ethnic) continuity and they wished to allude to (and take possession of) what appears to be a vague memory of the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt, the fact that the Hyksos worshipped Ba'al and the 'Israel' of the Bible were absolutely prohibited from doing so suggests that *purposeful discontinuity* played a major part in the evolution of

[129] Na'aman, 2011a: 48

[130] Papyrus Anastasi VI. Cf. Davies, Graham, 2004: 34; and Malamat, 2012: 27.

[131] Hoffmeier, 1996: 113

[132] Na'aman, 2011a: 47-49. See further, Redford, 1992: 221ff.

[133] On the religion of the Hyksos rulers, see Redford, 1992: 116-118. Although it is considerably dated at this stage (due to the wealth of information obtained since the excavation of Tell el-Dab'a/Avaris), see also Van Seters, 1966: 171ff.

Israelite identity, and that a disassociation from Ba'al worship is significant with regards to cultural memory and 'forgetting'. It should also be considered that the biblical polemic alluding to a shift away from Ba'al worship and towards that of YHWH may recall an actual historical precedent in which the incoming Shasu deity was favoured by certain elements within embryonic 'Israel' (as suggested above).[134] It is becoming clear, then, that numerous and favoured aspects of various traditions were retained as the compromise or 'negotiation' of identity continued throughout the development of Israelite society. What was remembered was only that upon which the collective agreed, with other memories slipping away as they ceased to bear relevance for the self-identity of the group.

2.2.4 *Akhenaten and Moses – A Revolution Remembered?*

Egypt in the 14th century BCE witnessed what is often referred to by scholars as a religious 'revolution'.[135] The 'heretic' king Amenhotep IV renamed himself Akhenaten and moved the royal capital from Thebes to a virgin site he named Akhetaten (modern Tell el-Amarna); and all this seemingly in the wake of a revelation he had experienced regarding the nature of the divine.[136] Pharaoh Akhenaten had, in every sense of the word, seen the light, concluding that the disc of the sun itself was the supreme deity and that from this entity all life, time, knowledge and wisdom were made manifest. Existence in all its intricacy was not only integrally connected to the worship of this entity; it was indebted to it.[137] Akhenaten was lost to history until 1907, when excavations at Amarna brought this enigmatic Pharaoh back into the world from which his memory had been systematically erased. Here was a king whose actions had apparently been so abhorred by the rulers of the 'reforming' nineteenth dynasty that his name was chiselled out of existence, his statues and stelae were smashed and any

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[134] If YHWH is seen as a war-god, then a shift in fealty to such a deity amongst a developing nation within the general milieu of the Ancient Near Eastern geopolitical landscape is not difficult to imagine. Of course, such a picture of events depends on the origins of YHWH's characteristics, and whether or not they were 'inherited' from 'Canaanite' deities like El or Ba'al. See further, Miller, Patrick D., 1967; Cross, 1962 (also 1997: Chapters 3 and 7); and Smith, Mark, 2002, Chapters 2 and 3.

[135] Cf. David, 2002: 215; and Assmann, 2003: 214ff.

[136] On the possible motives behind Akhenaten's religious program, see David, 2002: 243-245; cf. also Redford, 2013: 13ff.

[137] Cf. Assmann, 2006: 139.

aspirations of eternal veneration were lost in the abandoned city in which this "fallen foe"; this "criminal"; this "rebel of Akhetaten" had hoped to rest forever.[138]

Apart, perhaps, from his famous progeny, Akhenaten is one of the most romanticised rulers in history, regularly spoken of as a wondrous enigma who attempted to set the course of human history on the path of enlightenment; a man truly ahead of his time.[139] Of course, any conceptual innovation marking a radical departure from the norm will always be seen as being 'ahead of its time' (particularly if the general populous are not ready to contend with it) and retrospective analogies do not necessarily heighten our understanding. Drawing parallels between culturally, spatially and temporally disconnected concepts – while sometimes providing tentative models by which we might attempt deconstruction – are unhelpful if they lead us to neglect their original *sitz im leben*, projecting the later phenomenon upon the earlier while ignoring the debt to causality occupying the time between the two.[140] It is this approach which has not only seen Akhenaten's religion compared to 'Mosaic Monotheism'; it has also fuelled the case for presenting the latter as indebted to the former. It should come as no surprise, then, that Akhenaten is sometimes discussed as a prophetic figure akin not only to Moses, but also to Jesus, Siddhartha (the Buddha) and Mohammed.[141] Yet all of these figures

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[138] Assmann, 2003: 215; Rose, 2002: 22; and Hornung, 1992: 44 (respectively). Singer (2006: 38) sees Akhenaten's request that his body be returned to Akhetaten should he die elsewhere as a "commitment [...] far more definitive than all the others", since the Egyptian obsession with the afterlife would infer an aspiration to an eternity in that city.

[139] Book titles such as *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet* (Reeves, 2005) and *Akhenaten: The Heretic King* (Redford, 1987) are inherently sensational, despite their academic status; while novels such as *Akhenaten: Dweller in Truth* (Mahfouz, 2000), and movies like *The Egyptian* (20th Century Fox, 1954) play on the melodrama and romance of an era about which we are invited to speculate wildly and a socio-religious phenomenon cast in modern monotheistic sensibilities.

[140] Cf., for example, Jan Assmann's connection between Akhenaten's sun-cult and "Ionian Nature Philosophy", from which he concludes that the Egyptian king was "approximately eight hundred years ahead of his time" (2006: 141). While retrospective analogies might shed some light on otherwise shadowy ancient worldviews, such approaches can often be quite misleading when trying to appreciate the cultural milieu within which the earlier phenomenon emerged. With Egypt long recognised as playing a significant role in cultural exchange throughout the Mediterranean and Ancient Near Eastern worlds, Assmann's analogy runs the risk of circular causality, especially when – as will be discussed below – Akhenaten's ideas did not die with him.

[141] Cf. Assmann, 2003: 216, 2006: 139; and Hornung, 1992: 47. "*Akhenaten: Ancient Egypt's Prodigal Son?*", the ironic title of John Ray's 1990 article published in *History Today*, is similarly as telling of the influence of Western culture so anachronistic that it distorts our preconceptions. His use of the phrase "a trinity of gods" (27) should, I trust, be read within the context of his awareness of the pitfalls of

are not only afforded iconic status as spiritual leaders or teachers; they are long established in cultural memory as people who changed the course of human history. While for many Akhenaten is the first identifiable founder of a 'religion' in history, his ideas vanished into the ether; or at least, that is what succeeding Egyptian rulers sought to achieve. Integral to this subsection is the matter, then, of quantifying their success, to which end we might ask how much was actually 'erased' from the memory of ordinary people as the program of 'forgetting' was initiated. This, of course, depends on our appreciation of how much the ordinary people had adapted to Akhenaten's religious experiment, thus assessing the necessity of any such program. Then we should ask if Akhenaten was truly 'forgotten' or whether his legacy lived on, before dealing with the possible connections – if any – between the demise of Akhenaten's 'revolution' and the story of the 'Exodus'. In the biblical story of the 'liberation' from Egypt of the Hebrew slaves, some have sought parallels with the 'heresy' of Akhenaten, in that the 'Exodus' might be read as a clash of religious ideals and the subsequent expulsion of the people with whom no compromise could be found. Yet is it really plausible to connect Moses with Akhenaten, or to see him as some sort of 'disciple' of the king whose spiritual inclinations resulted in his retrospective persecution?

Here we return to Flavius Josephus, whose literary genius is matched only by his resounding frustration at the anti-Jewish sentiments with which he had to contend.[142] As we have seen above, Josephus took the opportunity to embrace the general historicity of the Hyksos expulsion when it came to aligning it with the Exodus, primarily because it bolstered Jewish claims to the great antiquity of their culture. He is considerably less impressed, however, by what he sees as a disgraceful story of origins involving Moses as the leader of a leper colony, with the two stories standing in conflict and fuelling Josephus' resolve as he tears the latter apart.[143] Josephus is content to have Moses – who for him lived five hundred and eighteen

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retrospective analogies and wishful thinking; an awareness leading him to observe that, "[s]everal historians, impressed by the universalism of the Hymn to the Aten...conclude that [Akhenaten] was essentially saintly, the man who invented God, misunderstood by an unready age". We may indeed weep for this clearly Christianised Akhenaten.

[142] Cf. Gruen, 2011: 277ff., noting that Jews were as much to blame (278) for their reputation as "antisocial and inhospitable" (277).

[143] Josephus also pits the versions (of the 'tale of the lepers') of Manetho and Chaeremon against each other to prove "the falsity of both these narrations" (*C. Ap.* 1.293). He [Josephus] goes on to say that "had there been any real truth at the bottom, it was impossible that they should so greatly disagree about the particulars" (1.293); an interesting statement from a man whose *Antiquities of the Jews* constitutes a re-telling of the history of his people found in the Hebrew Bible. Following his logic, contradictions between the two should be taken as evidence of the falsity of both!

years prior to the expulsion of the lepers (*C. Ap.* 1.280) – leaving Egypt as the leader of the 'Shepherd Kings', primarily because the alternative is "rather unpleasant".[144] As for Manetho's 'tale of the lepers', we must – as Josephus surely did – wonder to what on earth he was referring. A deconstruction of the myth with which Josephus had to contend attests to the complex nature of collective memory and the evolution of tradition. Keeping in mind the Hyksos experience and how it was claimed by Manetho that they were chased to Jerusalem, an extract like this (*C. Ap.* 1.248-250) raises suspicion:

> But for the people of Jerusalem, when they came down together with the polluted Egyptians, they treated the men in such a barbarous manner, that those who saw how they subdued the forementioned country [...] thought it a most dreadful thing; for they did not only set the cities and villages on fire, but were not satisfied till they had been guilty of sacrilege, and destroyed the images of the gods [...] It was also reported that the priest, who ordained their polity and their laws, was by birth of Heliopolis, and his name Osarsiph [...] but that when he was gone over to these people, his name was changed, and he was called Moses.

The first thing to note is the ethnic sentiment of this dramatic pericope: *foreigners* came to Egypt and 'subdued' it; in this case, people from Jerusalem. With Manetho maintaining that the Hyksos had established Jerusalem following their expulsion (*C. Ap.* 1.228), the link to Josephus' ancestors is nought but implied (perhaps someone else had established Jerusalem?) until the revelation that a traitorous Egyptian priest sided with the invaders and changed his name to Moses. But had Moses not led the people out of Egypt in the first place? Had Moses not been part of the correlation with the Hyksos? Not for Manetho, who had never spoken of Moses of their leader; it was Josephus who had affixed Moses to that tale of origins, by way of its confirming the 'Exodus'. Josephus' appropriation of the story of the Hyksos for his own ends is precisely the foundation for his own argument against Manetho's chronology when it comes to the lepers! This is not, however, the heart of the problem for Josephus; it is merely the means by which he can attack a tradition insulting the legendary founder of Judaism (perhaps this is why he appropriated the Hyksos story in the first place?).

What is the truth, however, behind this tradition of rebellious lepers and their expulsion from Egypt?[145] From where does this language of bodily and spiritual impurity derive? It is possible that a plague at the end of the 'Amarna' period – identified in the archaeological

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[144] Raspe, 1998: 130

[145] For a discussion on how Tacitus developed the tradition, see Gruen, 2011: 190ff.

record and alluded to in Hittite texts – was the genesis of the motif, considering that it was interpreted as the wrath of the traditional gods in light of Akhenaten's 'heresy'.[146] The memory of an actual epidemic may be the foundation for later interpretations of contemporary events cast in the context of religious conflict. A. D. H. Mayes, following Assmann's deconstruction of the "myth of the lepers", envisages the gradual dilution of the memory of the 'Amarna' period until it has dissolved into nothing but a vague recollection of a trauma of spiritual significance.[147] With the much older Hyksos experience purposely preserved in Egyptian memory and political propaganda as a triumph of internal order over external chaos, the retrospective on the Amarna period becomes embroiled in a conflated memory so that the religious (and sacrilegious) aspects of Akhenaten's program come to define the earlier event.[148] It becomes difficult in Egyptian memory, then, to differentiate between the details of the two, so that both are presented as the result of external invasion and the imposition of foreign religion upon the people of Egypt.[149] Akhenaten's favouring of the Aten is recalled as a ban on all *Egyptian* gods in favour of an external deity – in this case 'Asiatic' in general, as the Hyksos were; and Jewish in particular, as the popular demonisation of Judaism becomes part of the myth. The 'trauma' of Amarna becomes dislocated, lying dormant as a latent memory until such time as a threat to the traditional religion of Egypt is perceived. Whereas the polytheistic cultures of the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds permitted what Assmann calls "intercultural translatability", facilitating the alignment of gods from various nations, Jewish monotheism was the antithesis of this practice.[150] With the general consensus in biblical scholarship that the fully defined 'Mosaic Monotheism' is a product of the Babylonian 'exile', it is difficult to argue for a *terminus post quem* of an Egyptian tradition attaching the Jews to the memory of Akhenaten's program (or even the Hyksos) earlier than the late sixth century BCE. Considering Josephus' focus on Manetho's (early third century BCE) version of the tradition, it is likely that the latter was the first to relate it as such.

If faithful records of the 'trauma' of Amarna had been kept, and Manetho knew what had actually happened during the time of Amenophis IV, it might have been more difficult for him to denigrate the Jews using the distorted story. The experience of the demonised Hyksos might

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[146] Kemp et al., 2013: 77; Assmann, 2003: 224; Hendel, 2005: 62-67

[147] Mayes, 2005: 306-307; Assmann, 2003: 398ff.

[148] Mayes (2005: 307) observes that "the tradition of the defeat and expulsion of the Hyksos had originally nothing to do with religious confrontation". The memories of the Hyksos, however, constituted "an available and highly suitable vehicle for an oblique representation of the trauma of extreme religious otherness" (Assmann, 2003: 228).

[149] This approach also serves to relinquish Egypt of any blame laid upon its internal administration.

[150] Cf. Assmann, 1998: 3ff. and Mertz, 1999: 222.

have sufficed, for – despite it allowing Josephus to attest to the antiquity of his people – it painted them with a sufficiently bad brush to satisfy popular anti-Jewish sentiment. So, Akhenaten's 'revolution' was diluted and distorted until such time as the memory of the event formed constituent parts of a jigsaw of national identity defined by ethnic polarisation; yet is it accurate to say that Akhenaten was completely forgotten? While he suffered a *damnatio memoriae* following his death, the erasure of all things related to him was neither immediate nor total. The former conclusion – that it was not immediate – I would argue based on the fact that Akhenaten was not only afforded a traditional Egyptian entombment, but his body was also moved from Akhetaten to the Valley of Kings (against his wishes), presumably in the wake of the abandonment of his failed capital.[151] This suggests that a modicum of respect was still afforded the man subsequently reviled by later Egyptian propaganda in light of the resurgence in power of the Amun priesthood and their patron kings.[152] The latter is evident from two very different perspectives: one (and at the risk of being pedantic), that we are speaking of him today;[153] and two, that it would appear that a memory of his 'revolution' survives in the Bible. It may be an obscure echo of his spiritual musings far removed from its original context, but Psalm 104 arguably preserves the literary depiction of Akhenaten's sun-god which we find in

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[151] DNA analysis conducted between September 2007 and October 2009 (the *King Tutankhamun Family Project*) and published in February 2010 (Hawass et al., 2010) concluded that the mummy in KV55 (Tomb 55) in the Valley of Kings was indeed Akhenaten. Up until this point, speculation abounded, yet even the presence of Akhenaten's name and that of one of his wives, Kiya, in the tomb (Rose, 2002: 22), indicates that the hostility directed at him was a later phenomenon.

[152] David (2002: 232; 237-242) suggests that Akhenaten's even more enigmatic successor, Smenkhare, may have continued promoting the worship of the Aten, and that it was not until Tutankhamun's succession that he – or, more likely, his courtiers (he was only a child) – began the 'counter-revolution' to restore his (their) "allegiance to Amun" (ibid., 239). It is possible, however, that Smenkhare was co-regent alongside Akhenaten (Rose, 2002: 22; Ray, 1990: 32), and died before the 'heretic' king. The "systematic destruction" (David, 2002: 241) of Atenism may not have begun until the reign of Horemheb, although Hornung (1992: 44) refutes this view (see note 153, below).

[153] Assertions claiming that "[t]he memory of the Amarna Period was effectively erased by blotting out all traces of its works and by rewriting history" (Assmann, 2003: 226) are inherently contradictory; the erasure was clearly not effective. It was, in hindsight, temporary and arguably superficial, belonging only to the space, time and context within which it was undertaken. Hornung (1992: 44) appears contradictory when he states that "there was never a counter-revolution against Akhenaten [...and...] most of his achievements were simply forgotten". Such a passive reaction to Akhenaten stands in contrast to his conclusions (idem) that "active suppression" occurred under Seti I and Ramesses II. The 'obliteration' of the names of Amarna kings from the king lists and the restoration of "the effaced names of the gods" could not have gone unnoticed.

the so-called 'Great Hymn to the Aten'. It is imperative then to make comparisons not only between these two works of literature, but also between Akhenaten's religious revolution and a similar phenomenon projected back into Israelite history through the dramatic Sinai pericopes of the Hebrew Bible.

Rather famously, it was Sigmund Freud who articulated fully and controversially in his 1939 work entitled *Moses and Monotheism* the hypothesis that this 'Jewish' myth (Freud played fast and loose with the ethnic term, likely aware of the weight of the anachronism) was one not only born of the latent memory of the murder of Moses by his followers (a re-telling of a primal myth of the killing of the 'primal father'), but also one indebted to the failed religious policies of Akhenaten.[154] For Freud, Moses was a subscriber to Atenism who led the disenfranchised followers of the disgraced Pharaoh out of Egypt, only to find himself at the wrong end of their dissatisfaction when he attempted to impose upon them this "exclusive and intolerant monotheism" as he understood it.[155] The parallels between biblical monotheism and Akhenaten revolve around an understanding of each as what Assmann calls a 'counterreligion'.[156] Inherent in the inception of both manifestations of 'revelation' are the central elements of 'true' and 'false' – belief in and worship of the chosen deity necessarily negates the existence of all other deities – but the main problem with ascribing to Yahwistic monotheism a debt to Atenism revolves around the nature of the deities in question.[157]

As noted above, Akhenaten's conception of the divine subordinated everything in creation to the will of the sun as a conscious creator and overseer. This is not so alien to biblical monotheism, but only if we were to align YHWH with the sun. As will be shown below regarding Psalm 104, the sun is as much a creation of – and therefore subordinate to – YHWH as anything else in the world, and while the apparent benevolence of both deities might be posited in their role as creators, it could be said that the Aten is decidedly unemotional while

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[154] Mayes, 2005: 296-299; Assmann, 2003: 215, noting Freud's expansion on the earlier proposals of Egyptologist James Henry Breasted. See further, Assmann, 1998: 145ff; also (briefly) Hornung, 1992: 46.

[155] Mayes, 2005: 297

[156] Assmann, 2003: 214ff. For Grabbe, an interpretation of Akhenaten's reforms as the earliest example of monotheism is "probably exaggerated" (2007: 59). Mertz, on the other hand, presents an interesting argument (1999: 222-223) for seeing Atenism as monotheism, as opposed to henotheism ("the worship of one god without denying the existence of others"; also known as monolatry). Observing that some might see the concerted attack on the temples and symbols of other gods as an admission of their existence, she interprets this as "trying to destroy their supremacy in the hearts of their followers", rather than recognising their reality. See further Redford (2013: 26), who argues against the use of the word 'religion' in the context of Akhenaten's program.

[157] On 'true' and 'false' in religions (or the "Mosaic Distinction"), see Assmann, 1998: 1-6.

YHWH is anything but. While the Aten is not exactly akin to the 'absent god' of Deism – the Aten is constantly present in creation and does not appear fully detached from the world – it is certainly not the wholly interventional god of unfolding history that we know from the Bible.[158] Despite the aniconic tendencies of formative Judaism, YHWH is decidedly anthropomorphised in biblical narrative (the Patriarchs converse with him face-to-face), lending him greater credibility as a deity who can relate on a worldly level to his people. Certainly, he is transcendent, but he is knowable, approachable; he is indeed "a god of his people".[159] Where cultural memory is concerned, biblical monotheism is completely defined by and indebted to the ritual commemoration of past events in the sense that they are relevant to each new generation of YHWH's chosen people.

The Aten, on the other hand, despite the relative consistency of its presence in nature, seems aloof, its transcendence spanned only through its association with the king.[160] This god has no character to speak of; it does not communicate with the people in any way.[161] As the 'son' of the Aten, Akhenaten controlled access to the divine and interpreted what he (it?) had to say, meaning that for ordinary people, Akhenaten was about as close to a god (in this case *the* god) as one could imagine.[162] Now, while cynicism may abound insofar as Akhenaten's program placed him at the centre of popular devotion, it is likely that the people were confused as to how to deal with the "absence of meaning" inherent in Atenism.[163] Mayes argues that, unlike the "ethical dimension" of biblical monotheism, there was no way of knowing what was right and what was wrong where the Aten was concerned, almost as if such things were irrelevant.[164] Certainly, while Akhenaten's 'Great Hymn' evokes images of a blissfully ordered world and there is no code of conduct or suggestion that people might stray from their prescribed duties, Akhenaten's 'observations' might have incorporated implicit instructions in that said duties were demanded to maintain order. Such an interpretation is, of course, speculative, and the circumstances which saw Atenism suppressed, while providing us with a unique insight into the origins of what Hornung calls a "world religion", also prevent us from seeing how it might have developed.[165] As for a comparison of YHWH with the Aten, it is

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[158] Redford, 1992: 379-380

[159] Redford, 1992: 380-381

[160] Hornung, 1992: 49

[161] Hornung, 1992: 48

[162] David, 2002: 244; Ray, 1990: 30. Cf. also Pritchard, 2011: 324.

[163] Assmann, 2003: 222. Cf. Redford, 2013: 26-29.

[164] Cf. Mayes, 2005: 306.

[165] Assmann (2003: 217-218) concludes that the religion would not have survived as long as it failed to provide an element of redemption.

safe to say that the two concepts of the divine are quite different beneath their characteristic veils of omnipresence (both of which are not exactly what they seem where cultic worship is concerned).

This does not close the case, however, on whether or not biblical monotheism preserves some of the ideas integral to Atenism, but before closing this subsection with a discussion on Psalm 104 and its possible debt to the 'Great Hymn', a question integral to this chapter as a whole must be addressed. In light of what has gone before, can we still speak of the Amarna period as the setting for the 'Exodus'; or at least as an historical context hidden beneath the layers of the biblical story? Is it possible that Moses led the people out of Egypt following the death of Akhenaten and the suppression of his fledgling religion? Excavations of the tombs of the non-elite at Amarna (Akhetaten) have revealed circumstances not too far removed from those described in Exodus, where people served the regime to make manifest the whims of the king: evidence of heavy workloads impressed upon inhabitants as young as early adolescence is akin to the biblical picture of a corvée labour force conscripted to build cities for the king.[166] This, of course, is not the glorious image of Akhenaten's reign as a period of enlightenment championed by advocates of the correlation with Mosaic monotheism, and we would expect the Bible to speak favourably of the Egyptian king if Moses was one of his most enthusiastic 'disciples'. While the demonisation of the nameless Pharaoh(s) – there are two in Exodus – may be part of the 'othering' of Egypt characteristic of Exodus (within which context it could be argued that a memory of Akhenaten was distorted over time), there are other more significant challenges which must be met if the Amarna period is to be considered 'ground zero' for the 'Exodus'.[167]

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[166] Kemp et al., 2013: 73. A decree initiating building projects dated to the time of Akhenaten survives on the Silsila (or Silsileh; see Smith, 1999: 394; Redford, 2013: 20) stele, discovered in the ancient quarry site of Gebel el-Silsila. See further, Kucharek, 2012.

[167] While 'Pharaoh' (meaning "great house") is not used for the monarch until the fifteenth century and was used without a personal name until the tenth (Hoffmeier, 1996: 87), the anonymity of the monarch in Exodus is testament both to the irrelevance of any possible historical context for the origin of the tradition (ibid., 109) as well as the theological weight of omitting the monarch's name in favour of the god who defeated him (111-112). The temporal dislocation of the tradition resulting from the omission also permits a timelessness which maintains didactic and ideological relevance in each subsequent contemporary retelling (cf. Hendel, 2001: 604-605; 2005: 59-62). By comparison, Sarna's conclusion (1986: 71) that the metonym simply refers to whichever monarch is in power at the time appears rather vague and convenient, especially considering the preservation in the Bible of the names of later Pharaohs (for example, Shishak and Necho; see further below in Chapter 3) whom we would presume were less significant than the one who oppressed the entire population of 'Israel'!

Firstly, the Bible has the Hebrew slaves building Pithom and Ra'amses (the so-called 'store-cities') for the nameless Pharaoh (Exodus 1:11), sites as yet unfounded during the Eighteenth Dynasty; and toponyms which are likely later insertions into the tradition.[168] There is neither reference nor allusion to the city of Akhetaten or any site which might be venerated as the foundation of a religion respected by any of the Hebrews, let alone Moses. In fact, Moses' request of Pharaoh – that he be allowed lead the people into the wilderness to celebrate a festival to their god (Exodus 8:16, 24; 9:1, 13) – tells us that the place in which the Hebrews lived was not suitable for worshipping their god. This does not accord with the Hebrews inhabiting a city constructed specifically for that purpose; and certainly not one which may or may not have been accessible for the ordinary people through the king himself. This leads us to another matter; that of the religious beliefs of the ordinary people of Akhetaten. Returning to the excavations of the 'South Tombs', it would appear that an array of traditional Egyptian beliefs are manifest in the burials, suggesting not only that the exclusive nature of Atenism did not filter down to the common people (and that the notion that it was all-encompassing in Akhetaten was part of state propaganda); but also that these were clearly Egyptian (or, at the very least, Egyptianised) occupants of an Egyptian city.[169] There is no room in this picture for 'Hebrews' devoted to worshipping their invisible god.

Of course, Akhetaten was a city built on a virgin site in what might have seemed initially like a 'wilderness'. It was built for the veneration of a god understood as the one and only creator

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[168] Mertz (1999: 279) posits that the longevity of the reputation of Ramses [sic] (and, by extension, his building projects) could account for later references to these "treasure cities". If she is correct, then any call to locate the 'Exodus' in a time contemporary to their construction is misguided (cf. also Greifenhagen, 2002: 54, who sees their presence in Exodus as an inversion of Joseph's control of the granaries). Redford had argued as early as 1963 (pp. 415-416) that the toponyms of Exod. 1:11 were inserted no earlier than the seventh century BCE (cf. also Redford, 1992: 451; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 66) and were likely post-exilic. Hoffmeier (1996: 117-119) disagrees, arguing for a correlation of biblical Ra'amses with Egyptian Pi-Ramesses (Qantir). Even if the Babylonian exile is too late a setting for the initial introduction of either toponym (Davies, Graham, 2004: 28-30), this does not mean that the initial construction of either site (during the reign of Ramesses II) is the only suitable context for their introduction into the tradition. Even the Bible's internal chronology argues against a thirteenth century setting for the 'Exodus' (Miller & Hayes, 2006: 53-54), and there is a rapid royal succession at the beginning of Exodus, with Pharaoh dying with his army at the 'Sea of Reeds'. If Ramesses II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, i) there would be a record of such a horrific event, even if its form was cast in a propagandistic light; and ii) the 'Exodus' would have to coincide with the end of his reign – c. 1237 BCE (see further below on the Merneptah Stele).

[169] Kemp et al., 2013: 75-76

of the world, and an entire population was relocated in order to bring this 'dream' to fruition. Could this movement of a population away from the evils of traditional Egyptian polytheism be echoed in the emigration from Egypt found in Exodus? I think such a conclusion simplifies the biblical text; trivialises serious attempts at correlation; and exaggerates the ramifications of Akhenaten's 'revolution' as they might have later manifested in Israelite religious thought. As Redford cautions: "It is easy to point to activity, universality, divine sonship, justice, and messianism in both Israelite and Amarna belief, but these are so widespread in all ancient religions (including the normative religion of Egypt) that to posit specific contact is quite misleading."[170] David also points to the general religious background from which 'Atenism' emerges, insisting that while Akhenaten indeed created something new insofar as he aligned himself fully with the divine, the foundations upon which his form of Aten worship were built had been laid long before his reign, and not only by way of any influence which might have come from his father, Amenhotep III.[171] To speak of direct correlation because of any one element of Akhenaten's reign would be careless in the extreme, but we can still debate the possibility that certain aspects of Atenism survived long enough to have an effect on Israelite perceptions of their god. This can be done through an analysis of Psalm 104, a perfect example of the phenomenon of cultural borrowing.[172] While little can be said concerning the means of transmission (thus perpetuating the debate concerning the connection between Yahwism and Atenism), it is clear from the extracts compared below that Psalm 104 preserves (in part, at least) the literary expression of the manifestation of the divine which we find in the 'Great Hymn to the Aten' (*ANET* 369-371), a work of praise supposedly penned or dictated by Akhenaten himself.[173]

The Great Hymn to the Aten[174]	**Psalm 104**
When thou settest in the western horizon, The land is in darkness, in the manner of death	[20]You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.

[170] Redford, 1992: 378

[171] David, 2002: 215-218, 232, 244; Singer, 2006: 37; Ray, 1990: 31-32. Significantly, Akhenaten's father bore the sobriquet 'Dazzling Sun Disk' (Redford, 1992: 381); see further, Redford, 2013: 10-11.

[172] Cf. Mertz, 1999: 224, who somewhat dilutes the relationship between the 'Great Hymn' and Ps. 104 when she attributes the similarities to "a literary tradition which flourished throughout the Near East over a vast span of time".

[173] For a summary and analysis of pertinent comparative studies, see Allen, 1983: 29-30.

[174] From Pritchard, 2011: 324-328 (translation by John A. Wilson)

Every lion is come forth from his den; All creeping things, they sting. Darkness is a shroud, and the earth is in stillness, For he who made them rests in his horizon.	[21]The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
At daybreak, when thou arisest on the horizon, When thou shinest as the Aton (*sic!*) by day, Thou drivest away the darkness and givest thy rays.	[22]When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
Their arms are (raised) in praise at thy appearance. All the world, they do their work.	[23]People go out to their work and to their labour until the evening.
All beasts are content with their pasturage; Trees and plants are flourishing. The birds which fly from their nests, Their wings are (stretched out) in praise to thy *ka*. All beasts spring upon (their) feet. Whatever flies and alights, They live when thou hast risen (for) them.	[11][...] giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. [12]By [the streams] the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches [...] [14]You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, And plants for people to use [...]
The ships are sailing north and south as well, For every way is open at thy appearance. The fish in the river dart before thy face; Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.	[25]Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. [26]There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.
How manifold it is, what thou hast made! They are hidden from the face (of man).	[24]O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all [...]
For thou hast set a Nile in heaven, That it may descend for them and make waves upon the mountains.	[6]You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains [...] [8]They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys [...]
The world came into being by thy hand, According as thou hast made them. When thou hast risen they live,	[29]When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die [...]

When thou settest they die.	

It is not difficult to see the points of contact here, but comparisons of Psalm 104 and the 'Great Hymn' regularly ignore aspects of the Psalm which display marked points of contact with expressions of the divine borrowed from cultures right on Israel's doorstep.[175] Making oneself aware of the intrusion into Psalm 104 of decidedly 'Canaanite' and Mesopotamian characteristics of the divine is extremely important for understanding exactly what is going on behind the scenes.[176] For example, the 'storm theophany' in the Psalm, which sees YHWH sending winds and flame, thunder, quakes and smoke is indebted to Canaanite cultic poetry (and may also have inspired the depiction of YHWH in the Sinai pericopes of Exodus).[177] Similarly, the imagery of controlling the water and populating the seas – particularly with the serpent, Leviathan – is characteristic of creation stories from across the Ancient Near East, in which the creator god struggles against and subdues the anthropomorphised sea (or river): Babylonian Marduk fights against Tiamat; Ba'al defeats Yamm.[178] What is important in these examples is the conquest and perpetual subordination of the great powers of nature (a subordination originally associated in ritual with the cycle of the seasons and their personified manifestations), yet if it is understood that all life depends upon light, there is no greater target for subordination than its source. Verse 19 of Psalm 104 connotes an inherent subordination of the celestial bodies: *"You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting."*[179] Clearly, any comprehension of the sun as the supreme being has been usurped here by the concept of YHWH as creator god. Whereas Aten, as the sun, was sole creator of the world, biblical monotheism as expressed in Psalm 104 subordinates the sun as a mere creation of YHWH.[180] Similarly, YHWH is "wrapped in light as with a garment" (v. 2a), controlling sunlight as the Lord of all creation. The complete subordination of natural phenomena is at the heart of

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[175] Dion, 1991: 44, 48

[176] For a theological interpretation of Psalm 104 quite apart from this literary heritage, see Miller, Patrick D., 2004: 178-192.

[177] Cross, 1997: 168-169. In turn, it is possible that the Genesis (first) creation story is dependent upon Psalm 104, with a 'demythologised' account in the former (Day, 2000: 101; 2004: 238-239); although cf. Hoffman, 2002: 43. See also Allen, 1983: 31.

[178] Miller, Patrick D., 1967: 413, n. 9; Cross, 1997: 112-120. Cf. also Ahlström, 1984: 521-522.

[179] While Pritchard (2011: 327) aligns "Thou makest the seasons" in the Aten Hymn to Ps. 104:19, there is obviously no suggestion in the Hymn that the sun or the moon are created by an external force.

[180] Dion, 1991: 58

Psalm 104, incorporating various established tropes from surrounding cultures.[181] What does this tell us, however, about the *sitz im leben* of the Psalm; and, more importantly, what are the implications within a discussion concerning the Amarna period and the 'Exodus'?

As noted above in the subsections on the 'Apiru and the Shasu, there was regular movement in and out of Egypt throughout the period with which we are dealing. These movements were so commonplace that memories of historical events or ideas related to Egypt which came to define the identity of other nations can sometimes be dismissed as analogous to the experiences of countless other groups who may have had similar interactions with Egypt. This approach attacks the 'uniqueness' of such memories, thus challenging the special place in cultural memory of an 'historical' event (be it true or not). This approach (echoing Redford's dismissal of "specific contact" observed above) crosses over into the world of literary-critical readings of ancient texts, so that – as with the case of Psalm 104 and the 'Great Hymn' – the uniqueness of the imagery retained in the former (and relevant to the latter) is weakened by asserting that they are simply "two examples of a literary tradition which flourished throughout the Near East over a vast span of time".[182] Does this mean that the Israelite scribes, in compiling the various literary traditions of the Ancient Near East in their quest to subordinate them all to a presentation of their own god, had not inherited the imagery of Akhenaten's hymn?[183] Can it be confidently claimed that mere convention is behind Psalm 104? I think not, on both counts; and I think some speculation as to the motivations behind the composition of such hymns of praise might point us in the right direction.

With an awareness of at least the geographical origins of the various poetic representations of the divine which surrounded them (above), I think that the scribes may have set out with a conscious effort to embrace them. How else should a universal deity be represented if not through the harmonisation of disparate cultural expressions of his manifestation?[184] In an

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[181] Cf. Ackroyd et al., 1977: 27. For a wider discussion on YHWH's relationship with nature, see, for example, Stadelmann, 1970.

[182] Mertz, 1999: 224

[183] In an interesting analogy, Dion (1991: 62) likens the inheritance of the imagery of the Aten Hymn by the Psalmists to the same phenomenon in Second Isaiah, Job, and other post-exilic works which preserve allusions to Ugaritic poetry. I would add here that the abandonment of a site associated with a particular form of literature does not necessarily mean that this was the last time such literature ever saw the light of day; it certainly does not mean that relative thoughts and concepts were abandoned with it.

[184] Focusing on the 'Storm-god' elements of Psalm 104, Dion (1991: 48ff.) places the depiction of YHWH within the general milieu of Ancient Near Eastern poetic expressions of the divine. Whether or not the various peoples of the region considered that they were "directing their devotion to *a single Lord* of

ingenious adaptation (if not a reversal) of 'intercultural translatability' – the compromise of polytheism, permitting cross-cultural dialogue on a theological level – biblical monotheism gathers under its all-consuming wing the imagery used to speak of many gods, asserting not the supremacy of its god over *others which are recognised*, but with almost missionary zeal the revelation to other nations that they have been worshipping YHWH all along.[185] Of course we cannot be certain of any direct line of transmission between Akhenaten's Hymn and Psalm 104, but I do not think it is too much of a stretch to claim awareness amongst the scribes of the Egyptian origin of the imagery employed when composing the Psalm; indeed, this awareness would lend potency to the literary project (the appropriation of the attributes of major international deities).[186] On a 'temporal map' of the transmission of the imagery, the Amarna experience occupies a conspicuous position along the time-line and could easily have resonated in the words adopted and adapted from the 'Great Hymn'. Whether or not Psalm 104 reminded anyone of any experience in Egypt (it certainly does not allude to the 'Exodus' as, for example, does Psalm 78[187]); or whether the Egyptian imagery of the Psalm brought to mind the beauty of Akhenaten's Hymn like some long forgotten dream, we can never know. As for the use of Egyptian imagery in its expression of the all-encompassing significance of a universal deity, I think Akhenaten would have appreciated the sentiment.

2.2.5 *Merneptah in Palestine – Who are 'Israel'?*

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weather and fertility" (49; italics mine) – a suspiciously monotheistic sentiment – the parallels in representation are clear.

[185] This is the same ideology behind the revelation of YHWH to Moses, whereby the ('Canaanite') 'gods of the fathers' are subsumed.

[186] I am not suggesting here that there was any awareness on the part of the biblical writers that Psalm 104 specifically and intentionally evoked imagery contained in the Hymn to the Aten. In saying that, I believe that the imagery survived in the general cultural milieu of Syria-Palestine, and it was incorporated into this 'song of praise' because the reverence of nature within facilitated a theological appropriation of these phenomena under the auspices of (developing) monotheism. We can only presume that the *damnatio memoriae* suffered by Akhenaten endured – it didn't endure into our time – but there is always the possibility that concepts and imagery promoted by his 'revolution' were preserved intentionally by people who fled Egypt back in the fourteenth century BCE, and their descendants. Perhaps the reinvigoration of the imagery of the 'song' prompted a vague recollection of what had occurred.

[187] See further, Day, 2004: 237-238; also Leonard, 2008 (on the contribution of literary allusion to the content and form of Psalm 78).

Egyptian dominance of Canaan seems to have been triggered by the expulsion of the Hyksos rulers and the pursuit of their forces into Syria-Palestine.[188] Either the early Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty harboured such enmity for the 'Asiatic' regime that they sought to exterminate them 'at source' (the siege of Sharuhen in the mid sixteenth century marked the climax of the campaign to destroy the powerbase of the Hyksos[189]) or they simply grabbed an opportunity for the appropriation of vassals and slaves; and for the strategic annexation of territory which would act as 'buffer' zones against foreseeable enemies.[190] Whatever the reason, the region became a sort of proving ground, providing "parades of strength" for subsequent Egyptian kings, with Canaan coming completely under Egyptian control by the mid-fifteenth century.[191] This final subsection deals with what appears to be the most significant incursion into Palestine (for our purpose, at least) by the Egyptians, reference to which was discovered on the now famous stele of Pharaoh Merneptah, sometimes called the 'Israel Stele' (*ANET* 376, 378). This inscription, set up both in Merneptah's mortuary temple at Thebes and in the Karnak temple (the latter is more fragmentary but preserves depictions of the conquered peoples) to commemorate his Libyan campaign, not only preserves the earliest reference to Israel outside the Bible (Merneptah's exploits in Palestine around 1207 BCE are included at the end), but also the only reference to Israel in ancient Egyptian texts.[192] Not until the ninth century – in the Mesha Stele; the Tel Dan inscription; and the so-called Kurkh Monolith of Shalmeneser III – do we encounter Israel in the extra-biblical record, and so the Merneptah Stele is the single, most important artefact for any appeal to the great antiquity of Israel.[193] Like any other piece of extra-biblical evidence relating to Israel, however, great controversy attaches to it when it comes to a reconstruction of the historical events in question. This

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[188] Markoe, 2000: 14; Grabbe, 2007: 40, 46

[189] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 56. Sharuhen (Tell el-Ajjul) was located just southwest of modern Gaza on the Mediterranean coast (Redford, 1992: 129, n. 13). See also Van Seters, 1966: 19-21, 46-47.

[190] Gottwald, 2008: 13-14; Hendel, 2001: 605. Also noted above (n. 47) was the impetus for 'taking the fight to the enemy' in response to the ethnic 'awakening' of the Hyksos experience and the resulting "core-periphery" perception of the wider world (again, Sparks, 1998: 84-85).

[191] Pritchard, 2011: 228; Na'aman, 2011a: 44

[192] Grabbe, 2007: 77; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 39-42. On the Libyan threat, see Redford, 1992: 247-250.

[193] On the Tel Dan inscription, see Lemaire, 2004: 369; on the Kurkh Monolith (*ANET*, 277-81; Pritchard, 2011: 255-257), see Grabbe, 2007: 131; also Mazar, 2007e: 162; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 178-180 (briefly). By comparison, Hasel (1994: 46) cites the tablets from Ebla (mid-late 3rd millennium) and one from Ugarit as preserving the earliest use of 'Israel' as a *personal name*, with the Merneptah Stele attesting to the earliest (documented) use of the name for a collective. For the Ugaritic text, see Margalith, 1990 (although cf. Sparks, 1998: 95, n. 2).

subsection is concerned, then, with identifying the 'Israel' of the stele and asking whether it (they) correspond(s) to *biblical Israel*; as well as asking if the events alluded to in the Merneptah Stele contributed to the perception of Egypt preserved in the cultural memory of Biblical Israel.

First, then, to those events: what happened in the highlands at the close of the thirteenth century; and what was claimed by Merneptah to have happened? It can be argued that these are two very different events, the former (possibly) surviving in the memory of this 'Israel', and the latter presented to an Egyptian audience. Egyptians would have read in the inscription that Israel's 'seed' was obliterated, which was claiming either that the conquered people would no longer reproduce or that their crops and their ability to harvest the land on which they lived were damaged beyond repair.[194] Now, while the latter seems more likely and sits well in descriptions of ancient warfare, this does not mean that the former was not being claimed.[195] If it was, then we must ask why that would matter to an Egyptian audience. Would they care that this 'Israel' – occupying some distant territory to which the great majority of Egyptians would never travel – was stopped in its tracks; that these people would not grow in numbers to threaten Egyptian interests in the region? While the fears of the nameless Pharaoh in the Exodus story (that the Hebrews would grow so numerous that they might rise up against Egypt) spring to mind, relating them here as an actual Egyptian concern goes too far.[196] The Pharaoh's fears in Exodus are those projected upon him by Israelite storytellers from a position of confidence, of triumph; and so this "conventional boast of power" on the part of Merneptah is akin to the same motif occurring from the Israelite authors in Exodus.[197] They are saying in Exodus 1 that Egyptian fear of the inevitable strength of Israel led Pharaoh to initiate the harsh conditions and the ethnic cleansing of their labour force (regardless of how paradoxical such action would be), and while this demonises Egypt, it also suggests that Israel is a strong nation in a position to be reckoned as equal to the great powers of the world. It is likely, then, that this intrusion into the tradition belongs to a time when Israel actually is in such a position (or certainly perceives itself as such).[198] While this is not the place to elaborate on the context for

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[194] Cf. Hoffmeier, 1996: 42; also the translation of the relevant line in Mercer, 1923: 96, "Israel is laid waste, his *grain* [italics mine] is not." See further, Day, 2004: 53.

[195] For destruction of crops and 'sustenance' as an Egyptian tactic, see Hasel, 1994: 53.

[196] Contra Sarna, 1986: 70-71.

[197] Pritchard, 2011: 329, end of n. 12

[198] Of course, the theological impulse behind this seeming paradox is related to the promise of YHWH to Abraham in Gen. 15; and so Pharaoh's fears of what the audience know has already been promised lead him to act in such a way that facilitates the need for liberation. The opportunity then arises for the world to recognise the power of YHWH; an opportunity created by YHWH himself.

that perception, it certainly cannot be said that 'Israel' at the close of the thirteenth century was a geopolitical power.[199] So if this is not about annihilating a significant enemy, what exactly does it say to an Egyptian audience?

Focusing on the patron-client relationship between Pharaoh and his vassals, Hjelm and Thompson highlight the possibility that the phrase "his seed is no more" might relate to the theological role of Pharaoh with regard to the fertility of vassal nations.[200] Otherwise, they envisage a circumstance with rather less wordplay, wherein Pharaoh is afforded the role as 'guardian' to a foreign land; a land which is, of course, entirely grateful for his assistance! By associating Israel with Hurru (Kharu, Hurra), Hjelm and Thompson reduce the former to an eponym referring to the latter, reading the relevant lines as follows:[201]

> Israel is laid waste, his seed is no more;
> Hurru has become a widow for Egypt.

While there exist in scholarship various translations of the 'Israel' line, there is a general consensus for 'Hurru': it *has become a widow* [*for* Egypt: see alternative translation below]. The situation posed by Hjelm and Thompson is that the ability of 'Israel' (in the role of patriarch) to provide for Hurru has been brought to an end by Merneptah: 'Israel' is rendered metaphorically impotent and Egypt can now assume the role of provider.[202] While this is an interesting approach to the text, the implications that this 'Israel' is synonymous with the Hurrians somewhat complicates the situation with regard not only to the antiquity and continuity of Biblical Israel, but also with the assertions in the Bible of being a people evolving autonomously and distinctly from those around them. The Bible places the Hurrians (biblical 'Horites' – Gen. 14:6; 36:20-21, 30; Deut. 2:12) in Seir or Edom, on the opposite side (southeast) of the Dead Sea and away from any highland settlement associated with early Israel, and these pericopes also associate a later arrival into and appropriation of the territory by Esau, Jacob's (that is, Israel's) brother. Of course, the biblical writers evince no detailed knowledge of this period – and certainly not of any interaction with Egypt – and so we should beware of reading these references to the 'Horites' as geographically and chronologically

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[199] Ironically, it is not until Israel is found again in the archaeological record (9th c. BCE) that it has gained such significance.

[200] Hjelm and Thompson, 2002: 14

[201] Hjelm and Thompson, 2002: 15; although see Grabbe, 2007: 78.

[202] Hjelm and Thompson, 2002: 15; contra Hasel (1994: 51), who sees Canaan and Hurru as "correspond[ing] to each other metaphorically as husband and wife".

analogous to the 'Hurru' of the Merneptah Stele. That said, we have already encountered this same region in relation to the Shasu and the origins of YHWH-worship, and so, if the region is of any significance for the origins of 'Israel', it is only such from the point of view of the ethnic identity of a much later Israel looking back upon the memories of the constituent elements of the collective; that is, any connection to this region is an ideological construction of biblical import, and certainly not something of which a thirteenth century BCE Egyptian scribe would have been aware.

Further, the mythic elements of the 'song' on the stele attest to its literary qualities, within which context we must be wary not only of naïve interpretations of the events, but again of positing analogies with the Hebrew Bible. It is entirely possible that the 'Asiatic' toponyms and eponyms on the Merneptah Stele are nothing more than empty claims of conquest conforming to Egyptian convention.[203] Translations of the text invariably complicate the matter, with the three lines of hieroglyphics expanded upon in an English structure so that conclusions based upon that structure are arguably disassociated from its Egyptian *sitz im leben*:[204]

> The princes are prostrate, saying, "Peace!"
> Not one is raising his head among the Nine Bows.
> Now that Tehenu (Libya) has come to ruin,
> Hatti is pacified;
> The Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe:
> Ashkelon has been overcome;
> Gezer has been captured;
> Yano'am is made non-existent.
> Israel is laid waste and his seed is not;
> Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.[205]

While this structure has been the norm since Spiegelberg's translation in 1896, it can lead us to certain conclusions and maintain certain preconceptions, its structure and particularly its punctuation dictating the pace at which we read and the significance we attach to the various

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[203] Cf. Pritchard, 2011: 328; Grabbe, 2007: 77; and Day, 2004: 51.

[204] Hasel, 1994: 48

[205] The text here is derived from Sparks, 1998: 96, citing Stager, 1985, as his source. The hymn, or song, closes with a conventional declaration of the return to order brought about by Merneptah, echoing mythic representations of creation and thus aligning Pharaoh with the gods.

toponyms.[206] The comma at the end of the third line presents Hatti's pacification as almost incidental following the defeat of the Libyan threat; three cities neatly follow the colon headed by 'The Canaan', telling the modern reader that the Egyptians located these cities in that territory; and, apart from the slight variation in Stager's translation (that is, the use of 'because of' instead of 'for' Egypt) of Hurru's relationship with Egypt, the semicolon asserts a relationship with Israel; one which is by no means certain.[207] Even without English punctuation directing our conclusions, scholars envisage chiastic and 'ring' structures within which the various toponyms might guide us towards a geographical location and geopolitical status for 'Israel' at the time of the campaign; conclusions are thus based upon perceived conceptual relationships between the names of peoples, regions and cities. For example, Hatti and Hurru might be read as parallels, before working our way 'inward' to connect (the) Canaan to Israel, allowing these two entities to embrace the three conquered cities as if sharing some political status?[208] If Hatti and Hurru are Egyptian terms embracing Syria-Palestine in general (even if this rather arrogantly incorporates Asia Minor), then everything in between is parenthetically reduced to add 'colour' to the claims of pacifying the region.[209] The phrase 'Nine Bows' refers to the traditional enemies of Egypt; it is a flexible and all-encompassing term applied to the enemy of the day (note that only eight enemies follow the phrase on the stele). Thus, if the stele cites 'Hurru' and 'Hatti' as generic terms – Hatti following Libya on a stele set up to commemorate the campaign *against Libya* – to refer to a loose Egyptian concept of the peoples of Syria-Palestine (where the Hittites and the Hurrians are understood as the major players), assertions as to the real identity of Egypt's (less significant?) military targets begin to lose credibility.[210] As for the ideological juxtaposition of Canaan and Israel, this seems implausible,

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[206] For a summary and analysis of various translations, see Hasel, 1994.

[207] Cf. Sparks, 1998: 97; Grabbe, 2007: 78. Ahlström and Edelman, 1985, also render 'because of'. Note that Ahlström and Edelman are following E. F. Wente (they cite personal communication), while Sparks (1998: 96) observes that Stager (1985) has also followed Wente.

[208] Hjelm and Thompson (2002: 10) read 'Gaza' for the Egyptian word *Pekana'an*, generally translated as (The) Canaan; cf. Grabbe, 2007: 78. See also Ahlström and Edelman, 1985: 60, for their oft-cited 'ring' structure perpetuating the perception of internal relationships between the toponyms (cf. Hasel, 1994: 47). Their article, however – lacking any convincing conclusions as it does – is but an introduction to the matter. I have yet to find anyone advocating for such a structure citing contemporary Egyptian texts in its defence.

[209] Cf. Ahlström and Edelman, 1985: 60.

[210] Lest we forget that a Hurrian (Abdi-Heba) ruled in Jerusalem little more than a century earlier, it is entirely possible that their culture permeated the region to such an extent that it was considered

considering that this is the first appearance in the record of 'Israel' and thus it is unlikely that there is a direct association with the long established 'Canaanites'.[211] This is not to say, of course, that this is the first Egyptian encounter with the entity 'Israel' – would the audience have known who they were? – but its absence in the record prior to this suggests a lack of significance; and while it might be said that, by 1207 BCE, they 'drew the attention' of Merneptah, they could just as equally have been 'pencilled in' by court scribes in recognition of their occupying the region so that authenticity is afforded the conventional claims to a campaign which may never have occurred.[212] To further complicate the matter, it has been suggested that "Hurru is a synonym of Canaan", with both together – as the perceived structure might suggest – forming an Egyptian reference to the "northern and southern Egyptian provinces of Syria-Palestine".[213]

Further implications arise from the pairing of Canaan and Israel, especially once we turn to the much discussed determinative accompanying the word 'Israel'. The so-called 'throwing stick' indicates an unsettled (nomadic?) people, as opposed to the determinative of a 'hilly country', indicating at the very least a sedentary, agriculturalist society. This is often used to refute claims to (homogeneous) Israelite settlements at this time, the implications being that the biblical picture we get from the book of Judges contradicts the Egyptian understanding of what was happening in a region they clearly dominated.[214] Some argue that the determinative is a scribal error and that the scribe 'forgot' to add the 'hilly country' determinative, but, despite relating to this matter a reading of the Egyptian word for 'seed' as literal (that is, referring to the ability to produce crops) and not metaphorical (progeny), it is difficult to

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sufficiently characteristic from the point of view of external reference. Cf. Grabbe, 2007: 61; and Van De Mieroop, 2007: 123-124.

[211] See further, Sparks, 1998: 97ff.

[212] Cf. Day, 2004: 55. Day also notes (*idem*: 51) not only that Egypt certainly did not conquer Hatti, but that Ashkelon and Gezer were of such importance for the Egyptians that "they could not have been conquered by [them]." Although cf. Ahlström and Edelman, 1985: 59 (and n. 2), citing the epithet 'Reducer of Gezer' (on the Amada Stele) to affirm the "genuineness of the campaign" (also Hasel, 1994: 47).

[213] Hasel, 1994: 51

[214] Cf., for example, Coote, 2005: 35: "The Merneptah Stele suggests that Israel was the main, if not sole, rural power in this region." His conclusions – despite recognising the social heterogeneity of the highland settlements – that they were predominantly Israelite at this time (36) cannot but be indebted to a literal reading of the book of Judges.

maintain the argument for scribal error amidst a context of the consistent use of determinatives with regard to everyone and everywhere else mentioned.[215]

It appears unlikely that a geographical location for this 'Israel' will ever be pinpointed to the satisfaction of all; and while it may not conform to the accuracy of a modern global positioning system, wherever Merneptah's 'Israel' was located in the thirteenth century BCE, it was certainly close enough to the later kingdom of Israel so that attempts to argue against ethnic continuity begin to smack of desperation.[216] It also appears entirely possible that no such incursion into Palestine actually occurred, and whether the eponym 'Israel' relates to Hurru or any other group one might posit in an attempt to break chronological links with Biblical Israel, the fact remains that the name 'Israel' was used: it existed at this time and must have meant something to someone.[217] Hasel's conclusion that 'Israel' was "a socioethnic entity *powerful enough* [italics mine] to be mentioned along with major city-states" may have some merit, but it could equally have been the case that 'Israel' was applied wholesale to refer to the inhabitants of a region within which the Egyptians knew of the name of only one specific people (why should we not envisage an entity 'Israel' occupying territory amidst others who were not 'Israel'; is this not the norm now amongst biblical scholars?).[218]

In saying that, I do not think that 'Israel' here was an *etic term* employed by the Egyptians (for one, the theophoric suffix 'El' locates it within a generally 'Canaanite' cultural context); rather, that it is one which the people in question employed for themselves; and if the 'Israel' of the Merneptah Stele is analogous with the "eponymic traditions" of Genesis, then surely this implies that said traditions mark a continuity with the use of the eponym at the close of the thirteenth century.[219] Whichever group bore this name – dismissing, of course, a futile search for a real historical figure named 'Israel' – maintained it throughout its evolution into a nation state, and I can find no convincing reason to disassociate this 'Israel' from the ancestors of the northern kingdom of the same name, even if the reality of this foundational period is not

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[215] Hasel, 1994: 51-52. See further, Day, 2004: 52-53.

[216] Redford (1992: 295) locates this 'Israel' around Shechem and suggests that they were the 'house of Joseph'; cf. Davies, Graham, 2004: 26-27. Of course, correlation with traditional (folk) epithets should always be met with caution. For a strong argument in favour of continuity, see Dever, 2003: 201-208.

[217] If the Egyptians employed their etic terms for foreign peoples based, for example, on language, they could not have failed to notice that Hurrian, an Indo-European language, was unlikely to have been used by 'Israel', derived as they most certainly were, from a 'Canaanite' (West Semitic) background. Cf. Van De Mieroop, 2007: 34-35.

[218] Hasel, 1994: 51; cf. Bloch-Smith, 2003: 401-402: "[N]ot a single feature of [the] settlements [of the central highlands] may be conclusively identified as exclusively 'Israelite'."

[219] Cf. the conclusions of Hjelm and Thompson, 2002.

recalled in the Bible (see conclusion). Of course, there is no reason even for 'minimalists' to fear this assertion of continuity; all it means is that a group of people (sufficiently significant to warrant mention in an Egyptian hymn of triumph) bearing the name 'Israel' can be seen as the ancestors of people who set down roots in the vicinity and built a kingdom. It certainly does not, by any stretch of the imagination, conform to a reading of any part of the Bible as factual. On the contrary, if anything survives in the collective memory of Israel from this encounter with Egypt, it is simply that they survived it. They were not, despite the boasts of an overzealous Pharaoh (or an appointed scribe), "laid waste". Their land or their 'seed' – whatever one's preferred interpretation of the latter – may have been decimated, but they most definitely did not cease to exist.

2.3 Summary

Two accounts of the origins of Israel pertaining to interaction with Egypt (one derived from the Hebrew Bible, the other from archaeological and artefactual evidence) could be laid side by side in an attempt to either harmonise both or dismiss at least one. I say 'at least' because i) the biblical account of the origins of Israel stems from such a late period that contemporary concerns obscure whatever 'truth' might lie beneath the 'layers' comprising the received text; and ii) it is entirely possible that, despite the foregoing attempt to posit memory contexts for the earliest murmurings of the people who became *Biblical Israel*, the literary conventions to which the Jerusalemite scribes were beholden could be seen as foundational for an ideological palimpsest, whereby a flood washed away the old and replaced it with the new.[220] It should be borne in mind, of course, that literary conventions bear the accretions of collective memory, and the longer they are established, the further back in time they may reach. Even the subordination of historiography to literary convention retains memories of what has gone before by recalling traditions previously presented in similar form – allusion is not only found in words.

So let us remind ourselves of what has gone before: we have seen how a population of 'Asiatics' gradually 'infiltrated' Egypt to the point of establishing a ruling dynasty which was subsequently expelled to the blasting horn of military activity leading eventually to Egyptian dominance of Syria-Palestine; we have seen how groups of *'Apiru* bandits troubled the settlements and towns of Palestine for centuries, concluding that the term was a social appellative used by external observers and those on the receiving end of *'Apiru* lawlessness; we have seen how Shasu nomads from the region of Edom moved up into the highlands and

[220] It is tantalising to read the Noah story as an analogy of cultural 'forgetting'.

settled in territory which would later become the northern kingdom Israel, bringing their god *Yhw* with them; and we have seen how a vague and 'dislocated' memory of Akhenaten's religious program not only survived in the literary heritage of the Ancient Near East to be appropriated by the biblical writers in characterising their own god, but also resurfaced a thousand years later in a distorted retrospective on the long forgotten truth of the Hyksos experience. All of the above occurred without any reference to a collective entity 'Israel', and all of the above is (at least explicitly) completely absent from the Hebrew Bible. So why not just dismiss it all as irrelevant? Why not leave the search for earliest Israel in the hands of archaeologists and simply wait for them to find something historians can use with greater confidence?

This is certainly tempting, but the air of concession would be foul and it would not be long before biblical scholars took up the baton and resumed their race towards that ever-elusive certainty that is both the bane of and the motivation for doing what we do. Of course, no matter how much ground is still waiting to be excavated and how many artefacts will undoubtedly come to light as the years and indeed the centuries go on, it is entirely possible that nothing will ever be found to shine a brighter light on the shadowy realm of pre-monarchic Israel. With that in mind, the quest resumes with the tools in hand; and lest we forget, the most important tool is the Hebrew Bible itself. Those advocating for the rejection of its relevance for a reconstruction of the history of Israel are, in my opinion, mistaken, for who in the ancient world was better equipped to speak of their own history than the people who wrote it? Distorted it may be; ideological it most certainly is; only alluding to the great antiquity of 'Israel' it absolutely is; yet the Bible is a repository of the collective memory of the people of Israel, and it is to that fact that we must afford considerable weight.

From our exploration above, it is clear that the term 'Israel' was not associated with any of the 'usual suspects' encountered before the time of Pharaoh Merneptah, and so the concession we are obligated to make is that direct continuity cannot with any certainty be drawn between those 'suspects' *as collective entities* and Merneptah's 'Israel'. Coincidence alone, however, is too convenient a reason for dismissing the association of these 'suspects' with the origins and evolution of the tradition of coming out of Egypt which enters the collective memory of the later entity 'Israel'. While it appears methodologically sound for minimalist or 'revisionist' scholars to deny the uniqueness of 'Israelite' literature or theological expression amidst the cultural milieu of Syria-Palestine – a sentiment I fully endorse – that same methodology is abandoned when it is reversed so as to argue for the incorporation of ideas, traditions and 'histories' into the collective memory and cultural trajectory of formative 'Israel' *which become defining for their ethnic identity*. In other words, 'Israel' appears perfectly capable of embracing the cultural expressions of those around it when the argument seeks to

reduce it to a generic cultural entity, but it is somehow incapable of expanding upon the incorporation of those expressions within the context of its own (later) unique conceptualisation of its place in the world.[221] That is what the Hebrew Bible seeks to articulate, and the writers appear perfectly content to preserve memories of ancient historical contexts prior to the inception of 'Israel' as a collective; it is these memories which lend credence to their claims of antiquity and continuity, as well as 'colouring' their fully elaborated traditions.

While the 'suspects' preceding Merneptah cannot be confidently connected with 'Israel', they still have the potential to provide us with memory contexts for i) inhabiting Egypt *en masse* and being expelled (chased) from it; ii) roaming the land as bandits and contributing to the rise and fall of petty Egyptian vassals (from whom a context of interaction with 'Egypt' might arise);[222] iii) making the journey to a territory not their own and bringing one's god to this new land (a pilgrimage across the wilderness?); and iv) suffering for one's faith and 'revealing' to the people a new understanding of the world and its creator. All of these memories are analogous in one form or another to the biblical account of the origins and experiences of formative Israel, and they all predate the 'Israel' of the Merneptah Stele. What is so important about the stele is that it demands at the very least a consideration of early traditions behind Exodus forming (and, for some, the 'Exodus' itself must have occurred) prior to the arrival of this 'Israel' in the highlands in 1207 BCE. For a long time, scholars have sought to align this *terminus ante quem* with the biblical chronology and, most especially, the toponyms in the story which they claim point to the time of Ramesses II; with some aligning the transition in rule between Ramesses II and his aged son, Merneptah, with the quick succession of Pharaohs which opens Exodus. Of course, the period of only five years between the death of Ramesses II and the Libyan campaign of Merneptah would completely contradict the biblical account of the wandering in the wilderness, which took forty years, and so I leave advocates of this position to their ingenious solutions.[223] It is much more likely, as will become clear across the next two

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[221] Cf. Mullen, 1993: 55ff. on how Deuteronomic thought formulated a sense of 'uniqueness' in the evolution of the group identity 'Israel'.

[222] This is an important point to make, and will make greater sense as we proceed through the next chapter: interaction with 'Egypt' does not need to mean Egypt (or Egyptians) proper. An awareness of Egypt or people *perceived as emulating Egyptian culture* as integral to the unfolding history of Israel is all it takes to evoke memories of earlier contexts of interaction.

[223] Cf. Mercer, 1923: 96, 102 (although he puts Merneptah's campaign in his third year). Mercer also posits more than one migration of Hebrews (or Israelites) from Egypt, speaking of a "final exodus [...] after the exodus under Merneptah", amidst his wonderfully creative reconstruction of events (102-103). The ideology of Exodus does not allow us to posit numerous groups leaving Egypt, and certainly not over so much time that extra-biblical events and individuals are accommodated across centuries. Similarly –

chapters, that *the crystallisation of the motif of transition* contributing to the change in monarchs in Exodus is indebted not only to literary convention stemming from such Egyptian stories as *The Tale of Sinuhe* (whose influence appears to have endured for centuries), but also to the transitions in power between i) Solomon and his son, Rehoboam (although we should allow for the possibility that this is a literary construct; see 3.2, below); ii) Shalmeneser V and Sargon II; iii) the Assyrians and the Egyptians (Necho II) during the time of Josiah; and iv) Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon to Cyrus II of Persia (with kings in between the two practically 'forgotten').[224]

It was noted above that the geographical location of Merneptah's 'Israel' is decidedly elusive, but if it was not located in precisely the same area as the Shasu settlement(s) dated to roughly the same period, then there is more reason to speak of YHWH worship (brought into the area by the Shasu) as having been attached to a collective entity known as 'Israel' at a later stage in their development than the close of the thirteenth century BCE.[225] This would correspond not only with the worship of 'Canaanite' deities implied by the theophoric name 'Israel', but also the biblical polemic concerned with disassociating said worship from Israel's past by way of the appropriation of the attributes of these 'Canaanite' deities by YHWH. If this is the case, then memories of the 'Shasu' elements of 'Israel' may indeed be evoked by the biblical writers.

In contrast, while some scholars might see the 'Israel' of the Merneptah Stele as corresponding to the tribal 'confederation' occupying the book of Judges, such a conclusion requires a convenient dismissal of the fact that the Bible betrays no knowledge not only of any attack by an Egyptian force against any people collectively known as 'Israel' *in their own territory*, but also of the dominance of the region by Egypt in general.[226] Similarly, the biblical writers also had no real knowledge of the Hittite empire dominating the territory north of Israel and undoubtedly impressing itself upon the region at precisely the time 'Israel' is supposed to have been emerging; not only according to biblical chronology, but also to scholars advocating continuity between Merneptah's 'Israel' and that of the Bible.[227] Still, I would not advocate for

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although for him there is only one 'Exodus' – Sarna (1986: 70) disassociates the Hyksos expulsion from the memory of coming out of Egypt to speak of the "Semitic population" who remained in Egypt as foundational for the Hebrews who experienced the oppression. In this sense, the presence of 'Asiatics' in Egypt simply facilitates Sarna's argument as he 'waits' for a suitable historical context to arise.

[224] Although see 2 Kings 25:27, and further below, 4.2.

[225] Remember that Redford spoke of the Shasu as 'latent Israel', while locating Merneptah's 'Israel' around Shechem.

[226] Cf. Redford, 1992: 257-258.

[227] On the anachronistic and ideological applications of 'Hittite' in the Bible, see Collins, 2007.

the complete disassociation of these 'Israels', and the retention of the concept of latent memory and its contribution to identity-driven historiography (is there another kind?) permits us this luxury. Certainly, there are echoes of older civilisations in the Bible – not only in the narrative texts but also in the cultic ones – but histories do not call for fully comprehensive accounts including every little detail. From an ideological point of view, the Hittite empire is irrelevant to the retrospective on Israel's past precisely because it no longer exists when the history is being written and does not have an effect on the identity of Israel. Egypt, on the other hand, is an entirely different matter. Its great antiquity was long recognised and admired while empires rose and fell around the Mediterranean and the Near East, and Israel identified itself in two very different ways through the 'spectre' of Egypt: i) through opposition – Egypt, with its strange customs and bizarre anthropomorphised gods, represented everything Israel 'was not', or – more accurately – intended not to be; and ii) through historical alignment – the very antiquity of Egypt was appropriated by Israel, locating the origins of fully-fledged Yahwism in that land as a righteous 'counter-attack' (counter-religion) reaching back into the timeless depths wherein its historical accuracy could not – and was not supposed to be – questioned. This is why modern attempts to identify the accuracy of Exodus are interminably doomed to failure – they completely miss the point. As we move on through our mnemohistory of the tradition of a migration from Egypt, it will become clear that the biblical scribes would be quite bemused by our obsession with proving their account historically accurate!

CHAPTER 3

Egypt in the Bible: The Evolving Narrativisation of an Ancient Tradition

> The development of states involves not only administrative and political arrangements, but also ideological justifications, legitimations and expressions. It is ideologies that give cohesive identity to the group organized through its administrative and political arrangements. Such ideologies are implicit in material culture, and explicit in stories and beliefs articulated by the group. In relation to the northern kingdom of Israel the story of the exodus from Egypt is one such ideology.[1]

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter dealt with the potential for memory contexts preserving the great antiquity of the migration tradition, this chapter considers the appeal to continuity over the centuries in which that tradition evolved to become Exodus. The significance of retrospective and the dynamics of collective memory in composing history were dealt with in Chapter 1, and the likelihood was observed that the crystallisation of Genesis-2 Kings as a cohesive history occurred in Persian period Judah.[2] Certain aspects of this history may have begun earlier, but the narratives were brought together and shaped in accordance with the concerns of Judean writers and a Judean audience (and, as I will show below, we may envisage in this project the incorporation of late redactions and contextualisations of prophetic oracles).[3] In this picture, then, the matter of why people in Judah would call themselves 'Israel' is certainly an important one; but perhaps it might serve us better to approach the question from a slightly different angle, especially from an historiographical point of view: if we are reading a history composed by Judean scribes and under the auspices of Judean elites, why should the defunct kingdom of Israel feature in that history at all? The authors or 'compilers' of the Genesis-2 Kings history are clearly concerned with glorifying Jerusalem, but considering what has been discussed in Chapter 1 regarding the 'limited temporal horizon' permitting the reshaping of collective memory, why not move towards the total erasure of 'Israel' in all its manifestations?

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[1] Mayes, 2010: 136

[2] See especially Wesselius, 2000 and 2002.

[3] Cf. Laughlin, 2009: 350-351; Ben Zvi, 2009a: 16-17. Mullen, 1993: 38, quite rightly points out that the *terminus post quem* for "the present books of Kings" must be the year of the release of the Judean King Jehoiachin from his internment in Babylon. The year reckoned for this event is 561 BCE, thirty-seven years after his capture (2 Kgs. 25:27); and the capture of Jehoiachin following the siege of Jerusalem in 598 is confirmed by administrative documents from Babylon (ANET 308; Pritchard, 2011: 274-275).

The answer can only be that elements of the ethnos 'Israel' were still a sufficiently significant component of exilic and post-exilic Judean society so that the kingdom from which they came and through which they identified themselves is afforded a symbiotic role in the history of the people of post-exilic Judah. Indeed, it is this conclusion which has lead scholars to speak of 'refugees' from the Assyrian annexation of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE descending into Judah and settling there.[4] This must be the reason why, in a history intended to assert the antiquity and thus the authority of the political and religious centralisation of Jerusalem, the authors could not simply claim that i) the entire territory ruled from Jerusalem was called Judah; or ii) the people of YHWH were known exclusively as 'Judeans' (despite the later endonym 'Judaism', derived from the Greek *Ioudaios*). Most significantly (and on this, I have yet to find a biblical scholar who disagrees), the patriarchal narratives are northern (read 'Israelite') ancestor tales, with Abraham – through his interaction with the ancient rulers of (*Jeru-*) Salem (Gen. 14) – positioned by Jerusalemite historiographers as head of this northern family so that he predates 'Israel' (his grandson)![5] It was suggested in Chapter 1 that historiography which succeeds in binding people together must negotiate their collective identity through compromising on their presentation of a shared antiquity. In the history of 'Biblical Israel', the descendants of the kingdom of Israel have conceded some authority through the historiographical focal point of Jerusalem; while the people of Judah have conceded their ethnic autonomy through the adoption of the name 'Israel'.[6] This is not to say that either concession only occurred during the later stages of composition, or even only in that context; rather, that in the biblical history we are seeing the literary manifestation of the

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[4] Finkelstein, 2007e: 148; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 390. See further, Grabbe, 2005b: 81-89; also Sweeney, 2001: 12-13, in relation to Deuteronomy being "brought south". Cf., however, Edelman, 1996: 33-35 (and see further below on Bethel as a 'repository' for 'Israelite' traditions).

[5] Overlooking this understanding of Abraham as a literary device, Fleming, 2004, revives the mostly debunked hypothesis that the Mari texts can reveal a Syrian heritage for the patriarchal narratives. Indeed, for him, Israel has Syrian ancestry. For Schniedewind (2004: 81ff.), the "prominent role given in [the Pentateuch] to the northern tribes" (82) pushes composition of the Pentateuchal narratives back as far as the reign of Hezekiah, in whose time "the northern tribes were still on the minds of the people in Judah" (83). As I will argue further below, I see the reign of Josiah as the earliest time any 'dreams' of creating a 'twelve-tribe Israel' might have come to fruition.

[6] Towards the end of Nehemiah, it is clear that a primary concern is the lack of knowledge (amongst the children of mixed marriages) of the 'Judean' language (Neh. 13:24). This highly significant cultural marker is significantly not called 'Israelite', and it is clear that the people can be both 'Judahites' (the MT in 13:16 reads 'sons of Judah') and 'Judeans' (13:23). On how Neh. 13:24 might elucidate the 'shaping' of "language identity" in Judah at this time, see Berquist, 2006: 64.

compromise.[7] What is clearly of great significance for the parties involved is continuity with the (shared) past, for it is within this context that the right to be distinguished as an autonomous people is articulated.

We have in the biblical history the accretion of narratives preserving memory contexts for earlier stages of this articulation. What is important to remember, however, is that despite a desire on the part of the writers at each stage of revising these stories to ensure a sense of continuity with the past, they must at each stage trust that those who have gone before preserved what was necessary to do the same. A writer in fifth century BCE Judah was unlikely to have undertaken analytical, critical research into the events of tenth century BCE Israel (or Judah, for that matter) as we might hope today; instead he would have gathered whatever stories and traditions came before him, with each of them bearing the contents of a similar process reaching back through time to the inception of the tradition (and arguably into the impenetrable depths of oral storytelling). For example, the great joint narratives of the Israelite and Judahite monarchy we find in 1 and 2 Kings is certainly founded upon some factual basis, considering the correlations we can make with extra-biblical evidence, but to accept without scrutiny that they were based solely on 'the annals of the kings' of Israel and Judah – as the Bible would have us believe – overlooks both the lack of evidence for such documents as well as the likelihood that any such annals may very well have been destroyed with the respective destructions of Samaria and Jerusalem.[8] The frequent references to these documents as their 'backup', however, tell us that the writers deemed them less interesting than their history (not to mention less capable of answering the theological questions of their time). In saying that, recognition of some sort of source documents upon which the biblical writers elaborated allows scholars such as J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes to offer an explanation as to how two kings with the same name occupied the thrones of both Judah and Israel at the same time:

> At one point we are presented with contemporary Israelite and Judean kings, both named Jehoram, both descended from Omri, both reigning approximately the same number of years, and both meeting their death about the same time. Israel and Judah were very closely aligned at the time politically, which raises the possibility that Jehoram

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[7] In this regard, Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 44) describe the literary figure of Abraham as "the unifier of northern and southern traditions, bridging north and south". In his interactions with ancient Bronze Age (pre-Israelite) cultic sites, Abraham also serves to legitimise their use by later Israelites (Miller & Hayes, 2006: 102).

[8] Strange (1975: 191) accepts the existence of such annals: "They should [...] be taken as official annals, inasmuch as the governments of Israel and Judah wanted them to be regarded as the History of the monarchies".

> of Judah and Jehoram of Israel were in fact the same person – a single ruler over both kingdoms. Assuming that the official records of the Israelite and Judean kings were kept separately, one can see how later editors might have inferred that the Jehoram who appeared in the Judean records was distinct from the Jehoram who appeared in the Israelite records and treated them as separate kings.[9]

If, as per Miller and Hayes, we are reading a late literary fracturing of the reign of a single king over both Israel and Judah, then it is possible that the writers did so deliberately so that the historical fact of a unified territory overseen by the Omride dynasty in Samaria was obscured amidst the retention of a Jerusalem-centred history.[10] This is a perfect example of the difficulties faced not only by the biblical writers but also modern historians for reconstructing the histories of these two kingdoms. There may have been a responsibility laid upon the composers or 'editors' of these narratives at each subsequent stage of revision to ensure continuity with the product of their predecessors, with the understanding that what has gone before preserved enough of the truth about the past to afford authority to subsequent narratives; but we must also allow for discontinuities – amounting to cultural forgetting – which ensure that the continuity projected creates ideological or theological coherence in accordance with the concerns of the respective writers. In this chapter, beginning with what Albertz called the 'first narrativisation' of the tradition which became Exodus, I will trace the development of that tradition in concert with the historical contexts within which revisions appear to have taken place, speculating at each stage upon the ideological and theological motivations behind each respective retelling.[11] It should always be borne in mind that each

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[9] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 243; also 320-323. While in the NRSV, faithfulness to the distinction in the Hebrew text between Joram (of Israel) and Jehoram (of Judah) is maintained – probably to avoid confusion – the JPS renders both names (יוֹרָם and יְהוֹרָם) Joram, noting that "the name Joram is sometimes written Jehoram", without explaining their decision.

[10] Admittedly, a major problem with this view centres on whether Joram ruled from Jerusalem or Samaria. Strange (1975: 200) suggests that he was a southern usurper to the northern throne prior to ruling both kingdoms; and the Deuteronomistic disassociation of a Judahite Joram from the northern throne keeps Davidic kings separate from the machinations of the apostate Israel (201). On the archaeological evidence for the Omride Dynasty and its demonisation in the Bible, see, for example, Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 169-195.

[11] It is by no means conclusive whether the earliest 'narrativisation' of the tradition amounts to a literary articulation of same. With this thesis concerned with the Biblical mnemohistory of the tradition, the matter is somewhat irrelevant. On literacy in ancient Israel and Judah, see, for example, Grabbe, 2007: 115-118.

respective biblical account dealt with below amounts to the *final stages of articulation* (and reimagining) of the memory contexts to be reconstructed.

3.2 Jeroboam and the Foundation of Israel

Chapter 1 offered an introduction to the story of Jeroboam's rebellion against the Judean monarch, Rehoboam, but there we were concerned with only briefly highlighting some of the literary motifs connecting that tale to Exodus. Although this section and this chapter as a whole is very much concerned with *how* the story is told, my initial point of departure will be to consider the potential historicity of the story of the foundation of the northern kingdom. A brief overview will suffice:

Jeroboam was assigned by Solomon the position of taskmaster over the corvée labour force of the 'house of Joseph' (1 Kings 11:28), but when a prophet (Ahijah of Shiloh) predicted that he would become king of Israel following the division of Solomon's territory, Solomon feared a coup and wanted Jeroboam killed (1 Kings 11:40; Solomon somehow heard of the prophecy, which had been delivered privately to Jeroboam).[12] Jeroboam fled to Egypt, was granted asylum there by a king named Shishak, and he returned to Israel only when he heard that Solomon had died. Approaching Solomon's son and heir, Rehoboam, Jeroboam requested that the heavy labour forced upon the northern tribes be reduced. Rehoboam refused, instead decreeing that the work should be even more demanding (1 Kings 12:14), a fateful judgement resulting in Jeroboam leading the secession of the northern tribes and the establishment of an autonomous state (administered from Shechem; 12:25) on Rehoboam's doorstep.

The kingdom of Israel was thus founded as the result of an uprising against tyranny and oppression; so far, a positive account. Yet it does not end there, for despite the prophet Ahijah promising (conditionally) that Jeroboam would be like a David in the north (1 Kings 11:38), the new king of Israel proceeded to make a considerable mess of things by not only seeking to decentralise the cult of YHWH – which the biblical account tells us was focused on Jerusalem at the time – but also by erecting idols of golden calves at two separate sanctuaries, Dan and Bethel, and by appointing priests "from among all the people, who were not Levites" (1 Kings

[12] On the prophecy of Ahijah, see, for example, Leuchter, 2006: 53-59; Galvin, 2011: 97-100. See also Linville, 1998: 158-165 on the 'torn robe' and whether it constitutes the 'tearing' apart of the Davidic kingdom or just the 'tearing' of the kingdom from David's heir. Leuchter (*idem*: 53) argues that the tearing of the cloak into twelve pieces "is more likely [to] correspond to Solomon's twelve administrative districts", (cf. 1 Kgs. 4:7) a conclusion which appears to contradict his immediately preceding recognition of the "Josianic-era" ideology behind the metaphor of the twelve tribes. In other words, the latter is likely the 'reality' behind the former.

12:31).[13] Most significantly for this thesis (and also because the verse presupposes the 'Exodus'), the ideological connection between these events and the Exodus narrative is articulated through Jeroboam's words when he calls the people to worship (1 Kings 12:28):

> "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

There is a clear connection here to the 'Golden Calf' pericope of Exodus 32 (I hesitate to use the word 'allusion' at this point as it implies a specific direction of dependence), and needless to say, it was not long before another prophecy was brought before the hapless king, this one foretelling the destruction of the altar at Bethel (1 Kings 13:2-3).[14] Another one followed in the wake of Jeroboam's continued 'heresy'. This final prophecy, delivered by the same prophet who had foretold Jeroboam's rise to power, warns of the impending destruction of Jeroboam's 'house' as well as the entire kingdom of Israel and the dispersal of its people.[15]

The rapid rise and fall of Jeroboam constitutes something of a portentous microcosm of the rise and fall of Israel, whereby the prophecy of the Assyrian destruction sets the mood for the entire history of the kingdom to follow. Although two centuries have yet to pass, destruction is

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[13] Leuchter (2006: 52) observes the connection between this promise to Jeroboam and that of Nathan to David in 2 Sam. 7 (cf. also Linville, 1998: 158), remarking also that the traits of Jeroboam – rising to prominence under the king – are "clearly reminiscent of the early depiction of David as he distinguished himself under Saul's regime". See also Galvin, 2011: 94-95. As with the matter of the golden calves and Exodus 32 (below), we cannot be certain of the direction of dependence of these literary and ideological connections (see Chapter Summary). On the comparisons with David which determine the character of Israelite and Judean kings – especially 'inverted' comparisons in the case of Jeroboam – see Frisch, 2011.

[14] Leuchter (2006: 68) sees the 'Golden Calf' pericope of Exod. 32 as "a Shilonite composition that was conceived to polemicize against Jeroboam's cult as a perversion of Mosaic tradition". If this is correct, then the result of this polemic is to project a presupposition into the 'time of Jeroboam' of such thing as a 'Mosaic tradition'. For Cross (1997: 73), it is the Shilonite inheritance which informs the Deuteronomistic polemic against Jeroboam. On the "military overtones" of the calf idol, insofar as it recalled the ark as a 'war standard', see Russell, 2009: 50-54.

[15] Jeroboam's spectacular fall from grace is the primary focus of Robert L. Cohn's 1985 article "Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative", in which he assesses the composite nature of the work in the context of the author's (or redactor's) theological apologetic. The narrative, then, is considerably multi-layered, as it deals not only with the retrospective assessment of the Assyrian annexation of the northern kingdom, but also how YHWH could make a 'covenant' with Jeroboam which appeared so doomed from the outset. For a recent treatment of the literary aspects of the story (focusing on issues of characterisation and political power-play), see, for example, Bodner, 2012.

inevitable and Jeroboam is to blame.[16] This tells us, of course, that the received Jeroboam story post-dates the events of 722 BCE, but the reference to Josiah in the Bethel prophecy tells us further that the story cannot be earlier than Josiah's late seventh century reign.[17] Certainly, the specific reference to a much later king in Judah moves the date of composition forward in time and disconnects it from its alluded context, but every retrospective account of prophecy does that. In order to explore the potential historicity of the Jeroboam story, then, we need to deconstruct the details within it which will either anchor or disassociate it from the tenth century BCE. Those which will be evaluated are: i) the reference to Shishak, the Egyptian king with whom Jeroboam sought refuge; ii) the possible establishment of a royal residence at Shechem; iii) the cult status at this time of Dan and Bethel; and iv) the building projects of Solomon (and Rehoboam), upon which the whole account rests.

3.2.1 *Shishak and Jeroboam – Finding Favour with Pharaoh?*

Shishak has long been recognised as Pharaoh Shoshenq, founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty.[18] This passing reference alone would be insufficient to help us date the story with great confidence, considering that it might constitute nothing more than a vague memory of a Pharaoh whose name in Hebrew sounds similar to the Egyptian. It is not long, however, before Shishak appears again, this time attacking Jerusalem in "the fifth year of King Rehoboam" (1 Kgs. 14:25). It is upon this event that historians mainly focus, dating the foundation of Israel by working backwards from Shishak's (Shoshenq's) campaign into Palestine, evidence of which comes from i) the inscription on the 'Bubastite Portal' at the Amun temple at Karnak; and ii) a fragment of a 'victory' stele erected at Megiddo.[19] As with the majority of proposed

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[16] Cf. Leuchter, 2006: 51: "The northern realm [Jeroboam] created is irreparably corrupted by his religious policies, and every subsequent northern king is judged [...] to be wholly illegitimate regardless of individual virtues or accomplishments explicitly because of Jeroboam's example. See also Mullen, 1993: 266-268.

[17] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 166-167. Wilson (1984: 187-188) suggests that the Deuteronomist has edited and updated an earlier tradition regarding a prophetic confrontation at Bethel.

[18] Kitchen, 1966: 29; Mayes, 2010; Levin, 2012 (esp. p. 45); Grabbe, 2007: 81-83; Assmann, 2003: 299; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 199; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 18; Dever, 2004: 74

[19] For full colour images of the Bubastite Portal and the Megiddo fragment, see especially Levin, 2012. Mayes, 2010: 130, and Finkelstein, 2007e: 148 both suggest that the attachment of the Egyptian invasion to the time of Rehoboam – as opposed to Solomon – amounts to a theological shifting of culpability to the former: he is the 'foolish' and 'sinful' king punished by external forces. Finkelstein, however, emphasises the likelihood that northern traditions preserving memories of the Egyptian invasion were

correlations between biblical accounts and extra-biblical evidence, however, debate abounds. It can be asked whether Shishak would have been in the least concerned to attack the relatively insignificant Jerusalem of the time, but both the veracity of the Karnak inscription and the dating of the Megiddo stele have been challenged; the former because it causes so much difficulty for the accuracy of the biblical account, and the latter because of arguments surrounding the stratigraphic association of the fragment (see below).

A. D. H. Mayes argues that despite the 'conventional' form of the Karnak inscription (in that a new Pharaoh is seeking to glorify himself through his military activity), the list of conquered sites includes some which do not feature on the lists of earlier Pharaohs, and thus is likely to reflect a visit to the region postdating its predecessors.[20] This in itself is insufficient to assert the historicity of the campaign, as increasing knowledge of sites in Syria-Palestine could accumulate through commercial means just as easily as military incursion, only to end up included on campaign lists with the understanding that they were unlikely to be challenged (who would challenge the veracity of Pharaoh's military prowess?); although I admit this is a highly speculative scenario. In the main, I am inclined to agree with Mayes that some sort of campaign into Palestine was undertaken by Shishak, in the long-standing tradition of using the region north of Egypt as a kind of 'proving-ground' for incumbent kings (see 2.2.5, above). The repeated attempts of scholars to trace the movements of Shishak throughout the region based upon the topographical list – those which Clancy calls "geographically and historically myopic" – serve only to move us away from the questions we wish to ask about the impact such a campaign might have had in Palestine in general, and on the development of Israel in particular (the focus of Mayes' essay).[21] Granted, the matter of whether Jerusalem was attacked is one of great significance, for it deals with the political significance of the city in the late tenth century BCE. In fact, the entire concept of a 'United Monarchy' centred on Jerusalem rests on assessing the status of the city.[22] This is dealt with in the summary below, because for now I wish to

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brought down to Judah. On the difficulties in correlating the reign of Rehoboam with the campaign of Shishak, see, for example, Ash, 1999: 27-34.

[20] Mayes, 2010: 133; Mazar, 2007d: 124; cf. also Kitchen, 1966: 29-30 (rejecting Wellhausen's "hypercriticism"): "In actual fact, Shishak's list uses an orthography different from all earlier lists, because of linguistic changes in Egyptian before his time and since the known earlier lists. It also contains many names never yet [of course, read 1966] found in earlier lists".

[21] Clancy, 1999: 18

[22] In an interesting article, Uziel and Shai (2007) navigate the evidence which for most relegates Jerusalem to an insignificant town, arguing instead that it should be seen as analogous to a 'temple-town' to which a palace was later attached (169-170). For the authors, the biblical account is reliable, especially since "none of [the biblical] references present Jerusalem as a large residential capital city"

emphasise the consequences on a geopolitical scale of the Egyptian attack; or raid; or invasion. What we call it is not immediately irrelevant, although it would bear connotations for its consequences. Perhaps Frank Clancy is correct, for example, to suggest that this "large raid" did not leave a "permanent mark on the conquered cities", but this is a statement of archaeological concern, and not one in the realm of collective memory and identity construction.[23] Accepting that Shishak came up from Egypt into Palestine and either attacked or threatened to attack significant elements of people who were or later became 'Israel' is our focus here, because the implications are that in the aftermath, the withdrawal of Egyptian forces and the preservation in the cultural memory of 'Israel' of a 'liberation' from Egypt informed the 'first narrativisation' of the story which became Exodus.[24]

The Bible suggests that Jeroboam fled to Egypt and sought political asylum there. That is not so difficult to believe, but it would be difficult to argue that this was a wholesale invention of later writers with no basis in historical accuracy, especially considering that the next reference to the Egyptian king in question points us not only to an historical figure who actually existed *at the time implied by biblical chronology*, but also to that king's own record of a military venture into the region.[25] To shout 'coincidence' would be nothing short of desperation, yet we cannot go too far. Certainly, Shishak (Shoshenq) existed and he came up into the general region to assert his military dominance, but did Jeroboam necessarily exist? Does this correlation automatically mean that Jeroboam must also have been a real figure? Remember, the

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(164); and the 'city' before the eighth century BCE should be seen as a "royal-cultic center [sic], purposely separated from a large population of residents, with the specific intention of strengthening the status of the monarchy" (162). The later development of Jerusalem occurred in the wake of "[t]he ruin of the competitor kingdom" (170). For a comparison of the developmental trajectories of Israel and Judah, see for example, Na'aman, 2010: 14-17.

[23] Clancy, 1999: 18-19

[24] If Frisch (2000: 18-19) is correct to see the 'coming up' of Shishak against Jerusalem as a theological inversion of the Exodus (in which 'Israel' 'came up' from Egypt [the verb עלה connecting both events]), then the position of Shishak's attack in the text constitutes an historical statement of causation in the wake of Jeroboam's sinful acts (or possibly Rehoboam's fateful decision at Shechem); one informed by an already extant 'Exodus' tradition of some kind. While this may weaken the claim to historicity of the former, it would not explain why the attack was placed specifically in the *fifth year* of Rehoboam.

[25] I agree, then, with Mazar (2007d: 124) that "the mention of Sheshonq's [sic] campaign [...] cannot be explained away as an invention of an author of the seventh-century B.C.E. or later", but I would not necessarily follow that "the writer must have had records of some sort", considering how vague and troublesome the reference to Jerusalem clearly is. The issue, then, is not one of faithful recording of historical events, but the survival in collective memory of allusions to those events (however distorted they may be) and the reasons for that survival.

correlation is with the second biblical reference, not the first, so the flight to Egypt by the rebellious king-in-waiting might be an interpolation legitimated by the reality of Shishak's invasion; an event *long remembered* and retaining its significance in Israelite history as a political turning point.[26] This suggestion is not without its difficulties, however, for it could be argued then that if Shishak had no knowledge of Jeroboam prior to his incursion into Palestine, and thus no reason to leave him to his own devices in his newly established kingdom (Israel), would the Pharaoh not have asserted his dominance over that particular upstart state (presumably what would be implied by the 'pay-off' made by Rehoboam)?[27] Counterarguments to this would run along the lines of dismissing the biblical presentation of the extent and strength of either states of Judah or Israel, particularly as it would be unlikely that an 'empire' the size of that claimed for Solomon would have remained outside the political remit of the Egyptians during its lifespan.[28] Furthermore, the instability caused by the secession of the northern tribes from such an 'empire' would surely have piqued the interest of whatever

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[26] In this, I disagree with Clancy (1999: 20) that the interpolation of Shishak into the story belongs at the earliest to a post-sixth century BCE context arising from Judeans living in Egypt having seen the Karnak inscription. I simply find this solution too simplistic in light of the overlapping connections between i) the biblical account of Jeroboam; ii) the restructured memories of the Solomonic 'empire' (see further below); and iii) the Egyptian evidence which places Shishak in close proximity to centres of emerging Israelite identity.

[27] With no accompanying evidence by which he might posit such a thing, Bakon (2012: 9-10) casts Shishak ("Jeroboam's patron") as "a contributing factor" to the division of "David's United Kingdom". Cf. also Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 178.

[28] Perhaps the biblical writers, hoping to keep their story watertight, invented the marriage of Pharaoh's daughter to Solomon so that they could explain why he had been left alone by Egypt. Of course, Jeroboam was also given an Egyptian royal bride (is this why Shishak did not attack the north? Is she the wife of 1 Kgs. 14?) and, just as Moses is rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, there is a repeating theme of Egyptian women 'saving' the 'saviours' in Israelite history. Whether it is a theme independent of the historical possibility of Ahab taking a Phoenician (read 'Canaanite') wife to seal a political alliance (see Grabbe, 2007: 136, 142); or whether it serves to both allude to and contrast with this 'fact' opens up another route of inquiry. I am tempted to agree with Sweeney (2001: 101-102) that Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter relates to a "Josianic redaction" of the story, in which Solomon's resulting apostasy – that which leads to the division of his kingdom – is contrasted with Josiah's religious fidelity, particularly in light of Egypt's antagonism in the late seventh century; but it should be borne in mind that i) the presence of prominent women associated with hero figures serves to connect these stories ideologically; and ii) Josiah's religious fidelity is more likely to be part of the later idealisation of this king (see Section 3.4). Thus, the motif of the political marriage becomes detached from any real historical relevance.

Pharaoh was sitting on the throne at the time.[29] The fact that neither Israel nor Judah feature on the list of conquered or 'pacified' people or places suggests that either none of this was the case or that neither state existed at the time as the Bible presents it: there simply were no geopolitical entities in the late tenth century BCE by the name of either Judah nor Israel to which an Egyptian scribe could refer, and the fact that Jerusalem is not found on the list suggests that it was of no concern to an invading Pharaoh.[30]

Israel Finkelstein emphasises the 'exceptional' nature of Shishak's movement up into the "sparsely settled, wooded, rugged and hostile hill country of Canaan", and goes on to argue that the likely target of this unusual military action was Gibeon (listed as one of Shishak's conquests), "the hub of an emerging territorial-political entity" associated with the Saulide state of 1 Samuel.[31] Although he refers to this entity as the "[f]irst Israelite territorial entity" in the northern highlands, the fact that the name 'Israel' is not mentioned alongside Gibeon on the campaign list or cities suggests that i) Shishak did not know that these people called themselves 'Israel'; or ii) they did not consider themselves to be a homogeneous entity called 'Israel'; or iii) Gibeon was not known as the political centre of a people called 'Israel'. Apart from the 13th century BCE Merneptah, no Pharaoh ever referred to an attack on any entity called 'Israel', but the Merneptah stele applied the term for an ethnic group. From an Egyptian point of view, where has that group gone by the time of Shishak, especially if either Gibeon

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[29] Mazar (2007d: 124) suggests that Solomon's death might have precipitated an attack on "the emerging Israelite state", but then the historicity of any sort of relationship between Egypt and Jeroboam dissolves with this view. Grabbe (2007: 82) deals with the suggestion that Shishak would have been interested in the copper trade centred on Judah, observing that the picture as to whether it was controlled from Jerusalem or any of the Philistine cities on the plain is not clear. The omission of those cities from the campaign list poses further problems for understanding the relationship between Egypt and the Philistines at this time. Clancy (1999: 4-5) argues that they were allies.

[30] Gelinas, 1995: 230 (who goes on [233] to suggest that Judah did not coalesce as a "centralized political entity" until after the Assyrian annexation of Israel); also Joffe, 2002: 445. Levin (2012: 47-48) suggests that Egyptian arrogance could lead to the negation of the legitimacy of other sovereign states in official records; a scenario which would see 'Judah' and 'Israel' omitted (if they existed at the time). Jerusalem's absence from the list is of no concern to Schniedewind, who states that 1 Kgs. 14:25-28 "accurately recalls a campaign of Pharaoh Shishak from at least two centuries earlier" (2004: 20). Certainly, we may have "chronological synchronism" (*idem*), but 'recollection' of the campaign has sacrificed details in favour of later ideologies.

[31] Finkelstein, 2007e: 148; although cf. Mazar, 2007d: 124. Clancy (1999: 8) deconstructs the reference to Gibeon to include Jerusalem as one of "the four Gibeonite cities", using its omission from the list to argue that "Shoshenq did not go into the hills of Judah at all" and that he was instead "punishing the Gibeonite confederacy".

(according to Finkelstein; of course, cf. 1 Kings 3:4) or Shechem (according to the Bible; see 3.2.2, below) are supposed to be centres of Israelite identity at this time? If there really was an exclusive 'Israelite' enclave in either of these sites (or anywhere in the region, for that matter), why would an Egyptian record of a campaign into the area not record its presence as in the time of Merneptah? Of course, the matter here is one of naming sites, not people, and the Merneptah stele refers to 'Israel' as a people (albeit a group of significant size and strength to warrant a reference), while Shishak's list refers to sites. The problem is not really about identifying anyone called 'Israel' in the list, however; instead, it is about identifying the likelihood that an early 'Israelite' enclave was attacked by Shishak.

It appears that instead of attacking Shechem – as we would presume from the biblical picture of the kingdom so recently established at that site – Shishak continued northwards into the Jezreel Valley and attacked Megiddo, a significant site at the time.[32] Were 'Israel' to be found here? Is this the source of the memory of Shishak which was eventually attached to Jerusalem (so that Jerusalem assumes the status of this significant site)? There would surely have been refugees from Megiddo and other ruined towns, and stories of Shishak's attack could have been brought into any 'Israelite' hub later embraced by that fully defined ethnic identity. If Megiddo was *a* primary focus (we need not presume to find *the* focus) of the campaign, and if it was at this time part of the northern kingdom, then poor Jeroboam did not benefit much from his 'sojourn' in Egypt. Of course, it is only in retrospect that we presume that Megiddo was part of the kingdom, and if it was not incorporated into an 'Israelite' kingdom until the ascension of the Omrides in the mid ninth century (see 3.2.4), then much like the incorporation into Israelite identity of the 'memories' of a migration from Egypt discussed in the previous chapter, memories of Shishak's 'visit' to Megiddo – whatever form it may have

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[32] Mayes, 2010: 135; Clancy, 1999: 16-17; Ussishkin, 2007: 306; Grabbe, 2007: 67-68. On Shishak's victory stele and the excavations at Megiddo (initially summarising the circular argumentation which supported the traditional view of Solomon as a great builder king), see, for example, Wightman, 1990; also Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 135-142. Chapman (2009: 16), dismissing the necessity of correlations with the campaign list, argues for associating the (unstratified; see Miller & Hayes, 2006: 199, n. 17) fragment of the Shishak stele to the Omride (late 9th century) stratum; which in turn moves the Egyptian campaign into this historical context. Similar to my argument above regarding the absence of the eponym 'Israel' on the list, any proposed "interest [...] in the kingdom founded by Omri in the north" on the part of an Egyptian Pharaoh completely ignores any question of recording the name of that kingdom; not to mention the anachronistic picture of the Egyptians marching up into a region increasingly troubled by the ascendancy of the Arameans. On the background of the political relations between (Omride) Israel and the Arameans, see, for example, Kottsieper, 2007 (based on an analysis of the Tel Dan inscription); also Grabbe, 2007: 146-149.

taken – entered the Israelite collective memory from non-Israelites.[33] The conclusion that Shishak took Megiddo accords with interpretations of his victory stele, although as Ussishkin observes, it is unlikely that the Pharaoh set it up in a ruined city where no one would see it; and Grabbe argues that "the erection of a royal stela at Megiddo shows that Shoshenq aimed to hold the city, not destroy it".[34] In this regard, perhaps Wightman is correct in his suggestion that a 'ceremonial' destruction occurred in a section of the town (later fortified under the Omrides), which would envisage the submission of the inhabitants rather than total destruction.[35] One could even go so far as to say that the 'pay-off' occurred here, but that seeks only to afford some ring of truth to the Jerusalemite version of events, which likely seeks to glorify that city by exaggerating its wealth.

The point here is how the memory of Shishak's attack was preserved in the collective memory of the people of developing 'Israel' so that it found its way into their cultural memory as an integral aspect of the foundation myth of the northern kingdom (see below). Working on the assumption that Shishak came up against Gibeon and Megiddo, in one form or another – the former confirmed by the correlation between the references on the campaign list to this "niche to the north of Jerusalem" and the biblical account of Saul's territory;[36] and the latter by the victory stele – can it still be said that he came up against an entity called 'Israel'? The account of David's handing over of seven men to be executed by the Gibeonites makes it very clear that the latter were not part of Israel (2 Samuel 21:2), but this may constitute a

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[33] On the 'Low Chronology' proposed by Israel Finkelstein, which would see the dating of major 'Solomonic' sites lowered from the tenth to ninth century BCE, see, for example, Miller & Hayes, 2006: 202-203; Hendel, 2005: 76-80 (for a 'thought experiment' on the implications of accepting this view); Levin, 2012: 52; Grabbe, 2007: 12-16, 65-77. For an argument specifically against the 'Low Chronology', see Dever, 2004. Ash, 1999: 64-67 addresses the issues, with his study assuming "that there were a David and a Solomon, who ruled over some 'kingdom' during the late eleventh and tenth centuries BCE". On the basis of the seals of *Asaph* and *Shema* associated with the gatehouse of the southern palace at Megiddo, Ussishkin (2007: 304-305; cf. *ibid.*, 1994) suggests a tenth century BCE connection to Jeroboam. If this is correct, and Shishak could have encountered our enigmatic 'Israelite' king at Megiddo, it has been pointedly 'forgotten' by the guardians of Israelite history.

[34] Ussishkin, 2007: 304 (reconstructing the history of Megiddo to account for its military centralisation after the Aramean destruction of Jezreel in the late ninth century; 306); Grabbe, 2007: 75

[35] Wightman, 1990: 19. Mazar (2007d: 124) notes that "[v]iolent destructions [...] were *tentatively* [italics mine] identified at [...] Megiddo", as well as other sites. Cf. Clancy (1999: 17), who suggests that the stele might have "celebrated" a treaty between Egypt and the (presumably Philistine) inhabitants of Megiddo. Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 341) identify Canaanite material culture in the city "well into the tenth century BCE".

[36] Finkelstein, 2007e: 147-148

retrospective distancing from people seen as "the remnant of the Amorites" at a later context in which the text is composed. In the greater milieu of developing Israel and Judah, there is no reason to exclude the inhabitants of this area in terms of their possible absorption into an 'Israelite' identity, the crystallisation of which, from a geopolitical point of view, likely belongs to the mid to late ninth century BCE at the earliest. The problem for the historicity of the Jeroboam story, however, is that if his newly established territory *at the time of Shishak's campaign* stretched from Bethel to Dan, and this territory constituted the fledgling northern kingdom Israel, Shishak would not have been attacking 'Israelites' in Gibeon unless Jeroboam's kingdom did not incorporate all 'Israelites' at this time; thus it is tempting to simply dismiss the biblical extent of the kingdom.

With so much uncertainty surrounding Shishak's campaign, I will move on under the assumption that he attacked a site of some significance to the people of developing 'Israel', so that this historical event entered their collective memory. As with much of the confusion (observed in the previous chapter) arising from the attachment by scholars of extra-biblical correlations to an 'Israel' imagined to be homogeneous from the thirteenth century BCE (and, for some, even earlier), the problem with locating in time the foundation of Israel under Jeroboam by associating it with Pharaoh Shishak presumes i) that the story is faithful to the historical context in which it is set; ii) that there was a 'United Monarchy' of Israelite people (or just a united people called 'Israel') ruled from Jerusalem prior to the establishment of the kingdom of Israel; and iii) that the *people of Judah called themselves 'Israel'* from at least as far back as the tenth century BCE. The latter is a complex matter which will be taken up again in Section 3.4, below, but the introduction into this argument of at least two significant sites associated with the developing Israelite identity – Gibeon and Megiddo – which appear to be separate geopolitical entities at this time introduces also the possibility that this identity was not exclusive to any particular territory, and that the dissolution of the Gibeon-centred 'Israel' left the way open for the exclusive adoption of the eponym for the northern kingdom.[37] It is here that we can posit the signs of a crisis of identity, one of the earliest instances of an argument over who is the 'real' 'Israel'; for if the David of legend appropriated the Saulide 'Israel', then it is possible to propose that Jeroboam was not rebelling against a tangible

[37] It is interesting to note Joffe's observation (2002: 442) that Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor in the tenth century were sites constructed on territorial borders (Phoenicia, Philistia and Aram-Damascus, respectively) and, as such, they may have been "part of a larger entity whose borders remain difficult to define". As he points out, however, the presence of multiple 'palaces' at these sites "may [...] reflect [the presence of] competing elites" therein. It is difficult in this regard to posit a structured hierarchical system subservient to a king resident at Shechem, Penuel or Tirzah (see further below).

geopolitical entity ruled from Jerusalem and thus 'dividing' an extant kingdom; he was establishing himself as a 'king' or chief – the semantic 'downgrading' is irrelevant – with exclusive rights to the name 'Israel'.[38] This is what Linville argues is taking place amidst the confusion of the Shechem sequence: that what is occurring is not the division of an 'Israel' previously incorporating Judah, but the establishment of an 'Israel' *rejecting* David (with Judah making "an independent choice" to side with the Davidic line; 1 Kings 12:20).[39] This is why the language of Jeroboam's rebellion so echoes David's rise to power: as David usurped Saul, so Jeroboam usurped Solomon (or rather, his son). In this light, the prophet of Ahijah envisages Jeroboam 'tearing' Israel away from Solomon; or, in the words of Mark Leuchter, "the original text [that is, prior to the later ideology of a homogenous twelve-tribe Israel] focuses attention on the king rather than the kingdom".[40]

This view, however, presupposes that Solomon did indeed oppress the people of the territories which would become the inhabitants of the northern kingdom, but such a conclusion hardly requires a Solomonic 'empire' ruled from Jerusalem as the Bible has it:

> Forced labour would naturally have been used in the construction of the Temple, the royal palace, and other projects in Jerusalem, and this, in conjunction with royal appropriation of other goods and labour, may have contributed to the alienation of the northern tribes from their political union with the House of David.[41]

Such a 'political union', as Hendel puts it, could have arisen from any number of circumstances, and I see no reason to overlook the possibility that agreements made within the constraints of kinship or other kinds of (perceived?) ethnic fealty precipitated the oppression of the northern

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[38] Cf. Thompson, 1999: 203.

[39] Linville, 1998: 165-171, on the confusing matter of 'Israel', 'all Israel', and the 'sons of Israel living in the cities of Judah' in the Shechem sequence. Carr and Conway (2010: 87-91), accepting not only the historicity of the 'United Monarchy' but apparently also the existence in the tenth century of "Davidic and Zion texts", refer to Jeroboam's rejection of Rehoboam and his establishment of variant cultic practices as the initiation of a "counter curriculum" (89). See further below in 4.2, however, for the Persian period crystallisation of the 'counter-history' centred on Bethel.

[40] Leuchter, 2006: 54. Cf. also Wilson, 1984: 185. In this regard, Bodner (2012: 51-52) highlights the clever wordplay in Ahijah's prophecy in which the root שלמה is used to connect the robe (שַׂלְמָה) to the king (שְׁלֹמֹה).

[41] Hendel, 2005: 79-80

tribes as a result of a Jerusalemite 'king' getting too big for his boots.[42] As will be argued below, the biblical presentation of Solomon as an Egyptianised monarch only served to bolster the negative image of that particular king, as well as facilitating the connection between Rehoboam and the Pharaoh of the 'Exodus', but it is in turn dependent upon the memories of Egypt's impact on the establishment of the northern kingdom.[43] As reiterated above, identities crystallise out of compromise and accommodation binding people together through narrativised allusions to shared antiquity, but they are more potently brought to fruition through a sense of shared suffering or simply through the recognition that a single entity is the enemy which this new identity group have in common. In the Bible, Solomon and subsequently Rehoboam are seen as that enemy, the 'other' in Jerusalem upon which and through which a new 'Israelite' identity can be founded and expressed. The rejection of Jerusalemite religion is explored further in Section 3.2.3, below, and all of this is relevant for appreciating not only the crystallisation of this northern Israelite identity but also that of the tradition which became Exodus; for if the invasion of Shishak was the catalyst for the resurfacing of older concepts of negative interaction with Egypt (and his withdrawal from the region was 'remembered' as a liberation from Egypt), then it is to the presentation of Solomon and his relationship with the northern tribes that we must look for the 'first narrativisation' of 'Exodus'. This is the argument behind A. D. H. Mayes' statement that "[i]f there is a Pharaoh of the exodus [...] that Pharaoh was Shishak";[44] for if Shishak is the key to understanding the context within which the migration tradition was 'rolled out' in response to a crisis of Israelite identity, then it is to the period in which and shortly after Shishak came up to Palestine that we should locate in historical time the initial articulation of *the Israelite identity championed by the Hebrew Bible*. That is all well and good, but it still leaves us with a considerable shortfall with regards to illuminating the socio-political context within which said articulation occurred. For that, we need to delve deeper into a deconstruction of the toponyms and motifs conveyed in the portrayal of Solomon's oppression of 'Israel' and the subsequent 'liberation' of his work force.

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[42] Cf. Gelinas, 1995: 235: "Perhaps there never was an inherently unified national structure but rather a personal union between Israel and 'Judah' that has been torn apart by the course of world events". In this, Gelinas attributes the socio-political realities of the late eighth century to the retrospective account of the 'division' of the 'United Monarchy'.

[43] On the retreat of Israel from Rehoboam's 'Egypt', see Linville, 1998: 172-173. Cf. also Mullen, 1997: 171.

[44] Mayes, 2010: 144

3.2.2 *From Shechem to Samaria – Getting to the Point*

Following Ahijah's prophecy of judgement upon Jeroboam's 'house', Jeroboam's wife returns with her son to Tirzah (1 Kings 14:17), where the boy dies. This is the first reference to this city ('after' Joshua 12:24), but it is not identified as a royal site in Kings until Baasha ascends to the throne in 1 Kings 15:33. Of course, the audience may have been expected to know that Jeroboam had moved to Tirzah from Shechem (via Penuel), but the account seems rather confused.[45] It would be unlikely that a foundation myth for the Omride dynasty later established in Samaria would preserve memories of an Israel locating its foundation in Shechem; in fact, it would be quite uncomfortable, unless the Omrides continued to hold Shechem in great esteem. This may be the case, considering how significant that site had been since at least the early second millennium BCE.[46] The disrupted coronation of Rehoboam at Shechem would have borne great religious significance for Israel 'at the time' (cf., for example, Joshua 24; Genesis 33:18-20); thus Jeroboam might have chosen to establish himself there to legitimise his position.[47] In saying that, the biblical account of the tenth-ninth century transition rushes through the successive 'dynasties' of Jeroboam, Baasha and Zimri, with royal capitals changing from Shechem to (possibly) Penuel and then to Tirzah before coming to Omri setting

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[45] Using the verb בנה 'to build', 1 Kgs. 12:25 envisages Jeroboam living first in Shechem, but it is not clear whether the reference to him building (more likely fortifying, on both counts) Penuel infers his subsequent residing there. For Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 151), Jeroboam's royal residence is in Tirzah, "the first capital of the northern kingdom", a conclusion apparently based upon this story. Miller & Hayes (2006: 278) make the same suggestion.

[46] On the (19th-18th century) Egyptian 'Execration Texts' which mention Shechem and (possibly) Jerusalem, see Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 154-155; Grabbe, 2007: 42. Also on the cultic installations at Shechem, see Fried, 2002. For an understanding of such installations at Shechem in the context of 'Tribal League Shrines' – based on the now outdated analogy of Israel's early history in terms of the Greek tribal amphictyony (cf. n. 95, in 1.2, above) – see Wright, G. R. H., 1971 (cf. also Anderson, 1957). On the convergence at Shechem of an important network of roads, see Dorsey, 1987.

[47] Linville, 1998: 166-167. At this point, I will avoid intimating a direction of dependence which would require that Joshua 24 was the earlier text. This is not to say that what it relays is not an earlier tradition than that of Jeroboam. For an argument in favour of a late (exilic) date for the composition of Josh. 24, see Van Seters, 1984. On the matter of fealty to YHWH and the threat of deviant worship in Josh. 24, see Mitchell, 1993: 115-119, who notes that the message of Josh. 23-24 is that "illicit worship will result in the reversal of the conquest, and Israel will share the fate of the nations" (119). What better ideology upon which to establish the kingship of Israel (at precisely the same location)? Does it not also imply a presupposition of the Assyrian destruction retrospectively blamed on religious infidelity (or perhaps it is addressed to post-exilic 'Israel' in the wake of the Babylonian destruction)?

himself up in Samaria. It is almost as if the writers cannot wait to get to the point; that is, the demonisation of the Omride dynasty (see below). It is not, then, to any continuities between the Omride dynasty and that of Jeroboam that we should look, but to the discontinuities, especially in light of the prophesied and fulfilled destruction of first Jeroboam's line; then that of Baasha and Zimri. My point is this: if it is to be argued that the Jeroboam story amounts to the distorted demonisation of memories of the Omride dynasty, why the rapid succession and destruction of dynastic lines preceding Omri which serve to significantly disconnect him from the legacy of Israel's legendary founder? It has already been observed that the second prophecy of Ahijah and the prophecy of the 'Man of God' from Judah belong at the earliest to the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, respectively. In this regard, the story of Jeroboam's wife returning to Tirzah could reflect an evolution of the Jeroboam tradition told in the courts of Baasha or Zimri (although the latter is unlikely, considering he only ruled in Tirzah for seven days; 1 Kings 16:15); thus the seat of the legendary founder was shifted to Tirzah by way of the story of Ahijah's second prophecy, which by its nature is retrospective.

What we might be seeing then, in this rapid succession of kings and their changing seats of power, is an attempt to articulate in a coherent narrative a story of the foundation of Israel which from very early on was detached from both its historical and geographical context. If this is the case, then any truth regarding Jeroboam we might hope to glean from the present account may have been irreparably obscured by each ideological and politically motivated restructuring. There may be some vague memory of a coronation or a coup d'état at Shechem, but the ensuing coups by Baasha and Zimri and their subsequent annihilation of the families of their respective predecessors suggests a literary pattern designed to intimate that Israel was consumed by conspiracy and murder from the very beginning. As Jeroboam's fate was prophesied, so too was the destruction of Baasha's line, by Jehu (1 Kings 16:1-13); and both Baasha and Zimri are said to have been punished because of Jeroboam's sin, a strange statement in light of their familial disconnection from him that can only be seen as maintaining a 'curse' on the northern kingdom no matter who sat on the throne.[48]

It seems to me, then, that a primary thrust of the account of these 'Israelite' kings is to assert the familial and dynastic discontinuity characteristic of the evolving northern monarchy

[48] Cf. Leuchter (2006: 69, n. 66): "Jeroboam's 'house' is to be seen in terms of Bethel more than in terms of biological lineage by extending the prototype of Jeroboam's sin throughout the duration of the northern kingdom's history long after other northern dynasties had taken power." It is possible, then, that the 'Josian' retrospective which legitimates his destruction of Bethel necessitates the projection of this prophecy into the distant past (see next subsection and, further below, Section 3.4).

in contrast to the continuity of that of the south (Judah).[49] A promise may have been made to Jeroboam that he would be like another David in the north, in light of Solomon and Rehoboam being punished for their sins, but the repeated dissolution of the northern bloodlines ensures that no such promise pertains to anyone claiming descent from a northern king. Thus the supremacy of Jerusalem is asserted through its appeal to a dynasty (Davidic) which necessarily *precedes the foundation* of the northern kingdom, thus maintaining pre-eminence over any claim to the name 'Israel'. The northern monarchs are held responsible for their own downfall, despite the faith YHWH had shown in granting them a chance at greatness (even the Judahite prophet Shemaiah relays YHWH's approval of Jeroboam; 1 Kings 12:21-25, while the 'Man of God' from Judah is tricked by a prophet of Bethel).[50] In short, the fate of Israel was its own fault, and certainly nothing to do with the Davidic descendants.

Where does this leave us, then, for the historicity of Jeroboam at Shechem? The short answer is 'back where we started', because without specific evidence of any such person at that site or any administrative centre there in the tenth century BCE, there is nothing to support a claim to *exclusively Israelite occupation* at the time, let alone the origins of the Israelite monarchy.[51] The Jeroboam story as a whole is, in my opinion, less concerned with historical integrity as it is with ideological and theological retrospective. It should come as no surprise, then, that the succession of kings leading to the Omride dynasty is both framed and pervaded by prophetic narratives – Ahijah and the 'Man of God' from Judah (as well as Jehu) on one side, and the Elijah-Elisha sequence on the other. This 'frame' is about answering questions prevalent at the time of its composition (or compilation), and as such we move further away from the alluded historical context. As Walsh observes:

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[49] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 267-270; Mullen, 1993: 268

[50] See further Walsh, 1989: 360-362; and Wilson, 1984: 187-191.

[51] Contra the optimistic suggestion in Campbell and Ross (1963: 10-11; emphasis mine) – based on a literal acceptance of Joshua 24; and an understanding that "the Israelites *represented by the tribe of Manasseh*" assumed control of the relevant territory – that Shechem "may very well have been the first real *Israelite* city"! As will become clear, the covenant ceremony of Joshua 24 is part of the late construction of continuity between Joshua, Jeroboam, and Josiah; and as I argued in Chapter 1 and 2, no conclusions should be drawn as to the ethnicity of pre-Israelite elements based upon the literary-ideological construction legitimating the continuity of 'Biblical Israel'. In fact, insofar as exclusivity is concerned, Campbell and Ross make it clear from the beginning of their article (1963: 3; emphasis mine) that "Shechem was occupied by either Canaanites or Israelites, *or both together*, throughout the Biblical period".

> The Deuteronomistic History often uses prophecy-fulfillment [sic] passages to bridge large sections of time and text. The underlying vision, of course, is the Deuteronomistic theology of the prophetic word as it reveals Yahweh's reliable guidance of history.[52]

The problem expands further, however, than just dismissing the historicity of a particular man at a particular place and time; instead, the 'domino effect' of such a dismissal is that Israel the kingdom did not incorporate Shechem in the tenth century BCE (did Israel the kingdom exist in the tenth century BCE?) and, by extension, neither did the Solomonic 'empire' possess that territory so that it could be relinquished of it in the first place! The implications of these conclusions are explored further below, but the matter of continuity and discontinuity suggested above is a significant one, for it reveals one of the major concerns of the biblical writers. If historical and ideological continuity is required, it is necessary to bridge the gap from both a genealogical and a causative point of view; conversely, creating a sense of discontinuity requires constructing a disassociation in the narrative from facts which would otherwise reveal connections resulting in a 'derailment' of the entire program. Consider, for example, the 'carrying off' of the treasures of Jerusalem by Shishak, an interpolation which seems to me to be an apologetic for the disassociation evident in later Jerusalem from the grandeur of the Solomonic 'empire' (Rehoboam's bronze shields [1 Kgs. 14:27] are surely no match for what came before!). Regardless of the strength of Josian 'Israel' (if this is indeed the time to which the presentation of Solomon belongs;[53] see below), the former could be only an aspiration, an ideal through which a 'reforming' king might legitimate attempts at expansion.[54] It is feasible, then, to suggest that the awareness of the writers of the tentative nature of some of their claims led them to anticipate challenges to them which survive in the text as anachronisms and contradictions brought to light by modern archaeological inquiry. As a result – and at the risk of sounding melodramatic – the truth behind the place of Shechem in the story of the foundation

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[52] Walsh, 1989: 367

[53] For an argument against the outright dismissal of the historicity of Solomon's wealth (albeit recognising that the received text dates from the sixth century BCE at the earliest), see Millard, 1994.

[54] A similar concept may be behind the payment made to Ben-Hadad by the Judean king Asa to "break his pact" with Baasha of Israel so that Asa could defeat his northern enemy with Aramean assistance (1 Kgs. 15:16-21). Following this pay-off, the coffers of Jerusalem must have been empty once again! We may add to this the contradictory account of Nebuchadnezzar taking away all the treasures of the temple and his "cutting in pieces [of] all the vessels of gold [...] which King Solomon of Israel had made" (2 Kgs. 24:13). This is clearly a motif of defeat to legitimise prophecies against kings, for if "all this [was] as YHWH had foretold" (24:13), then someone somewhere was rather confused about which event YHWH was referring to!

of the northern kingdom may forever be obscured by the 'perfect storm' of time and cultural 'forgetting'.

3.2.3 *"These Are Your Gods" – Dan and Bethel in the late Tenth Century BCE*

So much for Shechem; now what of Dan and Bethel? Is the biblical picture of Jeroboam setting up cult statues in his border towns to divert worship away from Jerusalem a credible one?[55] Fundamental questions obstruct any 'eureka' moment in this regard: firstly, were Dan and Bethel really the border towns of an Israelite kingdom in the late tenth century BCE;[56] and secondly, can we be sure of which deities were worshipped at these sites at this time? More specifically, can we be sure that Israelite deities of any kind were worshipped there? As with Shechem, only archaeology can answer that question; and as with Shechem, the picture is hazy at best.

In the Jeroboam story, Bethel is the primary focus, with Dan quickly fading into the background. It is significant that in the MT the verse referring to the sin of erecting the golden calves (1 Kgs. 12:30) attaches that sin specifically to the people going up to Dan, with the 'sin' of Bethel implied by the pericope that follows (NRSV and JPS both insert Bethel in their English translations, although the latter notes a clear interpolation).[57] There is no way of knowing if this passing reference to whatever the situation may have been at Dan indicates either i) a lack of preserved memory of anything that occurred there; or ii) a lack of interest in the same, considering the focus on Bethel.[58] A combination of the two would explain much (a lack of interest over the centuries resulted in nothing of historical value being preserved), and Finkelstein and Singer's observation that greater knowledge of Bethel should be understood

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[55] On the literary aspects of Jeroboam's "mutinous soliloquy", see Bodner, 2012: 84-89.

[56] Biran (1994: 7) certainly thinks so.

[57] Chung (2010: 22) observes how the other 'sins' (the appointment of non-Levite priests and the changing of the dates of festivals) are subordinate to that of the erection of the calves.

[58] Leuchter (2006: 69) suggests that "[t]he Deuteronomist may have even geared his rhetoric to appeal to the sacral concerns of figures who were at one point associated with these non-Bethel northern cult sites." Of course, attributing significant elements of the story to the Deuteronomist(s) distances it considerably from the tenth century, positioning its concerns in a much later socio-religious context. Cf. Chalmers, 2008: 45, n. 154: "The calf at Dan seems almost secondary in all of these traditions; it is virtually absent in the rest of the Deuteronomistic History and is not associated with a calf by Hosea" (see 3.3.2, below). Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 191, n. 9) note the suggestions of some that "the idea of a bull calf image at Dan was a Deuteronomistic fiction". Fried (2002: 442) appears to presume the historicity of the golden calf at Dan.

with respect to its proximity to Jerusalem as much as anything else adds greater credence to Noll's words regarding Dan:[59]

> Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Dan as presented in the Hebrew Bible is how little is actually said about it. Biblical writers seem to have known next to nothing about that city. Even if one assumes a basic historical reliability in all references to a city of Dan (as opposed to a legendary individual or 'tribe' by that name) one will conclude that, according to the Bible, Dan was only marginally related to Israel at all.[60]

Noll goes on to say that "the biblical writers were less interested in Dan as a city than in the city of Dan as a symbol – a symbol of all that is not right in Israel".[61] If this is true, then Dan is reduced to little more than an ideological device (albeit one afforded the weight of expressing cultic de-centralisation; see note 87, below), with historical facts lost to mnemohistorical purpose. As for identifying what deity might have been worshipped at Dan, Noll also argues that Hadad was the primary god there "during much of the pre-Assyrian Iron Age"; a conclusion refuted by Greer.[62] Through an analysis of faunal and ceramic finds from Tel Dan and the correlations he makes with biblical accounts of cultic feasting and sacrifice (specifically from Exodus and Leviticus), Greer argues that Israelite cultic activity occurred there during the Iron II period. Because his study relates to ninth and eighth century strata, he concedes that such activity occurred "at least at some stage" during Iron II.[63] Despite the correlations Greer identifies, his conclusion from ninth and eighth century evidence that tenth century cultic practice at Dan was *distinctly Israelite* because "cult is by nature conservative" assumes that the biblical texts he uses are faithful records of practices which were *uniquely Israelite* at a time either *coeval with* or *predating* the faunal and ceramic deposits.[64] This is where things get very complicated, especially as Greer adds that "later texts often preserve earlier practices" (a statement not inherently problematic).[65] In conjunction with the assertion in his earlier work on Dan (upon which his 2014 article depends) that the cult of the northern kingdom was "essentially Yahwistic and traditional in its inception and perpetuation", Greer seems to be of

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[59] Finkelstein and Singer, 2009: 43, n. 121

[60] Noll, 1998: 13

[61] Noll, 1998: 14

[62] Noll, 1998; cf. Greer, 2014: 7-8.

[63] Greer, 2014: 2, 8

[64] Greer, 2014: 7

[65] Greer, 2014: 7

the opinion that the biblical accounts of Levitical practices pre-date Jeroboam I.[66] This is problematic (and not only because it assumes the historicity of Jeroboam), for while cult may be conservative, historiography is not. With each respective retelling of the past, the latter gradually loses its grip on certain details; and as such, we cannot really be sure that these biblical accounts (the implied *sitz im leben* of which is the thirteenth century BCE) are reflections of monolithic cult practices reaching back through centuries of faithfully preserved Israelite cultic history.[67] If the biblical accounts appear to correspond with evidence of cult practices in ninth and eighth century strata, then I would propose taking that correspondence solely as a *terminus post quem* for those accounts, particularly if one is going to make assertions regarding the ethnic identity to which the practices belong. Projecting the biblical accounts further back through time than the archaeological correlates demand based on an understanding of the conservative nature of cult is speculative at best; while it assumes that 'Israelite' cultic activity was manifestly autonomous in relation to its general socio-cultural environment by the time implied by the Hebrew Bible. The biblical text is a complex artefact itself, comprised of its own strata indicative of its composition history, but then so is any archaeological record of human behaviour.[68] 'Conservative' does not necessarily imply 'unchanging', and Greer's argument requires a *symbiosis of stasis* on the part of both the cultic practices and the texts in question.[69]

In his 2010 article 'An Israelite Mizraq at Tel Dan?', Greer argues for the association of Israelite cultic practices as described in the Bible with the 'blood-bowl' (mizraq) found in the

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[66] Greer, 2013: 43; Nakhai, 2001: 166: "[t]he Levitical priesthood [...] had dominated religious practice at Dan since the Settlement period"; Cross, 1997: 74 (accepting both the historicity of the Jeroboam story and the "fact" that Yahweh was the god "who brought Israel up from Egypt"). Also cf. Laughlin, 2009, who – despite acknowledging that we cannot be certain which gods which were worshipped at Dan – suggests that Jeroboam "may have been reviving an old Yahwistic cult that was known to have existed [t]here centuries before" (354). Cf. also Miller & Hayes, 2006: 314. On Judges 17-18 (which likely presupposes the Dan element of the Jeroboam story and thus informs the foregoing preconceptions) and how it serves to connect Dan and Bethel, see Amit, 1990.

[67] Accepting them as such is the problem inherent in 'biblical archaeology' (discussed in Chapter 1) and it leads to an inverted understanding of the burden of proof implicit in such statements as the following: "The Bible's complex, obscure and fascinating description of the *bāmôt* system *challenges archaeologists* to search widely for relevant material remains" (Nakhai, 2001: 168, emphasis mine).

[68] Cf. Dever, 1987: 221.

[69] Edelman, 2012: 161: "While there tends to be a conservative bias in rites, they do change in their form, symbolic meaning and social effects according to the needs of the people using them to link the past to the present and the present to the future."

eighth century Stratum II. While allowing for the possibility that the relevant cultic paraphernalia or "altar kit" could be "a common feature indicative of the greater Levantine cultic milieu", he nonetheless maintains that the 'blood manipulation rites' were *distinctly Israelite*.[70] Greer's conclusions appear to be comprised of an argument from silence and a ready application of the biblical description of such rites so that they can be attributed to an ideological retrospective on the antiquity of Israel and its cultic practices. In this regard, Greer's view of the biblical account of northern religious practices should be approached with caution:

> Finally, returning to the Deuteronomistic account of the northern cult, it would be surprising indeed to think that a cult of foreign god in Israel would have escaped mention – let alone vehement condemnation – by the historians who considered such practices to be the cause of the fall of the north.[71]

Greer appears to have fallen into the trap set by the biblical 'leap-frogging' into the past of the Davidic-Yahwistic legacy, which asserts the great antiquity of the exclusive relationship between YHWH and the (homogeneous) people 'Israel'.[72] The biblical history of Israel and Judah is clearly characterised by the demonisation of the northern kingdom on the basis of heretical behaviour and religious infidelity. While the Omride dynasty is blatantly accused of worshipping stereotypically 'Canaanite' deities (without which the Elijah-Elisha sequence would have no potency), the negotiation of constructing a shared antiquity mentioned at the beginning of this chapter necessitates the attaching of Yahwistic centrality to the earliest stages of 'Israel'.[73] This leads us in the direction of questioning the identity of the 'original' god of the 'Exodus' as preserved in the subtext of the Jeroboam story, something to which I will return below, but it will suffice here to say that if any such cultic 'reform' as that implied by the text actually occurred, it may have been altered so that it appears to be *pseudo*-Yahwistic insofar as the identity of the god who brought Israel up out of Egypt appears to be presupposed by the

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[70] Greer, 2010: 38-39; 2014: 7

[71] Greer, 2014: 8

[72] It is also worth bearing in mind that a single deity worshipped at a single site (even if it was a state-sponsored temple) did not necessarily mean that that deity was perceived as god of the entire territory (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 134). What is important is the significance and meaning attached to a specific deity; the issue here is one of binding identity (see below).

[73] In this regard, Elijah's contentious words on Mount Carmel ("How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If YHWH is *the* god, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." [1 Kgs. 18:21]) are written from a Yahwist perspective of (perceived) triumph.

context.[74] This is done to maintain the antiquity and continuity of the connection between the idealised 'Israel' and YHWH, while also justifying the retrospective 'cursing' of the northern kingdom. When it comes to sites such as Dan, about which the biblical writers clearly knew so little and arguably did not care to know, we should be careful as to how we interpret the Yahwistic, Judean perspective:

> [I]t seems clear that the "view from the south" [...] needs to be carefully re-assessed in light of both critical literary studies and now the abundant archaeological evidence. It is hoped that the renewed excavations will continue to make important discoveries from the time of biblical Dan and help even more to bring this important city back to life and rescue it from its very hostile and negative portrayal seen in the "view from the south".[75]

This 'view' also applies to sites not nearly as far to the north; in fact, right on Jerusalem's doorstep. The retrospective on Bethel, the primary focus of the religious polemic in the Jeroboam story, belongs to a much later time than that implied. Even the repetition in 1 Kgs. 12:32-33, which tells us twice that Jeroboam ascended the altar at Bethel, suggests an emphatic interpolation to set the scene for the confrontation with the Judahite 'Man of God'. The repeated reference to the establishment of a festival emphasises the conflict with Jerusalem regarding the cultic calendar, and while this does not necessarily mean that either calendrical system was in place in the tenth century BCE, it is worth noting that a conflict concerning cultic practices informs the polemic of the prophets Amos and Hosea in the eighth century (cf. Hosea 8:4-6, 11; Amos 3:14 and 4:4-5).[76] We can be reasonably confident, then, that the picture of a prophetic condemnation of Jeroboam's Bethel constitutes a memory of some form of deity worship and its associated cult seen as the antithesis of the cult at Jerusalem prior to the eighth century BCE. The assumption, however, that there was actual continuity between the religious practices under Jeroboam the legendary founder of the northern kingdom and those of *his namesake* in the time of Hosea and Amos takes the text at face value. Whatever memory may lie behind the authentication of the Bethel pericope at the time of its composition could just as easily have originated with a ninth century initiation of Israelite practices preserved through the prophetic traditions of the eighth century (traditions bolstering much later claims to the

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[74] Cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 194: "Jeroboam's cultic activities started nothing new [..] but simply attached new significance to a traditional cultic image that was at Bethel, probably a *leftover* from the Late Bronze Age or from Iron Age I [...] which was probably connected originally with El [...]".

[75] Laughlin, 2009: 355

[76] Leuchter, 2006: 68, n. 62

antithetical nature of Bethel).[77] I believe it is feasible to see this element of the Jeroboam story as belonging to a Judean retrospective on the time and activities of Jeroboam II (the apparent *sitz im leben* for Amos and Hosea; 1:1 in each book), especially in light of the conflict between institutional and peripheral prophets evident in both narratives. In fact, it is entirely possible that the elements of the foundation myth featuring a legendary founder of Israel *by the name of Jeroboam* belong either to an eighth century context in which Jeroboam II constructed his pedigree through a revision of that myth; or a slightly later context in which he found his pedigree attacked through the demonisation of the first 'king' of Israel by the same name!

Lest this all become too speculative, however, let me return focus to the sanctuaries themselves. Can we be confident that the towns in which they were located marked the boundaries of a kingdom called 'Israel' towards the end of the tenth century? The simple answer is 'No'. While the construction of "monumental cultic structures" at Dan, and possibly a "base or podium for a temple", might belong to a late tenth century context (if not an early ninth), I have found nothing conclusive to identify the builders.[78] Finkelstein and Singer have posited an occupation gap in late tenth century Bethel, and reconstructions of the biblical account of Jeroboam's erection of calf or bull idols are often based on aligning that account with generalised correlations drawn from an international context of cultic iconography (not to mention accepting the biblical chronology requiring seeing in Exodus 32 the precursor to the Jeroboam story!)[79]

Take, for example, the image of a bull engraved on a bronze plaque discovered in a ninth-eighth century context at Dan, something which would at least give us some grounds for positing the worship of an idol similar to that said to have been set up by Jeroboam roughly a century earlier. If there was a memory of such iconography involved in the cultic practices at Dan, it could easily have been attributed to the demonised founder of the kingdom of Israel within the context of rejecting Jerusalemite Yahwism. If Laughlin is correct to suggest Syrian influence behind this iconography; and if we were to allow for the possibility of a legendary founder of Israel setting up bull (or calf) idols, then the biblical picture has warped the reasons for his actions considerably.[80] The picture, in fact, opens up the possibility – as inferred above – that the original identity of the 'Exodus' deity was not the 'Israelite' YHWH we would expect.[81]

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[77] See further in Chapter 4.

[78] Laughlin, 2009: 344. Dever (1987: 233, based on Biran's 1974 findings) sees this 'high place' as constructed in a "Canaanite style", but states that it is "certainly Israelite".

[79] Finkelstein and Singer, 2009. On said context, see especially Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 177ff.

[80] Laughlin, 2009: 343

[81] Chalmers, 2008: 43

In fact, A. D. H. Mayes suggested in 2006 that the 'heresy' of Jeroboam was a distortion of a 'religious reminiscence' in which Ba'al was the god of the Exodus: hence the golden calf idols erected in Dan and Bethel, idols which he argues were most likely to have been associated with representations of 'Canaanite' deities such as El or Ba'al.[82] Is this what is happening here? Are we in fact seeing a much more complex rewriting of 'Israelite' tradition, in that a Ba'al-focused migration tradition (or El-focused; see 3.3.2, below) was appropriated by followers of YHWH? It is an interesting theory, one which would require a reassessment of Greer's conclusions regarding the ethnic distinctiveness of the cultic practices at Dan.[83] In fact, it might require an understanding of the early religious practices of the kingdom of Israel solely in terms of continuity with Canaanite practices:

> [It] is difficult to insist, from a strictly archaeological perspective, that the kingdom of Israel as a whole was ever particularly Israelite in either the ethnic, cultural, or religious connotations of that name as we understand it from the perspective of the later biblical writers. The Israeliteness [sic] of the northern kingdom was in many ways a late monarchic Judahite idea.[84]

This is the lens through which we should analyse the Jeroboam story. The 'sin' of Jeroboam as we have it in the Primary History is not 'simply' that he "declared [the] god of Israel to be the

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[82] Mayes, 2006: 56-59. Although Chalmers (2008: 46) argues that "bull imagery fits comfortably in the cult of El, Baal, *and* Yahweh". See further Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 118-119, 191-195; Mazar, 2007c: 91: "The symbol of the bull in the religion of the northern tribes of Israel [...] was inherited from Canaanite religion". Contra Cross, 1997: 73: "In spite of its polemical distortion, the slogan 'Behold your god(s) who brought you up out of the land of Egypt' is a characteristic Yahwistic confession"; and further (75): "There can be no question of Jeroboam introducing a Ba'l-Haddu [sic] cult: if he had, tradition should have preserved the fact". I would ask why Cross would expect this preservation of 'fact', in light of a thoroughly ideological and polemical text; although Chalmers (2008: 51) agrees with Cross in that he sees YHWH "as an El figure".

[83] In an interesting excursus on the 'archaeology of borders', Bunimovitz et al. (2009: 119) emphasise the need to address issues of cultural diversity which might be characteristic of sites which are by nature situated on the fringes of more than one territory. They go on to assert that it is, in fact, at border sites that identity formation most evidently takes place within a context of liminality and contrast with external identities (120). I would complicate the issue further by adding that in a context of socio-religious fluidity arising from constant interaction with 'others', identity might never be confidently described as 'formed' or 'codified'.

[84] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 194. See also Miller & Hayes, 2006: 102-106; and Galvin, 2011: 114-116.

calf" or bull, or any other animal specifically.[85] Instead, *by the time of the composition of the received text*, it is about setting up idols of any kind, the anthropomorphising of the deity in direct contravention of the second 'commandment' of Exodus 20:4-5; and if Yahwism was not aniconic in its early stages, then it is highly unlikely that this 'commandment' or Jeroboam's sin (which presupposes it) belongs to a tenth century context.[86] Of course, the rejection of Jerusalemite centrality is also the issue, and most scholars would locate the *terminus post quem* for the crystallisation of this ideology in the seventh century BCE context of Josiah's 'reformation'.[87] Now we are a 'distance' of three hundred years from the 'time of Jeroboam' and the picture has become very hazy indeed, but who better for Josiah to contrast himself with as the founder of a *new* 'Israel' than the man who must have been long cast in Jerusalemite circles as the architect of a rebellion against 'their king'? Jeroboam proved himself unworthy of the faith YHWH had shown in him, but through the destruction of Bethel (amongst other 'heretical' sanctuaries), Josiah would not only prove himself more than worthy; he would redeem 'Israel' from the condemnation echoing down through the centuries:

> From the perspective of the Josianic court, the northern realm had been a complete failure as part of YHWH's covenantal plan for national existence, doomed by Jeroboam almost immediately after its inception.[88]

I will return to this matter in Section 3.4 (because the biblical picture of the Josian-era is far from reliable), but I believe these connections identify interdependence between these two foundation myths of 'Israel'. In this regard, the story about Bethel – and by association, that of

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[85] Loewenstamm, 1992: 53

[86] On the aniconic nature of 'Israelite' religion, see Laughlin, 2009: 353; Chung, 2010: 7-14. See further, Grabbe, 2007: 161-162. On the general decline in anthropomorphic representations of the divine, see Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 135ff. On the likelihood of a late date for the composition of the 'decalogue' ("a point of arrival rather than departure" harmonising earlier ethical traditions), see Mayes, 1991.

[87] It could be argued that cultic centralisation as a whole informs the polemic against the twin sites of Dan and Bethel. The confusion arising from variant references throughout the Bible as to whether there was one or two calves (cf. Chalmers, 2008: 30-36) would be somewhat redundant in this light. Even if Jeroboam wished for a single god to be worshipped, there would be two idols if there was one in each sanctuary (cf. 2 Kgs. 10:29). Chalmers might be correct to see the accusations of polytheism as later distortions of whatever 'truth' we might be dealing with (41, 50-51), but I think the priority for the biblical commentators on the 'memory' of Jeroboam was to present the practices he introduced as *non-Yahwistic and de-centralised*.

[88] Leuchter, 2006: 72

Dan – is a projection into the past of the historical 'character' of these sanctuaries preserved in the collective memory so that they can be used as symbols of "all that is not right in Israel".[89] Used in *the stories of Josiah's 'reform'*, they function to bring 'closure' to that state of affairs, so that a new foundation is (retrospectively) laid for the future 'Israel'. The negative image of these sites disassociates them from the court history of the kingdom of Israel, as it is quite beyond belief that any kingdom would perpetuate the demonisation of its own founder (see further below). Just like the Elijah-Elisha narratives which seek to continue this polemic against Israel into the ninth century; and the prophetic condemnations of eighth century prophets which presuppose the doom of the kingdom, the stories of Jeroboam's idols at sanctuaries marking either end of his territory should be read in the context of religiously-charged political propaganda perpetuated by Jerusalemite court scribes and storytellers.

3.2.4 *Solomon the Builder King – Omride Grandeur and 'Exodus' Ideology*

The story of Jeroboam, then, is a complex foundation myth, dislocated both temporally and ideologically from whatever original context to which it *might* have belonged, but in the biblical text, this foundation myth has its own foundation – the reign of Solomon; more specifically, the building projects upon which the 'House of Joseph' are forced to work.[90] A critical reading of the Genesis-2 Kings presentation of Solomon reveals the Jerusalem-centred theology and the grandiose claims to a 'golden age' under the Judean king which stands not only in conflict with the international context within which such an 'empire' might have existed, but also with the accumulating evidence from the field of archaeology that the biblical picture of this empire has intentionally reversed the reality of the northern kingdom Israel dominating the highlands from the ninth century on.[91] The biblical writers, whose concern it was to harmonise the religious and political centralisation of Jerusalem with a reimagining of the history of the people 'Israel', worked hard to avoid anyone in the future drawing conclusions such as this:

> If we were to accept only the archaeological record and the extrabiblical [sic] literary evidence from the ancient Near East, we would have to conclude that Omri of Samaria,

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[89] Davies, Philip R. (2005a: 3-4) attributes "the production of much of the material in Judean literature" to the rivalry between Jerusalem and Bethel, but adds that "it must have achieved its literary expression in the period when Jerusalem reasserted its supremacy over Bethel".

[90] See Miller & Hayes, 2006: 213-216.

[91] Against seeing the biblical picture of David-Solomon as a 'golden age', see Linville, 1998: 89-91. Cf. also Miller & Hayes, 2006: 186-187.

who is referred to in the ninth-century BCE inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, is the first known king of Israel.[92]

The reign of the Omrides, this uncomfortable truth from a Jerusalemite perspective, was the true 'golden age' of Israel, and the biblical account amounts to the Judean appropriation and suppression of the Omride legacy.[93] A relatively late date for this literary-ideological appropriation would provide a context for the audience accepting the biblical chronology which places Solomon (and Rehoboam) neatly before the formation of the Israelite kingdom.[94] In other words, the distance in time between the Assyrian annexation of Israel and the composition of the stories designed to glorify Solomon as the great builder king facilitated the 'forgetting' of the Omride dynasty the very real power and grandeur of which had dominated the region.[95] Omri, the king who built armies which would (under his son, Ahab) go on to stand against Shalmeneser III in the powerful anti-Assyrian coalition of 853 BCE which asserted the strength of Israel, is afforded a handful of lines in the biblical text: he did "what was evil in the sight of YHWH [...] more evil than all who were before him" (1 Kgs. 16:25).[96] All the man did, apparently, was acquire the hill of Samaria, build his palace there, and die. He may have 'shown power' (16:27), but not the kind of which Jerusalemite Yahwists, overseeing the composition of

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[92] Gelinas, 1995: 230

[93] See especially Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 180ff.

[94] The schematic length of the reign of Solomon (forty years; the same as David) is overlooked by Green (1978) in his consideration of a connection between Pharaoh Siamun and Solomon, when he makes the surprising statement that "the dates for the 21st and the 22[n]d Dynasties must be moved backward or forward in accordance with the accepted end of Solomon's reign [...] by which they are fixed" (356)! For a more enlightened approach to the potential for correlations, see Ash, 1999: 22-26. For Davies, Philip R. (2009: 67), the existence of Rehoboam himself is doubtful.

[95] On the shifting conclusions from archaeology on the 'stables' and palaces at Megiddo, which in the 1960s reassigned the former to Ahab and the latter to Solomon (the palaces were uncovered beneath the stables); and more recently placed the palaces in a ninth century context, see Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 137-140.

[96] Dever (2004: 69) applies the relevant Assyrian text to argue that Ahab's kingdom could not have simply sprung "into full-blown existence overnight" and that the "ascendancy of Omri and Ahab [...] requires us to postulate predecessors who had founded a kingdom somewhat earlier". Does it really require us to postulate a *kingdom* as the Bible presents that of Solomon, or would a tribal affiliation suffice, one which led to the coalescence over roughly seven decades into a territorial state? It is an interesting argument, but I would draw attention initially to Dever's ready acceptance of the Assyrian text claiming that Shalmeneser was faced by two-thousand Israelite chariots (not to mention ten-thousand foot soldiers; ANET 277-81)! Why deconstruct one source and not another?

the history, approved. Similarly, the triumph of Ahab over Ben-Hadad of Aram (Syria) is attributed to YHWH (20:26-29) while his 'ivory house' and all the cities he built (or perhaps fortified; 22:39) appear in a somewhat incidental 'postscript'. The account of Ahab's reign is so dominated by the theological polemic of the Elijah-Elisha sequence that attention is drawn away from any historical concerns, so the reality of the building projects of that king could easily have faded from the collective memory to be pushed back in time and readily appropriated within the context of the Solomon story.[97] Whatever the case, the temporal dislocation from the age of the Omrides permitted their demonisation in terms favourable to the later theological concerns of Jerusalemite Yahwists, with the accounts of their reigns reduced to nothing more than a literary stage for the propagandistic manifestation of same. It is within the context of the Solomon story, however, that we find the basis for the 'first narrativisation' of the migration tradition, for the image of Solomon as the great builder king facilitates his casting as the tyrant who oppresses the northern tribes. Whether such oppression really occurred is difficult to say, but Solomon might only have built or restored within and around Jerusalem itself.[98] If this is the case, then the image of a great workforce comprised of ten tribes outside his immediate sphere of influence belongs to the realm of fantasy; it is an image concerned with aligning him ideologically with rulers in the Ancient Near East with whom the biblical writers could only hope to compare him.[99] Similarly, the biblical claim that one of Solomon's wives was the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kgs. 3:1; once again, an anonymous Pharaoh – why remember Shishak but not this one?) appears on the surface to amount to Solomon's diplomatic relations with Egypt, but it tells us something else – that Solomon's kingship was recast as an Egyptian-style monarchy.[100] This is the memory of

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[97] On the likelihood that the Elijah-Elisha sequence is retrospectively given a ninth-century context, see Miller & Hayes, 2006: 313-315. Also Blenkinsopp, 1996: 57-58. Young (1998: 252) observes that it has likely "been heavily redacted by someone sympathetic with Jehu's revolution".

[98] Hendel, 2005: 80

[99] Thompson, 1999: 202: "[T]he narratives describe a Croesus-like Solomon in a manner reminiscent of the way the kings of great states like Egypt, Assyria and Babylon liked to describe themselves".

[100] Green, 1978, argues for Siamun as Solomon's 'Father-in-law'; but cf. n. 94, above, on his ready acceptance of the biblical chronology informing his conclusions. Miller & Hayes (2006: 208) take a decisive stance in the opposite direction: "We decline to speculate on which Pharaoh gave his daughter to Solomon in marriage [...], since we regard the whole 'pharaoh's daughter' theme as suspect". See further Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 178) for Egyptian cultural influence in Israel (although they appear to take the biblical account of the 'United Monarchy' at face value; cf. *idem*: 133). A concise summary of opinions and bibliography relevant to the question of Egyptian cultural influence in the time of David and

Solomon's reign (and subsequently, that of Rehoboam) which piques my interest, for it is within this context that the story of Jeroboam makes much more sense:

> If one pays careful attention to the message that was proclaimed at the sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan at the same time that the images of the bulls were set up [...], then one can see that such activities were part of a program that was to give expression to an emancipation intended to free them concurrently from subjection both to Egypt and Jerusalem.[101]

This comes close to the matter, but to what subjection(s) are Keel and Uehlinger referring? According to the story, Jeroboam set up these idols immediately following his return from Egypt; that is, before Shishak came up to Palestine. Considering that the biblical text has the Pharaoh attacking Jerusalem five years later, Jeroboam's Israel has no experience of subjection by Egypt. Attacks on Megiddo or any other site later brought into the sphere of Israel's territorial influence may be retrospectively attached to the memory of Jeroboam, but none of this concerns the biblical writers. Instead, the answer to the above question is that any perception of subjection should be seen within the context of the Egyptianised image of Solomon's kingdom, in that from a literary-ideological point of view, Jerusalem and Egypt are one and the same. Dealing with a vague memory of the experience of the 'House of Joseph' as it 'slaved' for a king in the south (we should still allow here for the possibility that this 'memory' is false), Jerusalem was cast as 'Egypt' through the attachment of a combination of popular literary motifs related to Ancient Near Eastern monarchic propaganda and collective memories of ancient interaction with and 'liberation' from Egypt. This is where the 'first narrativisation' of the migration tradition really comes into its own, for it is here that the negative connotations of Egypt lying dormant in the collective memory are appropriated amidst an array of related concepts and half-truths so that it aligns itself perfectly with an assertion of identity on the part of 'Israel'. Something must have happened which led to the rejection of the Jerusalemite monarchy or chieftainship, because the polemic against Solomon was designed to explain the dissolution of a pre-existing relationship amongst the people of the highlands, north and south. I believe there is some sort of memory surviving here of a fundamental schism which set the developing states of Israel and Judah upon different cultural trajectories. What better way to present Solomon in this story, especially in light of the memories of interaction with Egypt

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Solomon can be found in Ash, 1999: 13-20. On the 'Canaanite' influence on the nature of 'the Israelite Monarchy', see Day, 1998 (who notably plays down any Egyptian connections).

[101] Keel and Uehlinger, 1998: 191

presupposed by the 'Charter Myth' of Israel (see below), than that of an 'Egyptian' king oppressing his own people? It facilitates both sides of the cultural divide, sufficiently glorifying the king of Jerusalem so that he has the ability to do such a thing, while incorporating and harmonising an Israelite assertion of ethnic distinctiveness.[102] In this sense, Shishak need not be seen as the 'Pharaoh of the Exodus', the conveniently positioned Egyptian king arriving amidst a crisis of Israelite identity, because both Solomon and Rehoboam fit the bill; and Exodus has two Pharaohs oppressing the Hebrews (with the second increasing the workload as Rehoboam does). Shishak may not be the 'Pharaoh of the Exodus' in any real way, but he certainly facilitates the projection into the past of the foundation of *the kingdom of Israel*. Of course, this is what is required from the point of view of continuity with the tradition in question, as will be shown.

3.2.5 *Shishak in a Stormy Sea – Section Summary*

In a sense, we are trying to determine whether the biblical account of the inception of the kingdom of Israel accords with the emergence in the region *at the time implied by the text* of an 'ethnic state' to the degree that said account faithfully preserves its own memory context.[103] Joffe's definition of an 'ethnic state' relates to the conclusions of A. D. H. Mayes that the withdrawal of Shishak from Palestine and the subsequent power-vacuum in the

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[102] Chung's suggestion (2010: 16) that "the tradition of Israel's exodus from Egypt was marginalized in the kingdom of Judah from the time of the reign of David and Solomon" makes too much of the biblical concept of an ethnically unified people sharing a single foundation myth prior to the inception of the kingdom of Israel. I believe that the people occupying the southern highlands did not utilise the memories of an Egyptian migration until 'Israel' became part of their shared identity. While this might have occurred from the late eighth century at the very earliest, I think that the late seventh century is the most suitable context (see Section 3.4); although cf. Davies, Graham, 2004: 26-27.

[103] Joffe, 2002: 426: "[T]hey are novel and historically contingent political systems which appear in the Levant during the first millennium BCE thanks to the confluence of several factors, not the least of which is the collapse of imperial domination and the longstanding city-state system. New forms of local identity and organization developed during the centuries of relative dislocation, which were later utilized in part by reemergent [sic] elites." The concept of an 'ethnic state' is useful, considering the overuse of terms such as 'city-state' or 'nation-state'. Gelinas (1995: 236) remarks: "Scholars attempting to write a history of Palestine from the tenth through the sixth century BCE must address the issues relating not only to the geographical, archaeological and epigraphic studies of this period in Palestine, but also to questions arising out of anthropological research on states, both their formation and collapse." Dever (2004: 76-86) deals with the problematic definition of 'statehood' as it is applied within the context of the debate surrounding the 'United Monarchy'.

region precipitated the emergence of Israel in the context of smaller states – centred upon long-established sites significant to ethnic identities – coalescing within a single territorial centralised entity.[104] Yet the Bible, apart from possibly inferring the importance of Shechem for the *reinvigoration* of an identity group called 'Israel' (the emphasis should be read in relation to the existence centuries earlier of Merneptah's Israel), does not relate this connection at all, despite its reference to the Egyptian king.[105] Instead, the Jeroboam story is concerned solely with how Israel broke away from both Davidic rule centred upon Jerusalem and the cultic manifestations of royal theology promoted by that monarchy. As such, the story is overtly biased in favour of both Jerusalem and Yahwism, which should immediately weaken any claims that this story reflects the actual concerns of a people called 'Israel' in a kingdom of the same name conceived in the tenth century BCE.[106] In fact, I think there is very little in the Jeroboam story that belongs to a tenth century context. It appears to have its own complex mnemohistory, one which warrants a much more thorough study than most have given it (and arguably more than I can afford to give in this thesis). It is, in my opinion, a

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[104] It is within this context that I am reluctant to accept Dever's (2004) attack on the 'revisionist' refutation of the nature and extent of both the 'United Monarchy' and a tenth century inception of a kingdom of Israel based upon an acceptance of the former. Dever points to urbanisation, centralised administration, monumental architecture and population increase (and relocation) as indicative of the formation of an 'Israelite' state in the tenth century; but even if Finkelstein's Low Chronology is proved wrong and the relevant sites remain dated to the tenth century, there is still no evidence that i) these sites are connected politically or ethnically; or ii) that the sites *implied by the biblical text as central to the kingdom of Israel* asserted any power over those which have provided evidence for Dever's criteria of statehood. In a similar vein (and because Dever refers to excavations at Beth-Shemesh; 82-84), I would argue that a picture of a centralised Judean state based upon the archaeology of Beth-Shemesh – a 'frontier site' to the west of Jerusalem – requires evidence of subordination to Jerusalem before convincing correlation with the biblical account. Beth-Shemesh may show evidence of "the involvement of a central government in the town's daily life" (Bunimovitz et al., 2009: 133), but if its description as a 'frontier' or 'border' site is based upon the biblical picture of a Jerusalem-centred state, any possibility of seeing it as subordinate to any other site, or indeed recognising its potential autonomy in the tenth century, goes out the window.

[105] The concept of 'reviving' Israel is behind Miller & Hayes' assertion that "the rebel kingdom took the *old name* 'Israel'" (2006: 265, emphasis mine).

[106] Cf. Grabbe, 2007: 121. Chung (2010: 24) agrees that "the Deuteronomist's condemnation of Jeroboam's religious policies is characterized by unjustness and bias, since his point of view is essentially Judean, that is, it originates in the southern kingdom". Chung, however, would see this point of view as contemporary with the alluded historical context, as he accepts the biblical picture of a 'United Monarchy'.

conflation of evolving traditions concerning i) the foundation of the kingdom of Israel; ii) the demonisation of the Omride dynasty; related to iii) Judean polemic against northern cultic practices (possibly later redacted to project the prophetic condemnation of Jeroboam II back to the origins of Israel; see next section);[107] iv) Jerusalemite political propaganda regarding the Davidic legacy; and v) interaction with Egypt. As such – and I would emphasise that I refer here to *the current form of the story* – it does not have a definitive historical setting which I would call a 'memory context'; at least not one which envisages a real Jeroboam establishing any kingdom in the north. Whatever memory context I might posit for an 'original' version of this story is drawn only from the preservation in the text of the correlation between Shishak's military campaign and a vague memory on the part of a pre-monarchic 'Israelite' entity of his activity in Palestine.

As noted above, Israel Finkelstein argues that the likely target of Shishak's unusual incursion into the highlands was prompted by the growing power of the 'Saulide State' centred on Gibeon, and that the memory of that event was later adopted into Judean-Israelite tradition so that Jerusalem is elevated by proxy to a status worthy of attack by an Egyptian Pharaoh. I have said something similar, of course, of Megiddo, but according to the Bible, Megiddo was part of the kingdom of Israel by the time of Shishak's campaign. The confusion arising from archaeology considering whether some or all of the site was razed by the Egyptians cautions against drawing conclusions either way, but the fact that there is no memory preserved in the Bible of the Megiddo attack is indeed problematic with regard to the historicity of the Jeroboam story. We could on the one hand choose to accept that Megiddo was in Israelite hands at the time, and that it is from here that the memory of an Egyptian attack arises, only to be later attached to Jerusalem. In observing that Jerusalem is not mentioned in the campaign list where one would expect to find it, Clancy argues that "[t]he most likely explanation is that Shoshenq omitted Jerusalem because it was neither rich nor important".[108] It is to this understanding of Jerusalem that we should apply the inverse portrayal of the city in the Bible. After all, why would a marauding Egyptian army ignore the mighty Jerusalem of the Solomonic empire?

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[107] This does not necessarily mean that Jeroboam I did not exist, just that his legacy was reassessed in light of prophetic condemnations of Jeroboam II. In this light, it might serve us well to reduce Jeroboam I to the "arch evil figure" (Russell, 2009: 47) in the biblical history of Israel, a character in the literary presentation of Israel's past who facilitates later theological reflections on the fateful events closing the eighth century. Russell argues that the connection of Bethel with the "celebration of an Israelite exodus from Egypt" pre-dates these events, but he is careful not to suggest an early date for the attachment of Jeroboam I (again, if he ever existed) to the initiation of such a celebration in the northern kingdom.

[108] Clancy, 1999: 5-6

The other option is that Megiddo was not in Israelite hands; that no one fled the city with tales of an attack which came to form part of Israelite collective memory, and as such Megiddo has nothing to do with the memory of Shishak; an option which leaves us with an 'Israelite' enclave at Gibeon. Again, however, this is not remembered in the Bible; Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, we read, until it feels like we are marching around in similar circles to those devised by scholars trying to find out where Shishak actually went! Someone remembered Shishak, though; someone who either identified themselves as 'Israelite' at the time or later came to do so. Whatever became of the stories of an Egyptian incursion into the region by elements outside 'Israel', the appropriation of those stories by developing 'Israel' became the foundation for a tale preserving a context of a crisis of identity. The apparent confusion in the text as to 'who is Israel?' may just as well be indicative of a real memory of an ethnic schism as opposed to a political one, into which has been interpolated the interests imagined of Judah at the (much later) time of composition. It is Shishak, however, who is the *mnemohistorical 'anchor' for the tenth century context* of the Jeroboam story, and I cannot see any conceivable reason for his presence specifically in the story (as opposed to just another anonymous Pharaoh) other than a real memory of some kind of interaction with Egypt coeval with his reign.[109] Through Shishak, ninth century memories of Omride power have been dislocated and 'forgotten' to glorify a comparatively weak kingdom in the south which did not concern Shishak in his campaign. To this weak kingdom is afforded the capability of oppressing its northern neighbours, aspects of which are a combination of the inversion of the reality under the Omrides as well as the appropriation of vague memories of some sort of liberation from Egyptian power. The withdrawal of Shishak following his Palestinian campaign is interpreted as a victory over Egypt and the crisis of identity regarding the ethnic label 'Israel' is associated in memory with this event because it facilitated the ascension of the Omrides, the first truly Israelite 'empire'. In the wake of the dissolution of the Saulide state, whose chiefdom may have been comprised of early Israelites and thus entertained pretensions of being the earliest territorial 'Israel', the focus of the foundation myth of the kingdom of Israel was intentionally shifted from Gibeon and Saul to Shechem and Jeroboam. At any rate, the demonisation of the Omride dynasty attacked the legitimacy of an 'Israel' centred upon Samaria, so that a

[109] Although related to the 'historicization' [sic] of prophetic activity in the prophetic books (see further below in Section 3.3), the words of Ehud Ben Zvi (2006: 49-50) are particularly relevant here: "Narratives about the communal past, that is, 'historical' narratives – whether accurate from our perspective or not – most often tend to contain temporal anchors and refer to particular circumstances in the social memory of the group." In this, I refer the reader back to Chapter 1 and Nietzsche's 'islands' of historical detail. Cf. also below (n. 128) on 'intentional' and 'incidental' historical information. In this case, of course, the presence of Shishak in the text is very much intentional.

foundation myth preceding the Samarian-based kingdom and coeval with pretensions of Solomonic splendour was absolutely necessary. This also facilitated an attack on the legendary (fictional?) figure of Jeroboam so dislocated from historical accuracy that it could not be contested. For modern historians, it is virtually impossible to penetrate:

> The historical discussion today about the role and nature of the tenth century in the history of Palestine is a close variant on the old question that teachers of philosophy put to their students, about whether there is a sound of trees falling in the woods when there is no one to hear it.[110]

From an historiographical point of view, then, the story of the tenth century 'foundation' of Israel occupies a 'no-man's land' of memory between historical contexts of interaction with Egypt (for which we can argue based primarily upon the Merneptah Stele) and the ascendancy of the Omride dynasty, which Jerusalemite scribes diluted in order to facilitate their inversion of Omride domination (remember their separation of an Omride Joram/Jehoram into two?). The stories of Israelite kings in a ninth century context are even more fantastical in their polemic, an approach which completely dominates the accounts;[111] and so, as modern historians, we find ourselves moving swiftly into the eighth century, where the action really appears to be. Not surprisingly, with the retrospective on the Assyrian annexation of Israel, this is where Jerusalemite polemic really comes into its own.

As a result, the excellent analysis of the ethnicity and identity of ancient Israel by Kenton L. Sparks moves from the Merneptah Stele at the close of the thirteenth century BCE to the beginning of Assyrian domination in the eighth century BCE (acknowledging the difficulties inherent in dating the 'Song of Deborah' from Judges 5 and gleaning any understanding of ethnic identity).[112] In fact, had the current study set out to focus entirely on ethnicity and identity in ancient Israel as it might be illuminated by extra-biblical evidence, the foregoing

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[110] Thompson, 1999: 200

[111] On the Elijah-Elisha narratives, see for example, Blenkinsopp, 1996: 58-64; and Wilson, 1984: 194-206.

[112] Sparks, 1998: 124-125. Sparks argues for a ninth century date for the 'Song of Deborah', in which Judah is conspicuously absent (109ff.), but its original *sitz im leben* is by no means certain: "[W]e should remind ourselves [...] that perhaps we are dealing with a viewpoint that postdates the supposed events by some time, and if this is the case, the song could well contain historical or sociological anachronisms that are not evident to us" (115). Apart from the likely conflation of traditions aligning Sinai with Edom and Seir (Shasu) traditions (cf. 2.2.3, above), Judges 5 bears no further information relevant to my investigation of the development of the migration tradition, however, and so there is no difficulty in moving directly into the eighth century.

analysis of the Jeroboam story might have been similarly overlooked. Of course, this thesis is about what is remembered, preserved and articulated over time in conjunction with the respective life settings of each narrative stratum; and so the question should be asked: what is being remembered in the Jeroboam story? Is it really the foundation of a kingdom? I do not believe so. In fact, I think this is less about the inception of a territorial kingdom and more about the earliest crystallisation of 'Israel' as an entity bound by a single ideology, one which distinguishes it from its southern neighbours so that it later coalesces as a territorial entity with the development of states resulting from external pressures and international influence. Insofar as the migration tradition is concerned, Jeroboam's statement that "These are your gods" calls the people to worship amidst the assertion of 'Israel' as a homogeneous entity rejecting Jerusalemite religion, whatever that may have been at the time (and amidst the confusion of literary retrospective, we should be cautious to presume religious uniformity of any kind). The vague memories of coming up from Egypt discussed in the previous chapter are brought into the spotlight but narrativised as a distinctive appropriation of the tradition within the constraints of this new 'Israelite' identity, separating it from Judean-Yahwistic concerns. If this is a 'Charter Myth' (and on this I assume a subtle distinction from the conclusions of Van Der Toorn), it is one of ethnic amalgamation, albeit one facilitating the state formation of *the ninth century*.[113] Remember, of course, that certain elements of those who crossed the Jordan and entered the highlands would have brought Yahwism with them, and so it is simplistic to conclude that Jeroboam's 'reformation' was to Ba'al religion. It might still have been Yahwism, but its articulation occurred within a framework of 'Canaanite' religious expression; and this is what is retrospectively condemned.[114] As we move on to the retrospectives on the eighth century prophetic condemnations of Israel, it is worth bearing in mind what has been suggested above regarding the connections between the Jeroboams of both the tenth and eighth century contexts. Some may find such a connection simplistic and historically dismissive, but in my defence I say this: does the prophecy against Bethel and the subsequent interaction with the 'old prophet' not anticipate (and presuppose) Amos and his conflict with Amaziah? I am certainly tempted to see in the figure of the 'man of God' from Judah that very prophet from Tekoa, thus laying the foundation for ideological continuity with the eighth century

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[113] For more on 'Exodus' as the 'Charter Myth' of Israel ("a powerful instrument to weld the Israelite clans and families together into one nation"), see especially Van Der Toorn, 1996 (291-302; quote from p. 302), and 2001; also Albertz, 2001 (a response to Van Der Toorn in the same volume).

[114] Cf. Dever, 1987: 233: "[T]he material basis of the early Israelite cult can hardly be distinguished from that of the Canaanite cult of the Late Bronze Age [...and...] there is nothing in the archaeological record per se that reflects 'Yahwism'".

context. Of course this may read too much into the text, and I am certainly not suggesting that Amos met with the same fate as his literary doppelganger, but the presence in both stories of this conflict between institutional and peripheral prophets and a king named Jeroboam should at the very least furrow some brows![115]

3.3 Assyria and Prophecy: Reshaping the Tradition in the Face of (Impending) Defeat

Moving into the eighth century, the historical ground beneath our feet appears somewhat firmer. Of course, appearances can be deceiving, and if a reconstruction of the affairs of Israel and Judah in the Assyrian period already provides historians with difficulties, then an assessment of the development of the migration tradition through an analysis of allusions attributed to the 'eighth century prophets' is bound to be fraught with literary-historical pitfalls. While there are "few substantial sources in the biblical or extrabiblical [sic] materials [related to Israel's history] that may be unambiguously dated before the eighth century", any attempt to assign to that period all of the material in these prophetic 'books' obscures their complex redaction history:[116]

> [T]he idea that we can quote an 'eighth-century' prophetic text as evidence for the eighth century is now looking distinctly dodgy. The older picture of the prophetic collections has given place to a thoroughgoing redactional approach, which views each of the collections as the work of creative editors working in the Second Temple era and reducing to order a mass of material, with varied points of view, originating at times spread out over anything from one to three centuries.[117]

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[115] Cf. Davies, Philip R., 2006: 122-123; 2009: 62-63 (and see further below). The motif of disobeying the word of YHWH and the subsequent death by lion attack is used in a similar vein in 1 Kgs. 20:35-36.

[116] Sparks, 1998: 125. See Davies, Philip R., 2006, on the attempts to do so. On the value of the prophetic books for reconstructing the history of Israel and Judah, see Moore, 2006. Ehud Ben Zvi (2006) emphasises the relative lack of concern amongst the writers of these texts for claiming historicity in any concrete form; it was not required for their ends. He suggests (46) that the "target rereaders" (that is, those for whom the texts were intended) "should read each text of a book in a way informed by the others and thus create networks of meanings that are deeply interwoven in the book."

[117] Houston, 2004: 132, words echoed in Tomasino's conclusion in a work concerned with the literary relationship between the opening and closing verses of the received form of Isaiah (1996: 163): "Proto-Isaiah may have come together like some celestial body, attracting a few chapters here, a few verses there, until the process was brought to an end by the authoritative hand of the final redactor. If such was the case, we would be quite brash to think that we might be able to unravel the process with any degree

These multi-layered texts (contextually and ideologically speaking) attest to the need for pseudonymic authenticity and authority, which by extension reveals a much later historical context (encompassing all of the inherently retrospective content) in which they provide the 'ammunition' for whatever is claimed through their articulation.[118] In this regard, it is not unusual to find scholars approaching these texts as if a singular ideology lies behind their final form:

> [A]lthough the four [prophets] in question come from different environments, are very different in other respects, and never refer explicitly to one another, their public pronouncements coalesce in a single but multiform tradition that [...had...] a powerful effect throughout the remaining two centuries of the monarchy and far beyond.[119]

It is within the conversation concerning the great antiquity and continuity of 'Israel' that the migration tradition arguably informs that singular ideology and emerges as the very reason for preserving and repeatedly reassessing the context of the 'words' or 'visions' of these prophets.[120] For my purposes, it is significant that some of the allusions to the Egyptian migration therein reveal an awareness (and the significance) of the tradition in the original *sitz im leben* of the eighth century prophets. I say 'some' because the form and content of some of these allusions betray the likelihood of later redactional activity and – as they cannot therefore be understood as preserving an original eighth century message – they cannot be used with confidence to speculate upon eighth century circumstances to which we could attach any meaning. Through an analysis of these allusions in Amos, Hosea, 'First' Isaiah (by itself a heuristic construct) and Micah, I will posit a memory context in this section for the next stage in

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of certainty." Cf. also Blenkinsopp, 1996: 87-88, regarding the composition and evolution of Amos and Hosea.

[118] Cf. Davies, Philip R., 2006: 124, n. 42: "The very fact that a document was preserved and copied itself presupposes a certain purpose, whether or not that purpose coincides with that of the text's original author."

[119] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 72

[120] Cf. Ben Zvi, 2006: 43: "[T]he more [...] the book fulfil[led] its functions in the text-centred discourse of the literati of ancient Israel/Yehud [...and...] the more successful the prophetic book was, the larger the chances that it [was] read, reread, studied, and copied [...], generation after generation."

the *biblical* evolution of the tradition of coming up from Egypt.[121] The following are the sort of verses to which historians are drawn when assessing the historicity of our relevant texts:

*The words of **Amos**, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.*	*The word of YHWH that came to **Hosea** son of Beeri, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.*
*The vision of **Isaiah** son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.*	*The word of YHWH that came to **Micah** of Moresheth in the days of Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.*

While these superscriptions (1:1 in each) are likely editorial insertions designed to situate the missions of the prophets in their historical context (a second 'heading' is found in Isaiah 2:1 which does not preserve such a context, but it appears to delineate another 'beginning' for the material to follow).[122] The earthquake noted in Amos 1:1 has been dated to around 750 BCE,

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[121] I make this emphasis because we cannot know for certain how the tradition evolved apart from that reconstructed from the biblical texts. There may have been tangential versions pertaining to disparate identities, but the one with which we are dealing is the one which 'won the day' insofar as 'Biblical Israel' came to dominate its articulation and its manifestation in the socio-religious expression of their identity. 'Exodus', then, is necessarily comprised of a retrospective articulation of the tradition as it was defined solely by that identity group. As will become clear, the arguments of such scholars as Stephen C. Russell (2009) that there were variant 'Exodus' traditions (Cisjordanian, Transjordanian and Judahite) do not stand in opposition to this concept, as they pertain to versions of the tradition which likely bore elements rejected over time in the creative journey towards the crystallised 'final' form (which called for a reimagining of still extant 'rival' versions).

[122] Blenkinsopp (1996: 103) suggests that the opening of Isa. 2 "directs us to read the first chapters as a separate collection of sayings" (cf. Carr, 1996: 175, who refers to Isa. 1 as "introductory material") which were originally connected to the so-called 'Syro-Ephraimite' conflict in 734-733. This second 'title' serves the same function as those in Isaiah 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1 [see further below]; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6; all of which delineate distinct sets of oracles. Aberbach (1993: 33-34) appears to relate these oracles to genuine (original?) Isaian interpretations of significant Assyrian conquests during the reign of Sargon II.

and has been described by geologists as "one of the strongest earthquakes ever to shake the city of Jerusalem".[123] Jeroboam II's reign ended around 748 BCE and, with Hosea active during his reign;[124] Amos in Bethel two years before an earthquake dated to the 750s;[125] Isaiah's mission situated in mid-eighth century Judah;[126] and Micah using the recent destruction of Samaria to threaten Jerusalem (a threat afforded credibility by the Assyrian advance into Judah prompting Micah's 'mission' and validated by the siege of 701),[127] I find no convincing reason to doubt their claims to a general eighth century context for the original 'missions' of the respective prophets.[128] In each case, of course, these texts have undergone redaction insofar as

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[123] Austin et al., 2010: 657, noting in their abstract the repercussions of the earthquake with regard to "the introduction of 'seismic theophany' imagery into the Bible" (cf. Freedman and Welch, 1994: 189-190). Ambraseys (2005: 330; giving a date of c. 759) argues that a sizeable landslide occurred either in or just outside Jerusalem. Blenkinsopp (1996: 78) suggests that the earthquake "must have been high on the Richter scale" to be spoken of centuries later in Zechariah, although Davies, Philip R. (2006: 122, n. 32), if I understand him correctly, cautions against taking the Zechariah text as proof of a genuine and popular memory surviving in that prophet's time (cf. *ibid.*, 2009: 71, n. 33). The account of the earthquake in Josephus' *Antiquities* 9.225 is clearly lost to the realms of fantasy.

[124] Sparks, 1998: 142. Kapelrud, 1984: 177-178 asserts that "the poetic parts of the book of Hosea [...] bear no Deuteronomistic stamp [...and...] they may be dated to a time between 750 and 730 BCE[.]"

[125] Freedman and Welch, 1994, argue that Amos' credibility rested on his *prediction* of the earthquake two years later (in relation to Amos 9:1ff.). I think this *constructed credibility* belongs to a much later time in which the memory of the earthquake anchors his recontextualised message for a later audience in an historical context relating to their concerns.

[126] Sweeney (2005: 46) articulates well the significant geopolitical events which Isaiah must have witnessed, reminding me of the words of David Aberbach (1993: 4; see also below): "Each of the surviving three major waves of Hebrew prophecy came about in wartime, and war is the subject of, or background to, most of the prophetic poetry[.]" Cf. also Blenkinsopp, 1996: 66-67.

[127] Micah the Morashtite (Moresheth-Gath was a border town between Judah and Philistia) "had to flee his home for Jerusalem as the Assyrians advanced" (Sweeney, 2005: 192). Note that Micah is quoted in Jer. 26:18 and placed in the reign of Hezekiah. Although it is sometimes suggested that Micaiah 'son of Imlah' of 1 Kgs. 22 might be the figure upon which Micah is modelled, by way of the phrase שִׁמְעוּ עַמִּים כֻּלָּם ('Listen, all you peoples') found in both 1 Kgs. 22:28 and Mic. 1:2, I see no convincing reason for this. Apart from the absence of any reference to Micah's pedigree, the superscription in Micah would contradict the historical context of 1 Kgs. 22, which sees Micaiah active a century earlier than the former. To connect the two invariably damages the historicity of the entire 'book' of Micah; and if the account of the מִיכָיְהוּ of Judges 17-18 is anything to go by (see Mullen, 1993: 165ff.), it is probably best to read the Micaiah of 1 Kgs. 22 as a literary device.

[128] On the reign of Jeroboam II, see Miller & Hayes, 2006: 352ff. It is quite unlikely that the use of the earthquake as an historical anchor for Amos' mission is mere coincidence. It was likely seen as a concrete

the prophets portray a Jerusalemite (Yahwist) bias crystallised by *ideologies applied to reinterpret* eighth century events (see 3.3.2, below).[129] As such, caution should always be taken when considering references to the migration tradition as we speculate upon the historical contexts in which they were 'originally' used. As we will see, such caution should for the same reasons be taken when approaching the eponym 'Israel'.

3.3.1 *The 'Exodus' in the Eighth Century Prophets – Did They Know Moses?*

My concern here relates to the nature (and content) of the allusions to the migration tradition amidst prophetic condemnations of the ruling classes and the people of the northern kingdom as a whole. With my argument focusing on identifying a context within which the prophets, wielding the migration tradition, appear to have interjected themselves into *a socio-cultural debate on 'Israelite' identity*, it is imperative to start with questions of audience relating to the deconstruction of the identity of the 'Israel' addressed in the texts. In other words, we need to ask two important and *symbiotic* questions: i) can we identify which allusions to an Egyptian migration belong to an eighth century context; and ii) can we identify to whom they were addressed? In the context of considering the evolution of the migration tradition as it attaches

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historical anchor by which validation was preserved, but it could easily have been attached in a similar way to the accounts of Amos' contemporaries by later redactors. Since it was not, I believe that the earthquake was genuinely remembered as synonymous with Amos' condemnations (Davies, Philip R., 2009: 62; cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 78-79. Tucker (2006: 90-91) suggests that to avoid confusion for a contemporary audience in a "geologically instable region", "this part of the superscription would not have been far removed from the time of Amos". On 'intentional' and 'incidental' historical information in the prophetic books, see Moore, 2006: 25ff. See further Sweeney, 2005: 46-47, on dating Isaiah; 182-183 on Amos; 173-174 on Hosea; 191-193 on Micah. See also Houston, 2004: 142-145 (on the eighth century prophets in general).

[129] Cf. Davies, 2009: 60 (on Amos): "There are enough clues in the book to make it clear that Judahites or Judeans are being addressed, whether or not some or even most of the contents were once uttered to Israelites." In arguing for a Persian period, Judean *provenance* for the book of Hosea, Bos, 2013, suggests that had the book been "Judahized" [sic], this would have been done "thoroughly and consistently" (21). While he recognises the presence of northern, Israelite Hebrew in the text, he argues that this "would point to a southern author's attempt to (*somewhat inconsistently*) portray the prophetic character of Hosea as a northerner" (*idem*; emphasis mine). Yet even if, as Bos argues, "the entire book was composed in the post-monarchic period" (25), this does not preclude the incorporation at that time of earlier oracles or sayings, be they preserved in textual or oral form. I rather think that this best explains the 'inconsistency' suggested insofar as a harmonisation of 'northern' and 'southern' traits are concerned. See further below on Bethel as a likely 'repository' for 'northern' traditions.

itself to the historical development of the identity of 'Biblical Israel', we cannot answer either one of these questions in isolation. The matter, as will become clear, is further complicated by the likelihood that the concept of 'Israel' held by the 'final' redactors of these texts contributed to the suppression of any earlier definitions of the eponym so that repeated contemporisation gave way ultimately to 'de-historicisation':

> [T]hese prophetic books were not really about [...] historicity [...] but about the learning of YHWH, Israel, and the relationship between the two in the past and the future. [...] Israel in these discourses was construed as a transtemporal [sic] entity whose manifestations included the Israel of the Exodus, Sinai, the monarchic polities, exilic Israel, and, of course, the community centred around Jerusalem in the Persian period[.][130]

As a result, the juxtaposition of allusions to the migration tradition and 'Israel' always present the critical reader with problems related to historical context. Take, for example, this extract from Micah:

> My people, what have I done to you? What hardship have I caused you? Answer me.[131] For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and from the house of slavery I redeemed you; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. **Micah 6:3-4**

To whom is this addressed? The obvious answer is 'the people of Israel', but the complexity arises not only from asking to whom the eponym 'Israel' might refer at this time but also whether these verses belong to 'this time' at all! Using a kind of 'synoptic' methodology, we can compare the accounts of Micah's contemporaries to evaluate his clearly distinctive allusion here not just to the still evolving migration tradition, but to the Exodus narrative itself.[132] Not

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[130] Ben Zvi, 2006: 42. Cf. also *ibid.*, 2009b: *passim*.

[131] The phrasing here is remarkably similar to one found in Joel 4:4 (MT), where YHWH asks the people of Tyre, Sidon and "all the districts of Philistia" if they are "paying [him] back" (NRSV) or "requiting [him]" (JPS) for something. Considering that these words occur within a retrospective on the destruction of Jerusalem, there is arguably a contemporisation of authorship connecting the two texts, a "Jerusalemite recension" likely related to redactional activity in the compilation of the 'Book of the Twelve' (Blenkinsopp, 1996: 74, noting also the thematic connections between Joel and Amos; see further Sweeney, 2005: 168ff.). Cf. also Jer. 2:5-6.

[132] I say a *kind* of synoptic methodology because in the context of the separate narratives into which the prophets (as protagonists) are interjected, we are not dealing with numerous accounts of the same event. Instead, we are dealing with *allusions* to a tradition presupposed by a number of distinct

only does Micah seem to know Egypt as a place of slavery from which the people were rescued; his words also attest to the 'triumvirate' of leaders through whom YHWH led the people.[133] Micah's only other clear allusion to the migration tradition is found in 7:15: "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, show us extraordinary deeds." It would be pedantic to simply argue that this lacks the specific nature of YHWH's deeds and therefore marks them as embryonic from a narrative or literary point of view, but coupled with the lack of the expected reference to bringing 'Israel' up from Egypt – instead, it is simply YHWH who came out of Egypt and the deeds could have been performed anywhere – and no real sign that this relates to the understanding of the tradition attested in Micah 6:4, I think it possible that we are seeing an early example of the attachment to the migration tradition of YHWH's revealing himself to the world.[134] The two verses following 7:15 may reveal Micah's awareness of the consequences of YHWH's actions as they are articulated in the migration tradition extant during his time:

> The nations will see and be ashamed of all their might; they will lay their hands on their mouths; their ears will be deaf; they will lick dust like a snake, like the crawling things of the earth; they will come trembling out of their fortresses; they will turn in dread to YHWH our god, and they will stand in fear of you. **Micah 7:16-17**

This is certainly a most suitable parallel to YHWH's repeated goal of self-revelation in light of his *extraordinary deeds* in and beyond Egypt in Exodus:

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protagonists. On how the synoptic approach can be profitably applied to the Hebrew Bible, see, for example, Knoppers, 2009. For a Hebrew 'synopticon' of parallel texts, see Bendavid, 1972 (there is also a more recent, 2012, edition).

[133] I will argue further below that while the imagery of Egypt as a place of slavery might have been articulated in the context of the migration tradition at this time, it might be best understood as a fledgling distortion of whatever memories of the Solomonic regime were prevalent in the northern kingdom of the eighth century; and the specific references to Moses and his brother and sister are later interpolations. Contra, for example, Sweeney, 2005: 195, who presumes the comparative antiquity of the Pentateuchal material. For more on the evolution of Aaron in Israelite-Judahite tradition, see Sperling, 1998: 103-119.

[134] Cf. Edelman, 2012: 168: "The ability to recall the specific or individual signs, wonders, or miracles is not as important as knowing that Yahweh performed them in the past". While the *implied past* may be inaccessibly distant, we cannot be sure of the *terminus ante quem* of this 'knowing'.

> And Egypt will know that I am YHWH, when I stretch out my hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst. **Exodus 7:5**[135]

Still, the revelation of a deity's power is a rather generic motif, and it is difficult to convincingly associate the allusions in Micah with the evolution of the migration tradition, as that found in Micah 7:15 is so vague; and Micah 6:4 is so suspiciously overladen with information that it stands out as anomalous and anachronistic amidst Micah's prophetic counterparts.[136] When we compare Hosea's understanding of the tradition, for example, the closest he comes to mentioning any of the three figures present in Micah 6:4 is to state that "by a prophet YHWH brought Israel up from Egypt" (Hos. 12:14), but that reference is so vague as to suggest that this might have been a retrospective attachment at the time of Hosea of an anonymous figure legitimating his own circle of influence (cf. Isa. 10:26, in which there is no prophet involved; see below).[137] He likely knows nothing of Moses because that figure is not by Hosea's time part of the tradition (at least not a version of which he is aware), but his concern to associate what is clearly understood by this time as the foundation myth of Israel with prophetic authority is probably best understand within the context of self- or group-legitimation.[138] Not only does Hosea know nothing of any kind of slavery or oppression in Egypt (neither does Amos; see below [also Isaiah 10:20-27 is dealt with further below]);[139] he attaches the tradition solely to 'Ephraim' (Hos. 9:3), that northern tribe also known as the 'House of Joseph' (whom we have encountered above in the Jeroboam story). That group was said to have experienced

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[135] Cf. Exod. 6:7; 7:17; 8:22; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 16:6b, 12; 29:46.

[136] On the latter, cf. Redford, 2011: 329.

[137] On the idea that Israel being 'kept' (some render '*guarded*') by a prophet (Hos. 12:14b) relates to shepherd and pastoral imagery and informs the Pentateuchal connection between Genesis and Exodus, see Russell, 2009: 61. The preceding verse, in which Jacob kept sheep ('sheep' appears to be implied in the Hebrew text), is thus intentionally juxtaposed with YHWH's shepherding of Israel.

[138] Contra Davies, Graham, 1992: 282-283 ("[T]he prophet is Moses") and many others who presuppose the received form of Exodus when reading these texts. I will return to this matter of Moses' presence in the tradition in Section 3.4, below. On the likelihood that there was no long-standing tradition of Mosaic prophecy upon which 'later' prophets based their authority, see Petersen, 2006, who concludes that "[o]nly after most of the prophetic literature had been composed did someone actually claim that Moses had been a prophet" (324).

[139] Cf. Russell, 2009: 60-61, who focuses on the use of the verb עלה (to come up) in Amos and Hosea to argue that "Israel's exodus is described with a verb of motion rather than with a verb of freedom", compared to the latter connotation found in the Balaam sequence of Num. 22-24 of the verb יצא (to come out).

oppression under Solomon and, while the wheels of continuity might for some begin to turn, they appear to manoeuvre around Hosea's concept of the origins of the northern kingdom, even if he understood this political entity as evolving from a ten-tribe system (as the 'Divided Monarchy' story would have us believe).[140] It might be best to understand Hosea's words as directed towards all the people of Israel, but that would depend on how one interprets 'House of Israel' in Hosea 5:1; and also to whom one applies the eponym 'Ephraim' (*passim*), the primary focus of prophetic condemnation. If 'Ephraim' is synonymous with *all the people of Israel*, the implications for Hosea's understanding of northern tribal identities are manifold; unless, of course, such identities are themselves later interpolations. For Hosea, the sins of the northern kingdom certainly encompass 'both' entities (Hos. 5:3ff.).[141] It is Ephraim and Israel *as one entity with a shared past* – that of migration from Egypt – who are being attacked by Hosea for their worship of Ba'al in Hosea 11 (see further below); and so while Hosea appeals to an extant migration tradition, the specific and elaborate details one would expect to find if Hosea's awareness extended to the 'Exodus' narrative are conspicuously absent.[142] We will see below that Isaiah's applications of 'Israel' or 'House of Israel' are predominantly dislocated from an eighth century concept of the eponym by way of later Jerusalemite ideology; whereas for Amos, the idea of 'Israel' appears interchangeable: it is a distinct entity *not including Judah*, as well as the later 'Israel' *recreated and redefined* in post-monarchic Judah; it is both the 'old'

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[140] Cf. Sparks, 1998: 166-167, 267-272 (on the 'tribal list' of Deut. 33). As noted above (n. 112), Sparks argues for a ninth century context for an original 'Song of Deborah' which preserves memories of ten "groups" (not necessarily 'tribes'; 1998: 115) and, as such, his understanding of Hosea's mnemonic background relates to these groups (and not necessarily those later understood as comprising the ten tribes of the north).

[141] The references to Judah inferring judgement read as awkward intrusions amidst condemnation predominantly addressed to a northern audience (cf. especially Hos. 5:5b; 6:11 [which may be related to 5:10 and a "reprimand of Judah for its border encroachments into Northern territory"; Sparks, 1998: 166]) and are better understood as warnings to Judah following the loss of the northern kingdom (Blenkinsopp, 1996: 87). I find the statement in 12:1b that – in contrast to Ephraim and Israel – Judah is faithful to God (or 'walks with' or 'stands firm with'; interestingly it is El and not YHWH) somewhat inconsistent in this regard. Similarly, Amos' references to the destruction of Jerusalem in Amos 2:4-5 is problematic, and the intrusion of the phrase תּוֹרַת יְהוָה marks it as a later text of Deuteronomistic influence (Tucker, 2006: 96; cf. Davies, Philip R., 2009: 69).

[142] It will be argued below that while Hosea's application of the tradition of an Egyptian migration urges Israel to recognise its significance for the retention of their core identity, his concerns revolve specifically around 'reminding' the people of which god it was who brought the people up from Egypt.

and the 'new' 'Israel'.[143] Amos' grievances might have been equally applicable to similar socio-economic matters in Judah at the time, but with Judah in vassalage to Israel at this time, it makes more sense that he would go to the source of the problem.[144] Despite this, it might be best to see the behaviour of the ruling classes in Amos as symbolic of the people as a whole, particularly as the spectre of Assyrian expansion threatened the entire nation and the (fulfilled) prophecies were about more than the doom of the monarchy alone.[145] Amos' fury and disgust is potent:

> Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, 'Bring something to drink!' The Lord YHWH has sworn by his holiness: Days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fish-hooks. **Amos 4:1-2**

Like Hosea, Amos seems to know nothing of either Moses and his cadre; or the motif of slavery arising in Micah 6:4. The "forty years in the wilderness" (Amos 2:10b) might imply a late interpolation, but I say this not simply because it muddies the waters. While the phrase could be an element of the schematic chronology connecting the dedication of Solomon's temple to the return from Babylon, the generic number forty might have been a regular motif in prophetic rhetoric by the eighth century (and thus would predate any post-exilic literary construct). If the tradition of Elijah's forty days' and forty nights' journey to "the mountain of God" (הַר הָאֱלֹהִים; 1 Kings 19:8) is of ninth century provenance, then it is possible that we have here an early application of a motif which is elaborated upon in the later 'Exodus' story.[146] Of course, it could also be the case that there was by the eighth century an understanding

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[143] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 66: "The overlaying of the two 'Israels' is an important dimension of the book that enables it to be both a record of Israel's past and a promise of Judah's future." (See also *ibid.*, 2006: 117, 127-130) In this regard, Ben Zvi (2009: 84) sees also a "hidden polemic" against the "Samaria of the Persian period" informed by an understanding of the legitimacy of the Jerusalem-centred 'Israel'. While Thompson (1999: 184-185) relates that the destruction of 'old Israel' is "theology using history as a metaphor, theology written from a much later Jerusalem's perspective", this does not necessarily mean that no memories of the 'old Israel' have survived.

[144] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 358. In this regard, Sweeney (2005: 183) sees Amos bringing (agricultural?) tribute to the Bethel temple.

[145] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 73

[146] The 'forty days' motif also appears in the story of the 'spies' sent to assess the enemy in "the land of Canaan" in Num. 13:25. On the intrusion into the Elijah narrative of the Negev and Horeb pericope, see Blenkinsopp, 1996: 58-60.

amongst the people of an ancient heritage of nomadism within which this motif of 'wandering' finds credence. Whether or not such an understanding reflects a past reality is irrelevant, and Sparks' suggestion that Hosea threatens a *return* to nomadism (Hosea 12:10) in contrast to what the prophet sees as 'degenerate' urbanisation does not necessarily require such a reality; the appeal to a 'memory' of such 'wandering' would suffice and this could just as easily be Amos' exaggeration of the same to which later writers attached historical validity.[147] The phrase 'forty years in the wilderness' turns up again in Amos 5:25, and if Philip R. Davies is correct to see the apparent denunciation of cultic practices beginning in verse 21 (within which context verse 25 may have originally found its meaning) as belonging to "a period and a place in which the supremacy of Jerusalem is unquestioned", then it might be necessary to read the motif of the 'forty years in the wilderness' throughout Amos as belonging to a later period of Jerusalemite supremacy.[148] It should be noted, however, that such ideology does not necessarily presuppose such abject supremacy – simply the aspiration of it. Of course, when YHWH is said to ask (through Amos) whether the 'House of Israel' brought sacrifices and offerings to him during the forty years in the wilderness (5:25), the rhetorical nature of the question should be emphasised if its focus is the Jerusalem temple, for they certainly could not bring such offerings to Jerusalem while they were wandering in the wilderness! I think it is pertinent here to note a tendency amongst scholars to find also in Hosea allusions to the 'wilderness' element of Exodus, particularly as it pertains to Hosea 9:10a:

> Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit in its season, in [or *at*] its beginning, I saw your ancestors.

Blenkinsopp includes Hosea 9:10a in his list of allusions to "the first encounter between Yahweh and his people [...] *in the wilderness*"; but I am far from convinced.[149] Were it not for the story of the 'Exodus', we would read these lines for precisely what they are – similes for the pleasure YHWH felt in finding Israel in a primordial and, in this verse at least, 'ahistorical' context; one intended to plumb the depths of antiquity for claims of 'Israel's' association with YHWH. Finding the ancestors of 'Israel' was *like* finding *grapes* in the wilderness (the NRSV cited above keeps to the MT word order as it opens the verse: כַּעֲנָבִים בַּמִּדְבָּר מָצָאתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל) or glorying in the first fruits of the season. The JPS inserts parenthetically the words 'as pleasing' (following "I found Israel", with which it opens this verse), explicating the simile so that the

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[147] Sparks, 1998: 164-165.

[148] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 60-61

[149] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 88, emphasis mine.

poetic comparison is made clear and we might better understand the passionate plea Hosea is trying to make: YHWH is furious with his people and recalls that first glorious moment of attaching himself to them and taking them as his own. It does not matter when or where this happened; what matters is the betrayal felt by the deity; and what is being contrasted is the youthful innocence of Israel prior to their corrupted relationship with YHWH as a result of exposure to 'foreign' deities. There simply is no need to find allusion here to any 'wilderness' tradition.[150] Similarly, connecting the *future* act of leading [Israel] through the wilderness in Hosea 2:16 is afforded the significance of the full-blown Exodus narrative only when a reading of 2:17b *presupposes that narrative*.[151] Blenkinsopp finds allusion to the 'wilderness' tradition in Hosea 11:3-4 where there is no call for such a thing, although the impassioned rebuke of YHWH noted in 9:10 is certainly present here. There can be no doubt that there was by this time an understanding of 'Israel' having come up from Egypt, but it does not amount to the elaborate narrative of Exodus (nor the incorporation of the Sinai pericope); and Hosea 9:10-17 as a whole contains no reference to Egypt whatsoever.

The 'pestilence' which YHWH is said to have sent amongst or against the people "in the manner of Egypt" (Amos 4:10) is similarly not proof of the presence at this time of any plague element in the migration tradition, although it cannot be convincingly ruled out that some form of curse element against Egypt had not entered the collective memory of the people by this stage. Stephen C. Russell suggests that בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם might be better understood as "on the Egypt

[150] Similarly, Sparks, 1998: 160: "This parallelism equates Israel with the ancient fathers *from the days of the wilderness*" (emphasis mine). Sparks allows for Graham Davies' argument that 'like finding grapes' is "part of the imagery" (Sparks, 1998: 161), but he does not go far enough to conclude, as I have done, that finding Israel was said to be 'like [finding] *grapes in the wilderness*'. Cf. also Landy, 2011, 134: "In the second part of the chapter we return once more to beginnings, to God's discovery of Israel in the wilderness." While the 'first fruit' of Hos. 9:10b may be connected to the notion of Israel as the firstborn son of YHWH (and whatever connotations of cultic devotion that might bear); and thus lies behind the justification for the tenth plague (Exodus 4:22-23; cf. Landy, 2011: 135), I am not convinced that Hosea was aware of the connection as it was developed in Exodus. Russell (2009: 61-62) argues that neither Hosea nor Amos were aware of the 'wilderness' tradition. For Russell (similar to Sparks), the 'wilderness' in Hosea is a reversal of "the ideal of a settled agricultural life[.]" It is "a place of desolation and thus [...] a powerful literary metaphor" (62), something articulated well in the imagery of Isaiah 21:1-2, where the 'stern [or *harsh*] vision' comes from the 'terrible land' that is the desert.

[151] Bos (2013: 158) reads Hos. 2:16b in the past tense (so "I led her in the wilderness"), despite the surrounding text evincing a clearly future-oriented nature. So, instead of seeing Hos. 2:17b as reminiscent of a memory of coming up from Egypt which would pre-date the Exodus narrative, Bos – in arguing for dependence on the Pentateuchal narratives – assumes the crystallisation of the connection between the Exodus, Wilderness and Conquest narratives prior to the conception of this Hosean oracle.

road" (or 'road to Egypt') and, if so, that this refers to YHWH's punishment of those Israelites who chose to flee to Egypt (rather than trusting in YHWH, a sentiment found in both Hosea's and Isaiah's condemnations of those seeking help from Egypt; Hosea 7:11, 16; Isaiah 30:1-5, 7; 31:1-3);[152] although he allows for the possibility that because the same phrase occurring in Isaiah 10:24 and 26 alludes to 'Exodus' motifs, the same may be true of Amos 4:10 and thus "the text would bear witness to a memory of pestilence associated with the Egypt story".[153] Still, if this is the preferred reading, it should be noted that Amos 4:10 does not specifically state that YHWH was *the cause* of whatever 'pestilence' befell Egypt; rather, the pestilence referred to is one that YHWH sent amongst the people *when they were in Israel* (the recounting of 'trials' sent upon the land by YHWH begins in 4:7), a pestilence likely 'modelled' upon one known to have occurred in Egypt. The credibility of the threat in the mouth of a prophet, therefore, may be linked to a memory of such a pestilence retrospectively attributed to a prophetic curse.[154] If it is the case that we are seeing in these prophets elements of disparate traditions concerning a migration from Egypt which would later be harmonised in Exodus, then we might have further evidence for the retention of distinct collective memories of ancient interaction with Egypt (as per Chapter 2) evolving within their respective frames of socio-cultural reference and relevance. The necessary coalescence of identities amidst the formation of the state of Israel – whether that occurred in the late tenth or early to mid-ninth century – should not be taken as the basis for positing the existence in the eighth century of a monolithic tradition of migration for the people of the kingdom, but of course it is also possible that Hosea and Amos are simply choosing variant strands of the same narrative deemed most appropriate as they formulate their rhetoric. In saying that, I do not think there is a need to differentiate between specifically northern and southern *eighth century* versions of the migration tradition applied by Hosea and Amos in the one case, and Isaiah and Micah in the other, particularly when Judean or Jerusalemite concerns permeate all four prophets and Judean national identity in the eighth century is likely formulated around Davidic monarchic lineage (see 3.3.4, below). So while it could be argued that Hosea and Amos 'diluted' a Judean version to speak to an Israelite audience, omitting the central players found in Micah 6:4 (an action requiring that a northern audience would have had no knowledge of them), I find this unnecessarily complicated. Such an omission could easily have been 'corrected' in a later rendition to bolster the ancient homogeneity of the tradition; instead, as above, I believe that it strengthens the

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[152] On the reasons for Isaiah's opposition to Egypt, see Wong, 1996.

[153] Russell, 2009: 57

[154] On this concept of cursing in a military context and how it connects to characteristic prophetic condemnations of the 'foreign nation', see Hayes, 1968: 81-82.

argument for the authenticity of Hosea's and Amos' earlier (eighth century) understanding of the tradition which does not include Moses.

While all of the prophetic texts underwent considerable redaction and re-contextualisation before reaching their received form, 'First' Isaiah presents itself as a much more complex text, for while it was once popular in light of the work of Bernard Duhm to distinguish three major blocks of work in Isaiah and assign historical contexts to them (chapters. 1-39, eighth century; 40-55, sixth [exilic]; and 56-66, late sixth – fifth [post-exilic]), it is clear from the very beginning of Isaiah that texts which look back on the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of Judeans have been retrospectively ascribed an eighth century *sitz im leben*:[155]

> Your country lies desolate, your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence aliens devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. If the Lord of Hosts had not left us some survivors, we would be like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. **Isaiah 1:7-9**

Despite the apparent weakness of claims to an eighth century context for a lot of the text in 'First' Isaiah, it does not necessarily follow that there was no eighth century Isaiah and that we cannot posit a socio-historical context for his activity. Indeed, whether there were three or more 'blocks' or 'versions' of Isaiah, the fact that they were attributed to him and later harmonised to assign to them a singular pseudonymic authority reaching back through the centuries indicates a long-standing respect for this figure; and if much of 'First' Isaiah evinces late seventh century or 'Josianic' concerns (compare, for example, Isaiah 9:1-6; 11:1-9), then it

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[155] Duhm, 1892. Cf. Sweeney, 2001: 237: "Although Isaiah 1 and Isaiah 2-4 contain a great deal of material that stems from Isaiah ben Amoz, they are presently arranged to address the punishment and subsequent restoration or purification of Jerusalem and Judah, and therefore they presuppose the Babylonian exile." Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 103-104. Sweeney argues (2001: 234ff.) for four redactional 'blocks' in Isaiah (cf. Clements, 2002: 118, envisaging a 'Fourth' Isaiah redacting the 'book' as a whole), with Isa. 5-12, 14-27, and 28-32 belonging to a seventh century 'Josianic' context; although he argues in his 2005 volume on the prophets (his 2001 publication is concerned primarily with the Josianic context) that *the received form* likely subordinates the work to an overall two-part structure, where Isa. 1-33 "projects a scenario of judgment [sic] and restoration on the Day of YHWH [...] that will reveal YHWH's sovereignty to the entire world" and Isa. 34-66 "no longer projects judgment, but instead presupposes that the judgment [...] against Babylon, Assyria, and the other nations has now taken place and that the time of Jerusalem's restoration is at hand" (48-49). This historical-theological retrospective thus subsumes the complex interweaving of multi-contextual oracles and narrative blocks.

would follow that allusions to earlier historical contexts within the text were the basis upon which the Josianic texts achieved their authority.[156] The same practice legitimates the later מַשָּׂא ('pronouncement') against Babylon in Isaiah 13:1-14:23:

> The oracle concerning Babylon [...] is the product of the sixth-century edition of the book of Isaiah that posited YHWH's judgement against the Babylonian empire as part of a scenario in which YHWH's sovereignty would be manifested throughout the world. The passage thereby took up an earlier eighth-century oracle against the Assyrian monarch Sargon in Isaiah 14:4b-21 and recontextualized [sic] it to address the downfall of [Babylon].[157]

As the superscription and other 'titles' direct us toward visions made from a Judahite or Jerusalemite point of view (as per Isaiah 1:1 and 2:1), caution should be taken as to whether to read 'Israel' as i) the people of the northern kingdom during the eighth century; or ii) an idealised ethnic eponym post-dating the destruction of the northern kingdom and retrospectively incorporating the socio-religious and socio-political concerns of its people as defined by the religious and political centralisation of Jerusalem. I would advocate for the latter, particularly as it would be strange indeed for Isaiah to be addressing an audience in Judah or its capital during the eighth century – that is, while Israel still existed as a state – while *associating them* (or their god) with their northern neighbour (cf., for example, Isaiah 1:3b, 4b, 24; 5:7a, 19b, 24b) or the ancestral house invoked to speak of it (Isaiah 2:3, 5, 6). In fact, the 'mountain of YHWH' and the 'House of the God of Jacob' to where the people will go to receive the divine 'instruction' (תּוֹרָה) are equated with Zion and Jerusalem, respectively, in Isaiah 2:3, suggesting a context post-dating the ideological conflation of northern ancestor traditions and Jerusalemite centralisation. The idea that תּוֹרָה would come out of Zion (Isaiah 2:3) implies a post-Josianic context, for if an eighth century prophet knew of the Torah, it cannot have been 'hidden' in the temple or missing for as long as we are led to believe in the story of King Josiah (see 3.4.2, below)!

Isaiah 8:14 speaks of two 'houses of Israel' and, while for some this may constitute the survival of a genuine concept of ethnic homogeneity subordinate to the idea of 'Israel', the verse continues to suggest that these 'two houses' occupy Jerusalem. Even the 'men of Judah' of 5:7 are said to be the 'pleasant planting' occupying the vineyard of *the* 'House of Israel'. The

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[156] Sweeney (2001: 241) relates the imagery of the 'little boy' of Isa. 11:6 to the story of Josiah's ascension to the throne as an eight-year-old boy.

[157] Sweeney, 2001: 244

interchangeable nature of 'Israel' and 'Judah' implies an historical context permitting an understanding of i) Israel *as an eponymous ethnic group* occupying *the territory* of Judah; as well as ii) Judah *as an eponymous ethnic group* perceived as a constituent element of the former. This is language reminiscent of later concepts of the genealogical heritage of Israel which includes Judah in the twelve-tribe system, but it is in 'Second' Isaiah that we get a better picture of how the ideological centralisation of Jerusalem has contributed to an understanding of *the territory of Judah* facilitating the origin of *the people of Israel*:

> Hear this, House of Jacob, who are *called by the name* Israel and who *came forth from the waters of Judah*, who swear by the name of YHWH and invoke the God of Israel[.] **Isaiah 48:1**

This is the retrospective on Israelite identity anchored to the people of Judah and Jerusalem;[158] and we would in 'First' Isaiah be better served by verses like 37:31, which clearly refers to the 'House of Judah' as a distinct entity (of course, this verse is not without its literary-critical difficulties).[159] In the same way that legitimation for the resurgence of the Davidic monarchy manifested in the story of Josiah's attempts at national 'restoration' was found through the contemporisation and revision of an original context for Isaiah which must have preceded that king, prophecies against Jerusalem such as those found below have attached the same criteria of causality which validated actual eighth century rhetoric directed against the northern kingdom – that cause is sin against YHWH:

> For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against YHWH, defying his glorious presence. **Isaiah 3:8**

> [S]hall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols what I have done to Samaria and her images? **Isaiah 10:11**

The problem, of course, is dating the activity of contemporisation, for a threat to Jerusalem could be part of a propagandist call to centralised worship in a Josian context (if such a thing

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[158] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 67

[159] Sweeney (2001: 237) sees Isa. 36-37 as a theological piece designed to present Hezekiah "as a model of piety to be followed by the Davidic kings (and people) of the future", and describes it as "an apocryphal tradition drawn from the book of Kings". Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 100. See further below on 2 Kgs. 18:13-19:36.

occurred) just as easily as it could be an *ex eventu* prophecy of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem.

What are we to make, then, of apparent allusions to the migration tradition in 'First' Isaiah? Have they been so repeatedly re-contemporised and re-contextualised that their historicity is irreparably diluted? For a start, there are few clear allusions to deal with and, acknowledging the complexity of the text, it is tempting to regard any which appear even remotely allusive as too late for my purposes.[160] Isaiah 10:20-27 is a perfect example of why caution should allay conviction. While it speaks of "the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the House of Jacob" (10:20) returning from deportation, and thus post-dates 721BCE, promises of judgement against Assyria (beginning from 10:12) are concerned with consoling people in Judah; or, more specifically, Jerusalem. The people of *Zion* are told not to fear the Assyrians "when they beat [them] with a rod and lift up their staff against [them]" (Isaiah 10:24; cf. 30:31), because YHWH will punish Assyria; and so the "remnant of Israel and the survivors of the House of Jacob" could be either i) the descendants of those who escaped the eighth century Assyrian campaign being promised by Josiah a return to their ancestral land (amidst his aspirations of reclaiming northern territory); or ii) 'exiled' Israelites in foreign lands hoping to come home. Of course, the latter assumes that they would want to return at all, considering that Israel no longer exists. If the texts are addressed to the latter, why would it be presumed that they would wish to return to Judah? Of course, if these verses belong to a context in which the demise of Assyrian dominance is imminent, that might better explain the optimism projected by assuring the people that they need not fear the Assyrians.[161] Such a context brings us into the period of Judean territorial resurgence under Josiah in the late seventh century, a situation facilitated by Assyrian weakness.[162] In this context, we could see Israelites called to return to the territory of Judah when its king is intent on reclaiming lost northern territories and redefining 'Israel' as a religio-political entity centred upon Jerusalem; just as we might see the descendants of the

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[160] Cf. Wong, 1996: 393: "[T]he theme of the exodus from Egypt is not prominent in Isaiah", one of the reasons he rejects seeing a purposeful allusion to Exodus 15 in Isa. 31:1, which lists horses, chariots and horsemen in the same order as the former.

[161] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 105: "[W]ith the passing of time, [...] perhaps during the movement for national independence during Josiah's reign, the attitude to the Assyrians expressed [in 'First' Isaiah] hardens[.]"

[162] Na'aman, 2010: 18-19. As will become clear in the next section, however, presuppositions as to the extent (and, indeed, the historicity) of this 'resurgence' should be challenged.

'northern tribes' placated (at least, to some degree) by the promise of a significant place in Josiah's new *Judean* 'Israel'.[163]

The imagery of future liberation from slavery in Isaiah 10:27 could, however, suggest a context in which conquest and capture by Assyria is still a possibility and, just as YHWH will bring the deportees from Israel back, he is promising the same for Judah *when they are beaten with a rod* and oppressed by the Assyrians. This imagery might best be related to the burden of vassalage, but its position immediately following 'Egypt' imagery directs us to an allusion to the migration tradition: the 'beating with a rod' is likened to a past experience with Egyptians in verse 24, and the removal of the Assyrian burden is likened to the consequence of YHWH's raising or wielding *his* staff over the sea "as he did in [or *in the manner of*] Egypt" (Isaiah 10:26b).[164] To see these words as constituting eighth century allusions to the migration tradition would require an extremely narrow contextual window (c.721-701) if the text actually preserves a real fear of Assyrian conquest and that empire's subsequent 'punishment' by YHWH (the 'miraculous' withdrawal of Sennacherib) compared with a memory of suffering in Egypt followed by liberation by YHWH. An argument for such a window would be extremely difficult to maintain, especially when it is more likely that we have here a Josian-era juxtaposition of Egypt and Assyria which envisages the demise of the latter informed by a collective memory of the defeat of the former. I think a combination of the projected optimism mentioned above and the newfound centralisation and revision of 'Israelite' identity in Jerusalem is the better lens through which to see the alignment of Assyria and Egypt in Isaiah 10:24-27, a conclusion which denies an eighth century context to the allusions to the migration tradition.

The very short allusion to the migration tradition in Isaiah 11:15-16 certainly post-dates 721 BCE when it envisages a 'highway' for YHWH's people to come out of Assyria, but the imagery

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[163] Similar issues arise for those wishing to assign an eighth century provenance to Amos 9:11-15, which speaks of the revival of the fallen (or, for some, falling) 'Booth' of David facilitating a restoration of "the fortunes of [...] Israel" (Amos 9:14a). As Davies, Philip R. (2009: 60) rightly observes, "It is doubtful that any political realignment with Judah would have been welcomed by Israelites" of the eighth century, particularly if the situation from which they were supposed to have rebelled was considered characteristic of the Judahite monarchy. Davies goes on (64) to say that "[t]he prediction about the 'booth of David' [...] does not [...] fit any plausible historical scenario for the prophet himself."

[164] Once again, we have the phrase בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם (Isa. 10:24b, 26b) which we encountered in Amos 4:10 (above), and the correlating usage in both of our 'eighth century' texts (it turns up in Jer. 2:18, where it is probably best read as 'road to Egypt', to contrast with 'road to Assyria') might suggest a stock expression informed by the 'paradigm' or 'archetype' of Egypt; see further below. Note that it is YHWH who lifts his staff in Isa. 10:26; there is no prophet here, as in Hos. 12:14.

of drying up the Egyptian sea in verse 15 could easily constitute a long established collective memory of an event which found its way into Exodus 14 (and facilitated the attachment of Exodus 15). If I am correct to see the tradition of the Jordan crossing as the earlier 'memory' incorporated into that of the Egyptian migration, such imagery as it was attached to Egypt could be relatively recent by the time it is used by Isaiah *or a later redactor* just as easily as it could be centuries old.[165] The allusion is vague, granted, but sometimes vague allusions imply an assumption of common knowledge amongst the intended audience. This is the same problem we encountered with Hosea and Amos failing to mention Moses when Micah's details were so polarised; perhaps the former prophets felt no need to clarify. All I will say of this allusion in Isaiah 11:15-16 is that it post-dates the Assyrian deportations of Israelites in the closing decades of the eighth century, but that the 'Egypt' imagery *taken up to address interpretations of that event* could be earlier. There is no convincing way to narrow it further, but if it belongs to the same historical context as that informing Isaiah 10:26b, then we are once again pushed into the late seventh century, *with the imagery established in collective memory by the time of Josiah*.

Isaiah 12 may not preserve a clear allusion to the migration tradition, but it does 'echo' the 'Song of the Sea' of Exodus 15. Sweeney draws attention to the "liturgical character" of both in relation to Passover celebrations, highlighting the centrality of that feast for Josiah's program of religious 'restoration'.[166] If, as Stephen C. Russell suggests, "the composer of Isaiah 11:11-12:6 was aware of both the Song of the Sea *and its subsequent association with the exodus*"; and it is correct to locate that composition in a Josian context, then we need not necessarily locate the incorporation of the 'Song' into the migration tradition as a whole until that time.[167] Imagery of the sea and creatures of the sea in Isaiah are perhaps best understood as pertaining to creation theology, particularly as it is attached to the festival of Passover. The destruction of Leviathan, the archetypal chaos monster, in Isaiah 27:1, heralds the ingathering of deported Israelites, whereby "those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship YHWH on the holy mountain at Jerusalem" (Isaiah

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[165] Sweeney (2001: 240) relates the "portrayal of YHWH's punishment of Egypt" to the geopolitical situation which saw Egypt side with Assyria against Babylon in 616 BCE, a circumstance which "placed it in opposition to Judah's interests in establishing its own independence." Thus, the imagery would not need to be so ancient amidst politically motivated rhetoric aimed at Egypt during Josiah's reign, and there is no way of knowing when the Jordan crossing was distorted to refer to the יַם־סוּף event.

[166] Sweeney, 2001: 241 (also 240)

[167] Russell, 2009: 140. In saying that, however, I see no reason to push into the seventh century the incorporation of 'Egypt' imagery into the 'Song'.

27:13).[168] As will be emphasised below, the particularly narrow contextual window where Egypt would have been seen as a destination for deportation under the Assyrians causes difficulties for the credibility of prophetic threats of the same, and perhaps calls for understanding 'Egypt' as something other than literally that land. Similarly, this hope for a return of deportees from Egypt pushes the date of this prophecy into perhaps the mid-seventh century at the earliest. As above, however, the envisaging of Assyrian weakness combined with the idea of Israel's *re*-creation best suits Josiah's 'reformation' of his Jerusalem-centred 'Israel'.

A particularly interesting prophecy in Isaiah 19 – despite referring to Egyptians rather than 'Hebrews' or Israelites – contains imagery highly reminiscent of the Exodus narrative, but the fact that it looks to the future *without alluding to any 'Exodus'-related precedent* strikes me as a missed opportunity to legitimate the prophecy if the imagery below was part of the tradition by this time. Instead, it is quite possible that verses such as these informed the later narrative (see further below):

> On that day there will be an altar to YHWH in the centre of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to YHWH at its border. It will be a sign and a witness to YHWH *Ṣᵉbaʼôt* in the land of Egypt; when they cry to YHWH because of oppressors, he will send them a saviour, and will defend and deliver them. YHWH will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know YHWH on that day and will worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to YHWH and perform them. YHWH will strike Egypt, striking and healing; they will return to YHWH, and he will listen to their supplications and heal them. **Isaiah 19:19-22**

In sum, we are left with little in Isaiah by which to convincingly posit eighth century applications of the migration tradition, but operating on the presumption – against which few would argue – that there was an eighth century prophet named Isaiah ben Amoz; and that we have in 'First' Isaiah at the very least echoes of the ideological 'flavour' of his rhetoric, what can be gleaned even from the redacted text is that later ideologies are formulated within the framework of this figure's reputation as a strong voice against infidelity to YHWH, and the social injustices wrought upon the people by the ruling classes:

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[168] Just as the demise of the Assyrians is cast in terms of the mythic defeat of Leviathan, so too is mythic imagery used to equate either Pharaoh or Egypt with "the older watery adversary" (Edelman, 2012: 168-169) defeated by YHWH, when Isaiah (30:7) likens Egypt's unreliability to "Rahab who sits still". Gerstenberger (2009: 121-122) sees Persian (Zoroastrian) influence behind the "eschatological and apocalyptic perspective" of Isa. 24-27.

> YHWH rises to argue his case; he stands to judge the peoples. YHWH enters into judgement with the elders and the princes of his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? **Isaiah 3:13-15**

It appears that parts of Isaiah exhibit allusions to 'sayings' of Amos, Hosea and Micah; and, as such, it could be maintained that Isaiah provides evidence for an eighth century *sitz im leben* for his 'predecessors'.[169] In saying that, Isa. 3:16-17, for example, while echoing Amos 4:1-3, appears to belong to a post-exilic context, which would not by itself keep the latter anchored to the eighth century as a potential source of influence. Similarly, a comparison of Isaiah's description of Jerusalem's restoration in 4:2-6 with its 'counterpart' in Micah 4 should remove both texts from an eighth century context: in both, the imagery envisages 'Israel' returning to 'Zion', and such theology finds greater expression in a later period when 'Israelite' identity is perceived as centred upon Jerusalem.[170] Blenkinsopp may be correct to attribute influence to Hosea for the imagery of "the faithless children" and "the harlot city" found in Isaiah 1:2-4 and 1:21-26, respectively, but – as touched on above – Isaiah 1 appears to be a conflation of imagery pertaining to the Syro-Ephraimite war of the 730s; the late eighth century incursions into Judah of Sennacherib; and a theological retrospective on the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. Perhaps the first two of these three contexts inspired the appropriation of 'Hosea' imagery, but if it is correct to see the temple at Bethel as the initial repository for 'records' of the activities of Hosea and Amos (as per Diana Edelman and Philip R. Davies, for example), then I think it is to a Josian context that we should look for a *terminus post quem* for literary allusion.[171]

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[169] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 104-105.

[170] Cf. n. 200, below.

[171] Edelman, 2009: 41; Davies, Philip R., 2009: 63-64, 68; Fleming, 2012: 318-321. See also Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz, 2009: 44; and Na'aman, 2010: 19-20. Cf. Tucker, 2006: 95 (on Amos): "[S]ince so many of the words are addressed to Bethel and Samaria, it is reasonable to conclude that he presented at least some of his addresses in those two centers [sic]." It is ironic that such oracles – made at the time by Yahwists – have come into our possession only because they were kept by the same religious authorities against whom they were directed! The Jerusalemite editors of these oracles reclaimed them for their own polemical ends by strengthening the validity of their condemnations against worship which most likely still existed *at the time the editorial activity was taking place*. On the possibility that there was no public cultic site in Samaria against which prophetic rhetoric would have been directed, see Fried, 2002: 455.

To return to the matter at hand, it is worth noting that those verses in Isaiah which appropriate the ideas and imagery of Amos and Hosea are connected to the latter predominantly by the rhetoric of social injustice as it was made manifest through the activities of the upper echelons of society. It is this binding feature of the prophetic texts upon which I will focus in Section 3.3.3, below, particularly as it would either have i) provoked assessment of the ideals of a covenant relationship with YHWH founded upon and within the migration tradition; or ii) facilitated the ideological foundations for later reconstructions of the period into which was projected the existence of such ideals. Before I move on to discuss the Yahwist and Jerusalemite representation of the prophets and their activities, I will say something about – or, rather, against – reading in the texts of the *eighth century Judean prophets* (Micah and 'First' Isaiah) any application of the migration tradition associated with an attack on the integrity of 'Israelite' identity.

As above, I summarily dismiss Micah's allusion to the migration tradition in 6:4 primarily because it stands out as completely anomalous amidst his 'contemporaries'. None of the others speak of Moses; neither Amos and Hosea, who address the people of Israel, nor Isaiah, who is clearly involved in the political machinations of the Jerusalem court and whom we would presume to speak with the authority of such a towering figure as the 'prophet' who led the people out of Egypt and received the תּוֹרָה to which (through the claims of prophetic rhetoric) the people are bound. Instead, any appeal to the identity of his audience on Isaiah's part would be articulated in terms of the antiquity and authority of the court at Jerusalem which, by extension, was informed by the ideology of the perpetual line of David. Any issue of national identity for Isaiah, then, was characteristically Judean (or, more specifically, Jerusalemite), and addressing threats to national identity would not have called for an appeal to the migration tradition, as was the case for our prophets whose audience was specifically Israelite (see further below). I have opted to read Micah 6:4, then, within a context of the 'archaising' not only of his message but also of the tradition (again, Micah 7:15 is too vague and does not enter into the discussion concerning identity); while those allusions to the tradition found in 'First' Isaiah that I would see as preserving genuine eighth century 'sayings' do not necessarily belong to the tradition in terms of the structured narrative of which we are aware. In other words, while they appear to 'echo' Exodus, the correlating content of that fully realised story might be best understood as dependent upon the imagery preserved in earlier prophetic tradition.

So while Isaiah and Micah might not appear on the surface to help us posit a convincing historical context for the next step in the evolution of the migration tradition, it is through memories of their activity and their fervent rhetoric directed at condemning the upper classes that they share an ideological affinity with the prophets who otherwise focus on the centrality of the migration tradition for the people of the northern kingdom; and it is through this later

homogenisation of the message of the prophets (and, indeed, of the migration tradition) that Amos and Hosea find their activity retrospectively valued by the Jerusalemite establishment:

> It appears that the creators of prophetic books selected the spokesmen for Yahweh from a larger prophetic corpus of materials that would have existed, based on their predication of the fall of Jerusalem, Judah or Israel or their prediction of divine punishment for unacceptable acts. These are the uniting threads throughout the prophetic literature.[172]

Further to this, I believe that the migration tradition and the 'Exodus' narrative which emerges as so fully defining for the identity of Jerusalem's post-monarchic 'Israel' informs this unification; and one of the primary reasons Amos and Hosea are deemed so instrumental to this process is not simply because *they championed the migration tradition as binding upon the identity and the values of the people of Israel*, but because they did so at Bethel, the site *later constructed in a literary sense* as the long-standing rival to Jerusalem's cultic centrality.

3.3.2 *A Decidedly Yahwist View – The Condemnation of Bethel*

Arguably, the 'centrepiece' for studies of the ideological and theological conflict between Jerusalem and Bethel in Israel's past has long been Amos 7:10-17, where the eponymous 'shepherd from Tekoa' confronts Amaziah, the institutional 'priest' of Bethel.[173] It is not necessary here to delve into some of the more 'popular' approaches to this pericope, which deal with whether or not Amos was – or saw himself as – a prophet in the institutional or 'peripheral' sense (the latter being arguably subjective);[174] but it is worth noting the work of Diana Edelman, who envisages a late historical context for retrospectively subsuming the

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[172] Edelman, 2009: 41

[173] Interestingly, in what might now be a considerably outdated view, Lindblom (1962: 209) sees Amos as "having been temporarily attached to the staff [at Bethel]".

[174] This relates to the 'Deuteronomistic' core of Amos 7, the denunciation of the cultic practices at Bethel under Jeroboam II. For Campos (2011: 21-23), the "curse of Jeroboam I [...is...] transformed" to relate to "the curse of the northern kingship", but this presupposes the historicity of the story of Jeroboam I dealt with in Section 3.2, which is decidedly unwarranted. On the 'professional' identity, see pp. 14-15 in Campos, 2011; also Tucker, 2006: 94; Heaton, 1996: 30-31 (who attributes considerable weight to Amos' words with regard to the professional identity of the other major prophets); Zevit, 1975 (for a rather different reading of Amos' words in 7:14); Giles, 1992 (who interprets Amos' words as crucial to the legitimation of his role as representative of the 'oppressed', in that he is disassociating himself from an institution representative of the 'oppressor').

memories and records of the activities of extra-cultic 'ecstatics' and institutional functionaries in monarchic era Judah and Israel so that the title נָבִיא was not only applied wholesale to them, but was redefined so that memories of non-Yahwistic practices became anathema in the collective memory.[175] Such practice is, of course, characteristic of the Yahwistic retrospective on the biblical histories of Israel and Judah, and it is always necessary for the sake of exegesis to bear in mind that a text wherein a particular practice, place, deity or person is condemned or demonised implies that said text was composed from a position either of contemporary rivalry or 'victorious' retrospective:[176]

> The unifying agenda of the book of Amos [...] is one of turning a scroll of collected oracles from the past to legitimize later Judaean [sic] assumption of the mantle of "Israel". Its purpose is to justify Jerusalem's triumph over Bethel and Judah's over Israel.[177]

When it comes to the biblical approach to the sanctuary at Bethel, it appears likely that we are reading a conflation of both perspectives, although the triumphant 'gloss' of the latter has invariably bolstered whatever confidence the former might have otherwise conveyed. As Philip R. Davies relates elsewhere, "[t]he problem in assigning [to Amos]" a call to destroy Bethel and Gilgal (Amos 5:4-6) is that "no obvious alternative to worship at these temples presents itself".[178] While Amos may have had reason to condemn non-Yahwist worship at Bethel, then, he would not necessarily have envisaged the destruction of the sanctuary there so that the people would worship solely at Jerusalem. It is insufficient (while entirely correct) to dismiss such ideology as retrospective, for it would be decidedly unrealistic to presume that the people of a flourishing eighth century Israelite state would reject their own sanctuaries for one in Judah. Of course, this resurrects images of the motivations of Jeroboam I for his supposed

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[175] Edelman, 2009. Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 79: "No label covering the role and activity of these individuals will be entirely satisfactory, but perhaps the designation [...] 'dissident intellectual' will not be entirely inappropriate." Also Heaton, 1996: 42: "[...] Amos and his successors were even more distinctive than they are now represented as being and that they cannot be adequately understood as a variety, even a rare variety, of prophecy as an institutional phenomenon." Contra, for example, Sawyer (1987: 17): "Not every prophet was characterized [sic] by exactly the same manifestations, but all had enough in common to be identifiable as prophets."

[176] Of course, such a 'victory' might also be just presented as such with little or no foundation in reality; a presentation which, in itself, could lay the groundwork for the cultural 'forgetting' facilitating the creation and survival of the 'memory' of the 'victory'.

[177] Davies, Philip R., 2006: 131

[178] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 57-58

erection of 'heretical' altars and idols at Dan and Bethel, the likelihood of which (that is, his motivations) should be considered with the above in mind. Matters of constructed continuity arise here, because – as I suggested in the previous section – the likelihood that there is a literary relationship between the story of Amos and Amaziah in Amos 7:10-17 and that of the unnamed 'man of god' and the priest at Bethel in 1 Kings 13 implies not only that one is dependent on the other, but that the historicity of (at least) one is considerably threatened. If Peter Ackroyd is correct to identify a further affinity with the very short pericope of 2 Chronicles 25:14-16, then the historical ground is close to giving way completely.[179] While I often favour the historicity of shorter versions of inner-biblical correlations, the conspicuous absence of any reference to Bethel in the Chronicler's brief account makes it extremely difficult to argue for its greater antiquity. The compromise of Philip R. Davies – in that he sees an historical kernel to the story in which a figure named Amos confronted someone named Amaziah (at Bethel) – will suffice for my purposes, and I would be inclined to agree with him that Christophe Levin's placement of the 'original' Amos in a tenth century context is a "radical" one.[180] Instead, I would propose that the Jerusalemite-Yahwist rendition of events is behind the inner-biblical correlations. What matters here is that the memory of the confrontation between a Yahwist 'prophet' confronting a priest at Bethel echoed down through the centuries until it was attached to the legitimation of Jerusalem's cultic supremacy; but it also served to *archaise* that supremacy by 'anchoring' an 'original' manifestation of that event to a constructed memory of the rejection of said supremacy deemed characteristic of the foundation of the northern kingdom (and continually so of its monarchy).[181] Once again, the construction of continuity occurs in both chronological directions, and the eighth century is beginning to emerge as a sort of 'two-way lens' through which the biblical writers look backward in time while also imagining themselves looking forward to their own present.[182]

Amos 7:10-17 is arguably the seminal pericope through which are articulated the ideologies of Jerusalemite supremacy over Bethel, but if Terry Giles is correct to see this scene as a confrontation between "archetypes representing the main antagonists within the book", then it is central to the picture of the appropriation by Yahwists of the voice of the poor in a socio-

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[179] Ackroyd, 1977: 80-81, suggesting that the Chronicler appropriated the older tradition, shifting the focus away from Amaziah the priest to attach the type-scene of the accused prophet to Amaziah the king.

[180] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 63, referring to Levin, 1995.

[181] As Ben Zvi (2006: 45) reminds us, "[n]either Jeroboam I nor his sin is mentioned in prophetic literature".

[182] I return to this notion of what I see as 'pivotal' historiographical contexts in the Chapter Summary, below.

political conflict blamed upon the rejection of the socio-religious obligations of the upper classes of Israel.[183] In other words, the cultic practices at Bethel are being represented as synonymous with the comparative 'depravity' of urbanisation characteristic of the biblical presentation of the northern kingdom. If there is some kernel of historicity to be found in this picture of a Yahwist 'prophet' speaking out against the religious institutions of the northern kingdom (and there may have been many more), then I think we should see Hosea's condemnation not only of the nature of cultic practices at Bethel, but also of the god worshipped there, as complementing the 'mission' of his counterpart. In this, Amos and Hosea might be seen as 'partners' in a theological battle for the supremacy of Jerusalemite Yahwism, but whereas Amos is concerned with the 'religiosity' of social and economic behaviour, it is through Hosea that the attack on the values and virtues of the people of Israel invokes to a greater degree the centrality of the migration tradition as it pertains to their core identity.

From the point of view of the 'theology' of Hosea, I find myself drawn to the work of R. Scott Chalmers (already cited in the previous section with regard to the Jeroboam I narrative), whose attempt to identify the theology of Hosea's 'opponents' at Bethel introduces a rather significant aspect of the development of the migration tradition in mid eighth century Israel. For Chalmers, one of the central questions Hosea brings to the fore is that of who might have been the 'original' god of the 'Exodus'. It was suggested earlier that El or Ba'al may have been that god, but while A. D. H. Mayes might be correct to see the "association of the exodus with Yahweh [as] a prophetic achievement" (and thus arguably moving the *terminus post quem* of this association into the eighth century), this does not preclude the possibility that YHWH was the 'original' god of this foundational 'event' if Mayes' claim is seen only as the (authoritative) crystallisation of said association.[184] In other words, it is entirely possible that we have been looking at this the wrong way, and that YHWH had indeed been the god of the migration *from the beginning*. Yet can we really locate in time 'the beginning' of the tradition, as was attempted in Chapter 2; and, more importantly, can we attach whatever 'beginning' we might posit to one homogeneous group? Indeed, what do we mean by 'the beginning'?

Even if the strand of the tradition introducing YHWH began with memories of Shasu groups from Edom, we still cannot be sure that there were no other groups possessing memories of coming up from Egypt *for whom their deity was central to the proceedings*; groups who later contributed to the ethnic composition of 'Israel'. If we are seeing in the prophetic texts evidence of an understanding in eighth century Israel that El (or even Ba'al, as per Mayes) was said god; and even if Jeroboam I had established a religion which looked suspiciously

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[183] Giles, 1992: 691. Cf. Kee, 1987: 152-153.

[184] Mayes, 2006: 68

'Canaanite', then there could have been a program of 'forgetting' in the north which gradually (and temporarily, of course) took credit from YHWH as god of the Egyptian migration until it was attached to one of those Canaanite deities:

> It [...] is not that El truly was the sole deity who was celebrated as the god of the Exodus, but rather that such a tradition may have been celebrated among certain populations in Israel, particularly in the north, most probably in Bethel.[185]

The tendency amongst scholars to approach the adoption of Yahwism as 'Israel's' central faith as if it constituted a thoroughly natural progression and a complete distinction from worship of 'Canaanite' deities – and that the former was somehow superior to its 'predecessor(s)' – dismisses the much more likely scenario of Yahwism evolving *over a long period* within a framework of 'Canaanite' religious practices:

> From the cumulative evidence it appears that on the whole Baal was an accepted Israelite god, that criticism of his cult began in the ninth or eighth century, and that despite prophetic and Deuteronomistic criticism, this god remained popular through the end of the southern kingdom. There is no evidence that prior to the ninth century Baal was considered a major threat to the cult of Yahweh.[186]

I suggested above that the *terminus post quem* of the 'prophetic achievement' by which YHWH was attached to the 'Exodus' might be best found in the eighth century, and I say this because of a glaring omission within the Deuteronomistic redaction of the traditions of Elijah and Elisha: there is no direct reference to YHWH having brought the people up from Egypt. This is surprising, when the prophets we have dealt with here afford that tradition such weight with regards to the identity of the people and the obligations associated with it. Where Elijah is certainly a prominent figure in the fight for Yahwistic supremacy, it seems probable that whatever aspects of the Deuteronomistic account of his activities have their origin in the ninth century, these did not retain memories of his appeal to the migration tradition in relation to

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[185] Chalmers, 2008: 52

[186] Smith, Mark, 2002: 74. Cf. Blenkinsopp (1996: 58): "By the time of Ahab much of the population of the [northern] kingdom had accommodated the cult of Yahweh to that of the old Canaanite-Phoenician deities[.] But the arrival of Jezebel [...] seems to have precipitated a violent struggle between conservative Baalist and Yahwist elements"; also p. 89: "The dominant religion, not only in Israel but in Judah, and not only then but throughout almost all of history, was a syncretic blend of the Yahweh cult with other cults of the region, especially those directed to the Canaanite pantheon[.]"

that 'fight'; and this stands out as a 'glaring omission' because the opportunity was surely there to introduce such 'memories' into those stories.[187] As with our eighth century prophets, then, I would be inclined to argue that Elijah 'did not know Moses' either; and even when we come to Elisha calling YHWH so that the water of the Jordan is parted with Elijah's 'mantle' (2 Kings 2:13-14), it would be best to read this as a generic motif of YHWH's control over the sea adapted in the story of the crossing of the Jordan in Joshua 3 and magnified in the 'Song of the Sea' in Exodus 15. Certainly, the provenance of the Elijah-Elisha sequence is open to question, but there appears to be no strong evidence for any concerted defence of Yahwism in ninth century Israel; and I would argue that the messages of Amos and Hosea (and to a lesser extent, Isaiah) – preserving the earliest evidence of such a conflict – characterised interpolations of disparate activities retrospectively attributed to Elijah so that the former were given even greater validity. Like Amos, Elijah is a champion of social justice, but even in the story of Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings 21 (the 'epilogue' of which is found in the closing verses of 2 Kings 9), no appeal is made to YHWH having brought the people up from Egypt as the event upon which is founded the traditions of social justice presupposed by the tale. I will return to such matters further below, but this is especially relevant insofar as Hosea's promotion and application of the migration tradition is concerned, because it argues in favour of locating the origins of the zealous defence of YHWH's association with the tradition in the mid eighth century at the earliest. This period, as I will show, is the one most suited for the exaltation of YHWH above other gods resulting from theological reflections on its notable events; and it is one in which the memories of prophetic 'missions' to Bethel in the name of YHWH informed the mnemohistorical anchoring of those reflections.[188]

In this picture, Yahwism is best understood as a singular cult operating within a milieu of polytheistic and syncretistic cosmogonies, within which framework occurred the oscillation of credit for the Egyptian migration depending upon which deity was in the political ascendancy at a given time – especially if that migration were understood as foundational for the nation. Hosea would have understood this, which is why he appears so focused on '*re*-appropriating' for YHWH the credit for the migration from Egypt which for the people of the northern

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[187] In this, I am not sure how Heaton can suggest that, in the ninth century (according to the Elijah-Elisha traditions), "the faith of Israel was seriously imperilled by the Old Canaanite religion of Palestine" and that "[i]t was in this critical situation that *Israel's Mosaic tradition* found in a new kind of prophecy its appropriate mode of expression" (1996: 40, emphasis mine). Linville (1998: 178) observes that neither the 'Exodus' nor Moses are mentioned in any of the "northern episodes" of the 'books' of Kings.

[188] It is worth noting, as suggested above, that many such 'missions' may have been undertaken by many such figures (cf. Lindblom, 1962: 202), but that a specific set of characteristics and content were deemed most suitable for the preservation and redaction of the 'oracles' which have come down to us.

kingdom *at that time* belonged to El. This may not simply be about usurpation of the latter with no credible grounds; for Hosea it could be about reclaiming a (perceived) historical religious heritage which he sees as binding upon the identity of the people:

> [F]or Hosea false worship [...] is at the root of both moral failure and social disintegration. False worship is, however, conceivable only when a community abandons its traditions[.] Hence any prospect of reformation depended on recovering and reappropriating the traditions that conferred on Israel its specific character and identity.[189]

In this context, it does not really matter which god was 'originally' associated with the migration tradition. What matters is that Hosea's perception of the situation in the northern kingdom suggests that a god other than YHWH was being venerated in terms akin to cult he believed should be reserved for YHWH alone. For Hosea, the core identity and values of 'Israel' were founded upon the relationship forged in the wake of YHWH bringing Israel's ancestors up from Egypt. The Deuteronomistic success in light of the relatively easy conflation of YHWH and El (which Chalmers argues is the reason for the paucity of overt biblical polemic against El) likely resulted not from violent attacks against El worship by prophets like Hosea, but through clever and impassioned pleas to accept what should have been obvious: YHWH was the one and only 'El' and, as such, YHWH was clearly the god who had brought the people up from Egypt. If Hosea had an argument to make, it was that the 'El' of Jacob should not be distinguished from the YHWH of 'Israel' – they are one and the same. In this regard, Hosea can tackle the worship of El in terms of theological conflation rather than triumphant usurpation, so that he can deal with Israel being "in such utter confusion about the identity of their saving deity".[190] While some might see Hosea dismissing the relevance of the Jacob tradition in favour of the migration tradition – particularly as the former attaches itself to Bethel (cf. Hos. 12:5, which uses the same verb מָצָא, 'to find', as in 9:10a, discussed above) – Hosea might be best read as offering a compromise harmonising two separate traditions of origin.[191] This is the primary thrust of Hosea 12:3-13, which combines the stories of Jacob which end up in Genesis, and the migration tradition upon which Exodus is founded. It is not just that Hosea is delivering

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[189] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 89

[190] Chalmers, 2008: 80

[191] For a discussion of the literary connection between Genesis and Exodus in this regard, see Schmid, 2006: 31-35. Also in the same volume, De Pury (51-72), Gertz (73-87) and Levin (131-141) discuss the matter in relation to the theoretical 'Yahwist'. Cf. also Na'aman, 2011a: 41. I will return to the literary 'bridge' of the Joseph story in my conclusion. On why the Jacob traditions might have lost their potency in the wake of the eighth century conquest of Israel, see 3.3.4, below.

the words of YHWH and thus the first person is required; rather, the emphasis is upon YHWH *as opposed to any other god* as he who performed these deeds (in this interpretation, אָנֹכִי would be best read emphatically in such verses as 11:9b).[192]

Of course, we will never know the entire truth of any 'dialogue' between Yahwists and their counterparts worshipping any god other than YHWH; what we have is the Yahwistic perspective and the words put into the mouths of their 'opponents', words intended to sometimes present them as naïve and mistaken zealots of the 'wrong' faith while also facilitating the noble and 'heroic' characteristics of the figures who defended the 'right' one. As a result, there is no reason to believe that worship of YHWH ever ceased in the northern kingdom; rather, the religiously fuelled rhetoric against the respective rulers and cultic institutions preserved in the prophetic texts attests only to the lack of prominence afforded YHWH resulting from the loyalties of those rulers to other gods.[193] If there were footnotes in the Hebrew Bible, they might ponder the apparent contradictory nature, for example, of the Yahwistic names of the Judahite King Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25ff.), or of Athaliah, his mother (who became Queen after his death; 2 Kings 11:1-3), both of whom were seen to promote the worship of Baal; or even, of course, the Yahwistic name of the priest with whom Amos argues at Bethel, but this in itself should suggest that worship of YHWH was far from prohibited in eighth century Israel; there were simply times when it was not in the ascendancy in a polytheistic system of worship. Whether or not Chalmers is correct to argue for the worship of a god called Bethel at the eponymous site – and that it is with this deity that Hosea's 'opponents' should be associated – it is with the Yahwistic perspective and the 'prophetic' activity carried out in the name of YHWH at Bethel that I am concerned, because at Bethel occurred not only the exaltation of YHWH as god of the 'Exodus', but also the harmonisation of the Jacob and 'Exodus' traditions (arguably best articulated in the juxtaposition of verses 13 and 14 in Hosea 12); a circumstance which arguably lays the foundations for the later Pentateuchal 'grand narrative' so central to Israelite identity. If this was really the direction of

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[192] Chalmers (2008: 75, 85-91, emphasis mine) argues for the following translation of 11:9b (91): "For I *and I alone* am El (God) and not a mortal, the Holy One in your midst."

[193] Cf., for example, Edelman, 2009: 35-36; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 247-249. In this regard, Blenkinsopp (1996: 58) notes the difficulties arising from Ahab's use of Yahwistic prophets regarding fighting the Arameans (when Ahab is condemned as a heretical king). Of course, not only is the issue in 1 Kgs. 22 more about the folly of trusting in sycophantic 'institutional' prophets as opposed to those truly inspired by YHWH, it should not be overlooked that it is by the advice of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, that Ahab asks his prophets to consult YHWH (perhaps they can consult whichever god they choose). Still, if one was to argue for Ahab's court as institutionally anti-Yahwistic, the Yahwistic name of his 'palace steward', Obadiah (1 Kgs. 18:3ff.), would surely stand in the way.

dependence informing the inner-biblical correlations and 'allusions', then Hosea's call to recognise YHWH not only as the god of the 'Exodus' but also as the only god 'Israel' has known since its beginnings is an interesting way to appreciate the early stirrings of ideas informing not only the Deuteronomistic concept of covenant, but also the later compilation of the 'Decalogue', the origins of which are projected back in time through the crystallisation of the migration tradition as defining for the relationship between 'Israel' and YHWH.[194] It is clear, then, that amongst our eighth century prophets, Hosea emerges as one of the most significant for my purposes.

3.3.3 *From Social Crisis to Fear of Deportation – Enter Oppression and Exile*

We have seen how the argument for (re)appropriating for YHWH the credit for the migration from Egypt was taken up by Hosea amidst the condemnation of Israel for ignoring its obligations centred upon the relationship with YHWH founded upon that event. I believe that Hosea's agenda regarding the 'clarification' of ongoing cultic practices occurred within a framework of disillusionment amongst the general population so that a call to 'return' to the worship of YHWH was presented as the best option for salvation from the Assyrian military machine. I will argue here that a convergence of circumstances presented 'prophetic' opponents to Israel's socio-political infrastructure with the perfect opportunity not only for reviving the migration tradition as fundamental to the core identity of 'Israel', but also for *reimagining it in terms relevant to their socio-historical context*:

> Appeal to these normative events and disclosures implied for Hosea a drastic relativizing [sic] of contemporary sociopolitical [sic] and religious structures. In refusing to acquiesce in them or to take them seriously, Hosea demonstrated the revolutionary strength of the prophetic movement of the eighth century B.C.E.[195]

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[194] Cf., for example, Hos. 4:2, within which context Mayes (1991: 32) remarks that "it is much more likely that this prophet is anticipating the decalogue prohibitions rather than depending upon them". See also Blenkinsopp, 1996: 89-90. Similar correlations with proscriptions found in Exodus arise, for example, in Amos 2:8, where the rich are said to "recline by every altar on garments taken in pledge", a text which 'echoes' Exod. 22:25-26. On the pre-exilic (Neo-Assyrian period) provenance of the 'Covenant Code' (Exod. 20:23-23:33), see Levinson, 2004; although cf. Van Seters, 2003, who argues for Babylonian influence and an exilic date for its composition by a single author (45).

[195] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 90

Although written in the context of cautioning against the tendency amongst scholars to 'lengthen' the time-span(s) of crises to which many biblical texts attest, the words of Philippe Guillame can open our conversation here:

> The mother of all crises in social-scientific exegesis of the HB [sic] is the one caused by the consolidation of the monarchic state in the eighth century in Israel and Judah. The rise of an urban elite at the court of Samaria and then at Jerusalem is understood as introducing social stratification in Israelite society, increasing the fiscal burden of the peasants, and spurring a prophetic reaction.[196]

Walter Houston also makes a strong argument for seeing the 'crisis' of the eighth century in terms of the growing disenfranchisement of the peasantry, but he emphasises that this should not be automatically understood as reflecting a specific (and continuing) increase in wealth amongst the upper classes.[197] Unlike the usual approach to the historical context of these figures and their words, which ascribes to Jeroboam II a period of great prosperity, Houston looks to the external pressures in the geopolitical context (first Aramean and then Assyrian aggression) which would have led to the need to exact greater taxes from the peasant classes and thus dissolve the traditional balance between the ruling classes and their subjects.[198] He argues, then, not for a Samaria suddenly bedecked in splendour during the reign of Jeroboam II, but for that historical context as indicative of a climactic circumstance resulting in protest from the lower classes. For Houston, "[s]uch conditions certainly recurred on more than one later occasion, and were perhaps even more severe in the fifth century".[199] Yet while it is possible that there was a need to cite precedent in a fifth century context, we should not allow ourselves to be led away from the eighth century simply because echoes in a later period have coloured its articulation. I believe that it was within a context of perceived social injustice in the eighth century that the egalitarian *pretensions* (with intended emphasis) of the 'oppression and liberation' elements of the migration tradition emerged to attack the ruling classes for their creation and perpetuation of social and economic imbalance. YHWH brought Israel up out of Egypt – and here it is the people of the northern kingdom who are addressed, not the later construct of a twelve-tribe 'Israel' – but the situation from which they were 'saved' had been

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[196] Guillame, 2010: 2

[197] Houston, 2004. Cf., for example, Campbell, 1994.

[198] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 71, 81.

[199] Houston, 2004: 146-147. Analysing these crises in different time periods as mutually exclusive is precisely what Guillame (2010) advocates.

recreated by the very people who were rescued – the oppressed became the oppressors.[200] The upper echelons of society were being judged unworthy of the very intervention which led to their deliverance in antiquity. Indeed, their arrogance was stripped from them by diminishing their sense of 'chosenness', in what Blenkinsopp describes as a 'negation' of the special relationship centred upon the migration tradition, a "systematic reversal of the traditional symbols and images that sustained the common life of the state and came to expression in the national cult":[201]

> "Are you not like the Sons of Cush [Ethiopians] to me, Sons of Israel, says YHWH. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir?" **Amos 9:7**

For the prophets, Israel had taken for granted the faith shown by YHWH in choosing them as his own from "all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2a), and the prophets were keen to show that YHWH was enraged by their infidelity. That religious infidelity, however, was intrinsically connected to the relative luxury experienced by the upper echelons of the highly urbanised society. As noted above, Sparks addresses Hosea's threats to the people (Hos. 12:10b) that they will return to a simpler (nomadic) way of life:

> If prosperity had contributed to the continuing decline of Israel, then we should expect at some point that the prophet [Hosea] would hope to undo this prosperous trajectory[.] If material prosperity had caused Israel's religious infidelity, then a return to economic simplicity might secure anew its religious affiliation.[202]

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[200] Cf. Gray, 2006: 22. Giles (1992: 690-691) relates that the "line of demarcation [between oppressed and oppressor] is not that of economic status, but [in] relation to means of production". In characteristically Deuteronomistic language reminiscent of 1 Sam. 8:10-18 (cf. Deut. 17:14-20), Micah (2:2) accuses the ruling classes of coveting fields and houses, seizing them as they see fit, oppressing householders and interfering in traditional rights of inheritance. Combined, however, with prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction (Mic. 3:12); return (to Zion) from exile (4:6-7); restoration of the (Davidic?) monarchy (4:8); תּוֹרָה centred upon Jerusalem (4:2) and the comparatively elaborate allusion to the 'Exodus' story cited above (6:4), an eighth century provenance for Micah's condemnation of the upper classes loses much of its credibility.

[201] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 80, 86. See also Loewenstamm, 1992: 63.

[202] Sparks, 1998: 164. Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 90.

Of course, in the context of Hosea's religious concerns, his application of the migration tradition centres around 'reminding' the people that YHWH was the god who brought them up out of Egypt, as opposed to El. If scholars wish to see the calf at Bethel as representative of YHWH, they have overlooked Hosea's understanding of that 'same' idol in his own time:

> The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven.[203] Its people shall mourn for it, and its idolatrous priests shall wail over it, over its glory that has departed from it. The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria as tribute to the great king. Ephraim shall be put to shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol. **Hosea 10:5-6**

Here, the text of Hosea looks back on the Assyrian annexation of Israel and the very real removal of its cultic iconography. The Nimrud Prism has Sargon II (who succeeded Shalmeneser V, who had conquered Israel) claiming to have taken away "the gods in whom they [that is, Israel] trusted", and this is very much in keeping with Hezekiah's fears for Jerusalem as he prays to YHWH for deliverance from the Assyrian siege:[204]

> Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have hurled their gods into the fire, though they were no gods but the work of human hands – wood and stone – and so they were destroyed. **2 Kings 19:17-18**

With a cautious nod to Yahwistic monotheism (cf. v. 19) marking the sentiment as belonging to a later context than that of Hosea, Hezekiah's prayer nonetheless captures the religious fervour which must have manifested in light of the Assyrian threat. For the biblical writers, the Assyrian destruction of Israel and the later siege of Jerusalem were significant events in a conflict of theological proportions. A problem with including Amos in this approach is that, although it is regularly presumed that his eighth century prophecies relate to the Assyrian conquest, he makes no explicit reference to them and he is much more likely to have operated during "a time of relative stability in Israel".[205] Of course, such stability was probably only relative to the ruling classes, and so Amos' oracles would within decades have found validity in a time when someone like Hosea would have revitalised religious condemnation and injected new relevance into whatever was recalled of the activity of Amos. Hosea, however, injected further relevance

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[203] On Hosea's use of בֵּית אָוֶן (House of 'Delusion' [JPS footnote] or 'Folly') to speak of בֵּית־אֵל (cf. Hos. 4:15), see Chalmers, 2008: 75. Also Blenkinsopp, 2003: 94, rendering 'evil' or 'mischief'.

[204] Thomas, 1961: 60. Cf. Grabbe, 2007: 202.

[205] Tucker, 2006: 93

to the migration tradition to attack the people at the fundamental level of identity, targeting the most significant cultural memory upon which it depended (or, for Hosea, it should have depended); and so the socio-economic crisis perceived by the prophets through their affinity with the poor was distorted to become a crisis of identity, in that perhaps the upper classes did not even bear the right to the name 'Israel'! This is where the wider international context becomes relevant, because identity is only ever challenged by the proximity of the 'other'. In this regard, it is by 'zooming out' from a 'parochial' view of the socio-historical context that a greater understanding of the situation can be attained.

We do not need to zoom out too far, of course, because Assyrian expansion in the mid to late eighth century meant that Mesopotamian culture was right on Israel's doorstep; and with extra-cultural proximity came counter-cultural resistance. The burden of vassalage to this great empire must have ruffled some nationalistic feathers in both Israel and Judah, and in the eighth century the prophets understood their roles not only as defenders of faith, but also of identity. They posed the tough questions: 'Who are we?' 'Where have we come from?' 'What have we experienced to get here and to be the people we are?' Of primary concern, however, and especially in the above context, was the following question: 'How do we protect who we are?' Survival, it seemed, was at the forefront of prophetic rhetoric in their "war against cultural imperialism", but their decidedly justified fear of cultural absorption was articulated through accusations against those deemed responsible for allowing the situation to get that bad:[206]

> While the prophets extol the virtues of submission, justice, kindness and mercy, their strongest moods are of angry defiance, accusation and bitter guilt; and this might be explained in the context of imperial expansion in the 200 years starting from the mid-eighth century. It cannot be accidental that the first extant written prophecies – of Isaiah ben Amoz, Hosea, Amos and Micah – coincide with an astounding series of Assyrian conquests in the second half of the eighth century.[207]

Of course, our retrospective on the eighth century prophets is complicated by later Judean redaction, and Aberbach looks to the fear of exile and assimilation in Judah – which they had witnessed happen to their northern neighbours at the end of the eighth century – as the reason for the absence of "extended prophecies against Assyria [...] in the period of its greatest

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[206] Aberbach, 1993: 11. Of course, as Thompson (1999: 183) reminds us, the equally real threat of deportation (which invariably targeted those of political and military influence) was that which kept the ruling classes under the control of the empire.

[207] Aberbach, 1993: 5

military successes".[208] Of course, we come back again to the matter of the audience, and it is possible that within the context of the socio-economic crisis the prophets rallied support for their tangential agenda of condemning the ruling classes for not doing enough to assure the security of the kingdom. If Walter Houston is correct, however, and the socio-economic crisis resulted from the real attempts of the Israelite monarchy to secure their borders either through tribute or maintaining their military strength, then this terrible irony appears at first glance to be lost on the prophets. While Aberbach suggests that "[t]he prophets' faith blinded them to the truth that Israel faced the best military machine ever created and stood no chance against it", I think this does them something of a disservice.[209] In fact, I think that rather than being unaware of the impossibility of standing up against this 'military machine', they used the inevitability of defeat (indeed, Aberbach later states that "no prophet [...] called for armed revolt, knowing it to be futile"[210]) as an opportunity to articulate the threat in terms of a crisis of religious identity, insofar as their attack on polytheism was afforded greater validity by the encroachment of an empire embodying just that:

> The unique ferocity of the prophets' attacks on idols and idol-worship, while largely ignoring the rich mythology of pagan beliefs, may have been less a sign of hatred for idol-worship per se than of the empires which were odiously identified with the false gods and the magic and superstition associated with them.[211]

This is where the migration tradition came into play, particularly as it addressed aspirations of liberation and survival attached specifically to one particular deity rising from a milieu of

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[208] Aberbach, 1993: 11. Judean authorities must certainly have breathed a sigh of relief in light of their escaping Assyrian conquest in 701 BCE. As Blenkinsopp (1996: 69) observes: "The survival of Jerusalem at that crucial juncture must have greatly reinforced the assurance of divine protection and inviolability that finds expression in the psalms of Zion[.]" In this regard, the call of the 'eighth century' prophets for the northern kingdom to trust in YHWH would be better understood from a post-701 context of surviving Assyria, with the texts retrospectively validating the warnings of the prophets. Cf. also Ackroyd, 1984: 250-251.

[209] Aberbach, 1993: 23

[210] Aberbach, 1993: 33

[211] Aberbach, 1993: 11. While Moore (2006: 34) argues that "Israel's prophets [...] believed that its existence was threatened by the degradation of religious beliefs and social principles" – and I would normally agree that we should recognise the beliefs of those behind these texts – I would argue in this case that the Yahwistic prophets took full advantage of the external threats to Israel's survival in order to condemn the primary religion of the monarchy in terms synonymous with that of the Assyrians.

polytheism. In the context of the increasing exposure to Assyrian polytheism perceived as synonymous with the threat of their military expansion, the migration tradition could evolve into one of liberation from a distant and ungodly Egypt coloured by the proximate reality of Assyria. In essence, having Assyria on Israel's doorstep introduces a new layer to the migration tradition in which Assyria can be spoken of in terms of 'Egypt'. In other words, 'Egypt' as a symbol becomes an archetype for defining Assyria because a pre-existing tradition permits the interpolation into the story of the threat of assimilation and a conflict of theological proportions. This is not to say that there was never any memory of an Egyptian threat to religious identity during the period of Egyptian dominance of Palestine – nor does it imply the complete absence of interaction with Egyptian culture during this period – but I would argue that a significant clash of concepts of the divine, characteristic of what is *presented as a monotheistic-polytheistic schism*, does not pre-date the eighth century prophets as the earliest proponents of a 'YHWH-alone' group seeking to elevate their deity above others. I should clarify that while I agree in part with David Aberbach's picture of "Assyrian imperialism forc[ing] upon Judah the discipline of monotheism and its teachers, the prophets", this view should be tempered to replace 'monotheism' with 'monolatry' or 'henotheism' (encountered in the previous chapter with regard to Akhenaten).[212] If this is the case, then the threat to 'Israelite' identity in terms of the fear of polytheism caused a contraction of religious beliefs which may have taken the form of a jostling for superiority amongst disparate cults. For the YHWH-alone group, the northern kingdom was a den of religious iniquity and infidelity, the 'front lines' of the fight, and they went straight to the heart of Israel's religious self-understanding by attacking the cultural memory of coming up out of Egypt:

> [T]he Exodus from Egypt was a tenet well-suited for use in rebuke, since it [was] the very basis of the belief that Israel is subject to the commands of the Lord and hence that Israel will be subjected to punishment if it fails to observe these commands. The Exodus was equally well-suited for use in teaching more optimistic lessons. It was, after all, also the grounds for the belief that the Lord, who brought his people out of Egypt, will continually

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[212] Aberbach, 1993: 8. Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 66-67. As per Diana Edelman, it is the developed monotheism of the 'Exilic' period coupled with an awareness on the part of the biblical writers of Egyptian (monarchic) theology which articulates a polarisation of Israel and Egypt in terms of a theological conflict (2012, 30): "By situating the story in Egypt, a monotheistic god could demonstrate his status as the only true god in a battle against a human pharaoh claiming to be an incarnate living god." Of course, this does not weaken the possibility that it was an earlier, Assyrian period, framework of theological conflict which facilitated this aspect of the 'Exodus' story.

save them from the hand of their adversaries, and that in times of trouble and sorrow, Israel can expect God's salvation.[213]

So while Egypt was not necessarily a tangible part of the socio-historical context in which these prophets operated (of course, its presence contributed to Isaiah's rebuke in a very real way), it was the *idea* of Egypt which facilitated the rhetoric against Assyria on an analogical level at the same time as it is was being reformulated within the migration tradition. Although I would normally be wary of projecting ideas back in time to argue for analogy, this practice of (esoteric) allusion arises in the Gospels when the writers use Babylon as an archetype for Rome, that great polytheistic enemy about which it might have been hazardous to speak so vehemently. In this, the memories of Babylon as a polytheistic imperial aggressor – which would otherwise be irrelevant to a Roman-era context – resurface to colour the condemnations of Rome. I believe this is predominantly what we are reading in the words of the eighth century prophets, and it is why Assyria and Egypt occupy particular parallel phrases (note that there are various translations of the tenses in Hosea 11:5):[214]

They will not remain in the land of YHWH; but Ephraim will return to Egypt, and will eat unclean food in Assyria. **Hosea 9:3**

They [will] return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria is [will be] their king.[215] **Hosea 11:5**

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[213] Loewenstamm, 1992: 61-62

[214] There are, of course, other parallel usages of 'Egypt' and 'Assyria', but they are related specifically to geopolitical concerns and such things as accusations of seeking alliance with Egypt (see above in Section 3.3.1 for biblical citations; cf. Davies, Graham, 1992: 192-193). Since the 9th century, Egypt had supported Syro-Palestinian rebellions in Assyrian-held territory (Van De Mieroop, 2007: 256). Cf. Russell, 2009: 60: "The use of both threats [that is, Egypt and Assyria] in poetic parallelism suggests that the primary threat was that Israel would be taken away from its land, regardless of the actual destination of exile. [...T]he threat of Israel's return to Egypt [...] is not primarily a threat of return to slavery but a threat of banishment from its homeland."

[215] Chalmers (2008: 76) continues the clause after 'Assyria *is his* king' so that this circumstance is a direct result of 'refusing to repent'. Similarly, NRSV reads: "...and Assyria shall be their king, because they refused to repent"; while JPS closes the clause: "They return to the land of Egypt, And Assyria is their king." For the JPS, the refusal to repent is the reason for the 'sword [...] descend[ing] upon their towns' of 11:6. Landy (2011: 157) translates Hos. 11:5 as "He will *not* return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria, he is his king; for they have refused to return." Landy's unusual rendering of a negative clause (where there

> On that day YHWH will whistle for the fly that is at the sources of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. **Isaiah 7:18**

Why threaten a deportation to Egypt when Assyria was on the doorstep? In Hosea's time, Egypt was not held by Assyria (this does not happen until 671 BCE), and so an actual deportation to an Egypt where Assyria is dominant was highly unlikely.[216] Rather than see these threats as meaning literally Egypt, it is best to understand them as threatening a return to *a state of being* akin to the 'Egypt' preserved in collective memory. If Ehud Ben Zvi is correct in his analysis of the book of Nahum, then its presentation of Nineveh as 'paradigmatic' operates in a similar way, and we need not jump forward into the Common Era to find this practice of parallelism and analogy. It is not esoteric in the same sense as the application of Egypt I am suggesting here (when it speaks of Nineveh, it 'means' Nineveh to a certain degree), but the knowledge of the terrible destruction of Nineveh resonates in a timeless fashion in the same way as the collective memory of a migration from Egypt:

> [...] Nineveh was both a historical city and a symbol of a sinful, overbearing, exceedingly oppressive political structure whose fate was unlike all comparable cities in their world: it was totally destroyed and never rebuilt. From the perspective of target rereaderships [sic] well aware of the fall of Nineveh, such a fall from the pinnacle of glory and might becomes a paradigmatic example of the fate of worldly, powerful oppressors and, above all, of the even greater power of YHWH who brings them down. As such, the book [that is, Nahum] provided a message of hope and trust in YHWH to those who saw themselves as oppressed by their own "Nineveh".[217]

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is none in the Hebrew text) plays a part in his presentation of Hos. 11 as a "counterpart, and largely a reversal" of Hos. 9 (157-158).

[216] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 70. See further, Van De Mieroop, 2007: 256-258.

[217] Ben Zvi, 2006: 44-45, n. 12. As noted above with reference to Ben Zvi's 2006 essay, the writers (or redactors) of the prophetic 'books' were for the most part unconcerned with claims to historicity: "[T]hese prophetic books were not really about mimesis or historicity in contemporary terms, but about the learning of YHWH, Israel, and the relationship between the two in the past and the future" (Idem: 42). As such, the 'de-historicization' [sic] which Ben Zvi observes occurring in the prophetic texts ensures a sense of ideological continuity and relevance through the temporal dislocation of the prophetic message (Idem: 43).

The triumphant, mocking tone of Nahum's oracle against Nineveh is clear ("All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you"; 3:19b), and as I read it, I found myself reminded of the triumphalism of the 'Song of the Sea' in Exodus 15. While this is not the place to enter into a comparative analysis of the two texts, it is worth noting that both attest to a climactic destruction of a paradigmatic oppressive enemy; and while both dominated Syria-Palestine in ways which left their mark on the collective memory of 'Israel' (compare Section 3.2.5 on the campaign of Shishak), it is within the context of Assyrian domination that prophetic condemnations of foreign enemies enter the collective memory in ways which arguably called for the construction of their authenticity. If this period truly saw the genesis of 'writing prophets', then it would be from accounts of past events surviving in the collective memory of the people that these figures would draw their inspiration and their authority. It is possible that the formula of ancient victory hymns such as the 'Song of the Sea' informed that of oracles against foreign enemies;[218] and while the 'Song' is more likely to have been related to a memory of crossing the Jordan and attacking 'Canaanites' than leaving Egypt and destroying Pharaoh and his army (as argued earlier in Section 2.2.3), it is possible that a false 'memory' of destroying an Egyptian force had entered the migration tradition by the time of the destruction of Nineveh. It may, of course, have entered the tradition by the time of the eighth century prophets, but I think that the actual destruction of the capital of such an oppressive empire is a much more likely *terminus post quem* for a related reflection upon the collective memories of leaving Egypt; if for no other reason than rational questions as to how 'Israel' could have departed Egypt unmolested are more likely to have been asked in the wake of the harsh reality of Assyrian domination and the annexation of Israel. Such questions are asked and answers given with greater confidence, however, in light of the end of Assyria, and once again we are pushed towards a Josian-era context. Of course, while 'prophecies' of destruction and deportation are often relegated to the so-called 'exilic' or 'post-exilic' era, and notions of returning to or reforming 'Israel' are regularly denied any context earlier than Josiah, it is a mistake to summarily dislocate whatever memories might inform later redactions from any earlier historical contexts.[219] Instead, it is best to see the combination of the oppressive nature of the Assyrian empire and its tactics of deportation and the associated oppressive nature of the socio-economic situation in the northern kingdom as a circumstance provoking a

[218] Cf. Hayes, 1968: 86-87 (esp. p. 86, n. 20).

[219] Cf. Sweeney, 2001: 238: "Grappling with the problem of exile did not begin in the Babylonian period; it began in the aftermath of Israel's exile to Assyria[.]

purposeful reimagining of the migration tradition, whereby the motifs of slavery and oppression in a foreign land are afforded immediate potency.[220]

Before summarising this analysis of the eighth century application of the migration tradition and their contribution to its evolution, it is necessary to consider how important these 'historical' figures might have been. Isaiah features in the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kings 19:1-20:19), but his contemporaries do not; and I would argue that this is because they (Hosea, Amos and Micah) were not considered sufficiently significant as agents of historical processes and causality. In short, they are not seen to have made anything 'happen' in a *tangible chronological sense*, and so they do not fit the criteria to become part of the cast of an ideological and theological retrospective on Israel and Judah *subordinated to an understanding of YHWH as a god active in history* rewarding those who venerate him accordingly and punishing those who do not.[221] In saying that – and it has been noted above that the preservation of these texts accords to a specific purpose – I believe that the reason texts like Amos, Hosea, 1 Isaiah and Micah were gathered together and contextualised using superscriptions and historical 'anchors' was both to validate their condemnations and threats of destruction in the context of Yahwistic-Jerusalemite triumphalism and to legitimise the ideological historiography of the Deuteronomistic writers and later redactors by creating the perception of a shared historical context which might otherwise have borne no relevance. Compare, for example, the words of Philip R. Davies regarding the newfound relevance of Amos:

> [Amos] was compiled not before the second half of the fifth century BCE [...] as part of a much wider process of text-production [...] when Jerusalem once more became the capital of Judah and for the first time was championed as the only legitimate sanctuary

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[220] This does not imply the presence in the tradition at this time of the more elaborate imagery of slavery and oppression we know from 'Exodus' – indeed, it is not even mentioned (the 'iron furnace' of Egypt [Deut. 4:20; 1 Kgs. 8:51] is Deuteronomistic imagery) – but it likely suggests early forms of that motif in place by the mid eighth century. This could indicate, by extension, that the 'separation' of Israel from whatever form of rule was characteristic of Jerusalem two centuries earlier was already being cast as a 'liberation' from oppression by this time, and that this 'popular' interpretation of Solomon's rule – thought of amongst Israelites in decidedly Egyptian terms – also laid the foundation for interpreting the Assyrian experience.

[221] Cf. Schmid, 2012: 290: "Generally speaking, the Hebrew Bible does not reason historical-*critically* but rather *resultative*-historically: it views historical processes in terms of their present repercussions". Thus, any historical figures who were not seen as contributing in any significant way to those 'repercussions' lose their relevance, even if only temporarily.

> for Yahwists. [...] In this context, a collection of "words of Amos" that were perhaps taken from Bethel when Jerusalem was reinstated formed the starting point: here were oracles that denounced Israel's depravity. Amos the prophet had no message for Judah and his message for Israel had little relevance in Judah until this moment.[222]

There is, then, a symbiosis of authentication at work here, an intertwining of legitimation where the prophetic texts bolster the ideological overview of the failings of the monarchies in both Israel and Judah. The call to recognise YHWH's proactive presence in historical time, however, informs the authority of specific prophets insofar as their activity is either described or appealed to in narratives outside of the prophetic texts. Isaiah features in the description of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13-19:36), which not only 'historicises' him and thus lends further credence to the 'book' later attributed to him (the parallel account in Isa. 36-37 seals the connection); it places him on the 'front lines' in a specific historical episode crucial to Israel's self-understanding as a people surviving through the will and the whim of their god (articulated by the prophets).[223] In this regard, it is arguably the theological weight of Isaiah's historical context – as opposed to the literary content of 'his' book – which contributes to the evolution of the migration tradition. By comparison with Isaiah, the 'relegation' of the other eighth century prophets to a position of extra-historical or purely theological or ideological relevance is possible, and I would maintain that their appeal to the 'memory' of a migration from Egypt as the bedrock upon which was founded the identity of 'Israel' and its relationship with YHWH afforded them credulity as the 'guardians' of the same during a time when a threat to its continuity was perceived (even if Amos was not active by that time, his oracles assumed immediate potency). As Assyria and Egypt were ideologically connected as symbols of oppression and idolatry, the very real fear of being deported by the Assyrians sparked the prophetic rhetoric in which a great migration from the lands of a foreign nation (Egypt) was promoted as a message of hope. Of course, YHWH's promise of a return from Assyria did not come free of charge, and the prophets demanded repentance and recognition of the covenant

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[222] Davies, Philip R., 2009: 68

[223] Cf. Ben Zvi, 2006: 55. For Ben Zvi, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are also afforded greater historical credulity (than the 'minor prophets') because they "bridge the chasm" between monarchic and post-monarchic Judah (*idem*). For the quite different Assyrian (Sennacherib's) account of the siege of Jerusalem and its aftermath, see ANET 287-88 (the Prism of Sennacherib; Pritchard, 2011: 269-270; Alpert et al., 2012: 67-69). For a comparison of 2 Kgs. 19:35 with Herodotus *Histories* 2.141, each featuring decidedly different interpretations of the "sudden withdrawal" (238) of Sennacherib's forces in Jerusalem and Pelusium (Egypt), respectively, see Strawn, 2006. Strawn argues that Herodotus' account "stems from an Egyptian source(s) that ultimately learned of the story from a Judean 'source' [...]" (236).

made with YHWH by Israel's ancestors.[224] Through this cycle of infidelity, punishment, repentance and forgiveness, Israel's relationship with YHWH could survive anything:

> [N]o matter what a particular manifestation of Israel would do, no matter even if its sin was as grievous as to justify exile and destruction [...], YHWH will make Israel reconcile with its deity and bring the people back.[225]

While this speaks very much to the heart of what we would call 'Deuteronomistic' theology, it is abundantly clear that these sentiments were very much at home in the eighth century; and that the prophets preserve memories of concepts later codified in the foundation myth of 'Israel'.

3.3.4 *The Conscience of Israel*[226] – *Section Summary*

So where does all this leave us with regards to an identity crisis? A social crisis there may have been, but can we find evidence in these texts for an eighth century crisis of identity? I believe that we can, and without attempting to articulate a convoluted solution, I think it is best understood as one where questions of identity are inverted; that is, they are *put to 'Israel' by external forces*. Just as the upper classes of Israel would not have considered themselves to be experiencing a social or economic crisis, neither would they have entertained the notion of a crisis of identity.[227] It is not that 'Israel' is questioning its own identity; indeed, there appears to be no reason for such a thing, despite the impending Assyrian storm. Rather, that identity – or, more specifically, the 'right' to bear it – is being challenged from the periphery:

> Indeed prophets seem always to be out of sync with their own times. In time of defeat and depression they come with words of encouragement and hope. But in times of

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[224] Kapelrud, 1984, sees a genuine perception amongst the "early prophets" of a covenant with YHWH to which the people were bound, but allows for its later Deuteronomistic elaboration and codification.

[225] Ben Zvi, 2006: 44

[226] I have appropriated for my own ends this title from one of the first books I read on Israelite prophecy as an Undergraduate (a book which admittedly I now find considerably dated): *The Conscience of Israel: Pre-Exilic Prophets and Prophecy* (Vawter, 1961).

[227] Kee, 1987: 155: "If Amos wrote in time [sic] of national crisis, clearly his reading of the situation was different from most people of his day. Outwardly there seemed to be no crisis."

affluence and self-satisfaction, they come with denunciation and judgment [sic]. They do indeed come to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.[228]

The prophets are demanding that the (elite) people be introspective, questioning the integrity of those who claim deliverance from Egypt as their formative 'creed' and accusing them of complacency in the face of their commitments to the ordinary people, who are (or should be) as deserving of a place in the relative prosperity of Israel as anyone who would presume to lord over them. After all, the migration tradition is much more likely to apply to everyone in the kingdom as a national foundation myth – not just the elite. As noted above, the words of the prophets are very much in line with Deuteronomistic ideology, but this does not require dependence on any text we might associate with an early 'Deuteronomic' movement.[229] The implications of that observation instead explain why the words of these prophets resonated for that 'movement' and were subsequently given new life in their construction of continuity; new life incorporated into the Mosaic 'Exodus' tradition:

Take care that you do not forget YHWH your god [...]. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied [...] then do not exalt yourself, forgetting YHWH your god, who brought you out of the land of Egypt [...]. Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth" [...]. If you forget YHWH your god and follow other gods [...,] you shall surely perish. **Deuteronomy 8:11-19**

It was suggested above that Hosea was not demonising the Jacob traditions, but was instead presenting a conflation of said traditions with that of the migration from Egypt, so that the past was harmonised and continuity was created. The migration tradition, however, emerged over time as the dominant qualifier of Israelite identity, and I believe that here in Hosea we are witness to the foundations of that dominance; that this is the historical moment wherein the tradition becomes the *cultural memory*. It was not specifically that the Jacob traditions were

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[228] Kee, 1987: 155

[229] For Sparks (1998: 126-129), it is best to understand what can be identified as the eighth century elements in Hosea as 'proto-Deuteronomic'. This was also noted above as per Blenkinsopp. While Bos (2013: 163) is correct to recognise that "the author [of Hosea] and his audience were familiar with [...] a wide range of traditions", this does not preclude an eighth century (or earlier, for that matter) provenance for some of those traditions. So where Bos argues that "it is difficult to imagine the book [of Hosea] existing prior to the sixth century" (*idem*) based on this entrenchment of traditions, I would temper this conclusion to speak of the 'book' and not its composite elements.

irrelevant for assertions of identity; just that they were of less relevance at the time of Assyrian expansion and the threat of conquest and deportation. A different tradition of origins and a fundamental sense of identity were needed to tackle that particular set of circumstances, and the long known tradition in which the ancestors of Israel came up from a foreign land had just the right foundation upon which to build contextually relevant motifs of imperial tyranny, oppression and subsequent liberation. Granted, such motifs may have entered the tradition in its northern kingdom manifestation as polemic against the Judean monarchs or chieftains who had once sought to rule the northern territory, but considering the increasing skepticism directed at the whole concept of a 'United Monarchy' (or anything 'united', for that matter), I find that more of a speculative stretch than the consequences of the encounter with Assyria for the evolution of the tradition. This argument does not necessarily require that the migration tradition was unique to the northern kingdom, but I think that it was unique for assertions of national identity when compared to the core traditions of southern (Judahite) identity:

> [...] Ephraimite Prophets [...] drew freely on the memory of founding events, events memorialized [sic] in the religious tribal shrines of the central hill country, while in Judah and Jerusalem it was the dynastic promise to the Davidites [sic] [...] and Yahweh's choice of Jerusalem as his dwelling place [...] which were of decisive importance.[230]

If this is the case, then applications of the migration tradition to address matters of identity and the associated social responsibilities are necessarily anachronistic in the mouth of an eighth century prophet addressing a Judean audience, be that Micah or Isaiah (of course, I have already rejected an eighth century provenance for Micah's allusions). Granted, questions arise as to whom Isaiah might have seen as the people of YHWH in the eighth century – his audience is Judean and his 'stage' is Jerusalem – but if any of the allusions to the migration tradition in 'First' Isaiah constitute eighth century memories of an Egyptian experience, then they are being made to Judeans. It is always difficult to get away from the 'United Monarchy' problem, and if Isaiah is alluding to the migration tradition in the eighth century, then he is an eighth century witness to a fundamental marker of identity in Judah which is *precisely the same as that which defines the people of the northern kingdom Israel!* I simply cannot accept that two separate kingdoms identified themselves using the same foundation myth, even if they did once share common socio-political ground. It has been clear to scholars for a long time that the Jacob traditions are of northern origin; they constitute a significant aspect of Israelite identity surviving the Judean incorporation of the remnants of Israel (see Section 3.4, below). In light of

[230] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 108. Cf. Sweeney, 2001: 12-13; Na'aman, 2010: 20-21.

Assyrian expansion and aggression, however, these traditions bore no elements capable of dealing with the threat to Israelite identity; they simply could not offer the same hope for survival inherent in the migration tradition which was evolving as the 'grand narrative' of Israelite distinction.[231] This is one of the main reasons why the activities of the prophets should be related to the evolution of the migration tradition. As per Ehud Ben Zvi, "[t]he prophetic books are about hope. The process of recalling memories of terrifying events that took place by rereading these books enhanced that message of hope".[232]

In terms of how this period was 'remembered' and how it contributed to the evolution of the migration tradition, then, there is a conflation of historical contexts and events which reverberated significantly to inform manifestations of self-identity relevant to the constituent elements of later 'Israel'. The origins of the elevation of YHWH to the role of the deliverer deity (compare Hosea 13:4 with the 'revelation' scenes of Exodus 3 and 6) to the detriment of all other potential claims to the same and on an international scale (he chooses his people "out of all the families of the earth" [Amos 3:2a]) which we find in Exodus is best suited to a context in which a multi-national imperial entity presented itself as a credible threat to the survival of Israelite identity and a theology of omnipotent control over world events emerged in response; especially since that same threat resurfaced almost immediately in Judahite terms as Sennacherib approached Jerusalem. In light of this, Hosea's condemnation of the upper echelons of Israelite society associated with his promotion of the role of YHWH in the migration tradition might have led to a recognition in Jerusalem of the value of that tradition for assuring the population that faith in a god who was clearly important to the political establishment could ensure their survival. Whether this occurred before or after 701 is difficult to say, but Jerusalem's 'liberation' from Sennacherib surely informed the theology of its perpetual inviolability (compare Isaiah 33:5-6; 14-24); and that was itself projected back through time to create a sense of antiquity for the self-aggrandising claims of Jerusalem's significance which appear to modern critical historians and archaeologists as anachronistic (as we saw in Chapter 1).[233] If Jerusalem, then, was seen as perpetual and inviolable in both chronological 'directions', it became the perfect place for the destination of the entire people of 'Israel' upon escaping oppression in Egypt in both the historical past and every ideological present. This is a theology considerably tempered by the Babylonian destruction, so I would argue that its inception belongs to an earlier time; and once again, the period of national restoration and accompanying propagandist optimism under Josiah comes to the fore. This, I believe, is one of

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[231] On a similar note and in a later context, see further below in 4.2 on Abraham.

[232] Ben Zvi, 2009b: 75

[233] Grabbe, 2010: 77, 2004: 245; Blenkinsopp, 1996: 109; Wilson, 1984: 276; and Fried, 2002: 461.

the reasons why the preservation and re-contemporisation of the activities of the eighth century prophets were so important: not only did they provide ammunition for calls to religious fidelity to YHWH in Jerusalem in the wake of the Assyrian threat to Judah by bearing the authority of perspectives so comparatively recent in historical time (thus any 'real' prophecies were validated); they were also conceptual 'vehicles' capable of laying the foundation for any and all future calls to fidelity as they would be attached to political legitimation. The destruction of Samaria and the subsequent reduction of the northern kingdom to an Assyrian province (a sequence of events which saw the transition between Shalmeneser V and Sargon II) reverberated down through time in the psyche of 'Israel'. It informed i) the interpretation of the siege of Jerusalem in 701 (the end of which was celebrated as a righteous triumph theologically juxtaposed against the destruction of Israel); ii) the newfound strength *perceived of* Jerusalem under Josiah in the 620s; iii) the theological reflections on the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6; and iv) the literary-ideological presentation of the 'returns' to and reconstruction of Jerusalem in the fifth century (see Chapter 4).

Amidst the interpretation of these events was the association of the migration tradition with threats to 'Israelite' identity, beginning with Israel as a people and a kingdom and continuing through its development into a Judean or Jerusalemite 'Israel'. As will be shown in the next chapter, the post-exilic construction of this Jerusalemite 'Israel' was defined and legitimated through this reflection on the destruction of both kingdoms and the survival of the ethnic (religious) identity which came to supersede in the historiographical mindset any attachment to a specific historical period or event within monarchic Israel and Judah.[234] Instead, such identity was defined solely by the 'extra-historical' tradition of a migration from Egypt, as to it alone could be attached the ideals of social, religious and political behaviour unblemished by the very institutions whose 'failings' were perceived as the reason for the traumatic events now seen as characteristic of the monarchic period.

As the eighth century prophets showed an awareness of the significance of the migration tradition, specifically applying it to castigate their audience by attacking the (perceived) foundation of their identity, memories of these figures became the ideological 'axis' through which reflections on the monarchic era were at the same time grounded in historical time while 'liberated' from its limitations. In this sense, the 'Conscience of Israel' articulated so powerfully in these texts informs and legitimates the Primary History in general and Exodus in particular. These texts validate the condemnation of the monarchy permeating the Primary History, as

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[234] As the institution responsible for articulating this reflection, the scribal establishment projected not only their ideologies into the past, but also their paraphernalia – written laws, 'lost' documents – and the figures they presented as entrusted with perpetuating the *written* word of YHWH.

well as presupposing and informing the redaction of earlier traditions (as well as earlier and, in some cases, variant, versions of those traditions) brought into an historical framework within.[235] In this regard, it is best to see a relationship of interdependency between the 'received form' of both the prophetic corpus and the Primary History.[236]

While the reality of the impending Assyrian destruction of Israel might have provoked collective 'recollections' of Egypt in the late eighth century, I think that it is best to see the application of the migration tradition in these texts as a conflation of accumulated retrospectives on numerous historical contexts occurring in relatively rapid succession. Certainly, the Assyrian encroachment on Israel and the subsequent destruction of Samaria might have been the ideological foundation for both comparing Assyria with 'memories' of Egypt and redefining the migration tradition by attaching to it characteristic manifestations of Assyria; but it is through the interpretative lens of i) the withdrawal of Sennacherib from Jerusalem; and ii) the much awaited demise of Assyrian dominance in Syria-Palestine which facilitated the hopes for a resurgence of Josiah's 'Israel' that we should understand the intrusion into the migration tradition of i) the theology of the inviolability of Zion; and ii) the redefining of 'Israel' as a people who survived the paradigmatic 'Egypt' in association with their *re*-foundation. Thus, the migration tradition facilitates a foundation myth of Josiah's 'Israel' by re-contemporising the 'memories' of the Egyptian liberation as analogous to surviving Assyria and being *re*-created in the aftermath of oppression. Of course, the resurgence of Egyptian power also occurs in the wake of the demise of Assyria, and Egypt becomes the contemporary enemy of 'Israel' in seventh century Judah for the first time since Shishak came up to Palestine, a situation which might also have seen Jerusalemite 'historians' plumbing the depths of collective memory for 'historical' precedents so that they were re-contemporised.[237] While the

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[235] Aberbach (1993: 27) introduces another possibility, one which takes us back to a late eighth century context; and it is that "Judah's guilt at being an indirect party to Israel's subjugation through its alliance with Assyria, and its need to justify Israel's fall by denouncing the northern kingdom for abandoning Yahweh and his Law" informs a wholesale retrospective inspiring future retellings of Israel's past just as it perpetuates the characteristic condemnations of that kingdom crystallised in the 'Deuteronomistic History'.

[236] On the relationship between the prophetic texts and the Pentateuch, see, for example, Gerstenberger, 2009: 125; Ben Zvi, 2009b: 84; and Edelman, 2009: 48.

[237] It is, of course, significant that the 'survival' of 'Israel' following the campaign of Shishak (Shoshenq I) appears to motivate theological reflections on the origins of 'Israel', as discussed in the previous section. It is important to note, then, that both this and the withdrawal of Sennacherib from Jerusalem are contenders for the contexts in which the 'liberation' aspects of 'Exodus' are born. As a novel aside – because I do not wish to afford it unwarranted significance – there was also a Shoshenq on the throne in

next section will explore the more detailed layer of the tradition emphasising scribal authority over the prophetic word, what I have outlined above is, I believe, the best way to understand *the biblical memories of the highly complex and rapid evolution* of the migration tradition in the eighth century. The allusions in the 'eighth century' prophets to the migration tradition are testament to the survival of both contemporary concepts of the memory which became Exodus as well as the evolving layers of the tradition which later informed its constituent parts.

To close this section, then, I wish to reiterate my position on the presumed authenticity of the allusions I deem original to prophetic activity in the eighth century. In the context of interdependency between the Primary History and the prophetic texts (I will come to include the received Jeremiah in this concept), the historicisation occurred of prophetic oracles from these earlier periods delivered by prophetic intermediaries known to have operated at the time; oracles which met the needs of the scribal establishment and their patrons in Jerusalem in the Persian period. There were of course, invented oracles (cf. Micah 6:4), and they were associated with figures best suited in the collective memory to have voiced such concerns and woes. This association in turn both connects the activity of independent prophets in their historical context, as well as contemporising their activity at the time of historicisiation and creating a sense of continuity with the past.

My concern, however, is with the threading back through time of an alignment of identity crises with the migration tradition; and while my willingness to accept the historicity of certain allusions to that tradition made by prophets centuries before the crystallisation of Exodus may appear somewhat naïve (and perhaps to some to contradict my critical approach to other aspects of the texts), I will say this: within the context of historicising these prophets, Micah stands out as anamolous (as observed above) because his allusion is closest in content to the received Exodus. His allusion, therefore, is either original to his historical context or is an invention of the scribal establishment responsible for Exodus, designed to legitimate its received form. I do not believe that it is original, and I maintain my argument that this is precisely because Hosea, Amos and Isaiah appear unaware of the details he invokes. One could argue that he is aware of a variant version, but then why does his Judean contemporary, Isaiah, not use these details? It is not enough to say that Amos and Hosea knew a 'northern' tradition,

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Egypt in the early eighth century (the fifth of his name; Assmann, 2003: 482); a ruler of the 22nd Dynasty centred upon ancient Tanis. The biblical writers knew this place as 'Zoan', and not only does Isaiah refer negatively to the 'princes of Zoan' (Isa. 19:11, 13; cf. 30:4 [also cf. Ezek. 30:14]) – thus contemporising the connection – we see in Num. 13:22 that 'Zoan' was used as a mnemohistorical anchor for the 'Exodus' (see further Hoffmeier, 1996: 118, 210)! This could not be a correlation relevant to the Josian-era, because Egyptian power is centred upon Sais by that time.

and Isaiah and Micah a 'southern'; especially when Amos came up from Judah to berate the people of Israel with their own foundation myth!

Why, then, from the point of view of literary connection and legitimation, would the scribal establishment not simply put the same or at least similar details in the mouths of their other prophetic champions, so as to consolidate their claims to the unity and continuity of the received Exodus? Rather than succumb to rhetoric, I will suggest a solution, and it builds upon a matter I introduced above and will revisit further below: the likelihood that the place that connects not only Exodus but also all of the memory contexts dealt with so far – and those still to come – was a respository for prophetic oracles. If Bethel held documentary evidence of the activity of prophets like Amos and Hosea, then there could be little or no alteration to their words while they were being set into a chronological, historical (cause-and-effect) framework.[238] Similarly, the activity of Isaiah as part of the cultic, political instutition posits the likelihood that his oracles were documented and preserved in the Jerusalem temple. I think it highly likely that, beginning under the reign of Josiah, these prophetic texts were brought together precisely because the allusions to the migration tradition made by these figures met the needs of the reformulation of 'Israelite' identity occurring during that reign (see further in next section). While I see no reason to doubt the existence of a prophet called Micah coming to Jerusalem to attack the elite for their failure to protect the outlying regions of Judah; and it is possible that Micah 7:15 alludes to a version of the migration tradition earlier than the association of Moses, I maintain that his specific allusion to a migration tradition featuring Moses, Aaron and Miriam (Micah 6:4) do not belong to the late eighth century and are in fact allusions to the received Exodus. In the context of the historicisation of Micah, I envisage the constructed alignment of his activity with the tradition through 6:4 legitimated by the authenticity of his vague allusion in 7:15.

[238] The same will be seen of Jeremiah's activity below (3.4.4), although the chronological framework of the received Jeremiah suffers as a result of adherence to memories of his activity.

3.4 Josiah, Necho and the Recreation of 'Israel': The Saviour King and the 'Second' Pharaoh

It has seemed throughout this chapter so far that Josiah is the 'saviour' figure through whom all our questions will be answered and a light shined into the shadowy depths of Israelite history. As has been suggested thus far, the ideologies espoused by the rhetoric of his 'reformation' in the late seventh century BCE pervade the *restructuring of memories of historical contexts preceding him* which Israelite historians deemed fit to preserve; but it may be even more than that. It may be the case that the later interpretation of his religious and political 'reunification' informed the resurgence and preservation of specific traditions the details of which were anchored in earlier historical contexts deemed capable of legitimating that program. It will become clear, however, that this 'program' may not have been all that the biblical account would have us believe.[239] This is most significant to appreciate, considering how much weight is often afforded its historicity as an event central to understanding the development of the religion(s) of Israel and Judah as well as the political establishments defined by association.[240] It

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[239] For the view that there was a 'minor' cultic reform pertaining to the royal sanctuary in Jerusalem; and that the Deuteronomistic account is based upon a "literary primary source for Josiah's politics of cult", see Hardmeier, 2005. As will become clear, I see the nature of and motivations for Josiah's 'reform' rather differently, while still allowing for consequences within the sphere of cultic activity.

[240] Cf. Sweeney, 2001: 5: "Clearly, the DtrH account of Josiah's reign constitutes part of the foundation on which modern biblical scholarship rests, in large measure because scholars accept the historical reality of Josiah's reign and reform program[.]" An example of the ready acceptance of the Bible's account and its almost simplistic representation of historical causality once championed by biblical scholarship is found in Cross, Jr. and Freedman, 1953: 56: "The political movements in Judah in the latter part of the seventh century B.C. sensitively reflect the progressive decline of Assyrian authority. The murder of Amon, king of Judah, represented, perhaps, an attempt on the part of the radical anti-Assyrian party to throw off the yoke of Assyria[.] However, the more moderate group gained control of the situation and placed the legitimate heir of David on the throne. The boy-king's advisers now proceeded more cautiously, yet to judge from later events, with carefully laid plans to regain the independence of Judah and the restoration of the old Davidic state. With the finding of the Deuteronomic Code in the eighteenth year of his reign [...], Josiah launched a full-scale politico-religious program for the re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom[.]" As per Henige (2007: 16), "[t] he story of the discovery of 'the book of the law' has proved congenial to those inclined to believe in the essential historicity of as much of the Biblical narrative as possible". This is not difficult to appreciate, as we will see, considering that the story in question appears to bolster the historicity of the greater narrative of 'Israelite' history within which context it acts as a mnemohistorical 'fulcrum', connecting the distant past to aspirations projected from a much later present than its own 'memory context' suggests.

is clear, of course, that were it not for this 'program' – whatever it was – we might not have been motivated to know anything about this enigmatic king; and as such the account of anything prior to the 'program' should be reevaluated in terms of its value for historical reconstructions of the period.[241] Before moving on to consider whatever 'truths' may be gleaned from the story of the 'finding' of the 'Book of the Covenant' to which is attributed Josiah's significance in the history of 'Israel', we should consider the circumstances through which he is said to come to power.

Behind the story of his accession to the throne as an eight-year-old boy might lie a popular motif in such apparent 'fairy tales' – that of the child who would be king. Far from unique in the Hebrew Bible, this theme introduces us, for example, to the infant Joash (whom, if the chronology is to be taken at face value, would have been only a few months old), the secret heir to the throne of Ahaziah who survived Athaliah's massacre under the protection of his aunt, until his real identity was revealed seven years later by a priest who championed his coronation (2 Kings 11).[242] Mario Liverani has argued that this type of story, which "always relate[s] to an irregular succession to the throne" has so much in common with those of Idrimi of Alalah (fifteenth century BCE) and Hattushili III of the Hittites (thirteenth century BCE) – amongst others – that it must have been appropriated by the biblical writers from presentations of royal legitimacy (apologetics) known far and wide throughout the Ancient Near East.[243] The story has at its core a concern with presenting a seemingly unexpected and unorthodox 'usurpation' as a 'restoration', a return to former order and a reconnection with the past.[244] Although Josiah was not hidden as was Joash, he certainly seems to appear out of nowhere and his pedigree in the text is rather suspect, which would suggest that those who put him on the throne might have appropriated a story similar to that of Joash in order to legitimise their actions as they 'mentored' the child on the throne; unless, of course, the story of Josiah's succession does not belong to the time of his reign at all, and both stories are constructed to act as the mirror of each other. As Linville suggests, an alteration of the motif of the 'hidden child' sees Josiah 'finding' the 'hidden' scroll, and that which connects both kings are the instructions to renovate the temple (compare 2 Kings 12:5-16 and 2 Kings 22:3-7).[245] As will

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[241] See the discussion in Grabbe, 2007: 206.

[242] On the "striking similarity" (Henige, 2007: 7) between the stories of Josiah and Joash (especially regarding temple restoration), see Linville, 1998: 238-239.

[243] On the reign of Athaliah and the accession of Joash in this regard, see especially, Mullen, 1993: 21-54.

[244] Liverani, 2004: 147-159. See also Handy, 1995: 269-274.

[245] Linville, 1998: 238. Also Blenkinsopp, 1996: 117. The story of Joash's temple repairs connects him to the northern king, Jehu; although the 'reforms' of both kings were limited (Mullen, 1993: 275-276).

become clear, this connection speaks to the significance of administrative centralisation occurring in both stories.

As for the motif of the hidden child which may be lurking in the background, it should not go unnoticed that it is one of the best-known aspects of the migration tradition; and that the concealing of Moses in the basket (sometimes 'ark') on the Nile so that he escapes the 'massacre' ordered by Pharaoh is an image which continues up into the Common Era in order to inform the ideological connection between Jesus and Herod (Jesus escapes to Egypt), and Moses and Pharaoh. A sense of continuity is paramount in these stories, and may forever confound any attempts at historical reconstructions to the satisfaction of all. To return to the Josiah story, however, and to maintain our focus on said historicity, we should ask some pressing questions. For example, a major problem with the account of Josiah, as noted above, concerns the age of the king upon his accession: was he a boy, as the text suggests, and no more than a 'puppet' for those who put him in power (undoubtedly like Joash);[246] or was he of an age when he came to the throne that a retrospective legitimation of his reign and his bloodline was required? If the former, then who were the עַם־הָאָרֶץ, the enigmatic 'people of the land' (2 Kings 21:24) who groomed him (and, significantly, Joash) for rule; and what were their motivations and ideologies?[247] If the latter, then should we envisage an earlier period of his reign as a child hampered by accusations of illegitimacy? All of these questions rest, of course, upon the precarious presumption that Josiah even existed:

> Despite all the praise lavished on Josiah by the priestly scribes, he is only known from Biblical sources. There are no references to him in contemporary Egyptian or Babylonian texts, and although we are nearing the point of relying on the Biblical text for historical credibility, we can only document his existence with limited archaeological evidence.[248]

Of particular resonance for attacking the historicity of Josiah's existence – as well as the literary connections between his reign and that of Joash – is simply his name, wherein the root יׁשע, meaning '[to] deliver', appears suspiciously synonymous of his (future) actions. In this regard,

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[246] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 112.

[247] Mullen, 1993: 50, reads the term literally in the Joash story, in that *all* the people of the kingdom rose up against Athaliah. While I would not summarily dismiss this interpretation (and would be open to a duality of meaning), I think the term עַם־הָאָרֶץ in the Josiah story has more subtle connotations when read in the wider context of those responsible for the ideological 'reinvention' of Israelite identity; and it may be designed to allude to the wider connotations of the term in 2 Kgs. 11. I will return to this further below.

[248] Alpert et al., 2012: 74. Cf. Grabbe, 2005b: 104.

Josiah is far from unique, of course, and the names, actions and destinies of numerous other biblical figures can be put forward to highlight the literary and ideological connections facilitating a sense of continuity in the greater story of 'Israel'.[249] The name 'Joshua', for example, shares the same root as 'Josiah', and it has been argued that the story of the former's conquest of 'Canaan' at the head of a united 'Israel' might have more to do with the latter's attempts to legitimise his role as a new 'deliverer' for a recreated 'Israel' than with any actual memories of forcibly settling occupied lands following the 'Exodus' (see further below).[250] Of course, the question regarding Josiah becomes one of whom exactly he is supposed to have 'delivered', and how he 'delivered' them. This is where the theology behind his self-legitimation comes into play, and I will return below to the matter of what exactly would have required legitimation *during* his reign; as opposed to something later legitimated by attaching it retrospectively to his reign. The archaeological evidence for Josiah's 'program' of national religious 'restoration' is sketchy at best, and it appears that even the destruction of sanctuaries during this time was neither complete nor necessarily related to Josiah, as will be shown below.[251] In order to determine the historicity of Josiah, then, a good place to start is at the end of his story; for this is where there is some semblance of correlation with extra-biblical evidence. The untimely death of Josiah – that with which the biblical writers appear to have struggled; and which some scholars argue has been 'tacked on' following what *should have been* the end of the first 'Deuteronomistic History' – is associated in biblical scholarship with a

[249] The 'problem' might be fixed by approaching the names of at least some biblical kings as 'throne-names' attached to them in relation to their activity (as opposed to a contemporary claim to legitimacy; cf. Jehoahaz, 'YHWH has established', throne name of Shallum [Jer. 22:11]), but this is not without its difficulties. If this were a practice occurring during their reigns, I fail to see how Manasseh, for example, would have chosen or accepted a name meaning 'cause to forget' (cf. Gen. 41:51) on account of his (apparently) turning the people away from the worship of YHWH (see especially Stavrakopoulou, 2005). When it comes to biblical names synonymous with attributed actions, it is tempting to dismiss them all as fictional; and Manasseh, as the king whose actions necessitate those attributed to Josiah (Mullen, 1993: 78), begins to look like a literary device. The situation is confused, however, not only by the extra-biblical evidence for his existence, but also by the likelihood that the success of his state-building under Assyrian vassalage laid the socio-economic groundwork for Josiah's 'reform'. See especially Finkelstein, 1994; also Grabbe, 2007: 201-204.

[250] Grabbe, 2007: 205; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 283-285, 349; Sweeney, 2001: 125ff.; and Nelson, 1981. On the town-lists in Joshua as reflecting the territory of Josian-era Judah, see especially Na'aman, 2005: 191-210. On the role of the Joshua narrative in relation to ethnic identity, see Mullen, 1993: 87ff.

[251] On the extent of Josiah's territory, see Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 347-353; Kletter, 1999: 27. Also Stern, 1994.

military campaign of Pharaoh Necho II in the closing decade of the seventh century.[252] Necho's ill-fated alliance with the weakened Assyrians would eventually see both parties humbled by the ascendancy of the Babylonians, but as the Pharaoh marched north in 609 BCE to join with the Assyrian force intending to retake Harran from the Babylonians, Josiah sought to block his advance at Megiddo; or so scholarly 'tradition' would have it.[253]

3.4.1 *Necho as Josiah's 'Anchor'*

As with Jeroboam I and Shishak; and arguably with our eighth century prophets and Sennacherib (most certainly with Isaiah), the presence of Pharaoh Necho II in late seventh century Syria-Palestine is the most potent mnemohistorical anchor for assessing the historicity of the biblical account of King Josiah of Judah. Scholars assessing this period might at first glance have little difficulty in appreciating the significance of the evolving migration tradition in

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[252] This relates to the *apparently* (see Section Summary) awkward intrusion of 2 Kgs. 23:26-23:30. Sweeney (2001: 9-12) identifies some of the problems with assuming a "Josianic edition of the DtrH" (11), although he concludes that there was an 'edition' not only in the time of Josiah, but probably during the reign of Hezekiah (Sweeney, 2001: 170; cf. Rosenbaum, 1979: 25; Schniedewind, 2004: 77-81). While Frost (1968: 380) argues that the story of Josiah was written "while he was still on the throne and still surrounded by the powerful aura of success", Sweeney (2001: 46) points out that the "tension within the present form of the Huldah oracle" indicates a considerable amount of redaction to harmonise a prophecy of his peaceful death and the later conquest of Jerusalem with the shock of his (apparently) violent death at the hands of Necho and the seeming futility of his actions. Cf. Linville, 1998: 231-232; also Williamson, 1982: 243-244, 246; Priest, 1980. As will become clear below, the lack of archaeological evidence for Josiah's 'reforms' troubles the idea of a "double redaction of the Deuteronomistic History" (Fried, 2002: 461); and Mullen's argument (1993: 79, n. 75) that the account of Josiah is one whereby the punishment of Judah is merely postponed makes much more sense for a compositional horizon. Interestingly, Na'aman (2011b: 57) dates the Huldah pericope to "the late First Temple" period by way of the archaeological evidence for the desertion of the Mishneh quarter of Jerusalem (where the prophetess is said to have lived; 2 Kgs. 22:14) between 586 and the 2nd century BCE. Of course, this presumes that no one would have recalled the antiquity of the location of "Huldah's seat" in what could easily be an 'archaised' account.

[253] This belief is primarily based on the assumed primacy of the account in 2 Chronicles 35:20-27. Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 289-291, 348. On the closing years of Assyria, see Van De Mieroop, 2007: 266-268; Miller & Hayes, 2006: 449-450. Linville (1998: 242-243; emphasis mine) maintains that the Hebrew text implies that "Necho *confronted* the king of Assyria in battle" (contra Talshir, 1996: 213-215). Interestingly, the JPS footnotes 'Assyria' in 2 Kgs. 23:29 to suggest that this means "the Chaldean Empire", presumably based on an exilic date for the use of אַשּׁוּר in Isa. 52:4, to which it refers the reader.

that it should have appealed to a popular demonisation of Egypt presumed of the general socio-political situation in Judah at the time. After all, was Egypt not the enemy of Josiah? I would for the moment temper this view, by pointing out the difficulties in assuming that Egypt was an outright enemy of Josiah before the latter chose to interfere in events external to his own mandate; especially as the debate continues as to the political relationship between Egypt and Judah at the time.[254] Speculation also abounds as to whether Josiah was specifically supporting Babylonian interests – or simply his own – when he marched to hamper Necho's northward advance, intercepting the Egyptian force 'at Megiddo' (which is about as much detail as the Deuteronomistic account provides) in 609 BCE, but if he was a vassal of Egypt at the time, then this move would have constituted outright rebellion.[255] If it is correct to envisage a newfound Judean confidence in the wake of Assyrian weakness towards the end of the seventh century; and that this confidence manifested itself in Josiah's "gallant but foolhardy" actions, then it might be best to see those actions as opportunistic whereby Josiah misread the situation and overstepped the mark.[256] Still, it is difficult to imagine Josiah believing his forces capable of defeating an Egyptian army without any help. There is no hint that an external force was supposed to be coming to his aid, and while the Babylonians may not have offered Josiah any assistance, they might simply have envisaged Josiah delaying Necho sufficiently so that they could tackle the Assyrians at Harran without worrying about Egyptian intervention.[257] M. B. Rowton sees Josiah's motivations in terms of avenging the destruction of Israel by facilitating

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[254] Cf. Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 282-283. Similarly, Redford (1992: 444-445) suggests some sort of diplomatic "understanding" between Judah and Egypt in the late seventh century. Miller & Hayes (2006: 450-453) envisage Egyptian vassalage. Kahn, 2007, argues that Judah was a vassal of Egypt "at least from 616" (513), which would make Josiah's move an outright rebellion. The biblical text either neglects to praise Josiah for this act (was Hezekiah not a heroic 'rebel' against Assyrian aggression?), or it was simply not the case. Kahn's reasoning seems to be related to assuming a correlation between New Kingdom holdings in Syria-Palestine and those of Saite Egypt (2007: 513-514). Sweeney (2001: 217) suggests that "the former northern kingdom" might have 'gravitated' towards Egyptian control at this time because of issues of access pertaining to assisting Assyrian forces, but that there would have been no call for such an arrangement with Judah. See further, Grabbe, 2007: 205; and Na'aman, 2005: 215-217.

[255] Cf. Frost, 1968: 371. Sweeney (2001: 16) suggests that "Josiah died supporting Babylonian interests, apparently following a long tradition of alliance with Babylon begun by his great grandfather Hezekiah[.]" Yet can we really believe that the story in 2 Kgs. 20:12-19 is true, and not just a later justification for the Babylonian destruction which attaches blame only incidentally to this seemingly naïve act on the part of the 'reforming' king? See further Cross, Jr. and Freedman, 1953; Mullen, 1993: 278-279. Cogan (1993: 409) presumes a state of "renewed vassalage" to Assyria following the siege of Jerusalem in 701.

[256] Frost, 1968: 371

[257] Cf. Rowton, 1951: 129.

the annihilation of the Assyrians, but this does not necessarily require that Josiah acted at the behest of a Babylonian overlord. Of course, if his encounter with Necho did indeed turn the tide in favour of the Babylonians, he would no doubt have ingratiated himself to them had he survived.[258]

To return to Josiah's interaction with Egypt, however, the question here is whether that nation would have occupied the collective psyche (whether intentionally or incidentally) to a sufficient degree *prior to the Megiddo encounter* so as to affect the development of 'Israelite' national identity in terms akin to the counter-cultural ideology of Exodus. From the point of view of physical proximity, it may have been the case that the comings and goings related to an Egyptian garrison at Megiddo kept that nation at the forefront of Judean attention, but apart from speculating on trade relations or minor skirmishes on Judean borders with Egyptian soldiers (who would most certainly have been in the region with the expansion of Saite Egypt at the time), it is difficult to conclude *based solely on the account of Josiah's death* that Egypt retained an immediate significance in the Judean national consciousness *during the reign of Josiah* which would have contributed towards further development of the migration tradition.[259] Coupled with the "deeply embarrassed [and] perplexed silence" at the death of this righteous king, the question arises as to whether any thought had been given to a general demonisation of Egypt as it was juxtaposed with Judean Israelite national and religious identity not only in terms of court propaganda but also as it would have continued to colour the foundation myth of the people.[260] Certainly, Assyrian deportations to Egypt would have been fresh in Israelite and Judean collective memory, but the Deuteronomistic History is silent regarding the contemporary relevance of Egypt right through the fifty-five year reign of Manasseh (a considerable length of time to be afforded a mere eighteen verses in 2 Kings 21);[261] the two-year reign of Amon; and the three decades of Josiah's reign prior to Necho's

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[258] Cf. Redford, 1992: 448: "Josiah simply saw himself as an ally of the forces of right in the final destruction of Assyria." Blenkinsopp (1996: 124) is clear in his understanding of the events: "Josiah decided [...] that the future lay with the Babylonians; but his attempt to win their favor [sic] by opposing the Egyptian penetration into Syria cost him his life[.]" Also Sweeney, 2001: 214; and Rosenbaum, 1979: 40.

[259] The debate continues as to the possessors of Megiddo at this time. See for example, Grabbe, 2005b: 86-87. On Megiddo as an Egyptian 'staging post', see Malamat, 1973. On the resurgence of Egyptian strength along the Eastern Mediterranean, see Redford, 1992: 430ff.

[260] Frost, 1968: 372

[261] As an Assyrian vassal during the reign of Manasseh (cf. ANET 291), Judah effectively became a 'buffer state' against Egypt (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 265). Still, I would point to the place in the collective psyche of Assyria as the 'truth' behind the 'Egypt' of the migration tradition at that time, as per

northward march. It appears on the surface, at least, that Egypt was not on the 'ideological map' (to borrow the term from Greifenhagen) of Judean Israelite identity until Josiah was killed (and, as will be seen below, it does not even have a role in the legitimation of the 'discovered' scroll); an event which is itself shrouded in mystery and which some have suggested may not even have occurred.[262] This does not mean that Necho was not in the area to aid his Assyrian allies, but if neither is the case, we must ask ourselves why Necho is in the biblical text at all. It is possible that the close proximity of an Egyptian garrison in Megiddo (which, as I noted above, is by no means a certainty) lent credence to scapegoating the Egyptians following the killing of Josiah by some other party whose identity was purposefully lost to history (and speculation would surely lead us too far off course); or that Necho was known to have passed through the region and – despite leaving Judah unmolested – he was still blamed for Josiah's death; and that in either case the demonisation of Egypt in the migration tradition was afforded new relevance in the aftermath. I think that while the last point sounds promising, we cannot ignore the extra-biblical coincidences which put Necho in the region and the possibility that Josiah might have wished to show a display of strength to an Egyptian army whom he knew – unless they were completely wiped out – would have been coming back that way in due course. The Bible certainly has Necho making his presence felt three months later with the capture and deportation of Jehoahaz and the instalment of Eliakim (Jehoiakim; whom it appears was the rightful heir, as the eldest son; cf. 2 Kings 23:31 with 2 Kings 23:36) as an Egyptian vassal, an account which I think defies denial (2 Kings 31-35); if for no other reason than the transition between Josiah and Jehoiakim could have been told without it.[263] So, while the historicity of

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my conclusions in the previous section. Even during the reign of Manasseh, it would have been safer to speak of Assyria in terms of the archetypal 'Egypt' of Israelite collective memory, demonising the latter to obscure popular opinion of the former; although it is unlikely that demonisation of Assyria would have been a concern of Manasseh's court (see further below).

[262] Grabbe's suggestion (2007: 207) that Necho II, as a "new ruler", would have expected Josiah to appear before him (presumably at Megiddo) to swear his allegiance permits the possibility that there was no immediate context for hostility. Na'aman (2010: 20) sees Josiah's "operations in the district of Samerina" as "the reason for his execution by the Egyptians". Frost (1968: 376) notes the 'Chronicler's' "rather unconvincing account" and dismisses the alternative idea of a "court-martial"; cf. Williamson, 1982: 244, n. 12.

[263] Finkelstein and Silberman (2002: 292) attribute Eliakim's accession to a pro-Egyptian faction (cf. Malamat, 1973: 271), and they see Jehoahaz as anti-Egyptian (as does Redford, 1992: 449; Sweeney, 2001: 220); while they appear to envisage a certain autonomy for Judah in its attempts at expansion, which are hampered not by vassalage, but by Egypt's control of the Eastern Mediterranean seaboard (289, 291). Kahn, 2007, argues for the vassalage of Judah to Egypt when Jehoahaz was on the throne, but

Josiah's encounter with Necho faces the 'absence of evidence' conundrum, the much more likely historicity of Necho's interaction with Judah around this time – no matter how incidental it may be reduced to – certainly tempers any 'evidence of absence' which might otherwise be applied to the matter.

I have no issue with seeing in the Bible evidence for interaction with Egypt in the final decade of the seventh century, but the picture is so vague that it is difficult to understand exactly what was going on and how the situation affected Judah. The Saite Dynasty would have been flexing its muscles in the region, particularly in light of Assyrian weakness and Babylonian expansion, and I will return further below to the probable implications for Judah of this historical reality. Apart from the sudden intrusion of the Megiddo episode into the biblical text, however, there appears on the surface to be no memory whatsoever of hostile interaction with Egypt contemporary to Josiah's reign which would have a significant effect on the collective or cultural perception of Egypt. The surface text can be somewhat misleading, however – and often intentionally so – and so it is through a closer analysis of the details that we might identify and deconstruct the relevant pieces of the puzzle before reconstructing the historical picture. At this point, I will move on to the enigmatic 'scroll' featured in the story of Josiah with the hope of better appreciating the contribution of the overall historical context to the evolution of the migration tradition; for perhaps it was upon the ideological foundation of what was by this point *an inflexible perception of Egypt* that the proponents of this elusive 'Book of the Covenant' based its authority.

3.4.2 *One Scroll to Unite Them All*

Scholarly interpretations of the biblical text at this point conjure up images akin to the modern-day melding in popular culture of archaeology and fantasy: a mysterious scroll is discovered in the depths of the temple and its words have such power that the entire kingdom is changed forever. The bewildered king descends into a religious fervour precipitating a program of 'purification' throughout the land – the banning of non-Yahwistic worship and cultic practices, and the destruction of all altars and cultic centres so that the entire focus of Yahwism is

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he does so by presuming (if I am reading him correctly) that Jehoahaz went to Riblah of his own volition – a circumstance requiring freedom of movement on the part of the Judean king facilitated only by Egyptian vassal status. In this, it seems that Kahn has misinterpreted וַיַּאַסְרֵהוּ in 2 Kgs. 23:33 when he says that "Jehoahaz was *arrested at the headquarters of Necho II at Riblah* in northern Syria" (2007: 514). The use of the verb אָסַר ('imprison' or 'confine') bears no connotations of where the initial 'arrest' occurred, and בְּרִבְלָה is best understood as 'in' Riblah.

centred upon Jerusalem. Only in the Jerusalem temple can YHWH, and YHWH alone, be worshipped.[264] The 'discovery' of this scroll and the religious 'reform' described in the biblical text marks for the great majority of historians, theologians and archaeologists alike the birth of monotheism and the foundations of the Judeo-Christian 'revolution' which spread across the ('western') world over the next millennium.[265] Be that as it may, the antiquity claimed of the religious norms legitimated by the contents of this enigmatic scroll is not as impervious to critique as some would like. For a start, a close look at the two versions of the story of the 'discovery' reveal very slight – but, I think, significant – differences. In 2 Kings 22:3-10, Josiah sends 'the scribe Shaphan' to the temple to have the High Priest, Hilkiah, melt down the silver in the temple treasuries in order to pay the workmen for the renovations underway there. There is no transitional text between Josiah's orders and Hilkiah telling Shaphan (who has clearly arrived at the temple) that he has found סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה, "*a* scroll of *the* Torah", words which imply (unless I am making too much of the definite article) that this scroll was *recognisable* as a *copy* of *the* (one and only) Torah ('Teaching' or 'Instruction' or 'Law')![266] The account of the 'discovery' in 2 Chronicles 34:14-15 has Hilkiah finding the scroll in the treasury apparently while Shaphan is there with him, and the High priest hands it to Shaphan immediately. Perhaps I am reading too much into the subtle difference here, but it seems possible that the account composed later in Chronicles sought to deflect any challenges to the authenticity of the 'find' in that we do not witness Hilkiah finding the scroll in the Deuteronomistic account; rather, he is already in possession of it and thus its true origin may for some be implicitly suspect.[267] It is strange that in neither account does the High Priest request that the scroll be brought to the king, considering that the subject matter concerns – amongst other things – the religious obligations of the king and the people in general; although the inference is that Shaphan's position ensured that it would be.[268]

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[264] The implications of 2 Kings 23:4-7 are that a host of other deities were worshipped in and around the Jerusalem temple.

[265] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 276. This is due to the traditional equating of this legendary scroll with (an early form of) Deuteronomy dating as far back as the 'Patristic Period' (Handy, 1995: 255), a correlation upon which long rested, by extension, modern perceptions of the origins of monotheism.

[266] Of course, as we will see below, it is more likely that the סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית or 'scroll of The Covenant' (2 Kgs. 23:2) is that which best corresponds to the scroll 'found' in Josiah's time; and in this regard, even the words of Hilkiah would be anachronistic.

[267] On the different accounts of the 'book-find' and the 'reforms', particularly with regards to which event came first (cf. 2 Kings 22:3 with 2 Chron. 34:3), see Grabbe, 2007: 206-207.

[268] The 'Shaphanide' family clearly held considerable influence in the Judean political sphere throughout this period (Blenkinsopp, 1996: 139; Sweeney, 2001: 213), with Ahikam son of Shaphan saving Jeremiah

Let us assume, for the moment, that Hilkiah did actually find this scroll. What are the questions which inevitably arise? Why it was missing is one of considerable significance, as is why it would be lying in the treasury; but for how long was this scroll supposed to have been missing, and why only in the reign of Josiah did a king feel beholden to the demands of the scroll?[269] Related to this, for example, is the apparent mystery as to how Hezekiah (a century earlier) would have been able to keep "the commandments that YHWH had given to Moses" (2 Kings 18:6) if they were lost for as long as the account of the Josian-era 'discovery' would have us believe.[270] Are we meant to imagine that it was during the reign of Manasseh (in his immediate succession following the death of the pious Hezekiah) that this enigmatic scroll was discarded in the treasury as part of a 'counter-reform' and the return to traditional forms of worship; or even secreted by the (Yahwist) priesthood to protect it from him? None of this is explained, unfortunately, and while the latter is not beyond the realms of belief, fifty-seven years of absence (fifty-five for Manasseh and two for Amon) on the part of the scroll – keeping

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from execution when the latter predicted destruction for Jerusalem (Jer. 26:26). A sense of continuity with the events of 2 Kgs. 22 is also created with a reference in Jer. 36:10-11 to both the son and the grandson of Shaphan 'the scribe' (particularly as the context relates to the reading of a scroll). The irony, in conjunction with the observation in n. 314 (below) that written accounts of prophecy would inevitably challenge the authority of prophets, is that the Shaphanides – as royal scribes – appear to have constituted a major element of the origins of the 'Deuteronomists', those who would come to codify the proscriptions of the Levites (cf. Leuchter, 2007: 433, n. 62) and redefine the criteria of 'true' prophecy (Römer, 2009: 176).

[269] Cf. Na'aman, 2011b: 58. As will become clear, this mystery is part of the Deuteronomistic scheme which connects Josiah with Joshua as the 'creator' of an idealised 'Israel'. For the most part, the alleged document "drops from view [...] until Josiah's priests discover it" (Nelson, 1981: 535), which is quite strange for a document which was apparently "so important [...that it...] should not have been lost" (Handy, 1995: 254). It is alluded to in 1 Kgs. 2:3; there is a likely allusion to a covenant (but not 'Torah') in 1 Kgs. 8:9 by way of the verb כָּרַת ('to cut'; used to imply the formation of a treaty agreement); and it is clearly cited in 2 Kgs. 14:6 (which quotes Deut. 24:16). Again, a covenant, and not the Torah, is mentioned in 2 Kgs. 18:12. In short, this 'Torah' of which Hilkiah appears to have previous knowledge bears little significance in the Deuteronomistic History after Joshua demands that the people obey its proscriptions in Josh. 23; and these vague allusions are "incompatible" with the account of its rediscovery (Knauf, 2009: 142).

[270] Cf. Van Der Toorn, 2007: 222: "On hearing the text of the Torah, the King realized [sic] that he and his forebears had long been acting against God's commandments." For Mullen (1993: 278-279), the story of Hezekiah's 'upright' nature articulates the ideal relationship between the king and YHWH. Rosenbaum, 1979, by contrast, argues for the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms and celebration of Passover during his reign.

in mind that no copies could have been disseminated for this hypothesis to hold – is a suspiciously short period for it to have been completely forgotten, especially for those working in the temple whose job it was to protect religious tradition (which, in a polytheistic system, would not have favoured any other cult before centralisation).[271]

It is often held that this 'scroll' was an early version (if not the first) of what became Deuteronomy, and that it "did not see the light before the reform of Josiah".[272] This best suits a context within which Josiah would react so passionately to the revelation, but it is when we examine the biblical claims as to how he reacted that we discover not only some glaring discrepancies regarding the historicity of the account, but also the dangers with presuming a correlation between the biblical image of the contents of the 'scroll' and any form of Deuteronomy.[273] In dealing with every potential (and identifiable) public cultic site not only in the (albeit debated) territory of Judah during the reign of Josiah;[274] but also those claimed by the biblical writers to have been in Samaria or in other territories presumed to have fallen within the sphere of Josiah's geopolitical aspirations at the time, Lisbeth S. Fried provides a thorough analysis of the archaeological 'evidence' for the religious 'reforms' which Josiah is said to have initiated following the realisation that his royal ancestors had been ignorant of "the words of [the] scroll to do all that [had] been prescribed for [them]" (2 Kings 22:13b). She concludes:

> There is no archaeological evidence consistent with the assumption that Josiah removed cult sites from the Iron Age II cities of Judah, Samaria, Megiddo, or the Negev. Except for sites under the control of Edom and beyond Josiah's reach, *there were none to be removed*. All had either been destroyed by Egyptian or Assyrian kings, or purposely

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[271] On the problems with maintaining an argument for a pre-Josian existence of the scroll, see especially Henige, 2007: 5-12. We must assume by the chronological gap that the Hilkiah whose son (Eliakim) was said to have been in charge of the palace (אֲשֶׁר־עַל־הַבַּיִת, literally 'who was over the house'; 2 Kings 18:18, 37) during the reign of Hezekiah was not the same as Hilkiah the High Priest who 'found' the scroll, but perhaps the reuse of similar names (also Eliakim is the 'original' name of the successor of Jehoahaz before Necho changes it to Jehoiakim) is part of the ideology of continuity which connects events regarding trusting completely in YHWH for deliverance from an enemy.

[272] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 222-224 (who presumes the historicity of some sort of reform [222]). Cf. Redford, 1992: 444; and Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 280-281.

[273] Cf. Handy, 1995: 256.

[274] See, for example, Grabbe, 2005b: 89.

> buried in anticipation of such destruction. None was rebuilt. [T]he reforms of Josiah [...] should [not] be considered historical.[275]

This is quite in contrast to the assertion of Yigael Yadin in 1976 that "the historical authenticity [of the] destruction of the 'high places' [by Josiah] is not doubted by scholars".[276] Clearly, the archaeological 'evidence' for the 'reforms' has undergone considerable reassessment since Yadin wrote these words. Yadin's article cited here was focused on identifying cultic features in Beer-sheba destroyed during the 'reforms' of Josiah, and he argued for a 'lowering' of the date of the altar from the period of Hezekiah's reign to that of Josiah. Fried argues more recently, however, that in Beer-sheba there was "no evidence of [seventh century] cultic activity", and that even 'Hezekian' reforms could not be argued based on the stones of an altar which were reused in a wall later destroyed by Sennacherib in 701.[277] All this tells us is that an altar was at some stage dismantled, without providing any evidence as to the motivations, religious or otherwise. Of course, the core claim of the biblical account of Josiah's 'reforms' is that the religious centralisation of Jerusalem began under the reign of Josiah, but Fried points to international events and the rise and fall of imperial powers (long instrumental in shaping the geopolitical, theological and ideological 'maps' of Israel and Judah) as the driving force behind the *purely incidental* centralisation of the Judahite capital – every other site had been destroyed, and the survival of Jerusalem (that event which informed the theology of the inviolability of Jerusalem mentioned in the previous section) was interpreted as the divine will of YHWH.[278] Thus, for Fried, the theology of the centrality of Jerusalem and the exclusive establishment of the divine name at that site propounded in Deuteronomy 12 was "an interpretation and explanation of a devastating present" rather than a future aspiration requiring a concerted break with the past.[279] That 'devastating present', however, presented

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[275] Fried, 2002: 460 (emphasis mine; a purposeful burial would have occurred to protect the sacral nature of an altar); Knauf, 2009: 143; Handy, 1995: 261-262. Also cf. Borowski, 1995: 151, although he accepts much of the biblical account of Hezekiah's (and Josiah's) reforms, attributing the dismantling of the Beer-sheba altar to Hezekiah (150). For a discussion of the archaeology pertaining to Judah's borders in the eighth-seventh centuries, see Kletter, 1999.

[276] Yadin, 1976: 5

[277] Fried, 2002: 447-448. Similarly, Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 372, n. 108) argue that 701 can only be the *terminus ante quem* for the altar. See also Altmann, 2011: 10-11; and Rainey, 1994.

[278] Cf. Altmann, 2011: 32.

[279] Fried, 2002: 461. For Van Der Toorn (2007: 153-154), Deuteronomy 12 was composed *after* the 'reform' of Josiah, "even if the reform was still recent". Accepting the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms,

itself as a most fortunate opportunity for the YHWH-alone group to prioritise their particular ideologies and worldviews. For them, this historical circumstance was not as devastating as it might first have appeared, and the exclusive focus on Jerusalem would later be presented as the ultimate goal in the unfolding (theological) history of 'Israel'.[280] It was, in a sense, the pinnacle of *creation*, and this is why the *political aspirations* of Josiah fit their needs perfectly. Amidst the court propaganda of *re-creating* 'Israel' in Judah (see Section Summary, below) was a need to legitimate those who hoped to remain in power following the death of the king. Kings come and go, but the administration can survive if its longevity is adequately protected. It certainly appears that the administration did not anticipate the death of Josiah at Megiddo (and I see no reason to reject the historicity of an encounter at Megiddo, as I will clarify below), but I believe that the wheels were in motion prior to that tragedy to legitimate the ideologies of the YHWH-alone group (those we would now call the 'Deuteronomists'). There is plenty of evidence in the ancient world for this practice, even at times appearing to be designed to manipulate the power of kings.[281] Of course, as per Nadav Na'aman, analogies with such texts or practices occurring within a wider international context cannot by themselves win the discussion concerning the historicity of Josiah's scroll, and while he concedes that "analogies drawn from ancient Near Eastern kingdoms [...] function as a kind of control for the discussion", he advocates a more focused approach:[282]

> The discussion of forgeries and the manipulation of evidence for the sake of legitimation in Egypt and Mesopotamia demonstrates how widespread and variegated this phenomenon was. Text manipulations of many forms and functions, all of them real artifacts, are attested from (at least) the early second millennium onward. In this light, the search for an original location for the topos of the book/scroll/tablet "discoveries" is

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Borowski (1995) relates them to the wider context of Hezekiah's preparations for revolt against Assyria, in that centralisation would ensure greater control of resources and manpower.

[280] As will be shown in Chapter 4, the 'return' to Jerusalem is the climactic goal connecting the greater Mosaic narrative to the 'missions' of Ezra and Nehemiah.

[281] See Na'aman, 2011b: 49ff.; also Ben-Dov, 2008, 2011.

[282] Na'aman, 2011b: 57. In this, Na'aman begins (48-49) by dismissing Katherine Stott's analogical comparison with Hellenistic and Roman material (Stott, 2005). Ironically, a considerable amount of Na'aman's article is comprised of analogies from the ancient Near East with regard to documents of legitimation, supporting oracles, and cultic reforms. His dismissal of Stott's analogies presumably reflects his own criteria whereby the validity of analogies requires that they pre-date or are contemporary with the subject matter (which has, of course, its own validity). In this regard, Na'aman's presupposition of the historicity of Josiah's reforms (58) determines his own 'control' of the argument.

useless. The episode of the "finding" of the scroll in the time of Josiah should be studied in its own right.[283]

While this appears to promote a perfectly reasonable methodology, David Henige's decidedly 'common sense' approach to the inner-biblical evidence swiftly shows that the integrity of the story on its own merits is left wanting.[284] In this regard, even if Na'aman is correct to see the story of the "discovery and presentation before the king" as "an integral part of the original story of the cult reform" and the "engine to ignite [that] process", this certainly does not require that the 'original story' was contemporary with Josiah's reign, but simply that the 'engine' performs its function as a literary device.[285] In order to understand the necessity amongst the biblical writers for claiming great antiquity for what Karel Van Der Toorn calls the "Covenant Edition" of Deuteronomy (as well as its relationship to the evolution of the migration tradition), it is imperative to appreciate the significance of what appears to be the beginnings in Israel of the usurpation of the prophetic establishment and the centralisation of the priesthood.[286]

3.4.3 *Prophetic and Levitical Subordination to the '(Proto-) Deuteronomic' Covenant*

For Van Der Toorn, the 'Covenant Edition' of Deuteronomy which should be considered contemporary with the 'discovered' scroll would have opened with what is now Deuteronomy 4:45 and would have closed with what is now Deuteronomy 28:69, a model relating to the form taken by Hittite and Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties.[287] This would suggest that the very recent memory of Judah's vassalage to Assyria under Manasseh was 'inverted' by appropriating its

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[283] Na'aman, 2011b: 53

[284] Henige, 2007

[285] Na'aman, 2011b: 54. Na'aman perhaps tempers his convictions regarding 2 Kgs 22-23 by referring to "the source on which it rests" (61) as contemporary with the pre-reform legitimation.

[286] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 152ff.

[287] On how this earlier 'code' – if it existed in written form – might have been appropriated by the "authors of Deuteronomy" and how its form would have related to Neo-Assyrian treaties, see Altmann, 2011: 18-31. Cf. Levinson, 2001: 527-528; Leuchter, 2007: 426-428; Sweeney, 2001: 166-168; Albertz, 2005: 34. As Mullen observes (1993: 56), Deut. 4:44 is one of the "four editorial superscriptions that introduce the materials that follow", but its use of הַתּוֹרָה suggests that it is later than a proposed 'Covenant Edition' (utilising the phrase סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית which we find in the account of the covenant agreement in 2 Kgs. 23:2). Leuchter (2009: 38) sees "the hopes of amalgamating diverse populations" in Judah in terms of "neo-Assyrian praxes adopted by the Josianic court".

form so that the people of 'Israel' were held to be in a vassal relationship with their god, YHWH (an inversion which likely relates to a contemporary relationship with Egypt, as I will argue below).[288] Thus, the reality of submission to imperial powers – which must by that point have seemed almost par for the course – was (idealistically) marginalised in favour of powers beyond the reach of mere rulers and their armies. This might appear to some as naïve and rather pointless, but in a world where placating the divine was presented and perceived as paramount for survival, it constituted a form of defiance against earthly powers while also promoting support for the YHWH-alone group. It would certainly have increased tribute to the Jerusalem temple, and both the economic and legal aspects of Josiah's 'reform' will help gain a better understanding of what was occurring as my argument proceeds.[289] Related to these matters, however, is the hint in the biblical text that there also occurred at the time a subtle but significant shift in power:

> Then the king directed that all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem should be gathered to him. The king went up to the House of YHWH and with him went all the people of Judah, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the House of YHWH. The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before YHWH, to follow YHWH, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant. **2 Kings 23:1-3**

It was one thing to speak in lofty terms of the people binding themselves to the worship of one god above all others, but the reality on the ground was to bind the people to the authority borne by the king himself. Yet if it appears rather cynical and anachronistic to project post-modern concepts of socio-political organisation and control upon the situation, then the suggestion that it was not entirely with the king but also with the administration (with whose support he maintained his throne) that true power lay will undoubtedly jar the sensibilities of some. The clues to the relevance of this concept with regards to the 'Deuteronomic' movement

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[288] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 153, 155 (contra Crouch, 2014, who argues that specific reference to Assyrian concepts must be present to infer *intentional* subversion). Although the covenant is 'ratified' following the escape from Egypt, it could be argued that the obligations laid upon YHWH were realised in his conflict against Pharaoh, who himself should be seen in terms of the 'god' of the Egyptians. In this regard, Exodus relates to creation imagery whereby opposing gods battle before chaos is replaced by order. See further Edelman, 2012: 168-169.

[289] In this, I will be building especially upon the arguments of Claburn, 1973; and Leuchter, 2007.

can be seen throughout the entire 'history' synonymous in biblical scholarship with their ideologies through which said ideologies are expounded upon and applied as tools of the retrospective evaluation of kings; and while the biblical texts are unlikely to preserve contemporary realities in their fullest sense, it has been argued that the 'Deuteronomists' may have sought at this time to delimit the power of autocratic rule (cf. Deut. 17:14-20).[290] If we are to accept the historicity of an eight-year-old boy being placed on the throne, then we would be best served by seeing the עַם־הָאָרֶץ as the "social and economic elite of Judah" whose specific interests would have been served by having their 'puppet' king initiating a program of oath-swearing binding the people to the manifestation and articulation of their ideologies.[291] Levinson's observations that the perceived Deuteronomic 'circumscription' or delimiting of royal power is considerably idealistic in its retrospective recounting of events; and is in fact reversed to a certain degree when it comes to Josiah's demands of the people to be held to the covenant and the celebration of Passover, highlight the confusion with regards to how these events have been recalled. In fact, the apparent discrepancies here indicate to Levinson the difficulties in accepting that a text which arguably pertained to the delimitation of royal power would have been produced "under Josianic aegis".[292] If he was, however, a king brought to the

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[290] Mullen, 1993: 74, 266ff. See further, Dutcher-Walls, 2002, arguing in the context of a faction ensuring that the king maintain 'dual loyalties' to YHWH and Assyria, thus ingratiating the state to both. Levinson, 2001, argues, however, that any such 'circumscription' of the king was nothing more than a retrospective idealisation in stark contrast to contemporary reality: "[T]he legal corpus of Deuteronomy conceptualizes [sic] the king in a way that rejects all prevailing models of monarchic power within both ancient Israel and the broader [Near] East" (original text reads 'New East', p. 511). Levinson goes on (512) to say that "[t]his utopian delimitation of royal power never passed constitutional vision into historical implementation"; and his analysis of the difficulties concerning, for example, a judicial system in which the king's role is delimited (520-523) highlights the anachronistic notion of administrative 'circumscription'. Cf. also Römer, 2013: 85-87. Linville (1998: 237) notes that despite the apparent lack of respect for the role of the king, "Josiah's story preserves for posterity some level of respect for the memory of the monarchy, [allowing] accommodation of the monarchic experience within Israel's other historical memories."

[291] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 273. Even Amos was aware that it was upon the shoulders of the social and economic elite that social responsibilities lay, for it was primarily to them that he had directed his rhetoric of social injustice in the eighth century. We might be best served by thinking of the king as having "enough power to enforce order but not enough to subordinate the interests of other powerful groups entirely to [his] own" (Trigger, 2003: 197).

[292] Levinson, 2001: 527. Cf. Knauf, 2009: 142: "The very notion of God giving his law to the people, to which the king was to be subject, too, presupposed the demise of the monarchy and the usurpation of royal prerogatives[.]" See also Davies, Philip R., 2005b: 73-74; while Albertz, in the same volume, rejects

throne as a child and raised under the auspices of those who put him there, the delimitation of his power might make more sense. It must be conceded, however, that we cannot know the truth of the 'boy-king' element of the story and whether or not it was nothing more than a motif of legitimation written back into a constructed memory of the events (and one designed to assert continuity with Joash, as suggested above). As such, the confusion over whatever power Josiah might actually have wielded personally may long remain, but I will argue further below that there are layers of 'power-play' at work in the text, related to contexts of the reinterpretation of events.

Of immediate interest for my purposes, however, is one particular demographic who attended this 'oath-swearing' ritual – the prophets. Granted, there are semantic difficulties regarding the identification of the נְבִיאִים, and we may (as noted above) be witness to a 'catch-all' term retrospectively 'homogenising' different groups of 'institutional' and 'peripheral' prophets so as to subordinate them to the Deuteronomic concept of intermediation.[293] The picture here is one whereby all of these men (and women, of course, considering it was Huldah who verified the authenticity of the 'scroll'; 2 Kings 22:14-20) subordinated themselves to the authority of this 'scroll of the covenant'.[294] If the picture of prophetic activity in the eighth century is in any way reliable, then it is reasonable to see this demographic still in the seventh century as comprised of individuals whose role in society – and in the court – was to interpret the word of YHWH *as and when it was delivered directly to them* (by whatever means). Here they were, however, agreeing that things should happen in the kingdom according to words written in a scroll upon which they had never before laid eyes. If this actually occurred, there

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Davies' skepticism while moving the "Deuteronomic law of kings" and the inception of a "constitutional monarchy" (2005: 35) into the reigns of Jehoiakim or Zedekiah.

[293] Cf. Mullen, 1993: 72-73, regarding 'Mosaic' succession and the criteria of 'true prophecy' in Deut. 18:15-22. The matter of subordinating the figure of the 'prophet' may play a part in Josiah's 'circumscription' of Levite autonomy, particularly as it relates to the identity of both Jeremiah and Moses. See Leuchter, 2007: 432-433, and clarification further below.

[294] As the later 'Book of the Law', this became symbolic of "the transition of authority from the prophet and the temple to the divine written word" (Na'aman, 2011b: 62); but this does not mean that the seeds of this transition were not sown during Josiah's time. Cf. Schmid, 2012: 293: "Although it would be misleading to speak of a book religion in ancient Israel in the seventh century B.C.E., one can identify its beginnings in this period. Deuteronomy does not *replace* the cult but reforms it, seeking particularly to monopolize [sic] and centralize [sic] it. [...] For the first time in the history of Israel and Judah, a text is used to bolster the authority of the institution[.]" See also Schniedewind, 2004: 91ff., who asserts that "the spread of literacy [in the seventh century] *enabled* [...] the religious authority of the written text" (91; emphasis mine).

must have been considerable weight afforded the presumed author of the scroll and the context within which it was composed, but in this regard it is extremely surprising that not only is Moses not mentioned in the 'original' account; neither is Egypt! Even the eighth century prophets alluded to some kind of migration from Egypt as the founding event within which social, religious and political norms were legitimated, so why is there no hint of it here? The Passover sacrifice is apparently reinstated (2 Kings 23:21-23), but while we are told that it "had not been kept since the days of the Judges who judged Israel or [during] the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah" (23:22), there is no indication that it had once been offered when the people came out of Egypt, or even that it relates to that event.[295] Where is the authority of the migration tradition within which context this sacrifice was supposed to find meaning?

Of course, it is possible that the intended audience of the text (both contemporary and future) would require no prompting as to the significance of the פֶּסַח, but with the repeated allusions to the migration tradition we encountered amidst the prophetic outcry of the eighth century, such allusions are conspicuously absent here. In fact, it is not only in the narrative that the tradition appears irrelevant by way of its absence; not one character throughout the story of Josiah mentions Egypt, and it is not until Necho's appearance at the end of the story that Egypt comes into the picture at all. In fact, the reference to Moses in what looks like an earlier 'epilogue' of the story (2 Kings 23:25) serves somewhat suspiciously to remind the reader of Egypt just in time for the account of Josiah's death at the hands of an Egyptian![296] It is possible, then, that if the Passover sacrifice was, in fact, *re*-introduced to the Judahite cultic sphere, this occurred on the weight of its own (at least, perceived) antiquity; and it seems likely that it was an ancient pastoral festival with a context originally independent of the 'Exodus' tradition.[297] In this sense, an ancient relevance of the 'first-fruits' sacrifice (cf. Leviticus 23:9-22) appropriated in this later context may mark the earliest intrusion into the migration tradition of the motif of

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[295] See Na'aman, 2010: 21.

[296] The reference to Moses in what appears to be – were it not for the Megiddo incident – the 'epilogue' of Josiah's reign (2 Kgs. 23:25) is not itself likely to be part of the earliest version of the account. Instead, "[t]he identification of the author [of the scroll] was made only by a late redactor" (Na'aman, 2011b: 54). Note that the account of the Passover before this reference to Moses uses the phrase סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית to legitimate the sacrifice, changing to הַתּוֹרָה only when the text reminds us of Hilkiah's 'discovery' (2 Kgs. 23:24).

[297] Grabbe, 2005a: 7;; Wesselius, 2000: 6. See also Mayes, 1979: 254-259. Note that Deut. 16:6-7 restricts the celebration of the festival to Jerusalem ("the place where YHWH your god will choose to establish his name"), a clear sign of post-centralisation ideology. See further, Edelman, 2012: 169ff.

the 'slaying of the first-born'.[298] In saying that, and despite the intrusion of the Passover ritual appearing on the surface to have no immediate relevance to the proceedings in the Josiah narrative, I find the argument quite convincing that the communal or 'cultic meal' should be understood within the context of the creation of an 'Israelite' identity in terms of a response to the recent wave of 'foreign' practices imposed (or adopted) in the wake of imperial occupation; a response which is in itself associated with the centralisation of the cult of YHWH in Jerusalem and the manifestation of ethnic exclusivity.[299] In this regard, the observation by Levinson that this event is celebrated as "the first ever *centralized* [sic] celebration of the Passover" might be brought further to conclude that it was, in fact, the *first ever* celebration of the Passover![300]

If this 'scroll' did initiate a legal concept of covenant to which the people were bound; and the migration tradition as we have it was still in its early stages, then it is to the claimed authorship of Moses as the 'hallmark of authenticity' that we should direct our attention. Who was this Moses? How could he simply be invented and afforded such authority if nobody had ever heard of him before? I think the most obvious answer is that he was not simply invented, and that there must have been an awareness of an ancestral figure upon whose shoulders could be borne the weight of *the re-invention of 'Israel'*. In the previous section, I dismissed the allusion of Micah to Moses (and Aaron and Miriam) as a much later interpolation, extrapolating that none of the eighth century prophets would have associated this figure with whatever form (or forms) of the migration tradition may have been in circulation in their time; but this *does not mean that no one had heard of Moses, nor that there was no antiquity perceived of him* by the time Josiah's scroll required legitimation. Clearly, he must have been of considerable significance to the people to have been credited (at a time later than Josiah's reign) with the

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[298] On the possibility of an early 'tenth-plague' tradition (cf. Exod. 4:21-23) later attached to a prevailing "three groups of three" division of the plagues, see Loewenstamm, 1992: 100, 118-119, 167. On the distinction, made manifest by the ritualisation of this act, between Egypt and Israel (cf. Exod. 11:7b), see especially Greifenhagen, 2002: 122-128. Interestingly, the motif of marking those who are to be saved from death can be found in Ezekiel, whose vision of Jerusalem's destruction a decade after his own deportation in 597 sees those who are troubled by non-Yahwistic worship marked and spared (Ezek. 9:4ff.).

[299] See further, Altmann, 2011: 37ff. Cf. Mullen, 1993: 281. Greifenhagen (2002: 237) appears to suggests that, while the festival of Passover or Unleavened Bread was previously known to the community at Elephantine – whose letters dating from the late fifth century defer to Jerusalemite (and Samarian; *idem*: 243) authority in relation to cultic practices – their letter may articulate an intent to "bring the celebration [...] into line with" its specifically *anti-Egyptian* connotations insofar as disassociation with Egyptian culture is concerned (see further in 4.2, below).

[300] Levinson, 2001: 525

reception of covenant stipulations which would bind the people to YHWH through their king, but I think it is most important to understand him as a figure of greatest significance to the YHWH-alone movement. In a sense, he should be understood as the 'founding father' of the 'Deuteronomists', for it is into his hands in an inaccessible antiquity that the legitimation of their program for the future (a program relevant to every present) is projected. It is possible that this is the first time in the history of 'Israel' that Moses is afforded such a central role in the political and religious consciousness of the people, but I think that we may reach a better understanding of this process through the continuity created at this time between the legendary Joshua and the very real Josiah.

As suggested above, the story of Joshua conquering the land at the head of a unified 'Israel' has much to tell us about the propaganda of the Josian court; but the clues to the relationship between the Deuteronomistic account of Josiah and the book of Joshua extend considerably beyond the visual and phonetic similarities of the names of these two towering figures in Israelite history.[301] What binds them most dramatically and convincingly from an ideological point of view is the figure of Moses; for just as Joshua inherited the leadership of the Hebrews who escaped oppression in Egypt, Josiah is seen to assume the mantle of leadership over a new 'Israel', emerging from the ashes of Assyrian oppression to bind his people together by promoting a covenant given to Moses in the context of that 'escape'. In this sense, both Joshua and Josiah – the deliverers – inherit and assume the role of Moses, and the presentation of Joshua as it relates to the ideal king championed by Deuteronomy means that he is "a sort of proto-king sketched out along the lines of the ideal deuteronomic [sic] monarch".[302] The

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[301] Fleming (2012: 317) argues that Joshua was likely a traditional hero figure associated with the cult site at Bethel. If I am reading him correctly, Fleming appears to intimate that the Joshua story emerged from other tales of 'Judges': "Joshua would be the sole individual hero associated at all with Bethel, and his victory is isolated from those in the book of Judges, instead forming the core of a separate literary work with a completely different rationale." I think it likely that we are indebted to Josiah for this elevation of Joshua. This would make sense in light of the Judean annexation of Bethel during Josiah's reign in which Judah came to incorporate Israelite tradition in its expression of self-identity (reiterated further below).

[302] Nelson, 1981: 534. In this regard, compare the description of Josiah in 2 Kgs. 22:2 with the words of Joshua in Josh. 23:6. Even Joshua's orders to refrain from mixing with other cultures and their gods (23:7-8); the claims that YHWH has driven out other nations (23:9); and the threat that this situation can be reversed if the people are not faithful to YHWH (23:13) constitute the best analogy to the aspirations of Josiah and his program for national religious restoration and the creation of a Judean 'Israel' in the wake of Assyrian withdrawal from the region and hopes for the territorial expansion of Judah. Certainly, there are echoes here of the views expressed in Ezra-Nehemiah on intermarriage and the perceived purity of the *ethnie* (as will be explored in the next chapter), but I think Josiah's reign is the most suitable

'discovery' of the scroll in the Jerusalem temple facilitates this 'passing of the baton' to Josiah, but it also creates a purposeful sense of continuity with the figure of Joshua. As such, we cannot allow ourselves to be fooled by the apparent direction of dependence of these narratives by way of the much later chronological arrangement of the biblical texts. After all, it is less likely that Josiah's actions reminded the people of the time of a well-known figure in Israelite history who saw the people through a tumultuous ordeal until they were settled in harmony; rather, Josiah's aspirations to do just that were the motivations behind the composition of the Joshua story which legitimated his right to lead the way.

As we saw in Chapter 1, modern biblical scholarship has convincingly shown that the 'conquests' attributed to Joshua are nought but fiction, and that even the idea of a Solomonic 'United Kingdom' – wherein a unified Israelite people occupy a single territorial polity – is a late ideological construct upon which a retrospective on the joint histories of Israel and Judah is founded. It is during the reign of Josiah that the ideas of a unified people calling themselves 'Israel' and identifying themselves by way of a covenant relationship with a single god centred upon a single cult site are first manifested in political terms. The idea of YHWH's people being held to a covenant with him may pre-date this period, as suggested above in Section 3.3.2 (although if Assyrian treaty forms are the influence, such pre-dating cannot reach back too far), but only here is it extended to incorporate everyone within the territory of Judah; because it is only here that this territory begins to be thought of as the formative land of the religious entity 'Israel'.[303] I can think of no more fitting response to Josiah's demands for loyalty as intimated in the covenant sequence than that given by the people to Joshua:[304]

> "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may YHWH your god be with us, as he was with Moses." **Joshua 1:16-17**

This not only aligns the authority of Josiah with that projected into antiquity of Moses; it also aligns the aspirations of the people with those of their perceived ancestors. The intentions and motivations of both parties are thus imbued with a sense of continuity and authenticity; and

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terminus ante quem for this 'theology of purity'. On the possibility that the Hebrew word מוֹשִׁיעַ 'deliverer' (as it is used in 2 Kgs. 13:5) is either "a word play on [...] מֹשֶׁה" or provokes images of Moses, see Linville, 1998: 178-180.

[303] Cf. Na'aman, 2010.

[304] Cf. Nelson, 1981: 532: "We need only think of the statements in Near Eastern vassal treaties demanding obedience to the suzerain's successor to understand the royal environment in which such concerns are at home."

whatever forms of ancient traditions are brought to mind, they are contemporised through the perception of active participation in an ancient covenant agreement.[305] To me, this focus on creating a connection across time constitutes a considerable challenge to the idea that a version of the Deuteronomistic History was composed during the reign of Josiah; at least one which featured him. I do not think that a narrative account of contemporary circumstances was a concern of the Josian court. Instead, legitimation was paramount; and a narrative *claiming ideological antiquity for Josiah's program of national (cultic) restoration and territorial expansion* would have been decidedly more important than one which told the people what was going on during his reign (and who would be the intended audience of such an account?). If there indeed existed the "Annals of the Kings of Judah", then this is the most likely place wherein Josiah's acts were recorded for posterity (2 Kings 23:28).[306] The scroll (Joshua 1:7-8), the Passover (Joshua 5:10) and the covenant – all manifestly new to the reign of Josiah – were authenticated through their connection with Moses by way of Joshua:

> And there, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. All Israel [...] stood in front of the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of YHWH[.] [...] After that [Joshua] read all the words of the law[.] [...] There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel[.] **Joshua 8:32-35**

This picture of a Late Bronze Age military leader inscribing laws – which were merely copies of earlier written material – may appear rather anachronistic, but this is not the place to consider the extent of literacy in 'early Israelite' society. Instead, what concerns us here is the role filled by Joshua as the purveyor of codified *legal* proscriptions.[307] This places the analogous Josiah in

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[305] Cf. Mullen, 1993: 79-80.

[306] Ben-Dov (2008: 230) might be correct to envisage an early account of "the book-find and the prophetic consultation [...] as well as [...] the reform report" during the reign of Josiah, although only the first of these two would be necessary from the point of view of contemporary (or near-contemporary) legitimation. If the second was an account of what actually occurred (and not merely an idealised retrospective), then it might be best to see it as a dramatisation of an originally laconic record for the 'annals'.

[307] An excellent consideration of the problems with determining levels of literacy in Israel can be found in Young, 1998. See also Ben Zvi, 2000, especially regarding the obligations borne by the 'literati' with regard to reading to the general population (16-18) and how such "readings of authoritative religious literature to a large audience [...] were probably characterized [sic] by some form of ritual, and organized or promoted by a center [sic] of authority in society" (18).

a similar position, but whereas 2 Kings 23:2 sees Josiah reading every word of the "scroll of the covenant", the reality on the ground would suggest a process of delegation tied up with an attempt to control the rural Levitical priests. In this, and building on the work of Marvin Sweeney, Mark Leuchter argues for the transmission of "regional jurisprudence" to Levitical priests whose relative autonomy until the initiation of Josiah's reforms was 'corrected' through the standardisation and centralisation of a legal system overseen by the King.[308] Leuchter notes that the changes would not have sought to "cripple or marginalize [sic]" these rural priests, but it would certainly have been to their advantage to come to Jerusalem to 'ply their trade'.[309]

It should be clear by this stage that while I do not accept the biblical picture of a purposeful 'purification' of non-Yahwistic practices (or de-centralised Yahwistic practices) enacted upon the discovery of a scroll attributed to anyone in the past, I believe that there was a reform of some kind, and I am convinced that the answer to its nature *and its motivations* is to be found in the administrative and legal aspects of the 'Deuteronomic Code' rather than the cultic ones. As Mullen puts it, "the deuteronomic [sic] ideal of cultic purity and centralization [sic] and the deuteronomic characterizations [sic] of foreign worship practices served as a blueprint for the *narrative* of Josiah's reform".[310] What must be questioned, however, is the historical basis upon which that 'blueprint' makes its truth claims. In this regard, it is methodologically sound to make analogies with contemporary and near-contemporary Near Eastern models of 'reform' and the manifestations of their (retrospective or contemporary) legitimation, but only insofar as those examples pertain to administrative changes. The difficulty, of course, is that in city- or nation-states where the temple – or, indeed, a plethora of temples – is (are) attached to and overseen by the royal administration, such changes are likely to have been presented in the guise of cultic reform legitimated by communication from the gods (whether directly or through intermediation) or the 'discovery' of a mythical cycle articulated to complement contemporary concerns. The exploitation of the temple as a 'conduit' for the royal treasuries may not be so difficult to believe, then, and the elevation of one particular deity as the patron of a dynasty would invariably enhance the flow of monetary support to the temple of that deity. Where a single deity ascends in the national psyche to the position of sole patron of the monarchy, only those deities maintaining significance to people outside the immediate sphere of influence of the city would continue to receive cult in rural areas. Yet this is the genius of the

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[308] Leuchter, 2007: 419. Sweeney's argument can be found in Sweeney, 2001: 150ff. On the literary development leading to the archaizing of the judicial system and its attribution to Moses in Deut. 1:9-18, see Brettler, 1995: 65-70.

[309] Leuchter, 2007: 420

[310] Mullen, 1993: 82 (emphasis mine)

centralisation which appears to have occurred under Josiah. In the guise of religious 'reform', Josiah's 'scroll of the covenant' compelled the people – and, more importantly, the priests – to abandon rural sites in favour of the Jerusalem temple, and bound them to bringing their goods, their services and their money as 'sacrifices' to Josiah's patron deity, YHWH.[311] Whereas it appears on the surface that Levitical priests would profit from the administrative-cultic centralisation – indeed, centralisation may have initiated the 'homogenisation' of the priesthood (see 3.4.4, below) – a closer reading suggests that they were wholly indebted to the people maintaining their covenantal agreements for survival:

> The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no allotment or inheritance within Israel. They may eat the sacrifices that are YHWH's portion[.] [...] This shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the two jowls, and the stomach. The first fruits of your grain, your wine, and your oil, as well as the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. **Deuteronomy 18:1-4**

As the covenant bound the people to sacrificing solely at Jerusalem, centralisation delimited the influence of the Levites outside the city proper and relegated any still existing rural shrines to insignificance.[312] In fact, the incentive for Levitical priests to come to Jerusalem (presented in the 'pre-Settlement' language as "the place YHWH *will* choose") and partake of these 'privileges' is quite clear:

> If a Levite leaves any of your towns, from wherever he has been residing in Israel, and comes to the place that YHWH will choose (and he may come whenever he wishes), then he may minister in the name of YHWH his god, like all his fellow Levites who stand to minister there before YHWH. They will have equal portions to eat, even though they have income from the sale of family possessions. **Deuteronomy 18:6-8**

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[311] As previously noted, this argument is adopted from Claburn, 1973.

[312] The tone of the apparently intrusive statement of 2 Kgs. 23:9 – that the "priests of the high places" appear to have celebrated Passover outside Jerusalem – is not clear, but Leuchter dismisses the argument that it is evidence of "a refusal of the reform", altering the translation to suggest that these Levites only went *up* (back from Jerusalem?) to the 'high places' following their own celebration of Passover; and that this enigmatic verse is an attempt "to present [the reform] as thoroughly successful in the communities beyond Jerusalem" (Leuchter, 2007: 428-429).

The rewards for 'coming in' and abandoning rural sites must surely have swayed the circumstances in Josiah's favour, because the flow of goods and money into Jerusalem would have been facilitated by the administrative elements of 'cultic' centralisation. Any such centralisation at this point, insofar as the people would actually have considered Jerusalem to be the only place where worship or veneration of YHWH was possible, was merely an ideal to develop as time went on – and to be reinvented and reinvigorated in post-exilic Jerusalem – but cultic centralisation in its infancy should be seen as an incidental consequence of administrative (economic and legal) centralisation, projected back onto the latter to reinterpret it (and hail it) as the former. This projection was absolutely necessary in order both to mask the reality of the motivations and to create a sense of discontinuity in the bigger picture of the history of 'Israel', because the reality would conflict with the ideologies alluded to in the condemnations of the northern kingdom. The great 'irony' with which the biblical writers had to deal was that the administrative centralisation which facilitated cultic centralisation (and eventually monotheism) was precisely the cause of the socio-economic imbalances attacked by the eighth century prophets and characteristic of the full-blown statehood of Israel which was presented as anathema to the 'true nature' of 'Israel'.[313] I would contend, further, that the ideologies of later cultic centralisation were projected back onto the memories of those prophetic 'missions' to characterise and enhance the platform of righteousness upon which those legendary figures stood, but here we move into the literary-ideological realm of constructed continuity; because amidst the biblical writers' concern with continuity and assertions of antiquity are also to be found aspects of discontinuity. In fact, it is arguably with the latter that the story of Josiah is most concerned, because if the reality of Josiah's Judah was akin to, for example, the Israel of Jeroboam II, then any sense of continuity with that model of a successful state would have to be overlaid with the ideologies of a very different motivation for centralisation.

Whereas the Passover celebration connects Josiah to Joshua, and the people to those distant antecedents who were on the verge of creating a new 'Israel' in the land promised in turn to *their* ancestors, the cultic 'purification' preceding and facilitating the celebration is presented as a kind of spiritual palimpsest whereby the perceived sins of people and kings before those of Josiah's Judean Israel are wiped clean to prepare for creation on a clean

[313] This picture provides a good explanation for the glaring paucity of information relative to Manasseh's fifty-five year reign. To direct any attention to the infrastructure of his reign which arguably facilitated Josiah's administrative 'reform' (as noted above; see further, Tatum, 1991) would lend validity to the actions of this necessarily demonised king.

slate.[314] This disconnection from the infidelities of foregone Israel amounts to a propagandistic claim of Josiah's right to create a new 'Israel' in Judah, because beneath the surface disconnection is the perpetual association with that hateful past which mirrors Josiah's achievements. In other words, the underlying continuity with that past both necessitates and magnifies the 'purification'. This is, of course, where the account of that past comes into question, for much of it is a literary construct to facilitate the greatness of Josiah's reign; but even the account of the 'purification' itself is in doubt. I think that it should be understood as a later justification for Yahwistic supremacy and centralisation the origins of which are projected on to the reality of Josiah's administrative reform so that it can be claimed that cultic centralisation is nothing less than *a correcting action* returning the people to their rightful relationship with YHWH; a relationship founded upon the liberation from Egypt. This is where the tradition of most significance is that of the migration from Egypt, for as a story concerned with the creation of Israel as a homogeneous nation, it is by its very nature an idealisation of Israel as a people untainted by the 'heretical' practices yet to be encountered upon entering the Promised Land. The tradition narrates precisely the same cultic and ideological palimpsest fundamental for the creation of a pure Israel – the disassociation from a nation presented as the antithesis of 'Israelite' socio-religious and socio-political ideals. As 'Egypt' in Exodus is the complete opposite of this idealised 'Israel', so too must Egypt be understood amidst this re-creation of 'Israel' as a nation of opposites. Assyria may have filled the role of the archetypal 'Egypt' during its ascendancy, but in the wake of its decline, Egypt itself returned to the region; and a tradition pertaining to the creation of 'Israel' as a distinct entity was afforded new significance. It likely bore little relevance as court propaganda during the "peaceful times" of Manasseh's reign, because it was the Assyrian imperial infrastructure which facilitated Judah's prosperity.[315] The confluence of events and circumstances facilitating the mnemohistorical

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[314] Cf. Mullen, 1993: 83: "In symbolic fashion [...] the entirety of Israel and Judah had been reconstituted in cultic terms."

[315] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 271, 346. Cf. Redford, 1992: 438; Grabbe, 2007: 201. See especially, Knauf, 2005. On the wider international economy facilitated by Assyrian hegemony, see, for example, Faust and Weiss, 2005; Na'aman, 2003. The absence in the biblical text of any reference to Egypt during the long reign of Manasseh suggests an ideological 'hiatus' within which a negative impression of Egypt in the collective psyche of the nation did not correspond with the contemporary socio-political requirements. It makes sense within the context of that reign and the biblical polemic alluding to non-Yahwistic practices – composed by "the ravening iconoclasts of a later age" (Redford, 1992: 437) – to posit a situation in which *Yahwists were not in the ascendancy as they clearly were during the reign of Josiah*. Similarly, Borowski's view that "the Bible did not forget Hezekiah's attempts to restore the Davidic glory" (1995: 153) would be best seen in terms of him offering greater support to the YHWH-

'leap-frog' which appears to have its origins in the reign of Josiah saw that reign defining itself by bypassing centuries of past wrongs and projecting its ideologies and the legitimation of its policies back into a time which may have otherwise remained immemorial. Yet the account of what happened is not, as I have shown, without its difficulties, and in order to appreciate what elements might have entered the migration tradition at this point, it is vital to return to the relationship between the king and those around him; specifically, the prophets and the Levitical priests. I do this because of one specific claim of the received form of the migration tradition – the Levitical ancestry of Moses, the archetypal prophet.

To be borne in mind here are a number of apparently conflicting claims and conclusions: i) that the 'Covenant Code' demanded a subordination of both prophetic and priestly (Levitical) authority to that of the king; ii) that the ideologies of the Deuteronomic 'movement' envisaged a 'circumscription' of the king; iii) that the Deuteronomists imbued the legendary figure of Moses with the authority to legitimate their ideologies; iv) that the king (Josiah) recognised that authority to the extent that he followed the instructions of the 'Torah of Moses'; and v) that Moses was, in fact, a Levite (and undoubtedly would not have seen his 'brethren' subordinated to any worldly authority)! The answer to the problems inherent in this convergence of perspectives is multifaceted, and pertains to the levels of power-play preserved in the redactional layers of the text and the reinterpreted memories of the events which occurred before its initial composition. I would suggest that the memories themselves preserved a quick succession of changes in authority as control over the evolving Covenant and later Torah stipulations moved from one entity to another. Karel Van Der Toorn supplies the most suitable solution, identifying how unlikely it is that Josiah would have endorsed the 'Torah of Moses' as well as alluding to the gradual disenfranchisement of the prophetic establishment; to the point that the only answer is the composition of the 'Torah Edition' in a post-monarchic (exilic) setting:

> By making Moses the model prophet [that is, based upon the criteria of 'true prophecy' in Deuteronomy 18], the editor redefines prophets as teachers of Torah. By so recasting the prophets, however, he turns them into extensions of the priests who possess the Torah;

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alone group whose legacy pervades the retrospective on whatever actually occurred. Cf. Cogan, 1993: 410-411 on the biblical presentation of Ahaz and Manasseh (also see Hulbert, 2008 on how Manasseh facilitates both exilic and post-exilic worldviews). On the problematic 'repentance' of Manasseh in 2 Chron. 33:10-17 and its significant omission from the account in Kings, see Grabbe, 2007: 203.

in the vision of the Deuteronomic Constitution, priests are the leading actors, while king and prophet play supporting parts.[316]

We must necessarily envisage the preservation in the text of Josiah's administrative reforms as they were justified by whatever proscriptions were contained in an original 'Scroll of the Covenant', but we should also consider not only that Levites were not part of the legitimating rhetoric of the Josian court, but that Moses may not have featured either – at least, *not explicitly*. In this picture, the version of the Joshua story propagated at this time – an idealistic story of conquest and unification – stood on its own merit as Josian propaganda prior to its later association with the more elaborate 'Mosaic drama' (Exodus-Deuteronomy).[317] What I envisage is Josiah's implied connection with the traditional figure of Moses *as a lawgiver* (see further below) facilitated by projecting images of *newly-established* practices and covenant ceremonies back to the time perceived of Joshua's activities. This would lay the groundwork for seeing an historical Joshua as the protégé of Moses, by extension allowing Josiah to justify his legal and adminstrative changes as if he had *inherited* the right to do so. To be clear, then, it is not that the figure of Moses did not play a role; instead, his authority as a lawgiver facilitated associations of authenticity as well as becoming foundational for the later *composite image* of Moses (see further below). Later development of the migration tradition would see Joshua's legendary status as the conquering 'creator' tempered by *a Levite prophet* whose authority superseded everyone who might claim otherwise; and, of course, to Moses in this role is attributed the 'Torah'. As such, it is not necessary that Moses was not part of a migration tradition at this time (although this is a possibility; see 3.4.4, below); simply that he was not a Levite.[318] I think that in order to argue to the contrary would require at the very least the

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[316] Van Der Toorn, 2007: 158-159. Related to this is the gradual usurpation of the authority of the prophetic word by written texts. After all, what better way to tackle claims to prophecy than to hold up against prophets written accounts of their words? This does not imply that such accounts would be true, merely that they conformed to the religio-political status quo and conflicted with the 'prophecies' of those who did not. This new way of thinking is arguably the origins of the 'bureaucracy' which developed out of Josiah's centralisation, against which Jeremiah spoke (Blenkinsopp, 1996: 139-140).

[317] See further below and more in Chapter 4 regarding the Joshua narrative.

[318] Leuchter, 2012b, discusses the place of Moses in memory as the eponymous ancestor of the Mushite priests, not only insofar as the contribution of memories of their battlefield prowess contributed to the Pentateuchal image of Moses as war leader; but also as to how the gradual association of Moses with Levitical activity is evidenced by such scenes in Exodus as the punishment meted out on the people following the Golden Calf apostasy of Exodus 32. There is a complex background here, pertaining to

extraction of Moses from the picture of Josian propaganda, particularly as Josiah's administrative reforms curbed Levitical influence and autonomy.

Before I begin drawing some conclusions regarding the historical context of Josiah's reforms and the contribution of both to the evolution of the migration tradition, there is one historical figure whose input has yet to be addressed. Amidst this milieu of administrative reform and the subordination of traditional institutions of authority was a prophet who also saw his influence threatened. He is not mentioned at all in the 2 Kings account of Josiah, but Deuteronomistic claims to the activity in the time of Josiah of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah (Jeremiah 1:1) might provide us with just what we need to solve the mystery.[319]

3.4.4 *Jeremiah as Josiah's Anchor*

The first step here must be to list the references to the people having come out of Egypt (particularly as these references constitute condemnation of behaviour in the same manner as the eighth century prophets), as well as to Moses. The latter takes little time at all, for there is but a single reference, in Jeremiah 15:1, to Moses. Almost in passing, Moses is mentioned alongside Samuel, although the implication is that these are important figures for prophetic heritage (and thus for the *biblical presentation* of Jeremiah's self-understanding).[320] There is no clear indication that Moses is associated with the migration tradition, and where Jeremiah speaks of the people having been brought out of Egypt (Jeremiah 2:6; 7:22, 25; 11:4, 7; 16:14; 23:7; 31:32; 32:20-21;[321] 34:13), credit is afforded YHWH alone. As above, Moses is arguably a figure of some mnemohistorical significance, but it would be reading beyond the evidence to simply presuppose the association of Moses with the migration tradition *at this time*. What

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collective memories of the gradual assimilation of Levites into the clan system; as well as to the legitimation of Levites as bearers and purveyors of the law.

[319] Cf. Leuchter, 2009: 34. Leuchter is concerned with the 'Chronicler's' appropriation of Jeremiah to allude to the historical role played by 'prophets' in the process of cultic centralisation; see further below). Knauf (2009: 135) claims that "Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah and Zephaniah are not mentioned by Kings because they formed part and parcel of the corpus to which Kings provided the introduction". Of course, by this reasoning, Isaiah does not belong in Kings either!

[320] Of course, with Jer. 15:4 clearly presupposing the Babylonian destruction and the theological attachment of this 'punishment' to Manasseh (as in the Josiah story), the use of Moses here in this late oracle is likely to presuppose his presence in the migration tradition.

[321] This very brief allusion to what appears to be the Deuteronomistic History, if not the entire Primary History (covenant with ancestors, liberation from Egypt, conquest of the land, subsequent infidelity to YHWH and punishment in the form of conquest) should clearly not be dated to Josiah's reign.

Jeremiah does indicate, however, is an understanding of a covenant relationship founded upon the migration from Egypt (11:2-10; 31:31-33; 34:13); and while the first clearly bears a Deuteronomic 'stamp' designed to make Jeremiah appear favourable to Josiah's reforms (the second and third cannot be Josianic in context), this may by extension indicate that it preserves a memory of covenant language contemporary with Jeremiah's activity appropriated for his own needs;[322] an appropriation 'inverted' by Deuteronomic ideology. In this sense, we could just as easily have a memory here of an ironic adaptation of Josiah's covenant delimiting prophetic and priestly activity, such that Jeremiah could be seen as defending his role as the rightful conduit of YHWH's words. In this regard, it would be difficult indeed to see Jeremiah as Josiah's "agent" delivering "pro-Josianic rhetoric" amongst the people (although Jeremiah 22:15-16 suggests some measure of admiration for Josiah after his death);[323] but the redaction history of Jeremiah makes it difficult to be certain as to whether the prophet was even active during the reign of Josiah![324] I believe, however, that not only should we envisage an original Jeremiah active during Josiah's reign (and a witness, based upon Jeremiah 36, to the ascension of the authority of the written word over prophetic speech);[325] we should also see him as an 'agent' of the evolution of the migration tradition at this time.

Blenkinsopp suggests that Jeremiah's reference to Assyrian hegemony in 2:36b as a thing of the past troubles the claims to Jeremiah's activity during Josiah's time, because "Assyria was to

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[322] By the book's own reckoning, the second association of a covenant with the migration from Egypt is placed within the reign of Zedekiah (cf. 28:1, the last indication of a date prior to Chapter 31), while the third occurs in Chapter 34 with clear indications of the same historical context.

[323] Leuchter, 2007: 432. For a reading of this admired 'father' as an allusion to David/Solomon and thus "dilutes the praise associated with [Josiah]", see Ben Zvi, 2005: 52-53. Of course, it is the purposeful opposition of Josiah and Jehoiakim as the 'good' and 'bad' kings which connects their different reactions to the reading of the scrolls in 2 Kgs. 22 and Jer. 36 (Römer, 2009: 176).

[324] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1996: 139; Sweeney, 2001: 208-209; Albertz, 2005: 43. Sweeney's discussion as to whether Jeremiah supported or opposed Josiah's reforms are, in my opinion, unduly complicated by his understanding of the "Deuteronomic Torah" as "the basis for Josiah's program" (2001: 210), particularly when that specific terminology is likely an interpolation post-dating Josiah's reign. In saying that, the introduction of Torah need not have occurred too long after Josiah's death, and Sweeney may be right to see Jeremiah's trial in Chapter 26 (during the reign of Jehoiakim; Jer. 26:1) in the context of a defence (on Jeremiah's part) of 'Deuteronomic Torah' (212-213). Of course, perhaps 'pre-' or 'proto-Deuteronomic' would be a more apt term. For a brief history of the scholarship on the composition of Jeremiah, see Römer, 2009: 168-171. Also cf. Leuchter, 2009: 36: "While [the Jeremiah texts] should not be used as accurate witnesses to history, [they] may be helpful in reconstructing public perceptions concerning the late 7th-early 6th centuries[.]"

[325] Römer, 2009: 176-178

remain at the center [sic] of international affairs for about fifteen years after the date assigned to Jeremiah's call in the superscription" and Egypt only enjoyed a "short period" of hegemony "during the early years of Jehoiakim's reign".[326] As has already been shown above, the international picture is not at all clear, and it is much more likely that Assyrian weakness led to Egyptian resurgence in the region, a situation which would best explain Jeremiah 2:36b:

> You will be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria.[327]

In fact, a contemporisation of Egypt as the significant superpower and overlord of Judah during Josiah's reign would solve a lot of apparent problems.[328] In the context of Josiah's bid to recreate an 'Israel' under Egyptian vassalage, it would, for a start, afford relevance to Jeremiah's appeal to the migration tradition as foundational for Israelite identity in terms of its primordial rejection of other gods (2:4-8; cf. 11:10); its agreement to obey YHWH and "walk in the way that [he] command[ed]" them (7:22-23; cf. 11:2-8); and its recognition of the status of prophets as YHWH's intermediaries (7:25). The use of the word תּוֹרָה in 2:8, however, troubles the notion that these words belong to a time when the בְּרִית is said to dictate correct behaviour, as is clearly the case in Jeremiah 11 (and in 2 Kings 22-23). Although there is notably no association of Moses with Jeremiah's use of תּוֹרָה, I would hesitate to reduce the concept to a generic understanding of 'law' bearing no connotations of Mosaic authority. With the words in 2:4ff. addressed to the 'House of Jacob' and 'all the clans of the House of Israel', it is tempting to assign to them a later context which perceives Josiah's 'reunification' of Israel as successful, particularly as Jeremiah is told to proclaim in Jerusalem.[329] For Galvin, "Jeremiah 2 probably emanates from the early years of Jeremiah, before Babylon became the prevailing Mesopotamian threat"; and this observation is made on the basis of Jeremiah's pairing of Egypt and Assyria as contemporary considerations.[330] For Galvin, the image of Assyria pertains in

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[326] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 138

[327] Galvin (2011: 128-129) observes the pairing of Assyria and Egypt here and in Jer. 2:18; but whereas 2:18 is concerned with trusting in the two major superpowers prior to the Babylonian ascendancy, 2:36b clearly contemporises Egypt as the one with which the people are faced in Jeremiah's time (contra Galvin, who states that the verse is a warning [129, emphasis mine] "that Egypt *and* Assyria *will* put Israel to shame").

[328] Although cf. Albertz, 2005: 41-43.

[329] For Davies (2005b), the fifth century is the most suitable *terminus post quem* for the concept of a unified 'Israel'; but I think that the Persian period ideal has its roots in a pre-exilic aspiration upon which is built the authority of continuity.

[330] Galvin, 2011: 128. See n. 327, above.

Jeremiah's time to the 'evil' of Egypt, but the contemporary strength of Egypt meant that no analogy was necessary to define it as such. The connection with Assyria serves to remind us of the ideological continuity informing the juxtaposition of these superpowers alongside the development of Israelite identity; and Jeremiah's concern is precisely that of his predecessor, Isaiah (also active in the Jerusalem court): you cannot trust Egypt. This is a perfect context within which to revitalise the migration tradition, and there is no ambiguity in Jeremiah's opinions of Egypt.[331] It is a place of oppression from which the people need to be – and indeed were, in the primordial past – liberated.

The analogical application of the 'return' from Egypt to prophesy a return of Israelites from 'the north' and from "all the lands to which he had driven them" (Jeremiah 16:14-15; cf. 23:7-8) is a perfect example of how the relevance of the tradition could be re-contemporised, and it is not necessary to see here a solely exilic or post-exilic aspiration of 'return'. Instead, the alignment of these 'returns' – one in the distant past, the other in the (near) future – attaches itself to hopes of restoration (and, of course, *descendants of the people of the northern kingdom* could be implied), and are quite at home amidst the rhetoric of a nationalist revival. In this, I would not go so far as Leuchter in that Jeremiah actively supported Josiah's reforms *as they pertained to cultic centralisation* (which is the route Leuchter takes for determining Jeremiah's support);[332] but if the air was filled with talk of recapturing a former 'golden age', then it is not difficult to see a significant figure like Jeremiah finding his own way to articulate the hopes of the people. This picture allows for the possibility that Jeremiah 2:4, with its use of 'House of Jacob' and 'all the clans of the House of Israel' is evidence of Jeremiah's 'buying in' to the nationalist rhetoric, but still the use of תּוֹרָה in 2:8 suggests a disassociation of the entire chapter from the time of Josiah's בְּרִית.[333] Where the covenant is invoked in Chapter 11,

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[331] Galvin, 2011: 125

[332] In the realm of cultic activities, Leuchter (2009: 37) states that Jeremiah "served under Josiah as a propagandist". I will address below the possible role of Jeremiah in Josiah's *administrative* centralisation.

[333] In the context of arguing for the greater antiquity of Torah over Covenant, prioritising correlations from Hatti and Mari over Neo-Assyria – and almost as an afterthought – Ben-Dov (2011) tackles the 'slight' problem of there being no reference to Moses until the end of the account of Josiah's good deeds. He argues that "[e]arly sources in the development of the discourse of authority in Israel did not refer to 'The torah [sic] of Moses' but simply to 'the book of Torah' or the like" (61). He specifically connects the Hittite concept of the "oracle-book" coming directly from a divine agency with the lack of a claim of human authorship for Josiah's 'found' book, a connection clearly favourable to his argument for a 'pre-Deuteronomic' concept of 'Torah'. For Ben-Dov, "[t]he origins of [the Josiah] narrative are rooted before the great advent of writing and revelation in Mesopotamia in the late Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods" (62). As I argued in Chapter 1 (and again in Chapter 2 concerning the survival of

accusations are made against both the 'House of Israel' and the 'House of Judah' (Jeremiah 11:10), envisaging distinct ethnic identities prior to any glorious 'reunification' under the banner of 'Israel'; although the truth of the matter is considerably obscured by YHWH's instructions in 11:2-3 to address "the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" with the words "Thus says YHWH, *god of Israel*". The presumption here is that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would understand their god as such!

It is possible that much of the material preceding Jeremiah's removal to Egypt in Chapter 43 was designed to denigrate Egypt to the point that Jeremiah's authority as the prophetic voice for exiled Judeans in Egypt is validated, something which aligns him ideologically with Moses.[334] Although there is no account of his return from Egypt or the suggestion that he might have been considered at his time 'a prophet like Moses', the Babylonian destruction certainly vindicated him.[335] While this clear manifestation of the criteria of 'true prophecy' in Deuteronomy 18 likely indicates a Deuteronomistic redaction retrospectively attributing prophecies of destruction to him, I do not think this negates the contemporaneity of his opinions of Egypt; and it is best to see a compilation of genuine speeches of Jeremiah combined with later 'Jeremian' oracles and reflections upon his historical context in this form-changing "biography-cum-autobiography" which echoes Deuteronomy itself.[336] I think that, rather than see Jeremiah's activities as alluding to memories in his time of Moses, we should envisage a later presentation and characterisation of Moses (or the simultaneous crystallisation

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'Atenist' creation imagery in Psalm 104), echoes in the Bible of a more ancient text rooted in a specific historical context only call for an understanding of that text as the *terminus post quem* of the concepts which found their way into the Bible. It is telling in this regard that Ben-Dov makes no reference to Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties as correlates for Josiah's covenant.

[334] On the connections which might point to Jeremiah as an "anti-Moses", see Galvin, 2011: 134-135. The connection with Moses is also 'reinforced' through "the relationship [...] between Jeremiah and his scribal supporters, who read, transmit and safeguard his words akin to Deuteronomy's charge for the Levites to do the same with Moses' teachings" (Leuchter, 2009: 37). With the likelihood, however, that Jeremiah witnessed the ascendancy of the written word over oracular authority (although, as Thelle [2009: 199] observes, Jeremiah continues to speak long after the context of Jer. 36), I think it best to envisage a reversal of dependency between these two traditions.

[335] Römer, 2009: 173: "The authors of [Jer. 1] want to show that Jeremiah was the last of the prophets sent by Yahweh to his people since the time of Moses. Jeremiah also fits the Dtr criteria of 'true prophecy' in Deut. 18:20 since his oracles of judgment [sic] become reality at the end of the book."

[336] Blenkinsopp, 1996: 146. As I noted above, the verification of prophetic words would be best served by a written record of them, and the book of Jeremiah preserves numerous memories of scribal activity associated with prophetic interaction with the court and the temple.

of both characters) in light of Jeremiah's activities (as well as a legitimising of Jeremiah's warnings against going to Egypt anchored in the developing presentation of that land).[337] No better connection between the two prophets can be found than the accounts of their prophetic 'call', in which both men debate their suitability for the task ahead (cf. Jeremiah 1:6 with Exodus 3:11; 4:10; 6:12, 30) and YHWH promises to be with them (cf. Jeremiah 1:8-9 and Exodus 3:12; 4:12). The repetition and development of the debate in Exodus, which ultimately shifts oracular duties to Aaron (7:1-2), implies an elaboration of a pre-existing motif in prophetic tradition the origins of which are likely to be found in Jeremiah.[338] Further, if it is the case that a genuine memory is preserved in Jeremiah 11 of an invocation of a covenant agreement with YHWH contemporary with Josiah's reign, then it is of a covenant *unrelated to Moses*. If it is not the case, then it is surprising that the Deuteronomistic redaction of Jeremiah 11 did not attribute the covenant to Moses. In this, I am reading references to the covenant as both pre-Torah and, by extension, predating the association of Moses with the covenant; and I think it is quite reasonable to do so. If the Torah was, by contrast, to be considered contemporary with the covenant – if in fact it is to be seen as *constituting the text of the covenant itself* – then surely there would have been every opportunity to alter references to it which could have been interpreted as ambiguous (the term בְּרִית somewhat demystifies the authority of the obligations by comparison with the Mosaic תּוֹרָה). Jeremiah's clear admiration of Moses – however brief – is conspicuously absent not only in his references to the covenant but also to the migration tradition, and that to me speaks to his understanding at the time of a legendary figure either disassociated from both or at the very least far from central to them. This would align his impression of the covenant with the presentation in 2 Kings 23:1-3, which to me suggests at the very least an historical kernel for Jeremiah 11 situated in Josiah's reign. It is to this kernel that we can attach the activities of an historical Jeremiah not as a court or temple 'propagandist' enchanted by the tones of Yahwistic ascendancy, but as a pragmatic agent of change amidst the centralisation of state administration *as it inevitably affected his*

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[337] In this light, the threats against Egypt throughout Jer. 42-44 may be later 'realised' in literary form in Exodus, but it is possible that an articulation of such sentiments in the migration tradition during Jeremiah's time afforded them immediate relevance.

[338] A similar Exodus-based elaboration of a Jeremian tradition may be found in Jer. 44:15-30, where the complaints of the Judeans in Egypt that things were better when they were worshipping the 'Queen of Heaven' are conspicuously similar to the complaints of the escaped Israelites in the wilderness that things were better back in Egypt (Exod. 14:11-12, 16: 3; Num. 11:4, 14:2-3). See Cogan, 1993: 411-412.

prophetic and priestly contemporaries; especially those whom the biblical texts appear to have subsumed under the generic term 'Levite'.[339]

This is the context in which I would adapt Leuchter's understanding of Jeremiah's activity as it would have pertained to the dissemination across the state of Judah of Josiah's administrative changes. State administration requires not just a bureaucratic system of policy dissemination in the capital, but a hierarchical one capable of communicating with the people of outlying settlements. The job of making the population aware of what was been asked of them through court legislation would have invariably fallen to figures of socio-religious significance, as the cultic infrastructure would have provided the best platform for reaching the widest audience. That infrastructure appears to have been relatively autonomous;[340] and the incentivisation of 'coming in' to Jerusalem (as above in Section 3.4.3) appears not only to have initiated a kind of priestly homogeneity which evolved into a later understanding of priests and Levites as synonymous terms; it also facilitated the transmission of a standardised corpus of civil and cultic law. As Leuchter makes clear, the Chronicler has a 'generic' understanding of Levites as "the bearer[s] of the prophetic and liturgical mantles" which speaks to the establishment in the collective memory during his time of the socio-religious functions of Levites.[341] Yet through his characterisation of Jeremiah (whom we have already noted is not present in Kings) and his attribution of these functions to the prophet, the Chronicler has personified and romanticised Levitical behaviour. This suggests that Jeremiah came to be understood as the archetypal 'Levite-prophet', but it also provides the grounds for a modelling of Moses based upon Jeremiah's legacy. If, within a hierarchical system of the dissemination of court policy ('propaganda' is too loaded a word, I think), Jeremiah was one of the 'agents' of civil and political change (and I would temper Leuchter's understanding of this idea once again by suggesting that perhaps he was not a willing participant), then his activities in this regard make him a perfect ideological foundation for the legendary 'creator' of 'Israel'. An elaboration

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[339] As Leuchter puts it (2009: 40), "all the prophets appear tied to priestly lineages, which would have indeed been understood in Josiah's time as Levitical in nature". Against the idea that the Levites were "advocates of the reforms [or] early developers of the deuteronomic [sic] rhetoric", Claburn (1973: 20) argues that "[t]hey would not be perpetrators of the reforms, but those against whom they were perpetrated!"

[340] Cf. Claburn, 1973: 20; that this was the result of a 'disconnection' from the political centre in "the aftermath of Sennacherib's campaign in 701". Notably, Claburn does not incorporate the likely consequences of a shift towards Egyptian vassalage following the "dwindling of Assyrian power", in that this would have motivated a recovery of control over autonomous centres of revenue (see Section Summary, below).

[341] Leuchter, 2009: 35

of Jeremiah, Moses is the Levite-prophet who brings the people together – for Jeremiah, 'the people' would be the priests and the prophets – amidst their complaints and their constant berating him for his unsuitability for the task (and both figures indulge in self-deprecation, as we have seen).[342] If Jeremiah truly was responsible for transmitting the obligations of the 'covenant' to his rural contemporaries and colleagues – legal proscriptions which would have curbed their autonomy – then he was instrumental in facilitating the homogenisation of the priesthood, and it is not difficult to envisage some measure of resentment directed towards him. If that seems too speculative, there are other clues as to Jeremiah's lack of popularity which may have influenced the theme of rejection (cf. Jeremiah 18:18; 20:2, 10), and his trial in Chapter 26 captures this sentiment. The potential outcome of the people's opposition to Jeremiah is shown by the punishment of Uriah son of Shemaiah, "who prophesied against [Jerusalem] the same things as Jeremiah" (Jeremiah 26:20). Uriah – quite conspicuously for my purposes – fled to Egypt (it seems there was never anywhere else to go for safety!), but there was no asylum to be found there. He was brought back to Jerusalem and executed. The story may not be true – in fact, its specifics may be tied to the general demonisation of Egypt – but it nonetheless articulates the political climate in which Jeremiah found himself. This apparent turning on Jeremiah notably occurs after Josiah's reign and, considering that Jehoahaz was said to have reigned for only three months, it is telling that we have a hint in Jeremiah of the prophet's opinion of Josiah to the detriment of that of his son, Jehoahaz (who was not next in line, if the ages of Jehoahaz and Eliakim are to be taken at face value). While this is sometimes taken to indicate Jeremiah's support of Josiah's 'reform', the reality may simply be that Jeremiah was seen in Jehoiakim's reign to be an opponent of that king's policies; and a perception of Jeremiah may have developed over time of a lone voice amidst the ignorance of the words of YHWH.[343]

As for attributing to Moses the liberation of the people from 'Egypt', this would be born from the popular image of Josiah alone; and as such, we should envisage a later conflation of

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[342] Leuchter (2009: 37-38) sees Jeremiah as a purveyor of the "Deuteronomic law code", an activity "essential to unifying a fragmented populace with diverse lineage roots and kinship allegiances". Certainly, this lofty goal may have been part of whatever 'program' was occurring under Josiah (particularly with regards to creating a sense of ethnic identity and redefining 'Israel'), but I think we should limit an understanding of Jeremiah's activity to those within his immediate socio-cultural sphere.

[343] For Thelle, 2009, 'MT Jeremiah' is a Persian period text concerned with redefining prophecy and its role in a post-monarchic society, into which context is written Jeremiah's attacks against 'false' prophecy. While this may be the case for 'MT Jeremiah', I believe that this conflict is situated atop real memories of a prophet-court conflict (symbolised as prophetic activity versus the written word) and has been rearranged to conform to later ideologies.

the activities of Jeremiah and Josiah (remember that Josiah's immediate legitimation rests upon the Joshua story) from which emerges the composite figure of Israel's deliverer as lawgiver (see 3.4.5, below), nation-builder, and Levite-prophet. He is at the top of the hierarchical chain insofar as the latter two are concerned, but when it comes to the law, that which determines the shape and extent of all which follows, Moses is subordinated through a similar process of delegation only to YHWH himself.[344] With the 'discovery' of the scroll in the temple during Josiah's reign – a scroll originally presented as grounds for legal and administrative reform and later afforded the authority of Moses – this 'saviour-' king 'resumes' the process of delegation, creating a hierarchical network of policy dissemination which over time is transformed into the word of YHWH delivered to his people through Moses.

I will move on now to draw some conclusions and bring the picture together, but with Jeremiah seen in the light of a purveyor of the policies of Josiah's court which ultimately facilitate the centralisation of cultic functions and prophetic intermediation, it could be argued that his significance during his own time is rather marginalised only to be later magnified by the agenda of those breathing new life into his memory. This brings us back to the 'historicisation' of prophets, and while I am in agreement with Barstad in that "what we find in the book of Jeremiah, strongly edited and worked over as it may appear, nevertheless reflects prophetic activity in the period prior to the fall of Jerusalem", I would also incorporate the sentiments of Auld, in that – like Amos – Jeremiah was likely not of great significance until long after he was dead.[345] Much like the historicisation of Isaiah which sees his legacy spanning numerous generations and historical contexts, Jeremiah's apparent significance is likely the result of a later association of prophecies and oracles, themes and motifs, and stereotypical biographical details through which the importance of his original activity is reinterpreted. In saying that, it is significant to note the arrangement of the chapters in Jeremiah, completely oblivious as it is to any chronological order insofar as the reigns of Judean kings are concerned.[346] If this is the

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[344] Watts (1998: 418-419) speaks of the power of Moses' "double delegation", and he asks rhetorically: "When both God and Israel have appointed him to speak for them, who is left to challenge his words?"

[345] Barstad, 1996b: 122; Auld, 1988: 245

[346] To summarise: Zedekiah is king in Jer. 21:1. When we get to Jer. 22:18, the prophet is speaking *in the future tense* about Jehoiakim, although he died at least three months before Zedekiah was crowned (the reign of Jehoiachin only lasted three months; 2 Kgs. 8). In Jer. 22:24, Jehoiachin (Coniah) *as king* appears to be addressed; Jer. 24:1 moves forward again to Zedekiah's reign; and Jer. 25:1 returns to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim is still king in the MT of Jer. 27:1, but 27:3 and 12 suggest it should be Zedekiah (NRSV amends Zedekiah and JPS notes the potential for emendation). All appears in order until Jer. 35:1, 36:1 and 9, where we return to Jehoiakim's reign; and Jer. 37 moves forward again to Zedekiah (where a sort of biographical narrative takes over). Chapter 45 is set in the reign of Jehoiakim, as are the 'Oracles Against

result of a preferred order of the accounts of his activity under the auspices of a theological and ideological agenda, this speaks to me of the subordination of actual historical activity to that agenda. If the texts did not preserve memories of specific interactions with specific kings, this hypothetical collection of invented interactions could easily have been arranged in chronological order with no consideration given to the reigns in which they occurred.[347] In other words, I think that the association of specific reigns with specific prophetic and oracular activity speaks more of the mnemohistorical restrictions preventing the dislocation of that activity from those reigns, to the point that adherence to the theological 'plan' of the received form of Jeremiah yielded to the historicity of his activity.[348] A further argument in favour of the historicity of Jeremiah pertains to the matter of authority, for just as I am arguing in this thesis that the accretion of collective memories laid upon the evolving migration tradition requires at the very least an original event to which each retelling of the story contributes an elaboration; the same attachment of important theological and ideological statements to a long dead prophetic figure to bolster their credibility would, in my opinion, require a memory of such an historical figure. Whatever the truth of that figure, he is certainly drowned out by his 'lamentations' over the destruction of Jerusalem, a sentiment which colours the presentation of what survives from his original context.[349]

3.4.5 *The Failed Re-Creation of 'Israel' – Section Summary*

It is vital to envisage a picture wherein Josiah attempted to *'recreate' Israel in Judah*, centralising and legitimating his authority in Jerusalem and attempting to – or at the very least, professing the intention to – regain territories once belonging to the northern kingdom. The

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the Nations' beginning in Jer. 46; and it is not until Jer. 51:59 that the context returns to Zedekiah's reign, until we get to the final destruction of Jerusalem.

[347] Of course, as Römer (2009: 174) observes, the forty years covered by the activity of the "Deuteronomistic Jeremiah" is an ideological construct designed to recall the forty years in the wilderness (or the forty years of David's reign; *ibid.*: 179). Once again, Jeremiah is used to relate to the activity of Moses.

[348] This is similar to Albertz' argument (2005: 41) for the historicity of a reform under Josiah, in that the chain of events into which the account was placed did not "fit the DtrH", the theology of which should have seen Israel attain "a wonderful future" because of Josiah's actions. The historicity of some kind of reform demanded an account at least reminiscent of the reality, an observation which Albertz uses to date the bulk of the composition of the 'DtrH' to between 562 and 547 BCE (36-41).

[349] Cf. Thelle, 2009: 188: "No other prophetic book is as preoccupied with Babylon, or even with any other enemy, as Jeremiah."

question arises as to why a Judean king would care to do the latter (he was not, as Frost rightly observed, "simply indulging in personal aggrandisement"), and this is where focus returns to the עַם־הָאָרֶץ, those whose ideologies I believe were made manifest in Josiah's actions.[350] In this regard, I think it is best to see these 'people of the land' as those who were claiming for themselves through the use of this loaded term the right to be there; that the land was theirs. This is why Josiah's 'reforms' should be seen as constituting more than centralising worship in Jerusalem (which is merely something they facilitated), but as the very *rebirth of 'Israel'*, a 're-rooting' of that entity and a reimagining of its ethnicity in the land into which their recent ancestors had been forced in the wake of the Assyrian annexation of the northern kingdom.[351] This reimagining required a myth of foundation to legitimise it, but there was no need to create one wholesale. The myth had its own foundation, evolving as it had been for centuries and revitalised as it was during the Assyrian threat. No questions are needed as to why a Judean king would 'abandon' to a certain degree the political rhetoric of Davidic continuity in favour of a 'northern' tradition of origins which normalised the religious authorities of Josiah's day if that king were understood as Israelite. I strongly believe that the coup (or 'counter-coup') which necessitated the retrospective legitimation of Josiah was carried out by the descendants of Israelite refugees from the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom.[352] They took advantage

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[350] Frost, 1968: 370. Of course, Frost presupposes the 'United Monarchy' and hopes for its re-establishment in his understanding of Josiah's motivations. Sweeney (2001: 13) believes that "[n]o one [has] adequately answer[ed] the question as to why a Judean monarch should adapt the covenant ideology of the northern kingdom of Israel when Israel had been so roundly defeated and destroyed by the Assyrians."

[351] In this regard, I think that the "sudden demographic growth [and] real social evolution" which transformed Judah from the late eighth century onwards should be seen in terms of the absorption of and harmonisation with Israelite culture as much as Judah's socio-economic integration into the Assyrian empire (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 245-246). Although cf. Na'aman, 2007: 35: "The assumption that the Assyrians permitted thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of people to flee from the new province and settle in Judah, a vassal state that Assyria had not annexed and had no wish to strengthen, contradicts everything known about the policy of the Assyrian Empire in the newly annexed territories[.]" I am in agreement with Na'aman that there is a tendency to overestimate the numbers associated with a possible influx into the southern highlands following the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom, but the clear adoption of northern traditions into the Jerusalemite socio-religious and socio-political sphere speaks to the incorporation of a significant contingent of Israelites.

[352] In suggesting "a connection between [...] a populace filled with panic" putting Josiah on the throne and "the havoc caused by a recent raid of [Scythians]" into the region who might still have been "roving the countryside", Redford (1992: 441) appears to accept the historicity of crowning "Josiah the boy-king" in terms of "a popular uprising" incorporating all of the people. I think Redford's interpretation of the

of a power-vacuum in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings 21:23-24) and installed their own 'puppet' ruler, a boy whose pedigree required clarification.[353] This situation called for the appropriation of popular myths used to validate ('apparent') usurpers; and usurpers rapidly need to become popular. Upon the foundation of reinvented myths of origins, Josiah's administration initiated two major institutions of communal harmonisation through which his authority would be legitimated and made manifest: the Passover sacrifice and the Covenant. The latter enjoins the people to obey laws disseminated by the royal administration, while the former arguably romanticises the general historical context within which the people envisage the formation of their national identity.[354]

The account of the first Passover celebrated upon entry into the land in Joshua 5:10 normalises the ritual in antiquity, and Josiah's celebration of the Passover in 2 Kings 23:21-23 – which significantly occurs following the destruction of non-Yahwistic cult sites – seals the connection between these two leaders of 'Israel' in their bid to oversee the creation of that people by 'framing' the eradication of 'foreign' influences.[355] By sharing in the Passover sacrifice, the people of Josiah's new 'Israel' adopt a collective 'memory' of their ancestors having done so when 'Israel' was in its infancy.[356] Later set into the framework of the migration tradition, this ritual 're-enactment' of an 'ancient' festival came to constitute the crystallisation of the relevance of the 'Exodus' for what is essentially the melding of two previously disparate

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term עַם־הָאָרֶץ as "the common autochthonous population" (1992: 449) misreads this loaded term, as the 'popularity' of these people at the time is much more likely to be a retrospective construct. Compared with the use of the term in Ezra, for example (4:4ff.), I would urge caution in assuming continuity of meaning. On the matter of the Scythian incursions into the region, see, for example, Na'aman, 2005: 212-214.

[353] It is not beyond belief, of course, that Josiah was conceived when 'his father' Amon was only fifteen or sixteen (Amon was twenty-two when he became king [2 Kgs. 21:19]; he ruled for two years, and thus was killed at the age of twenty-four; Josiah was eight when he was installed as king), but I am not convinced that Amon was his father. His maternal parentage (Jedidah daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath; 2 Kgs. 22:1) bears no apparent claim to antiquity. Other occurrences of the name 'Adaiah' are found in 1 Chron. 6:26 (MT), 8:21, 9:12; 2 Chron. 23:1; Ezra 10:29, 10:39; Neh. 11:5, 11:12, but as well as being concerned with projecting *paternal heritage* into the past, none of these would support a relative contextualisation of Josiah's maternal 'grandfather'.

[354] In this, I am prioritising the historicity of an early (Josian) Joshua narrative over the Sinai pericope of Exodus, so that no specific primordial context is envisaged at this time for the delivering of the laws. As noted above, they are neither attributed to Moses nor associated with the migration tradition in 2 Kgs. 23:1-3.

[355] On the archaeological evidence for non-Yahwistic cult practices in Judah at this time, see Dever, 1994.

[356] Hendel, 2005: 72. See especially Edelman, 2012.

ethnic groups, Judeans (or Judahites) and Israelites.[357] This is the core of Josiah's 'reform', but it is of the utmost significance for the creation of ideological continuity throughout the biblical retrospective on the development of the ethnic-religious group 'Israel' that we should consider the historicity of some kind of military action occurring at Bethel during Josiah's reign (2 Kings 23:15-18) which was later 'theologised'.[358] This is the act which seems to have reverberated most for the YHWH-alone group as it witnessed the culmination of its aspirations of cultic centralisation; but it also pertains to the justification for post-monarchic Judah's control of Bethel (a matter to which I will return in the next chapter).[359] Destruction of Bethel would have marked the ideological 'correcting' of Israelite mistakes if such a concept as expressed throughout the Deuteronomistic History existed at the time of Josiah (it might have been constructed shortly after his actions), but significantly it would have signified the eradication of the last vestiges of Assyrian influence on legal autonomy, as Sweeney makes clear:

> By destroying the altar at Beth-El, Josiah destroyed the primary religious symbol of northern Israel's revolt against the house of David (and the Jerusalem temple).[360] He likewise destroyed a primary symbol of Assyrian domination of Israel as 2 Kings 17:27-28 indicates that the Assyrians installed a priest at Beth-El to teach the people the law of the land and thereby to secure their hold on Israel by identifying themselves with the local cultic establishment.[361]

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[357] Cf. Na'aman, 2010: 21-22.

[358] Cf. Davies, 2005b: 75-76. Any conclusions on this matter are seriously hampered by the archaeology, in that no temple has been uncovered in the Iron IIC (late 7th-early 6th c. BCE) strata and, according to Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz (2009: 45), "[i]t is more reasonable to assume that in Josiah's time Bethel was already in decline [and] that Josiah did not act in a prosperous city". Cf. Albertz, 2005: 36. It is possible – and I will return to this matter in the next chapter – that memories of Judah's incorporation of Benjamin during this time were preserved solely in terms of the annexation of Bethel, an event which saw the introduction into Judean cultural memory of 'northern' traditions (cf. esp. Fleming, 2012: 314-321; also Knauf, 2006). The account of the destruction of other cultic sites outside Jerusalem, however, may be nothing more than a distorted memory of the 'bully tactics' arising from enforced centralisation; a memory embraced by Yahwists whose legacy was retrospectively attached to this 'embryonic' elevation of the Jerusalem temple.

[359] Na'aman, 2010: 20, 22

[360] Whether or not Josiah was assumed to be of the bloodline of David was irrelevant. The centralisation of Jerusalem was what was at stake; and pretentions of Davidic loyalty would merely have placated those maintaining its significance.

[361] Sweeney, 2001: 232

If this symbolic destruction did indeed occur, it would embody a physical palimpsest in relation to the spiritual and ideological palimpsest perceived of the cultic 'purification' (mentioned above) later attributed to Josiah's activity, and the idea that there might have been motivations of a legal nature behind it brings us back to the figure of Moses.

Clues are certainly to be found in 2 Kings and in Jeremiah as to the significance of Moses for at least a marginal element of court proceedings, and I think it highly likely that although he may not have been understood at this time as the deliverer of a united Israel, he was nonetheless part of the conversation regarding its future as his authority was projected into the past. I would like to suggest that Moses was already known at this time as a legendary lawgiver – in the vein of the Spartan Lycurgus or Athenian Solon (the latter roughly contemporary with this period) – whose legacy had remained independent of the migration tradition until this point. As I suggested above, the conquest attributed to Joshua was most likely a Josian-era work of propaganda and could easily have stood on its own merit (I would add that this does not require that Joshua was not previously established in Israelite tradition), but with Josiah connecting himself to this legendary figure and seeking to anchor legal and administrative changes in the primordial time to which he belonged, who better to rest the rhetoric of 'inheritance' upon than a man long known to have brought order to the people? In this picture, Josiah rested his claims upon the authority of Joshua (notably from a northern tribe; Numbers 13:8, 16), who is himself presented as inheriting the role of leader of 'Israel' from Moses, the lawgiver later elevated to the role of the great intermediary who led the people out of Egypt.[362] With Josiah's aspirations of re-creating 'Israel' and reclaiming it from Egypt, the migration tradition was afforded an immediacy like never before, and the 'machines' of political ideology were working overtime to persuade the people that this was the right move. The narratives produced were at the same time simplistic in their delivery as they were complex in their construction. Stories are, however, told within the constraints of audience expectations, and as such, the apparently 'unexpected' intrusion of Necho into the story is best

[362] For a discussion of the three 'voices' of Moses in the Pentateuch (King, Prophet, and Scribe) as they pertain to the creation and dissemination of law, see Watts, 1998. Seeing Moses in terms of a number of significant socio-political and socio-religious figures marks him as a literary figure designed to appropriate their condensed authority. Notably, priests are subordinate to Moses, and, as inferred above, Moses' Levite lineage is likely a late interpolation designed to invert this earlier ideology and thus appropriate legalistic duties for Levitical ends (furthermore, Moses is not presented as an ancestor to legitimise his descendants; cf. Edelman et al., 2012: 12-13). Significantly, from the point of view of temporal correlation, Redford (2011: 311-313, 328) relates the late 8th century BCE (Saite) traditions of Egypt – especially whereby Bocchoris is a celebrated lawgiver – to the Exodus story.

understood as something which an audience contemporary to the composition of the story would both accept and expect. Certainly, it appears to come after the 'epilogue' of the story of Josiah, but this is merely because the story of Josiah's actions with regards to the centralisation of Jerusalem has been told in its entirety.[363] The story of the encounter at Megiddo *is not relevant to the highlights of Josiah's reign*, which are the primary concern of the writers, but it is necessary to facilitate the transition in power from Josiah to Jehoahaz. What 2 Kings 23:29-30 does, further, is provide evidence for the likelihood of Judean vassalage to Egypt, precisely because the appearance of Necho and Josiah's subsequent death *is not a surprise* to the audience![364] Combined with the economic motivations for administrative centralisation as they relate to tribute payment, a punishment for Josiah in terms relative to some kind of reneging on his vassal agreement is the most likely solution to the 'mystery'.[365] Granted, the question arises as to why Josiah would take such a risk, but perhaps an awareness of the encroaching Babylonian threat made him or his administration think that not only had Egypt and Assyria both seen their day, but that the wealth flowing into the capital of Judah would be best withheld from Egypt in preparation for a new overlord; and the possibility remains that Babylon had already initiated diplomatic relations with Jerusalem, a scenario which speaks to

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[363] Cf. Talshir, 1996: 221.

[364] Van Keulen (1996: 258) suggests that the phrase וְנֶאֱסַפְתָּ אֶל־קִבְרֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם ('and you will be gathered to your grave in peace') in 2 Kgs. 22:20 is designed rather to prepare the audience for Josiah's violent death, particularly as it echoes the use of the word קֶבֶר (grave) in relation to Ahaziah (2 Kgs. 8:28) and Amon (2 Kgs. 21:26) and the violent deaths which preceded their 'gathering'. If this is the case, then this is most likely a Deuteronomistic interpolation of the Huldah oracle (if indeed there was even an 'original' version) designed to correct what would otherwise be a false prophecy of Josiah's fate. This 'correction' would be of the utmost importance, considering the weight afforded Huldah's words for confirming the authority of the 'found' scroll. It would not have suited a 'Deuteronomistic' agenda to correct the entire oracle to predict Josiah's death, considering the burden of cultic authority projected back upon his reign. It may have been that to deal with the reality of his death, the writers inserted a reminder of Manasseh's apostasy (2 Kgs. 23:26-27) as if to darken the mood (or to blame Manasseh for Josiah's death, "the first movement in the long, inevitable slide into total exile" [Halpern, 1998: 513]). The Chronicler, on the other hand, laid the blame for Josiah's death at his own feet (Talshir, 1996: 230-231).

[365] Kletter's suggestion (1999: 27) that Josiah "came to submit to Egypt and not to fight her", does little to explain why Necho would then kill the Judean king. Noting the difficulties in interpreting the scene, Talshir (1996: 217-218) envisages a summons to appear before the Egyptian overlord Necho II in terms of the practically identical language used in the account of Ahaz' appearance before Tiglath-Pileser in Damascus (2 Kgs. 16:10). If this linguistic parallel is purposeful, it is best then to understand Josiah as a loyal vassal of Egypt, just as Ahaz was loyal to the Assyrians. See also Linville, 1998: 243-244.

Jeremiah's "pro-Babylonian stance" and his repeated calls to reject Egypt.[366] This solution can be taken further, however, because vassalage to Egypt would provide an historical context for further evolution of the migration tradition in which Egypt is presented as the power standing in the way of Israelite autonomy. As the diminution of Assyrian control of Syria-Palestine presented Judah with an opportunity for expansion and aspirations of a new 'Israel', Egypt stepped in as the new overlord of Judah to hamper those aspirations.[367] It was thus afforded a newfound relevance on the 'ideological map' of Judean Israelite identity, set in opposition to dreams of the creation of a new Israelite identity which *for the first time* included Judah:[368]

> Josiah's death [...] marks an important transition in the political sphere, Israel's independence is, once again, measured against Egyptian power, and once again, it falls short.[369]

This relevance led to a contemporisation of the demonisation of Egypt in terms informing an evolution of the migration tradition in Josiah's time. Paramount to that evolution was the historical reality of Necho's assuming control of Judah, a reality alluded to in the motif of the transition in power from one Pharaoh to another that we know from Exodus. Of course, we cannot know if the introduction of this motif relates to the transition between Solomon and Rehoboam in their presentation as 'Egyptianised' monarchs;[370] or whether that presentation is

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[366] Sweeney, 2001: 220

[367] Of course, as per Na'aman (2005: 217), the account of Josiah's activity obscures the reality of Egyptian vassalage so as to "mask the fact that Josiah, the ruler of unparalleled loyalty to God [...], was subordinate to foreign rulers for most of his days".

[368] I disagree with Schniedewind (2004) that the reign of Hezekiah was marked by that king's 'dream' of "reclaiming the lost northern tribes of Israel and their territories" (80). In contrast to a scenario in which Hezekiah would have the power or inclination to do such a thing amidst the mounting threat of an Assyrian conquest of Judah (as well as having to deal with a rise in population brought about by the influx of Israelite refugees), I see the reign of Josiah as a time when taking advantage of external geopolitical instabilities to promote such a 'dream' would make much more sense.

[369] Linville, 1998: 244

[370] I would argue that it is highly unlikely that a Solomonic 'United Kingdom' would have needed a 'grand narrative' of escape from oppression (if it had existed), a symbol which invariably requires a context of revitalisation and regrowth to make relevant the ideas of 'escaping' and (especially) 'reforming' which permeate Exodus. There is also no room in the (mythical) idea of the powerful Solomonic 'empire' for a contemporary enemy from whom 'Israel' would have escaped; on the contrary, the biblical picture of Solomonic power requires comparative weakness on the part of contemporary geopolitical entities (cf. Lambert, 2004: 363).

dependent upon the introduction in Josiah's time of this motif, but with the later transition in power between Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus romanticised as facilitating the 'recreation' of 'Israel' in Persian period Judah, it is clear to me that this motif is an essential part of the ideological continuity informing retrospectives on attempts to 'create' a new 'Israel' – whether that be the eponymous northern kingdom; Josiah's Judean Israel; or the 'Biblical Israel' of post-exilic Judah. Here, in Josiah's reign, with Assyria conceding Judah and surrounding vassal territories to Egypt, a 'new Pharaoh' came to oversee the 'oppression' of 'Israel' as in Exodus.[371] Was it a greater 'oppression' than before, as we have both in Exodus 5 and in 1 Kings 12? It is entirely possible that this oppression was felt in real terms with regard to the tribute exacted from Judah, as the ascendancy of Babylon might have called for an injection of funds into the Egyptian military coffers in order to fight this new enemy. Of course, Egyptian expansion during the Saite dynasty would not have been without its own costs, and so an increase in tribute could be argued in this light; a tribute which called for the centralisation of "sacred wealth" which would have an impact on the cultic infrastructure.[372] Perhaps, however, there was no increase in tribute, and it is only to the crushed aspirations of the 'recreation' of an imagined 'golden age' of a (newly perceived) twelve-tribe Israel that we might attribute a negative presentation of Egypt during Josiah's reign (remember that no such presentation exists in the 2 Kings account); simply because it was the most sensible scapegoat.

Josiah's reign best suits the *origins of the idea* that the ancestors of the people of both Judah and Israel came up from Egypt *together* – only to be 'torn apart' by the ethnic schism of some sort of 'rebellion' (that of Jeroboam I?) – because i) they now both occupied the same state and were being promised a *revitalisation* of their significance in the region; ii) the idea was being championed *for the first time* that one single deity was central to the identity of this unified people and, as such, was central to the deliverance of the people from their oppressors (an idea facilitated by the cultic centralisation resulting from Josiah's more 'mundane' reforms); iii) the picture of that 'deliverance' had a reason for demonising Egypt contemporary to the historical context *for the first time* since Shishak had been in Palestine (thus the ideological connection between – or polaristion of – Jeroboam I and Josiah was born); and iv) there was a

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[371] Finkelstein and Silberman, 2002: 68-71. Of course, Evil-Merodach (561-560; cf. 2 Kgs. 25:27); Neriglissar (559-556); Labashi-Marduk (556); and Nabonidus (555-539; all dates from Van De Mieroop, 2007: 313) all fade into insignificance in this ideological shift from one 'bad king' to the next. As with most ideologically-driven historiography, significant figures preserved in the narrative are those seen to have facilitated major socio-political change (see next chapter and Conclusion).

[372] Claburn, 1973: 20. As Claburn argues, Josiah's reforms should be seen in terms of "a fiscal reorganization [sic] resulting in major structural changes in Hebrew society rather than by passing them off as senseless religious intolerance or mere xenophobia".

king presented as the 'deliverer' of a united 'Israel' against a foreign enemy *for the first time* (connecting him to Joshua). I strongly believe that it is highly unlikely that we would even have Exodus were it not for this king and his supporting administration (and more so the latter). Although the 'returns' of the Persian period both necessitated and inspired a further reimagining of the migration tradition and a revitalisation of the claims of 'Israel' to possess the land to give us more or less its received form (and to facilitate the attachment of the received form of Joshua) – as will be argued in the next chapter – it is to the Josian aspirations of the recreation of 'Israel' (and, arguably, to their failure) in seventh century Judah that we owe the most enduring foundation of the myth of its origins. The tendency of scholars to cite Josiah's death and the biblical picture of return to non-Yahwistic worship (indicated by the phrase, "he did what was displeasing to YHWH" [2 Kings 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19]) as indicators of the ultimate failure of Josiah's 'reforms' rests on presuppositions of these reforms as purposefully cultic in orientation (and the belief that worship of gods other than YHWH actually ceased during his reign!).[373] In other words, interpretations of the reforms as having failed buy into the biblical picture of Josiah's specific attempts to elevate the worship of YHWH through the centralisation of his cult in Jerusalem. I would argue, however, that far from failing, Josiah's 'reforms' set the stage for a solely Yahwistic, Jerusalemite 'Israel'; and that they facilitated a *negotiation of identity* in which hereditary Judeans and Israelites constructed a shared past with a view to a shared future. This is the success recalled of Josiah's reign, and the reason his death bears no relevance when weighed ideologically against his achievements.

3.5 Summary

Josiah is a central figure for the Deuteronomistic History; of that there is no doubt. The prophetic books associated with figures likely to have been active prior to or during the late seventh century have to a significant degree been coloured by his reign, but I would emphasise that it is more to the *memories* of his reign that we should attach value for both interpretation and the assessment of the historical contexts within which the generic נָבִיא were 're-historicised'. An awareness of a significant distinction between actual records of his reign and the memories of events surviving and evolving over time as the circumstances required calls for the recognition of the relevant texts as having at their ideological core the much later consequences of those events; and, significantly, from a redaction-critical point of view, the accumulation of numerous consequences. I made reference in Chapter 1 to Israel Finkelstein's suggestion that the canonical Hebrew Bible be deconstructed 'in reverse'. That is, instead of

[373] See, for example, Linville, 1998: 232-234, noting the biblical pattern of doomed 'reforms'.

allowing the 'beginning' of what is largely a linear narrative history (and I would stress that such a description be restricted to the Primary History) to determine one's presuppositions, that history should be read with an appreciation of how it ends as the basis for interpreting all that precedes it. Such methodology is far from foolproof, of course, and this can be seen in the attempts of scholars to define seventh century Judah as foundational for the Deuteronomistic History based upon an understanding of the historicity of the Josiah story and its composition during or very shortly after his reign. Upon this foundation rest deconstructions of the historical contexts with which I have dealt in this chapter to the extent that much of the information in the Bible is reduced to little more than Josian-era propaganda. Certainly, it is clear from the prophecies against Jeroboam I that Josiah's reign is the *terminus post quem* for their composition, but that should be all. Presumptions of Josian-era composition ostensibly align themselves with presumptions of the triumph of Yahwism at that time, but if – as I have argued above – Josiah's reign was retrospectively afforded greater significance because of the administrative centralisation facilitating the ascendancy of Yahwism from the point of view of both the cultic and legal infrastructure and the ideological legitimation derived from the antiquity perceived (or constructed) of the same, then the strength of the argument for the composition of an early version of the Deuteronomistic History in which its historiographical zenith recounts the destructions of cult places at Bethel and Samaria begins to wane. We have seen that both Necho and Jeremiah are to a certain degree 'anchors' for the memories of Josiah, but as for the origins of a coherent Joshua-Kings narrative, I think it wise to raise Josiah from the mnemohistorical waters and leave the account of his reign drifting until such a time that we can be more certain of *a Yahwistic ascendancy outliving a single monarch*.

It is through the lens of Yahwistic triumph that we should interpret the retrospective on the joint history of Israel and Judah, and that triumph takes up the polemic against the northern kingdom which I think originated not in the tenth century against any monumental division of territorial polities and socio-religious practices; but in the missions of the eighth century prophets who considered themselves authorities on moral and cultic issues as they pertained to the preservation of identity in the face of an overwhelming threat to the same – the Assyrian empire. By appropriating the memories of these figures and diluting them to generic characters (men of God) or literary vehicles for re-contemporised ideologies, later writers pushed 'prophetic' activity in the vein of socio-religious and socio-political opposition back into an earlier age; one in which the stage had already been set for the concept of a united 'Israel'. Again, Josiah's reign merely set that stage, and upon it was built the later idea that the people of Israel and Judah had once been a single entity. This concept called for the reinterpretation and re-appropriation of the words of the men and women we know from the Bible as the נָבִיא, but I think that their words were by this time so established in the collective memory that they

could not easily be distorted. They could be added to – and perhaps there were many claims of 'lost' scrolls to which the Bible makes no reference, for the words of prophets needed authority (as above, Deuteronomy 18:17-22 best suits a context whereby written oracles are re-checked to affirm their veracity) – but I think the confusion arising from here a reference to the 'House of Judah' or the 'House of Israel' and there to a 'House of Jacob' or just 'Israel' apparently implying the people of Judah or Jerusalem, is evidence of the intractability of some of these traditional diatribes and laments. While these are weighty anchors (and this by no means implies that they all belong to the 'original' prophets to whom they are attached), they are not, however, immovable; and their immersion into narrative and poetic contexts of later provenance served to archaise 'prophecies' of events which had already come to pass.

Certainly, there are memories preserved in the Deuteronomistic History of actual reigns and real events articulated in the form of a faithful history, but those memories have been distorted by and subordinated to much later ideological concerns and literary conventions. I think that it is not until the YHWH-alone group – evolving as they were over the centuries – were confident not merely in a state of temporary ascendancy dependent upon their influence on or over a particular king; but in their *stable position* as the official interpreters of the joint history of Israel and Judah, that their theological and ideological retrospective came about by plumbing the depths of collective memory and selectively and subjectively evaluating events and figures deemed significant for and relevant to the world in which they found themselves. That world was ultimately one in which the machinations of royal-political and prophetic-religious figures we encounter in the Deuteronomistic History ceased to be relevant, because not only had the monarchy been destroyed; so too were the cultic structures attached to and defined by it. That world was one in which faith in YHWH was at a crossroads of devotion and demise; and thus it was one in which the identities of Israelites and Judahites alike were in their greatest moment of crisis. Yet it was a world in which those with the courage and perspicacity to do so could seize the opportunity to reinvent their past so that the future might appear brighter than it appeared possible; because the 'Israel' of that world lived in a great shadow – that of Babylon. The 'exile' was not necessarily the most significant event in Israel's or Judah's past (or that of 'Israel' in Judah), but in the literary-ideological retrospective informing the re-imagination of that past (the 'Biblical History' of Israel and Judah), it was paramount. As an historiographical tool, it was used to determine the form and content of the history, its psychological and theological consequences 'threaded' back through time to incorporate

events the reinterpretation of which imbued them with magnified and related significance and meaning.[374]

With an awareness of the many historiographical tools and keys to interpretation informing the composition of the received form of so many texts of the Hebrew Bible, caution should always be taken when arguing for the presence of self-contained compilations with distinct beginnings and endings. Instead, the canonical Bible might be best understood as a collection of literary concentric circles, each characterised by a coherence of meaning, but the criteria for such circles would be ever-shifting and should not be taken as evidence of multiple 'versions' or distinct histories. What should be clear from this chapter is that interdependence between narratives is both multi-directional and multi-faceted in its ideological and literary criteria, and I find myself moving towards the idea (similar to Whybray on the Pentateuch) that a single author was responsible for the compilation and composition of the Primary History. If this were the case, then the story of Josiah which informed that of i) the foundation of Israel and the claimed renegotiation of Israelite identity; and ii) the attacks on the nature and legitimacy of Israelite identity during the Assyrian period, is as much a product of reflections on those periods as it is the basis for those reflections. This, to me, provides the basis for a greater argument for a disassociation of the entire Deuteronomistic History as a coherent narrative from any of the historical contexts dealt with above; it is a literary-ideological work evincing a vantage point not only of Yahwistic triumph but also one in which *the monarchy can be judged as an erroneous enterprise without fear of repercussion*.

Before I move on, and because literary convention must remain in our sights, there is one more point I would like to make – or, perhaps, reiterate – regarding the connections between Jeroboam and Josiah. Both of these kings are presented as initiating a 'creation', a formation of Israel; the former in the sense of a geopolitical territorial entity, the latter as an ethnic (socio-religious) 'reformation' in the territory into which the people of the former had been forced. Between these two memory contexts of identity formation is a solid historical context of invasion, destruction and deportation (bolstered by the historicisation of the 'eighth century prophets'), and it is the ideological fulcrum weighing one against the other in an account ultimately dominated by reflections on the Babylonian experience. Jeroboam's sin initiates and

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[374] It should come as no surprise that the first major event following the creation of the world is articulated as a story of expulsion and exile; but it is through the ideologies espoused by the re-contemporised story of a primordial flood experienced by the ancestors and the selection of a single (chosen) family to survive this catastrophe (after *forty* days, no less) that the interpretative foundation was set for the historical event which followed the exile – for the exile was purgation and the return restoration.

perpetuates the inevitable demise of Israel, while Josiah's ratification of the 'Mosaic' covenant and the symbolic destruction of Bethel redeems 'Israel'. Both events are related to the Golden Calf episode of Exodus 32 – the former to the initiation of the sin, the latter to the resulting punishment – but as well as the nature of the apostasy and the language used (although compare the use of אֵלֶּה [Exod. 32:4b] with הִנֵּה [1 Kgs. 12:28]), the stories of Jeroboam and Josiah are connected to Exodus 32 by the pivotal roles of the Levites. In the former, they are expelled and Jeroboam installs priests who are specifically non-Levite; in the latter, Josiah's centralisation program is *re*-presented not in terms of keeping them in check (the likely reality), but as the pivotal moment of their '*re*-foundation'. In Exodus 32, it is the Levites who mete out the punishment against the people, killing thousands for their apostasy; and with this story connected to both the expulsion of Levites in Jeroboam's time and the destruction of apostate sanctuaries and priesthoods in Josiah's time, this is as much about a Levite triumph as anything else.[375] Granted, Levites do not feature specifically in the story of Josiah, but their influence is implied by the interpolation of Mosaic authority afforded the 'discovered' scroll. The later attribution of Levite ancestry to Moses means that the authority of their writings are presupposed where Exodus is understood as the foundation of the people of Israel, but the matter goes further than this; for if Levites lay claim to the paradigmatic prophet of foundation – through whom the veracity of all 'later' prophets is judged – then in a sense the veracity and relevance of all prophetic accounts are subordinate to Levitical evaluation. If all prophets are ideologically 'Levitical', then this affords Levites a fundamental role in protecting Israelite identity insofar as they determine the correct way to be 'Israelite' (is this not the mantle of prophecy?).[376]

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[375] In fact, Blenkinsopp (2003: 102-103) reads the phrase 'Levitical priests' in the Deuteronomistic History in terms of its polemical weight directed against the 'sons of Aaron' who had been 'originally' attached to Bethel. To this polemic is also afforded an attack on the relationship of a Mosaic heritage descending from the sanctuary at Dan (cf. Judg. 18:27-31; and especially the suspended נ of מְנַשֶּׁה in Judg. 18:30), so that the etiologies of both of 'Jeroboam's' sanctuaries are subsumed by later Levitical primacy.

[376] These observations are similar to those of Sweeney, 2001: 315-323, although we differ in opinion regarding the nature of and motivations for Josiah's 'reform' (although Sweeney recognises the economic incentives; 316); as well as on the matter of a "DtrH" during both Josiah's and Hezekiah's reign (I do not envisage either). I would also temper his argument for a version of Deuteronomy which curbs the power of the Levites, "*all the while* portraying the Levite Moses as the authoritative source for such actions" (316-317; emphasis mine). As above, I see the figure of Moses the lawgiver being appropriated by Levitical ancestry so as to invert the reality of the control asserted over the Levites during Josiah's reign; retaining the memory context because the administrative centralisation facilitated their ascendancy. It is notably in Ezra – the man charged with delivering the תּוֹרַה מֹשֶׁה to the people of post-

Josiah is presented as having done things the right way, but if Josiah *redeemed* 'Israel', why was it destroyed? Why are the kings who follow him not shown as preserving his legacy as the account then rushes towards this destruction? Of course, the account attributes blame to Manasseh, but that is as simplistic an explanation as it is insufficient (particularly as the fifty-five year reign is dismissed as otherwise insignificant). Instead – and in response to claims of a Deuteronomistic History composed in Josiah's time – I would add this: the destruction of Jerusalem occurred; it had to be explained. Just as the reason for this catastrophe had to be safely anchored in the pre-monarchic era, so too did the future redemption of 'Israel' require authentication in the past. In a sense, every king – not just those who followed Josiah – was unworthy of redemption, and the accounts of their reign were recounted and coloured accordingly. The only Yahwistic legacy anchored in Josiah's time is that which they constructed for themselves, precisely because the reality recalled of that king's reign was one in which their power and influence became centralised and concentrated for the first time. Rural Levite priests became subordinated to the ideologies of their urbanised brethren and *the foundation of those evolved ideologies* was imagined as a 'reformation' under Josiah; a 'reformation' which resonated in the collective memory as an attempt at the 're-creation' of 'Israel'.

Throughout my studies in the history of ancient Israel and Judah, I have long been concerned with the issue of an ethnic group in post-exilic Judah (Yehud) calling themselves 'Israel', and I believe it is *the* most significant 'problem' when considering the biblical account of pre-exilic Israel and Judah, precisely because the history recounted in the Hebrew Bible is that of a projection into the past of the (constructed) antiquity of 'Biblical Israel'. This late, post-exilic 'Israel' was re-created, reimagined, and reconstructed in Judah; its identity was a product of negotiation and compromise which retrospectively homogenised disparate kinship groups. As above, however, I see the inception of that project of identity negotiation occurring under Josiah; or at the very least it was envisaged by significant elements of his court. Those who chose to initiate this project *in post-exilic Judah* knew that it had been attempted before, but they were aware that it had failed. What they needed to make this 'Israel' truly *Israelite* – considering it was, as in Josiah's time, located in Judah – was a claim to continuity with that eponymous kingdom. What better way to appropriate the right to re-create 'Israel' than to project one's authority back into antiquity through the migration tradition, that consistently evolving vehicle of Israelite identity which had long come to the fore when said identity was under threat or required reinvention? The echoes of early versions of the migration tradition

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exilic Yehud – that financial burdens on Levites and the priesthood in general are ordered to be removed (Ezra 7:24; although cf. Grabbe, 2001: 94, 112, on Ezra 7:12-26); just as it is significant that the Levites explain the תּוֹרָה to the people (Neh. 8:7-8).

which I believe I have shown are present in the three major accounts of identity negotiation pertaining to the formation, preservation and 're-formation' of 'Israel' are Nietzsche's 'islands' of historical detail (the 'embellished facts' of history) binding the accounts ideologically and thus, in a sense, reducing them all to a singular moment of mnemohistorical relevance. Each of them were capable of positing and answering questions to similar circumstances, because *all of them together* had been constructed within a single historical context and had been subordinated to its contemporary concerns. The mnemohistorical 'anchors' for the contexts to which they allude, however (Shishak; Assyria, Sennacherib, Isaiah and Hezekiah; Necho and Jeremiah), preserved their claims to antiquity, but the migration tradition binding them retrospectively later became the presupposed foundation upon which every claim within them to social, political and religious normality and continuity was laid. Those norms, however, belonged to a time in which the literary-ideological construction of a homogeneous Israelite identity was centred upon Jerusalem; a time in which both purposefully preserved and latent (distorted) memories of threats to identity were gathered together to articulate a coherent narrative of the great antiquity and continuity of 'Biblical Israel'. It is to that time that we now direct our attention.

CHAPTER 4

Something Old, Something New: Constructing a new 'Israel' in Post-exilic Judah

> The writers of the Bible did not argue openly or directly with [...] unwanted traditions. Instead, the battle they waged against oral traditions was, for the most part, a covert one fought through interpretation. These writers presented a new or different version of a known story that did not openly oppose the views it disputed but, instead, interpreted them. The polemicist of this sort often finds himself between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, if he wants his readers (who know the old version) to be willing to accept his rendition, he must reproduce faithfully, as much as possible, the popular tradition. On the other hand, he is committed to his belief and ideology, which require him to change the familiar tradition. The art of the biblical story can be found in the delicate balancing act performed by these writers, who tread carefully between the old and the new.[1]

4.1 Introduction

Unlike the memory contexts heretofore explored, the removal of Judeans to Babylon was not recounted in the same manner or to any such extent.[2] With the account of Ezekiel's 'mission' amongst the first 'exiles' (taken in 598/7 BCE) offering little of value from the point of view of historical reconstruction;[3] and whatever early writings ended up in the second century BCE book of Daniel subordinated to the motif of the 'Jew in the foreign court' which we find in Joseph and Esther, the decades spent in Babylon of deportees and their descendants were not preserved in any works of the canonical Hebrew Bible comparable in scope or concern to the extended period covered by the Primary History.[4] This is surprising when we consider such

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[1] Shinan & Zakovitch, 2012: 7

[2] Cf. Middlemas, 2005: 24. On a similar note, cf. Stökl, 2013: 257: "In spite of the importance of the fall of Jerusalem for the development of Judaism, Nebuchadnezzar, the Neo-Babylonian king whose troops occupied Jerusalem, does not make many appearances in the text of the Hebrew Bible."

[3] While the historical context of Ezekiel as a refugee in Babylon is not in doubt, the text is perhaps best read in terms of appreciating the effects of exile on a personal, psychological level; or more specifically as 'refugee literature' relegating historical detail (present in metaphorical form) in favour of symbolic rhetoric. See especially Smith-Christopher (2002: 75-104), who identifies references in Ezekiel to the realities of siege warfare (84-89; cf. Ezek. 8:7-10).

[4] 2 Kings ends with "Evil-Merodach [Abel-Marduk] King of Babylon" releasing Jehoiachin – who had been taken from Jerusalem following the first Babylonian attack of 598/7 BCE – and showing him favour as a privileged prisoner of war. On the late authorship of Daniel, see, for example, Stökl, 2013: 259-261;

works as Lamentations, which would clearly have us envisage the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of its people as a traumatic event resonating for those dislocated from their spiritual home:

> Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days? Restore us to yourself, YHWH, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old – unless you have utterly rejected us, and are angry with us beyond measure. **Lamentations 5:20-22**

The absence of an historical narrative pertaining to the 'exile' is even more surprising in light of the general (although not total) consensus that the compilation and composition of texts and the articulation of extant traditions began in earnest during the Babylonian 'captivity' and crystallised for the most part during the Persian period.[5] This activity is best understood in

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Kratz, 2009: 159-162 (albeit within a wider literary context); Bergsma, 2009: 61 (cf. Schniedewind, 2004: 179); Middlemas, 2005: 27-28. On how "Jewish literature" on Nabonidus informed later reflections on (the earlier king) Nebuchadnezzar as preserved in Daniel, see especially Newsom, 2013. On the Joseph story, see discussion and references in 2.2.1, above.

[5] Berquist, 2008: 41-43. On the Pentateuch, see especially Greifenhagen, 2002: 206-224. Cf. Amit, 2003: 135ff. on the circumstances which would have provoked this "period of intensive writing" and the character it assumed. This is in contrast to the opinion, for example, of Schniedewind, who sees the "Babylonian exile [as a period of] crisis for both text and oral tradition"; and the Persian period in Yehud as "the darkest hour for biblical literature [which was] essentially completed with the end of the royal house and its sponsorship" (Schniedewind, 2004: 22-23; contra, for example, Eskenazi, 2009: 83). His statement that, during the exilic period, "writing returned to *state control* under the exiled royal family in Babylon" (139; emphasis mine), perhaps extrapolates too much from the closing verses of 2 Kings which see Jehoiachin living in relative comfort (not to mention depriving any inferred 'writers' of this period of any significant input to work "essentially completed"); a situation – supported by the Wiedner ration lists – which Pearce (2011: 269) concedes was "extraordinary". Schniedewind's conclusions regarding the period of composition of the Pentateuch (as he admits) certainly do "fl[y] in the face of over a century of biblical scholarship" (119). Of course, he is not alone, and Berquist's (2012) argument that the Deuteronomistic History was composed *by* "Persian imperial scribes" before being read by Yehudite scribes of the Second Temple Period is, to my mind, unique. In recognising the "[h]eated scholarly debates on all facets of the formation of the Pentateuch", Eskenazi (2009: 85) wonders if we are "running out of eras in which the composition could be located". On the possibility of Zoroastrian (Persian) influence on the construction of Moses as a 'central divine envoy', see Gerstenberger, 2009. Cf. Otto (2013: 121), for whom Moses' relationship with YHWH relates to "the legal hermeneutics of complementarity between the deity and the king in the royal ideology of the Achaemenids".

terms of preserving the ethno-religious identity of those first dislocated from their homeland and then seeking to regain an authoritative foothold upon their return. Ideologically, then, the texts we have are close to these seminal events; yet still the majority of them engender claims of much greater chronological distance without overt reference to the period in which they were written.

It was posited in 1.2, above, that the transition in power between Nebuchadnezzar II and Cyrus II facilitating the 'return' of the descendants of deported Judeans (as well as some of the original deportees, if we are to believe the biblical text;[6] see especially Ezra 3:12) was the catalyst for reflections on earlier expressions of 'Israelite' identity; and I introduced briefly in 3.4.5, above, the idea that this motif may have other, more ancient, contexts of mnemohistorical relevance through which the perceived historicity of particular biblical narratives was constructed. I will return to this in my conclusion, showing that the perception of oppression and liberation projected back into these contexts was purposefully pronounced and afforded ideological immediacy, contributing to the perpetual relevance of the reinvented accounts for an audience occupying (and, indeed, long after) the 'horizon' of composition. It will become clear that socio-political transition was recognised as a potent force not only for incidental change but also as a cultural palimpsest whereby purposeful reorganisation and reinvention of ethno-religious identity could be formulated. In this sense, the motif of transition (in power) informs the wholesale appropriation of 'memories' (some of which may be literary-ideological constructs) of earlier stages of the development of Israelite identity, emphasising that while this occurs in some cases to the detriment of historical accuracy, it is most likely that the account of the history of Israel and Judah we have in the Hebrew Bible would not exist were it not for the theological and ideological potency of this motif founded upon the historical events of the early sixth to mid fifth centuries BCE in which the latter state was disastrously embroiled. In fact, it is arguable as to whether we would have a history of Israel and Judah at all were it not for this most significant period of transition:

Interestingly, Becking (2009: 34) raises the possibility of Zoroastrian influence on the problematic issue of 'mixed marriage' in Ezra-Nehemiah.

[6] It is possible that original deportees actually returned (cf. Grabbe, 2009a: 118), but the writers of the texts might have incorporated memories of their return so as to imbue later returns with legitimacy. Interestingly, Fried, 2003, interpreting the biblical account of rebuilding the temple within a greater Near Eastern context, relates the 'weeping' of the elders and others to "prescribed lamentation rites" (44) made over the ruins of the First Temple, a stone or brick from which was incorporated into a ceremony initiating the laying of the foundations of the Second Temple.

> It is of lasting importance that the Israel of the exilic period did not run away from its catastrophic history but instead seized the political catastrophe as an opportunity to examine its past theologically.[7]

The nature of this 'Israel' of the exilic period is what is at stake here, as the mnemohistory of Egypt was a core element of the negotiation of identity facilitating the formulation and foundation of what scholars call 'Second Temple Judaism'.[8] As I have argued over the previous two chapters, *memories of interaction with Egypt* informing the development of the identity of peoples inhabiting the kingdom of Israel *evolved and were transformed* symbiotically alongside the development of 'Israel' the *ethnos*, colouring their reflections on i) the creation of their 'eponymous' kingdom through socio-political and socio-cultural distinction (necessitating ideological polarisation); ii) the destruction of that kingdom by the Assyrians and the subsequent dislocation of Israelites from their ancestral home (that "crucial event that permitted the possibility of Judah absorbing Israelite identity");[9] and iii) the gradual rise to prominence of Israelites in the Jerusalemite court, laying the foundation for envisioning a homogeneous 'Israel' incorporating Judeans. Those reflections were preserved in cultural memory not only because of their historical relevance, but also because of the resurfacing of said relevance in each context of identity (re-)negotiation. As I have shown, each of these memory contexts can be associated with *the symbiotic evolution of the migration tradition*.

In this chapter, I will deal with the transitional period within which I believe the crystallisation of Exodus occurred; but because this period has received so much scholarly attention in recent decades (and because memories of interaction with Egypt are my primary

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[7] Albertz, 2003: 436. On a similar note, cf. Blenkinsopp, 2011: 463: "If the Babylonians had followed the example of the Assyrians in the practice of cross-deportation, the story would probably have ended there; but they did not, and so the story continued."

[8] While I recognise that neither 'Israel'; nor 'exilic'; nor even 'Second Temple Judaism' are perfect descriptors insofar as they connote a sense of homogeneity projected back upon an undoubtedly complex and diverse reality, their application as heuristic devices conform firstly (with regards to the first two terms, respectively) to the biblical presentation of i) continuity and antiquity of the ethnic identity 'Israel'; and ii) discontinuity and re-establishment of that identity in its ancestral land necessitated by the deportations of a minority of Judeans; and secondly, to a scholarly concern with delineating chronological periods for the study of religious history (see, for example, Japhet, 2003). That the Bible is concerned with subsuming *internal* diversity – and thus any challenge to legitimacy – through its claims to the continuity and homogeneity of 'Biblical Israel' goes hand in hand with seeing Exodus as the end product of a long history of identity re-negotiation.

[9] Edelman et al., 2012: 2

concern), I will assume a slightly different approach, framing it in terms of answering a question integral to understanding not only why the migration tradition was afforded such ideological potency at this time; but also why the Hebrew Bible is devoid of a 'grand narrative' of the Babylonian captivity.[10]

4.2 Why Egypt?

For those maintaining the historicity of Exodus, this question should be met with the suitable retort, "Why not Egypt?". After all, the story is about the ancestors of Israel coming out of that loathsome land and laying the foundation for the development of the בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל constituting the Primary History. From a literary point of view, Exodus is in precisely the right place in this history, but in its received form, this tells us little as to the direction of dependence in a much greater narrative characterised by repeating motifs. That, however, is a matter for my conclusion, for there is a more immediate concern when it comes to considering the relevance in the Persian period of the tradition of 'coming up' from Egypt. With the proximate reality of Babylonian and then Persian dominance of Syria-Palestine from the sixth-fourth centuries BCE, Egypt could hardly have seemed much of a threat to Israelite identity; thus making it difficult for a foundation myth featuring that age-old nemesis to retain primacy for a post-exilic audience.[11] Here, the 'maximalist' might feel vindicated, for surely only the staunch historicity of an 'Exodus' from Egypt would ensure its credibility in a time when Egypt was no longer a major player in the region? Some 'revisionist' theories might counter with a relatively late pre-exilic composition of the (original) story, so that its 'historicity' was planted in recent cultural memory; but as Donald Redford suggests, we must "view empirically the great historical and

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[10] See especially Japhet, 2003, on why the so-called 'Neo-Babylonian period' "did not attract the attention of biblical historians". For an overview of scholarship on the Persian period, see, for example, Eskenazi, 2009. Important collections on the Persian period are to be found in Lipschits and Oeming, 2006; with more recent works in Lipschits et al., 2011.

[11] Certainly, the reality of deported Judeans living in Egypt might have borne some relevance, but to relate this to the evolution of the migration tradition would afford primacy to their experience over that of the 'Babylonian' deportees. While Judeans could easily have returned from Egypt and had their experiences incorporated allegorically into the tradition, there is no hint in the Bible that their experience was given ideological priority over 'Babylonian' returnees. Granted, this could be the result of the latter's construction of priority, but with Exodus emerging as the foundation myth *par excellence*, there would have been the risk of shifting that priority towards 'Egyptian' returnees if they actually played a significant role in the construction of identity.

geographical backdrop against which the pieces were composed".[12] More specifically, we should make ourselves aware of the perceptions and interpretations of the wider geopolitical circumstances invariably shaping articulations of identity at this time; for in so doing, a greater appreciation arises of the contemporary ideologies brought to the fore by the Persian period reinvention of the migration tradition.

A slight step back in time is necessary, if only to remind us of Jeremiah's forced removal to Egypt (Jeremiah 43:4-7) following the assassination of Gedaliah at Mizpah (Jeremiah 41; 2 Kings 25:25) in the late 580s BCE.[13] Vehement reminders of prophetic warnings against going to Egypt frame this event in chapters 42 and 44, emphasising the significance of Jeremiah's relocation; and the literary-ideological significance of Jeremiah 44:15-30 was noted in 3.4.4, above. Also noted in that section was the seemingly haphazard chronology of the book of Jeremiah at this juncture, but Jeremiah 45 takes the reader back to Jehoiakim's reign to condemn Egypt to destruction immediately after the 'later' ideological context of Jeremiah's condemnations of Judeans who would choose to stay there![14] Just as Egypt was doomed by prophecy and Necho defeated at Carchemish, so too would the Judeans who go to Egypt face death. Of course, the door for return is left open by Jeremiah 44:14b, so that Egypt is not necessarily the end of the road. Whether or not Jeremiah's prediction of the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (MT Nebuchadrezzar) relates to the Babylonian incursion of 567 BCE or constitutes generic rhetoric, it maintains an enmity towards Egypt set in opposition to ongoing

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[12] Redford, 2011: 299

[13] Hoffman (2003: 189) reckons 582 BCE for the assassination. Miller & Hayes (2006: 486) note that while the biblical accounts "imply that Gedaliah had been killed only two months after the fall of Jerusalem [...,] [t]his seems hardly sufficient time for all the activities attributed to [him.]" Cf. Blenkinsopp, 2003: 97.

[14] The arrangement of these chapters in Jeremiah is a perfect example of how any concern with chronology has been supplanted by ideology. The chronological discrepancies in the received text, however, suggest the presence of inflexible historical kernels which could not be completely subsumed by ideological concerns. Such ideology may be directed towards Judeans still living in Egypt in the Persian period – and particularly those attached to the garrison at Elephantine, from which communication with Jerusalem was made (see recently Porten, 2003: 457-461, dating the establishment of the temple at Elephantine to 650 BCE [also Greifenhagen, 2002: 233-235; Grabbe, 2007: 158-159]) – insofar as their loyalty not only to Jerusalem as the centre of Yahwism was concerned, but also what could undoubtedly have proven to be a risky loyalty to the Persian empire (cf. Greifenhagen, 2002: 231). Greifenhagen (2002: 241) suggests that the copy of the Behistun inscription found at Elephantine "could be an affirmation of the loyalty of the Judean colony to the Persian crown", although he notes objections to dating the inscription to the time of Darius I (241, n. 64).

support for Babylon.[15] As we saw in Section 3.4, there is a possibility that pro-Babylonian factions in Josiah's court upset the apple-cart insofar as relations with Egypt were concerned, but it is also possible that pro-Babylonian ideology was introduced *in Babylon* to earlier traditions, with a view to placating the new overlords.[16] Conversely, Jeremiah's prediction of Egypt's destruction might better be understood in light of Persia's later humbling of their nemesis, which would move its composition into the late sixth century.

The idea of appealing to the greater political authority relates to the theory in biblical scholarship – initially posited by Peter Frei in 1984 – that the Pentateuch was composed under the auspices of Persian administration, or at the very least "stimulated by a Persian imperial initiative".[17] Not only does the relentless call of prophets to favour the Mesopotamian powers over Egypt contribute to the demonisation of the latter; the remarkably positive allusions in the Pentateuch to the 'eastern' origins of the Abrahamic line suggest a skewed deference to the nations known to have dominated Syria-Palestine for centuries. Certainly, Egypt had its time in the region, but apart from the story of the 'Exodus'; the incursion of Shishak; and the intervention in Judean politics of Necho II, little note is made in the Bible of Egyptian activity as

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[15] Greifenhagen, 2002: 250. Cf. Miller & Hayes, 2006: 488-489, who are not entirely convinced of a Babylonian invasion of Egypt.

[16] Maintaining support for Babylon in either Judah or Egypt *immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem* would fly in the face of all logic. YHWH's regret (Jer. 41:10) for his actions in this context is rather troublesome, particularly as it precedes his request that the people stay and submit to Babylonian control. His threats of things worsening in Egypt need the full force of the ensuing rhetoric just to surpass what the people have experienced at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar's army! Newsom, 2013: 281, deals briefly with the development in Jeremiah of attitudes towards Nebuchadnezzar which see him transformed from a hated conqueror to an instrument of YHWH. As she remarks, this is done "both to triumph over that defeat psychologically and to provide the grounds upon which one can 'do business' with the current imperial powers" (281).

[17] Edelman et al., 2012: 5. Frei's 1984 work ("Zentralgewalt und Lokalautonomie im Achämenidenreich") is the basis of the essays collected in Watts, 2001 (in which can be found an English translation of Frei's 1995 summary of his own developments on the matter [Frei, 2001 in bibliography herein]). Sperling, 1998, emphasises the necessity of reading the Pentateuch as an allegorical work evincing the much later (primarily political) concerns of its authors; and if, as he argues (8), "the stories in the Torah reflect religious-political concerns of the Israelite-Jewish communities between 1100 and 400 B.C.E.", then we must take the latter date – while recognising its limitations as an estimate – as the *terminus post quem* for the received form. Smith-Christopher (2002: 34-35ff.) tackles the ready acceptance of the idea of 'Persian authorisation' of the Pentateuch, pointing to the signs of resistance to empire 'hidden' in the texts, while Ezkenazi (2009: 86; paraphrased) observes the 'essential and effective deconstruction' of Frei's theory.

it might affect an articulation of Israelite identity. It could be argued that both Egypt and Mesopotamia in equal measures contributed to the evolution of Israelite identity (and the Pentateuch certainly alludes to these regions with regards to the origins of its diverse ancestry[18]), but then why not demonise them both equally in favour of the land from which Israel actually emerged?[19] Indeed, why do the stories of Israel's ultimate origins feature Mesopotamia and Egypt, respectively, when Syria-Palestine appear to be just territories through which the ancestors passed on their way to being more fully defined by their experiences in either of the former regions? The strange deference in the Pentateuch to the eastern regions from which the greatest conquerors came suggests deference contemporary to the composition (or compilation) of the stories. Such deference is not complete, of course; instead, it is a pragmatic acceptance of the reality articulated in the greater context of a "subversive theology [...] that reserves recognition of authority to God alone, while maintaining a necessary polite demeanour to the imperial representatives".[20] After all, rather than an overt celebration of the land from which Abraham comes, the emphasis remains fully on the rewards for departure (Genesis 12:1-3, 7 [13:2]; 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 18 [verses notably framing foresight of the 'Exodus']), and it is the journey itself – if not a *pilgrimage* (see further below) – which is paramount:

> The patriarchs in Genesis, for their part, move in a kind of saraband. Nothing inherent in the patriarchal narratives links the "fathers" to Mesopotamia; yet it is from here that they come, anticipating and foreshadowing the postexilic [sic] trek of the returning exiles.[21]

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[18] Cf. Edelman et al., 2012: 6.

[19] As Redford (1992: 423-424) rightly observes, the journeying down to Egypt of the tribal sons contradicts claims that "the eponymous ancestors live[d], marr[ied], raise[d] families, and die[d] in Canaan".

[20] Smith-Christopher, 2002: 45; a concept echoed in Otto, 2013 (albeit expanded to incorporate the evolution of 'Deuteronomic' ideology throughout the 8th-5th centuries), and contested in an Assyrian period context in Crouch, 2014. Cf. Habel, 1995: 37-39, on the 'theocratic' ideology which elevates YHWH to the status of a universal emperor. For Habel, YHWH is the "invincible monarch" (39); the "owner of all lands" (41); and "a celestial overseer monitoring the territories of earth" (47). Jigoulov (2009: 147) observes that Persian influence may not have been "all-encompassing", a circumstance allowing for the possibility of "resistance to imperial ideology". See especially Berquist, 2008.

[21] Redford, 2011: 301. The 'saraband' was a dance initially made popular in 16th and 17th century Spain; and the accumulation and compilation of disparate traditions either originally or later attached to the 'fathers' and brought together with the pretence of chronological unity certainly makes for a sometimes aimless 'dance' around Syria-Palestine. For more on how Abraham is used to address the socio-political

The received stories of those journeys, however, in presupposing and ultimately facilitating the 'Exodus', are likely later compositions evincing a carefully constructed literary-ideological whole (even if they preserve more ancient ancestor traditions);[22] but the demonisation of

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and socio-economic concerns in the world of the writers, see, for example, Sperling, 1998, 75-90; Stansell, 2005; Blenkinsopp, 2011. Notably, Abraham's wandering not only incorporates the first interaction with Egypt in the Bible; this interaction is also framed by visits to Bethel, a cultic site which the patriarch himself establishes (Gen. 12:7-13:4). Bethel is later exalted by Jacob in two etiological tales (Gen. 28:10-22; 35:1-7), both of which have no reference to Abraham's activity; yet they establish the significance of the genetic link in relation to the promise of progeny and land (Mullen, 1997: 151).

[22] Cf. Edelman et al., 2012: 2; Ben Zvi, 2013: 27-30. While Redford (1992: 429) identifies an early Jacob tradition that functions without Joseph, the received Joseph story – in facilitating the circumstances leading to an 'Exodus' *featuring a twelve-tribe 'Israel'* – is a carefully structured composition with a specific literary function; and if its central motif of the 'Jew in the foreign court' evinces exilic or 'Diaspora' ideology, I think it best to consider it post-exilic – particularly as it ends up in a much larger composition whose literary function is defined by post-exilic, Jerusalemite ideologies. Van Seters, 2006, maintains his argument for an exilic 'Yahwist' in Babylon responsible for constructing the connection between the patriarchal traditions and Exodus (cf. his 2003 volume on the 'Covenant Code' of Exod. 20:22-23:33). Redford, 2011, directs our attention towards the "outgoing fifth and the whole of the fourth century" as the historical context for the composition of "the Joseph and Moses traditions" (315). On how the 'Patriarchal' stories address Persian-era questions regarding ancestral origins as they relate to claims of land possession; as well as set the stage for the story of oppression and liberation (an "important motif in the development of ethnic myths"; 158) see Mullen, 1997: 123-161. Worth noting is Greifenhagen's observation (2002: 241) that despite the Yahwistic elements of the diaspora community at Elephantine, there appears to be no evidence of awareness (or, at least, of reverence) of the towering figures "associated with Israel's early origins" that we find in the Pentateuch. He argues further (*idem*: 264-266) that Abraham is a necessary over-writing of Israelite ancestry to remove a measure of prominence from Moses and Joseph, who are essentially Israelite-Egyptian 'hybrids'. See Fleming, 2012: 320-321, on the 'exilic' elements of the Jacob story. While it might be read as analogous of a Babylonian-era wandering with a view to coming home, its "overwhelmingly Israelite [...] contents" (*idem*: 321) suggest that it was originally born of reflections on the Assyrian deportations. Edelman et al. (2012: 87) suggest that the inclusion of Harran in Abraham's journey may relate to memories of resettled Israelites which are later appropriated so as to include Jews of the "Samarian diaspora [...] within the definition of the religious community [...] that was forged when the Pentateuch was created" (a sentiment echoed by Amit, 2003: 147, in relation to the ideology of the 'Chronicler'). Interestingly, Edelman suggested in 2005 (38-40) that 'Sanballat the Horonite' of Neh. 2:10ff. (who was likely the governor of Samerina [Samaria] might have come from Harran, "which was a strong center [sic] for the [Babylonian] cult of Sin", a fact which would leave it open for polemical attack as a place from which an ancestor would have been called

Egypt in the received form of Exodus – best understood as contemporary with the crystallisation of its characteristic concepts and motifs – belongs to a time in which the powers to which the Judean authorities were ultimately bound would not only look favourably upon it; they would in fact encourage it.[23] This may be the primary thrust of the deference in the Pentateuch towards eastern lands, but in its sweeping generalities it by no means constitutes wholesale compliance to imperial policies at the time of its composition. Instead, playing to a wider context of *cultural contradistinction with Egypt*, the more specific ideological aims of the Pentateuch are contextualised within a generalised demonisation of the last bastion of resistance against Persian domination of the entire eastern Mediterranean seaboard. There is no need to speak of Exodus as a defunct story of the past when it had been repeatedly reinvented throughout the development of 'Israel' in order to retain its contemporaneity and validity; but with the text of Ezra-Nehemiah making Persian authorisation of their 'missions' quite clear (Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 2:1-9), it is perhaps best to envisage this myth of primordial foundation as imbued with a wider (read *external*) political authority than any earlier, 'parochial' versions; particularly as the account of said 'missions' shares literary and ideological elements with Exodus (see further below).[24]

The contemporary geopolitical reality within which context the Pentateuch was composed has led scholars to speak of Yehud as a 'buffer state' in the sense that military garrisons may have been established there to deal with Egyptian attempts to cause unrest in the region; a possibility wholly pragmatic in its inversion of Saite Egypt's concern with stabilising its own north-eastern border.[25] Following the complete annexation of Palestine, Yehud may have been

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to leave. Cf. also Van Seters, 2003: 45, who sees the use of Ur and Harran as evidence for exilic period composition, particularly as these sites receive "special prominence in the time of Nabonidus, the last Neo-Babylonian king".

[23] Greifenhagen, 2002: 247-249

[24] On the Persian authorisation of these 'missions', see, for example, Ska, 2001: 174-176; also Greifenhagen, 2002: 222-224, noting a possible reference in Ezra 7:26 to a "codification of Israelite law undertaken under Persian imperial auspices" (223), but cautioning against seeing direct association with the composition of the Pentateuch.

[25] Redford, 2011: 315; Barstad, 2003: 10. On the "string of forts" in Yehud which were likely *incorporated* into the Persian military infrastructure (that is, they had previously constituted a local defence network), see, for example, Edelman, 2005: 317-319 (see 321ff. for the Negev forts built during the Persian period, the purpose of which was, according to Edelman, to protect a Phoenician trade route [323]). Grabbe (2009b) cautions against seeing Jerusalem housing a Persian garrison, at least in the early Persian period when Mizpah was the more important centre. Deferring ultimately to Briant (2002[ET]: 573-9, 586), Grabbe maintains that Jerusalem would not have had sufficient strategic value to warrant its

just one of many staging posts for the invasion of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 BCE.[26] Grabbe's rejection of such a theory centres upon the lack of reference (in Ezra-Nehemiah) to Persian military activity in the region, but in texts primarily concerned not only with socio-religious matters but in the magnification of the role of elites claiming descent from the original deportees, it is not difficult to imagine why Persian-led legal homogenisation or the fortification of Jerusalem would be played down.[27] As for Nehemiah 'instigating' the journey to Jerusalem (as per Grabbe), this affords greater credence to the motif of supplication (within a general 'culture of permission'; see Conclusion) than is warranted once we recognise its repeated use in biblical stories of ethnic renegotiation – something most definitely occurring in Ezra-Nehemiah. As is the case with the narratives with which I have dealt up to this point, the accounts of the returns from Babylon and the process of restoring first the Jerusalem temple (Ezra) and then the city walls (Nehemiah) may indeed articulate collective memories of the same originating in the period to which they allude (c. 458 BCE for Ezra, and 445-432 for Nehemiah);[28] but those memories have been shaped to support a specific ideological

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establishment as a Persian garrison (2009b: 135, n. 6). See also Berquist, 2008: 46-47. If Barstad is correct to argue that the economy of the *Neo-Babylonian empire* meant that Judah was of sufficient value so that it would have been "unwise [...] to destroy it" (2003: 11), it may be equally unwise to diminish Jerusalem's significance in the subsequent Persian period, especially once restoration of its status as capital began. Of course, as Finkelstein (2008: 510) argues, the idea that the relatively insignificant Jerusalem of the early Persian period was selected for fortification – for whatever reason – is decidedly "far-fetched".

[26] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 513-515. Greifenhagen, 2002: 226: "The expeditionary force that accomplished [...the conquest of Egypt...] would have marched south through the Levant and therefore conceivably may have had some impact on [...] Yehud[.]" Edelman (2005: 321) suggests Persian use of Yehud for maintaining grain supplies to troops "being sent overland to Egypt".

[27] Grabbe, 2001: 110. On the "pacification program" of Darius following 520 BCE; and especially the account of Udjahorresnet – and how it (they) *might* elucidate the circumstances behind the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah – see Blenkinsopp, 2001: 49-51 (also briefly Greifenhagen, 2002: 226-227). Note, however, that Grabbe had previously cautioned (Grabbe, 1994: 295-297) against the implications of Blenkinsopp's comparing the Egyptian and Judean texts (in Blenkinsopp, 1987) based upon the dissimilarity between Yehud and Egypt in the late sixth century (cf. Greifenhagen, 2002: 230, n. 18). See generally Van De Mieroop, 2007: 290-299, on the administration of the Persian empire; also Jigoulov, 2009 on the Persian influence on Phoenicia as a model for "managed autonomy" on the imperial fringes.

[28] Dates from Greifenhagen, 2002: 229. On how the 'Nehemiah Memorial' (understood to constitute the original core of the Nehemiah tradition; sometimes called the 'Nehemiah Memoir'; see particularly, Fitzpatrick-McKinley, 2009: 94-100) appears to suggest that Nehemiah's mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem as a defensive measure against outsiders obscures his intent to "impose his will" on the

retrospective.[29] Ezra has been magnified to appear almost unique with regards to his promotion and proliferation of whatever form of the 'Mosaic Law' he had in his possession;[30] but it is likely that at most *the literary Ezra* represents *an intent* (not necessarily an achievement at the time) to return cultic centrality to Jerusalem, which was most likely associated with Bethel by way of the administrative centre established at Mizpah by the Babylonians since the first deportations of 598/7 BCE (Jeremiah 40:5ff.).[31] Such actions would suggest a Yahwism under threat of growing irrelevance (especially if YHWH was seen to have been defeated by the Babylonians);[32] but the Yahwism either promoted by an historical Ezra or *retrospectively attached to him* was invariably defined by exilic ideology in light of the recent deportations. As such, its legitimation depended upon not only projecting the authenticity of its connection with Jerusalem back to a time preceding the ascendancy of Mizpah, but also demonising Bethel (which may have become the focal point of 'Israelite' cultic identity). Such redirection required claims of continuity for the centrality of the Jerusalem temple interrupted only by its destruction, but it also required a 'counter-history' for the antithetical cult site; a

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people, see Grabbe, 2009a: 121-122. Edelman (2005: 206) sees the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls as indicative of the shifting of regional power from Mizpah to Jerusalem.

[29] If, as per Finkelstein (2008), there was no wall constructed where and when it is claimed by Neh. 3 (indeed, he argues that neither the population nor the infrastructure was sufficient at the time; 510), then perhaps the author of the text was seeking to archaise the construction. This might, in my opinion (and considering the emphasis on the pedigree of all those taking part), indicate a desire to legitimise claims of certain families to have contributed. While Finkelstein introduces the idea that Neh. 3 may be a Late Hellenistic (Hasmonean period) text, he nonetheless recognises the difficulties inherent in separating the time of composition of the account from the rest of Nehemiah.

[30] Greifenhagen, 2002: 230: "Although there is no unequivocal correlation between any element of the commission of this law and Pentateuchal legislation, it seems that that author of the scroll(s) of Ezra and Nehemiah understood the law brought by Ezra to be the Pentateuch[.]" On how Ezra's 'mission' might be afforded plausibility within a general context of Persian imperial administration, see especially Leuchter, 2012a: 57-60; also Jansen, 2000. For my thoughts on the promulgation of this 'Mosaic Law' as it pertains to the theory of imperial authorisation of same, see n. 81, below.

[31] Barstad, 2003: 7. Cf. Oded, 2003: 66, on the account of Ishmael's deception in Jer. 41:5-7; also Blenkinsopp, 2003: 97-98, who suggests that the group of 80 pilgrims must have been heading for a בֵּית יְהוָה "in or near Mizpah". See also Blenkinsopp, 2009: 73-74; Knauf, 2006: 305-309. Notably, Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz (2009: 45) emphasise the lack of evidence for significant activity at Bethel during the Babylonian *and* Persian periods (and Blenkinsopp concedes that the evidence is "inconclusive" for "the last phase of Bethel"; 2009: 74).

[32] Cf. Miller & Hayes, 2006: 482: "For many, the city's destruction probably led to a loss of faith in Yahwism or to a continuation and even intensification of syncretistic practices."

counter-history shifting radically from the patriarchs' reverence of Bethel to condemning the site as a fundamentally northern anomaly anathema to Jerusalemite Yahwism.[33] In the story of the creation of the kingdom of Israel, the demonisation of Bethel spoke both in the Babylonian and early Persian periods to the importance of this site for the territory of Benjamin (a region which notably escaped destruction at the hands of the Babylonians and appears to have continued with relative economic success).[34] The story of Jeroboam's heresy projected a fundamental distinction between Bethel and Jerusalem (as well as a purposeful separation of 'northern' and 'southern' cultural traits) into the distant past, thus validating condemnation of the former. In this sense – and just as Israel was perceived as being founded upon secession and polarisation – Bethel was rejected in an ironic inversion favouring Jerusalem.[35] Bethel is

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[33] On the biblical polemic against Bethel ("because of its potential as an alternative to Jerusalem"), see, for example, Amit, 2003: 139-143 (quotation from p. 142). Cf. also Meyers, 2009: 170, who suggests that the 'returnees' "viewed with suspicion" those still present in the land because they had initiated "new rites and ritual centres in Benjamin". Fleming (2012: 315-316) observes that while the demonisation of Bethel might appear fundamental to the presentation of the northern kingdom in the books of Kings, the subsequent paucity of references to the site following the account of Jeroboam I suggests that it did not actually have "strong ties to the Israelite monarchy and its Samaria capital".

[34] See especially Davies, Philip R., 2005a. Also Middlemas, 2009: 184 (cf. 2005: 230); Barstad, 2003: 6. See further Meyers, 2009: 167-168. The site had also survived the Assyrian onslaught, and while there is the hint that Yahwism might have continued in the province of Samaria via a priest sent to Bethel to teach the people to worship YHWH, the biblical writers are quick to remedy this potential continuity by attaching their characteristic lapse to syncretism (2 Kgs. 17:27-41). On the possible historical background of the Benjamin tribe and how 'northern' memories of same were likely interweaved with 'southern' (competing) traditions in the Primary History (indeed, the author argues for the possible autonomy of Benjaminite identity incorporated into the biblical construction of 'Israel'), see Fleming, 2012: 144-161. On the rise and fall of the region of Benjamin (and Mizpah) as evinced by the archaeological record, see especially Lipschits, 2003: 346ff.

[35] This irony is magnified upon realising that this rejection severed ties with a site long revered in Israel; a site which – as was noted in 3.3.1, above – had most likely served as a repository of Israelite cultural heritage in the wake of the Assyrian annexation of the northern kingdom. This by no means indicates the centralisation of literary activity in pre-Assyrian Israel, and certainly not that Bethel was such a centre (cf. Fleming, 2012: 309-310, 314ff.). On the contrary, the apparent discontinuity (cast in contrast to the claimed continuity of the Davidic kingship; see 3.2.2, above) evinced by the relatively rapid transitions in royal sites which takes the reader from Shechem (Jeroboam) to Samaria (Omri) suggests that there might have been numerous centres wherein tradition and lore would be preserved. Bethel, then, likely emerged as the polar opposite to Jerusalem precisely because its cache of traditions survived the Assyrian invasion (and were likely reinterpreted in its wake). See further, Knauf, 2006.

essentially the historical 'keystone' of a concerted polemic connecting the creation of Israel the kingdom with the *re*-creation of 'Israel' the people, and this observation is more pronounced when we recall that Bethel was the site which bore the brunt of prophetic attack in the memory context immediately preceding the destruction of Israel and the deportation of its people (see 3.3, above).[36]

Thus the stage is set for presenting Jerusalem as the rightful place of worship; but what of practices seen as anathema to 'Ezra's' Yahwism which might have continued throughout Judah during the Babylonian or 'exilic' period?[37] Since Barstad introduced the concept of the 'myth of the empty land', an uncritical eye might continue to see life in Judah at this time in terms of relative continuity, whereby any 'desolation' claimed of the period (2 Chronicles 36:21) merely facilitated a physical and ideological palimpsest permitting the unchallenged re-planting of 'Israel' in its ancestral land.[38] Certainly, "[v]arious aspects of life were greatly modified", but such modifications appear to have pertained to administrative and agricultural life insofar as those who owned very little or no land in the pre-exilic period found themselves compensated following the removal of those who had controlled such things from Jerusalem.[39] Even if there

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[36] If Knoppers, 2006, is correct to see Samaria's administrative and political dominance (in comparison to Judah's) as the motivation for the (false) rhetoric of cultural polarisation upon which is constructed the demonisation of 'northern' territories, then it would make perfect sense to project the 'counter-history' of Bethel into antiquity (cf. chapter 3 in Bos, 2013, arguing for the Persian period composition of Hosea). Thus, it is not just that Exod. 32 relates to 1 Kgs. 12:25-32; it relates simultaneously to every appearance of Bethel in the mnemohistorical contexts heretofore discussed (see further in Conclusion).

[37] On Lamentations as it might elucidate continuity of YHWH worship in the aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, see Middlemas, 2007: 28-51.

[38] Barstad, 1996a; cf. especially Oded, 2003, who rejects such a myth contemporary with Ezra-Nehemiah (see further below). On the archaeology of Yehud as it pertains to questions of continuity of settlement from Iron IIC to the Persian period, see especially Chapter 5 in Edelman, 2005. Regarding conclusions drawn from excavations, Edelman states that "it is not possible to know with any degree of certainty which sites *that are listed as having Iron IIC occupation and Persian occupation* were continuously settled [...] through the Neo-Babylonian period" (2005: 317; emphasis mine). Barstad (2003: 8) draws attention to the caves at Ketef Hinnom (as well as to Ezek. 33:24), southwest of Jerusalem proper, to argue for the possibility of people returning to live in Jerusalem after the destruction. On the Ketef Hinnom inscriptions, which quote texts from Num. 6:24-26 and are dated to around the sixth century BCE, see especially Barkay et al., 2003.

[39] Miller & Hayes, 2006: 482-485. The memories of the rhetoric of the 'eighth century prophets' in favour of disenfranchised farmers (see Sperling, 1998: 39) might have found new meaning in this context, although the ideological thrust of such rhetoric would have been redefined by the later Jerusalemite authorities. For Smith-Christopher (2002: 45-49), in his contextual critique of Barstad's 1996 thesis, the

had remained in the land certain elements of the Jerusalem elite, the ascendancy of Mizpah as the administrative centre may have led to their disenfranchisement. There is no way of knowing whether the descendants of such individuals or families, professing their rights to hereditary land, would have attached themselves to Persian-backed 'returnees' with plans for land redistribution, but the claims in Ezra 2:1b and 2:70 that 'returnees' took up residence in *their* towns and cities (even allowing for a later retrospective in which said people have established themselves) would require at the very least that some sort of provisions were made with regard to those who had held the land since any redistribution occurring in the wake of the deportations.[40] As such, and combined with the accounts of opposition to rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, the text of Ezra recognises the presence of others in the land opposed to a renewed Yahwist ascendancy.[41] Add to this the concerns brought to Ezra regarding protecting the 'holy seed' (Ezra 9:2) from perceived racial impurity and the picture becomes one of an idealised ethnicity imposed upon a culturally – and religiously – diverse population (although any *imposition* perceived is itself part of an idealised retrospective).[42] In fact, the suggestion above of the purposeful severing of cultural ties with Bethel – a site afforded significance as a repository of Israelite heritage not only in pre-exilic times but also

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idea that things continued in Judah in "much the same way" (Barstad's words; echoed in Barstad, 2003: 12) constituted an attempt to "minimize the tragedy of Babylonian hegemony" and "reduce the impact of the exilic events" (Smith-Christopher, 2002: 49). On a similar note, Fried (2003: 22) contrasts the reaction to the destruction of the Elephantine temple articulated in the letters sent to Jerusalem, whereby "[t]heir loss was enormous, even though the destruction [...] involved neither deaths nor deportations". As such, she argues that Barstad "greatly underestimates the role of both temple and palace".

[40] After all, unless they were returning to a 'ghost town', one would presume that there was an infrastructure – and by extension, other residents – to return to! Of course, that the list in Ezra 2 is retrospective, and does not refer solely to the 'first return', is difficult to contest in light of the numbers involved; the inconsistency of form; and – perhaps most importantly in light of the reverence afforded him – "the surprising absence of Sheshbazzar" (Knowles, 2004: 65).

[41] Leuchter's suggestion (2012a: 59) that "[t]he challenges to Nehemiah's power by forces within Yehud and elsewhere [...] constitute challenges to the Persian throne that stood directly behind Ezra" is not entirely at odds with this; particularly if the 'returned' Yahwism was seen as a religio-political incarnation of imperialism.

[42] On this diverse population, see especially Knoppers, 2001b; Becking, 2009. As Eskenazi (2009: 87) points out, it is this concern with racial purity in Ezra-Nehemiah that distinguishes the account of Judean 'restoration' from whatever might have been occurring amongst neighbouring nations; thus by extension indicating a practice in Persian period Yehud at odds with the general picture of imperial policy (if, of course, the biblical account has a foundation in the historical situation).

throughout the Babylonian period – accords perfectly with the idea that conflict over claims to the name 'Israel' began in the Persian period and necessitated ideological discontinuity with cultural remnants of the northern kingdom.[43] Thus, the 'myth of the empty land' as it might be extrapolated from 2 Chronicles 36:21 is, in my opinion, best understood as a much later concept constructed from the viewpoint of those seeking to repress the memories of such conflict and diversity, particularly as the crystallisation of Jerusalemite dominance would require claims of historical ethnic continuity and, most importantly, *religious* homogeneity (see also below).[44]

Any support for a myth of repopulating a land untainted by foreign influence – contemporary with the *original memory context* behind Ezra-Nehemiah – risks rendering irrelevant *during that time* the conquest narratives as they are attached to Exodus; for if Exodus *evokes the Babylonian experience and the returns of the Persian period*, then the Joshua narrative celebrates the *re-establishment* of homogeneous 'Israel' in its ancestral land.[45] Just as

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[43] Cf. Davies, Philip R., 2005a: 8. Also Bos, 2013: 75: "[I]t is not implausible to think that the 'upstarts' in Jerusalem in [...] would have needed to legitimize [sic] their own activity as well as to undermine [...] their competitors to the north." Cf., however, Knoppers, 2010, highlighting the cultural and religious similarities between Yahwists in Jerusalem and Gerizim (based on the onomastic evidence for "religious overlap" continuing from the Persian period into the Hellenistic). Caution is thus urged regarding assumptions of outright polarisation between Samarian and Yehudite identity.

[44] Contra Middlemas, 2009: 178-183, who concludes on the matter of "communal division" that "[t]exts stemming from the period at the onset of Persian rule suggest efforts were made to *honour* the multiplicity of experiences that followed the collapse of Jerusalem" (183; emphasis mine). While I agree that concession and compromise would have been necessary (I believe these are regular, if not constant, features of the construction of ethnic homogeneity), I think that any benevolence we might perceive on the part of those revitalising the centralisation of Jerusalem should be tempered by acknowledging later redaction of pertinent texts. Cf., for example, Meyers, 2009: 170 (emphasis mine): "[T]he myth of the empty land was created to *substitute for* the most recent and ascendant views of the Babylonian returnees [...]." Also Eskenazi, 2009: 81: "The writers of "EN [Ezra-Nehemiah] may be attempting to [...] imply there was no tension with a shift from the Benjaminite [...] centre to [...] Jerusalem". Of course, Middlemas acknowledges the likelihood of religious diversity in the community (2009: 182-183), which I believe would constitute sufficient grounds for 'communal division' in a community so attached to and defined by loyalty (or lack thereof) to YHWH and the Jerusalem temple. See also Smith-Christopher, 2002: 45-49; Leuchter, 2012a: 61-63.

[45] Oded (2003: 64) observes that "according to pan-mythic scholarship", Joshua is "a fictional composition from the Persian or Hellenistic period". This does not, of course, negate the possibility of older layers of the Joshua narrative; simply that the story as we have it has been coloured by later concerns.

Exodus and Joshua are imbued with cultic symbolism, 'Israel' is invited to return not only from Babylon but from anywhere else to where its people might have been deported over the centuries in journeys akin to the 'pilgrimages' of their forefathers. That the returns in Ezra evoke pilgrimage imagery is clear from the focus on matters, materials and practices of a cultic nature.[46] There is a dichotomy here, however, as the tension between the relevance of the old and the potency of the new is played out through the appeal to both continuity and discontinuity. By evoking pilgrimage imagery (the initial request made of Pharaoh by Moses is that the people be allowed journey three days into the wilderness to worship their god;[47] cf. Exodus 7:16, 26; implied by 8:4) and cultural memories of treks across the wilderness, connections are made not only with the journey from Egypt but also with the evolving traditions of the conquering hero, Joshua, who inherited the mantle of Moses. It could be argued that Joshua's mission to purge the land of foreigners might have been injected with greater potency than any version which might have been around in Josiah's time;[48] yet how

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[46] See especially Knowles, 2004, who observes that this retrenchment in Ezra in cultic terms of the "second exodus motif" (73) emphasises the recreation of 'Israel' as "a *worshipping* community" (*idem*; emphasis in source) defined by faith in YHWH and association with the Jerusalem temple. With its basis set allegorically in the migration tradition, this re-contemporisation of the foundation myth facilitates the incorporation of the local population into the ideologies of restoration (see further below). Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-19 are also characterised by pilgrimage imagery. Notably, the latter verses call for the Egyptian Diaspora Jews ("the family of Egypt") to "present themselves" at Jerusalem.

[47] The account of this request ties in with the sense of abandonment evoked by Exod. 2:23-25 (see n. 54, below), in that YHWH required appeasement before restoration of the relationship with him could begin. As per Fried (2003: 50), this might relate to the general near eastern context of the requirements for temple restoration (see further below, n. 79). Greifenhagen (2002: 261-262, and n. 9) suggests that from a narrative point of view, this request is merely a ruse to facilitate a permanent escape from Egypt, although he notes that ideologically it might represent a call for "a permanent exodus to Palestine".

[48] Again, attention returns to Bethel, because if Joshua was originally associated with Bethel (as suggested in 3.4, above), the subordination of Joshua to Moses would constitute a further attack on any authority claimed of that site. Of course, if Josiah annexed Bethel and appropriated the story and character of Joshua in the context of his program to reinvent 'Israel' in Judah (or even to placate Israelites who had remained in the land of Benjamin since the Assyrian invasion), the subordination to Moses might already have been established. As such, the demonisation of Bethel informing the connection between Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 12:25-33 would already have an ideological platform. I will return to this in my conclusion. In noting the "antiroyal [sic]" ideology of Joshua, Habel (1995: 57, n. 12) likely identifies an element disconnecting the received tradition (which Knauf, 2006: 311, dates to the early fourth century) from Josiah's reign. Also see p. 67: "Joshua has established no centralized [sic]

could the writers of these stories – in light of what had been experienced by Israelites and Judeans over the past three centuries – hope to promote what was essentially a story of invasion and annihilation?[49] The answer was to present the usurpation of foreign cultural influences as a *return* to the land of its rightful owners (and remember that Joshua's conquest was far from total);[50] thus creating an ideological foundation for the reinvention of the Joshua tradition wherein focus is shifted from the violent conquest of the land (an aspect unlikely to have been appreciated at the time) and directed towards territorial acquisition by *a twelve-tribe Israel* expected to bring about the actualisation of the divine promise made to their ancestors.[51] In doing so, the groundwork is laid for a retrospective on this period *encoded* (see further below) in the revitalised migration tradition and alluded to in the reimagined Joshua – a retrospective preserving the sense of something new (the return from Babylon) contemporised and validated by something old (the return from Egypt) – to emphasise the concept of return. That return, however, initiates the reformulation of 'Israel' by incorporating those already occupying the land. By appealing to ancient kinship ties; and resting upon the authority of the ancient migration tradition, the Persian period 'layer' of the book of Joshua promotes the idea that "the ancestral household, not the priesthood, the Levites, or prefigured royalty" (the latter

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court, temple, militia, or administration. Rather, he encourages each ancestral house [...] to claim [...] its own lands." Cf. below.

[49] Extrapolating from Smith-Christopher's remarks on the 'monarchical traditions' (2002: 25-26), the dichotomy in the Primary History (he does not use this term) of promoting "a militarist and nationalist [...history...] only to savagely criticize [sic] it as idolatrous and ultimately as disastrous" is best read in the context of (subtle) resistance to imperial ideologies whereby the community of faith is preferred (Wesselius [2000: 3-4], compares the military movement of 'millions' to take the Promised Land to Xerxes' army intent on conquering Greece in Herodotus' *Histories*). I have noted above (as per Smith-Christopher, 2002) the necessity to shift authority away from imperial powers so that it was understood to come exclusively from YHWH. Important to observe, then, is the command of YHWH to rebuild the temple found in Hag. 1:7 and Zech. 1:16, wherein an appeal "to divine anger rather than to imperial decree" (Edelman, 2005: 3) would be needed even more so when 'Israel's' 'history' was full of the woeful consequences of such demands of grandiose labour. Notably, as Edelman makes clear (*idem*), "failure [...] to mention the existence of an imperial decree is not proof that none had existed".

[50] Although Oded (2003: 63), in his general rejection of a myth of an empty land *contemporary with the returns*, notes that "the land is not empty but full of foreigners" (and he remarks that "[r]epossession is the word"), he nonetheless argues that repossession of their land (he uses the word 'retaking') is not the end goal of the 'returnees'.

[51] Habel (1995: 62-65) suggests that the thrust of the book of Joshua (and here I am adapting the message for the sake of a Persian period analogy) is not that the returned leader[s] 'did all the work', but that all of 'Israel' were expected to finish what he [they] started.

a significant rejoinder to whatever Davidic aspirations remained) were "being upheld as the hope for Israel".[52] Instead of a sweeping power-grab implied by the older versions of Joshua, this apparent 'democratisation' of power and rights was a message of which considerably more people could approve, in comparison to a story connoting the supplantation of indigenous peoples.

As I have shown in 3.3, above, the journey out of Egypt known to the eighth century prophets (and arguably during the time of Josiah) appears not to have been thought of as a *return* (particularly if the memories of the same reached back into a distant, 'pre-Israel' past as discussed in Chapter 2). This was a later aspect of the grand narrative facilitated by stories of patriarchs centred upon 'Canaan'; but of course with Abraham coming from territory 'later' consumed by the Babylonians, any earlier traditions regarding him – if indeed there were any – were subsumed by the relevance in the 'exilic' and 'post-exilic' period of the location of both his father's and his starting point, the ancient region of Haran (also the name of one of Abraham's brothers; Genesis 11:26) and the city of "Ur of the Chaldeans" (Genesis 11:31). This both archaises Abraham so that he pre-dates the great empires to the east, while appealing to Judeans to make a similar journey (one based on faith in YHWH).[53] Still, while Abraham's journey might have been mildly inspirational, it lacked the grandeur and the contemporary relevance of the story of 'Israel's' ancient ancestors subjected to the yoke of a tyrant and calling for their god to rescue them (Exodus 2:23-25).[54]

All this is well and good, but the question at hand – why Egypt? – cannot be answered without another opposing question posited in the introduction above: Why not Babylon? Where is the grand narrative of a great return of the people from Babylon; a magnificent

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[52] Habel, 1995: 73

[53] On genealogical 'stretching' to claim greater legitimacy, see Zerubavel, 2012: 78-80. The seemingly ancient 'credo' found in Deut. 26:5-10 connects Abraham's ethnicity to that of the greater Persian empire by way of claiming affinity with a 'wandering Aramean', the connotations being that this ancestor spoke what would become the *lingua franca* of the empire, Aramaic (cf. Ben Zvi, 2013: 30-31). Significantly, the demonisation of Egypt in the 'credo' aligns the experiences of the descendants of this Aramaic-speaking ancestor with Persian hostility towards their great western enemy.

[54] The idea that the groans and cries of the slaves was necessary to secure the attention of YHWH implies a sense of abandonment, a sentiment inherent in the book of Lamentations (likely composed around this time; cf. Amit, 2003: 136), as we have seen. That the relationship of the exiles with YHWH was over and that their very identity was eroding might best be dramatised by the fears of genocide articulated by Pharaoh's orders to kill the Hebrew boys (Exod. 1:15-16). While Ezek. 10-11 describes the prophet's vision of YHWH's removal from Jerusalem to Babylon (Cf. Fried, 2003: 30 and n. 79, below), I think this should be read as an account designed to placate an exilic audience in Babylon.

journey across the Syrian Desert with Jerusalem in sight? Why compose an allegorical narrative when the deportations were so fresh in the minds of the people and Babylon was the place from where they had returned to rebuild their crumbled society? Perhaps the answer is that the great majority of those to whom the narrative was directed in its role as a formative narrative were those who *had not experienced deportation*. Perhaps the only way this audience could appreciate the experiences of those claiming the right to re-form 'Israel' in Persian period Yehud was to articulate those experiences in an established narrative framework, a cultural memory long imbued with the weight of social and cultural norms.[55] This solution incorporates the evidence pointing to life not only continuing in Judah throughout the Babylonian period, but also being restructured so that land and wealth was allocated to those who likely did not have any beforehand (compare 2 Kings 25:12). No one returning from Babylon decades after the destruction of Jerusalem – even with whatever Persian support we might envisage – could hope to assert palatable claims to land without carefully inserting themselves into the socio-political infrastructure; and this called for nuanced legitimation appealing to socio-cultural structures continuing (and possibly still evolving) throughout the period.[56] In this regard, the 'myth of the empty land' would relate to the observations of Sara Japhet that what was of paramount concern for the biblical writers was forming a "direct transition from the destruction of the temple to its restoration";[57] that is, the sense of purposeful discontinuity with whatever transpired in Judah during the 'exilic period' (which gave rise to the aforementioned 'myth') was incidental to the primary concern of reaching back to a time of relative stability within which context the continuity of Jerusalem could be claimed. This is where genealogy comes in, and the accounts of the Persian period returns are not without their carefully structured claims to familial descent (Ezra 2; 7:1-5 [Ezra's personal pedigree];[58]

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[55] In her critique of the term 'exile', Middlemas (2009: 175) makes it clear that "[a]n 'exile' only exists from the point of view of people who have been deported. The people who remained in Judah did not regard the forced relocation of some of its citizenry in any special way". In her earlier publications (see, for example, Middlemas, 2005; 2007), Middlemas advocates for the replacement of 'exilic period' with the term 'Templeless Age', with a view to returning scholarly focus to the population of Judah. As she concludes in her 2007 volume (137): "Rather than suggesting a closing date for a situation that never in fact ceased to exist [i.e. the 'exile'], 'templeless' clarifies a time frame – that epic period between the two temples".

[56] See, for example, Miller & Hayes, 2006: 487.

[57] Japhet, 2003: 81

[58] On this "illustrious list of ancestors", see Leuchter (2012a: 44-49), who observes a concerted attempt in Ezra's genealogy not only to legitimate claims to his authority in Yehud as a 'returned' priest, but also

8:1-14; Neh. 7:6-63).[59] Of the utmost importance for those attempting to (re-)appropriate the ancient ethno-religious label, 'Israel', was not only the projection into pre-exilic times of their ancestral heritage; but association with ancestors whose pedigree superseded that of anyone standing in opposition.[60] They needed to show not only that they were descended from those who had been central to the Jerusalemite establishment of pre-exilic Judah, but also that said establishment constituted the 'true Israel'.[61] Into this program of identity renegotiation came

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to connect him to specific 'ancestors' (while 'leap-frogging' others) whose activities were remembered within historical contexts of significant transition. Cf. Fulton, 2011: 233-234.

[59] See, for example, Knoppers, 2003 (also 2001a, 2001b); Grabbe, 2009a: 122-124 (highlighting the problems arising for historical reconstruction from the reuse of common names). Note that Neh. 7:61, 64 make it clear that there were some whose pedigree could not be determined. See especially Chapter 1 in Edelman, 2005, for a thorough analysis of the genealogical information in Ezra-Nehemiah (and cf. the short response to Edelman in Klein, 2008, especially as Edelman's late dating for the temple depends greatly – but not entirely – upon her reconstruction of the genealogical data in Ezra-Nehemiah). On the significance of the lineage of Jeshua, the 'High Priest' in Neh. 12, see Fulton, 2009.

[60] Cf. Knoppers, 2001a: 18: "Genealogies [...] were caught up with fundamental issues of self-definition, identity, territory, and relationships. They were composed mainly to address claims about social status, kinship ties, and territorial affiliations[.]" Based on genealogies in 1 Chronicles, Wright, 2006, re-evaluates the geographical extent of Persian period Yehud in terms of a more porous territory defined by kinship and patronage; one which may easily overlap with other polities under Achaemenid control. See also Crüsemann, 1996. On *Persian* genealogical construction, providing a contextual milieu for the biblical material, see Fulton, 2011.

[61] Interestingly, the concept of seeing the returned 'Israelites' or the בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Ezra 6:16, 21) as the 'holy seed' (Ezra 9:2) from whom, for example, foreign wives were to be separated (Ezra 10:11, 19), might best be understood as retrospective idealism pertaining to claims of *discontinuity* with actual 'foreign' elements (or cultic practices) eventually absorbed into the new 'Israel'. Dor, 2011, sees the accounts of separation in Ezra-Nehemiah as symbolic of rites facilitating the inclusion of elements deemed foreign; while Oswald, 2012, approaches the accounts in terms of the criteria for citizenship and socio-political status, comparing the developing situation in Yehud to the inception of the 'citizen states' of ancient Greece. For the foreign elements in the list of Neh. 7, see Edelman, 2005: 342-343; Becking 2009: 35-36. Becking also notes that the concept of the 'holy seed' constitutes a "deviation from earlier concepts in ancient Israel" (cf. Blenkinsopp, 2011: 477), particularly those pertaining to "the protection of the poor and the needy" (33). Where "traces of integration are absent" (*idem*) in Ezra 9, such lofty claims of purity (cf. Neh. 13:23ff.) should be understood within the greater context of constructing a foundation myth for a 'pure' and 'true' 'Israel' disassociated from memories of (perceived) religious apostasy. As I will conclude below, this ties in well not only with the motif of cultural disassociation in Exodus – whereby Egypt represents the archetypal antithetical nation – but also with the concept of purgation characteristic of the 'wandering' aspects of the received Mosaic drama. Brett (2012: 33-35)

the migration tradition, that long established vehicle of 'Israel's' self-identity pertaining to all who would claim 'ownership' of that name. It had been appealed to many times before when the very nature of 'Israel' was under scrutiny, and the 'perfect storm' of circumstance had arrived in which to do so again. This 'returned Israel' needed to anchor its legitimacy in great antiquity, but the permission granted to rebuild the Jerusalem temple and to re-establish stability in the region with Jerusalem at its centre also called for an air of deference *incidental to the geopolitical situation*. Demonisation of Egypt was by this stage nothing new for Israelite or Judahites alike, and the Persian authorities would have welcomed it; but usurpation of their ultimate authority over this new 'Israel' came in the form of Abraham, with the even greater antiquity of his fateful pilgrimage anchored in the very region from which the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires had 'later' emerged. I would argue, then, that the figure of Abraham ultimately undermines Persia as the facilitator of the creation of a new 'Israel', an ideology suggestive of a context in which the Persian empire was in decline;[62] but association with Exodus appeals to what might best be understood as 'provincial propaganda' belonging to a time either contemporary with an Egyptian threat to Persia or to Persia's dominance of the region (particularly as the ideological highpoint of Exodus – from a Persian point of view – might be found in Egypt's defeat at the Sea of Reeds).[63] In this regard, the mid-fifth century BCE – in which Egyptian and Greek revolts hampered Persian territorial integrity – begins to emerge as the most suitable period for the revitalisation amongst a population still under Persian dominance of a tradition demonising Egypt, as well as coinciding with the biblical context for

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makes a strong argument for seeing the concept of the 'holy seed' in Ezra in socio-religious terms aspiring to 'horizontal' solidarity, whereby older purity restrictions for the priesthood have been telescoped in the "legal imagination" to apply to the laity. Southwood (2011: 201) refers to this phenomenon (idealised as it may be) as "the democratization [sic] of holiness".

[62] See Redford, 2011: 315ff.; also Greifenhagen, 2002: 232; and Berquist, 2008: 50.

[63] Cf. Greifenhagen, 2002: 230: "It would be in the best interests of the leaders of the Judeans to disassociate their community from any Egyptian connections so as to affirm their loyalty to the Persian cause[.]" On the matter of the Egyptian defeat at the 'Sea of Reeds', I would not agree that Exod. 15 was ever the climax of the migration tradition, no matter how much it may appear so (cf. Loewenstamm, 1992: 233-234; although he speaks of it as the 'conclusion' or 'culmination' of "the story of the Exodus"). Instead, where leaving Egypt behind is paramount in a narrative concerned with the creation of a distinct ethnic identity, the defeat of the enemy at the sea – although appropriated from an ancient tradition of crossing the Jordan (see 2.2.3, above) – is the 'historical' transition in Exodus (that is, the received version of the migration tradition) facilitating *the journey towards renewal*. Strangely, Loewenstamm states that, following the defeat of the Egyptian army in Exodus, "the Bible never again mentions the Egyptians" (1992: 233)!

the activity of Ezra and Nehemiah. As Greifenhagen argues, "[w]hat is important is not that the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah took place exactly as depicted in the biblical accounts, but rather that the biblical accounts depict these characters as active in the mid fifth century in Yehud, at the height of Persian imperial concern over the stability of the western frontier".[64]

A lot of the above would appear to stand in favour of envisaging the wholesale composition of Exodus during this period, but the foregoing chapters laid the foundation for another possibility: that Exodus *was not a purposeful allegory* of the Babylonian experience. It can be read allegorically, certainly, and such a reading evokes said experience, but to see it as a wholly allegorical narrative *whose sole purpose* was to allude to captivity in and liberation from Babylon implies that no such narrative existed before those events (as well as reiterating the question: why not Babylon?).[65] Instead, like the earlier memory contexts I have heretofore discussed, the experience in Babylon and its implications for the restructured identity of 'Israel' in Persian period Yehud led to a further evolution of an extant migration tradition to the extent that it completely overwhelmed earlier layers of the story.[66] It was afforded timeless immediacy, as the migration tradition 'de-historicised' the oppression under and liberation from a tyrannical state so that it was applicable to any regime – past, present or future. Of course, any 'memories' of 'coming out of Egypt' achieved expression through retention of cultic practices repeatedly contemporising that event (Passover, Tabernacles), and because not everybody experienced the deportation from Babylon, it was the cultural memory of a more ancient experience which was promoted in the program of identity 're-formation' in 'post-exilic' Yehud. In other words, a grand narrative about Babylon is not found in the Hebrew Bible because it was not deemed relevant in the context of Persian-period negotiation of 'Israelite' identity. Yet it was more than a question of relevance, and Melody Knowles identifies the

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[64] See further, Greifenhagen, 2002: 227-229 (quote from p. 229).

[65] To clarify, I am using allegory here to mean a narrative in which "the events [...] obviously and continuously refer to another simultaneous structure of events" (Preminger, 1974: 12); a definition implying authorial intent and a disassociation from the potential historicity of the events portrayed. On the risk to historicity implied by allegorical readings, see Sperling, 1998: 27ff. On the 'presentification' of a past event to align it with an (as yet) unresolved current event, see Gumbrecht, 2006: 324.

[66] That Exodus contains topography in relation to the Egypt of the Persian period (or at least no earlier than the late seventh or early sixth century; see esp. Redford, 1963: 415; 1992: 258, 409) points to an elaboration of the ancient tradition with regards to concerns contemporary with that time. Cf., for example, the Egyptian Saite period reinvention of the past (Assmann, 2003: 339ff.). With the story of the 'Exodus' in place, the patriarchal stories emphasising the rewards for journeying out of foreign lands assumed greater prominence as Diaspora literature, calling the descendants of displaced Israelites and Judeans 'home' to the 'Promised Land'.

'problem' staring the returnees in the face: they did not all come back together.[67] The difficulties inherent in glorifying the journeys from Babylon of Ezra and Nehemiah as heroic episodes *in their own right* are to be found in how they *do not correspond* to the 'Exodus' from Egypt of *an entire homogeneous population*. Although the ethnic homogeneity both championed in Exodus and perceived of Persian period Yehud is a biblical construct, the *discontinuity* evident in Ezra-Nehemiah (see further below) locates the composition of those texts at a later date than that of the Primary History, the interdependent work *presupposed* by the writers of the former.[68]

I propose, then, that the Persian-period program of reinventing 'Israel' in Yehud was not intent on focusing on the Babylonian experience for three main reasons: i) it was only relevant to 'returnees' who were *a minority of the population* in Yehud, and its articulation as the reason for reforming 'Israel' *in Jerusalem* would seem alien to those who had continued to occupy the land throughout the Babylonian period; ii) the inconsistent nature of the returns (as extrapolated from the biblical texts) would have evinced a problematic diversity of opinions as to whether 'returning' from Babylon was even worth the effort;[69] and iii) respect for ancestors whose experiences were anchored in the distant past provided a much more stable and potent platform for generating authenticity and authority for norms to be established for the future. In a world of empires wherein the retention of local and autonomous ethnic identities were constantly threatened – something which the people of Yehud must surely have acknowledged – the primary concern of those responsible for preserving and repeatedly reinvigorating that

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[67] Knowles, 2004: 66: "In sum, while both a pilgrimage and an exodus involve a journey of the community, the separate journeys have different emphases and sociological functions. That the return from Babylon was accomplished in a series of journeys rather than a single constitutive one distinguishes it from an exodus."

[68] The "crushing of heterogeneity" (Southwood, 2011: 205) idealised in Ezra-Nehemiah is brought about not by clinging on to the majesty of returning from Babylon, but by conceding the significance of that experience to the migration tradition revered by the majority of the population to whom an appeal to a shared history was fundamental for the credibility of the 'returnees'. Still, as I will argue in my conclusion, there is a purposeful element of discontinuity with the Primary History at play in Ezra-Nehemiah.

[69] On the status of Judeans in Babylonia; their integration into its social and economic environment; and the potential for success (evidenced especially by the Murašû archive) amongst its diverse population, see Pearce, 2011. Based on the account in Ezra 1:5 of monetary support for the journey and the rebuilding of the temple, Satlow (2014: 56) suggests that some Judeans in Babylonia would rather give money than make the journey.

identity was to articulate hope for the future through appeal to the past.[70] If it could be shown that the form and character of this new 'Israel' had repeatedly endured and survived threats to its existence and struggles over its nature; and that its nature in fact transcended that of the autocratic state, it would be provided with the claims to antiquity and resilience necessary for rallying support for its continued existence.[71] That Exodus incorporates imagery of the Babylonian experience and the subsequent 'return' of those taken into exile shows not only that it was inspired by these recent events (and we should, of course, recognise the potential for 'returnees' claiming or being afforded an air of experiential authority), but that it retained the authority of an ancient tradition of migration and return *into which context reflections on said events were interpolated for posterity*. The reality of life in Babylon – the dislocation, alienation and sense of abandonment – is captured in Exodus (and some generic elements may have already been part of the tradition, considering the history of deportations), as is the 'victory' of liberation from and triumph over the oppressive enemy. With YHWH credited with revealing his will through unfolding history, the experience in Babylon was embedded allegorically into an ancient tradition in which he brought his people out of a foreign land into one promised to their ancestors. As such, the Bible is not entirely ignorant of the reality of life in Babylon, but it evinces no immediate concern with articulating it within a historiographical framework. Yet while continuity with the past through association with the migration tradition

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[70] Becking (2009: 33ff.) deals with, and subsequently rejects, the suggestion that the language of apparent xenophobia in Ezra-Nehemiah relates to "a threatened community looking for its identity in the immense Persian Empire" (cf. also Eskenazi's caution against reading a "double identity" – that is, Persian and Judean – into the text [á la Berquist, 2006]). For Becking, the problem is one of internal (that is, solely Yehudite) ethnic perceptions, albeit informed by the geographical proximity of external syncretistic influences. It may well be that these proximate influences – for Becking, manifested especially in the archaeological record at the Edomite site of Maqqēdāh (present day Khirbet el-Qôm; 2009: 39-41; cf. also Knoppers, 2001b: 27-28) – hastened the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem so that re-centralisation of Yahwism could begin. In comparison with the "immediate impetus" to rebuild the temple in Elephantine (destroyed as a result of ethnic conflict), Fried (2003: 23) wonders if "returnees from Babylon" would have been necessary to initiate the temple-rebuilding project in Jerusalem. Interestingly, Greifenhagen (2002: 239-240) observes that it is far from clear whether the Elephantine temple was actually rebuilt. While the biblical picture suggests a strong and immediate desire to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, Kratz observes (2009: 158) that the biblical "picture of postexilic Judaism" does not conform to the "social and religious circumstances described in the Elephantine papyri" (cf. also p. 160-161); and that the former is best suited to the Hellenistic period.

[71] Cf. Fleming, 2012: 305: "Continuation as one group involved self-identification in truly 'ethnic' terms, against the sequence of great external powers that dominated the Middle East and Mediterranean through the next centuries."

was important during the Persian period 'crisis of identity', what was more important for those who would later reflect on this period was asserting that a certain discontinuity had occurred. In Ezra-Nehemiah, therefore, the focus is not on exile, but solely on return and its benefits. This is the thrust of the pilgrimage imagery noted above, because Ezra-Nehemiah glorifies the return so as to appeal to Diaspora audiences; and as such the point of origin of the journey is less important than its ultimate destination.

Nehemiah's concern is that Jerusalem is in ruins, and his request to travel to Judah (Nehemiah 2:5) articulates the author's expectations of every Judean or Israelite in exile: they should be concerned that their homeland is in disarray and they should wish to contribute to recreating its (perceived) former glory. The motif of 'despoiling' the populations in Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36) and Babylon (Ezra 1:3-11; also 5:14-15; 6:4-5; 7:14-16), conforming as they would have to contemporary practices, constitutes a tangible reminder – to complement the questionable 'decree' of Cyrus in Ezra 1:1-2 (the veracity of which might have been doubted) – that this newly created 'Israel' was been sent upon its way with the 'blessings' of powerful nations.[72] Yet, just as wealthy patrons might sponsor temple construction to win the favour of their chosen deity, the author clearly wishes to 'sell' this same idea to exiled Judeans. If Nehemiah 3 is a late rendering of a written record of those who contributed to the work (it may simply constitute retrospective glorification of certain individuals), then it is not difficult to understand the attraction of immortalising one's family name.

Just as Moses' and Aaron's supplication to Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1) initiates a trajectory towards the creation of a homogeneous 'Israel' which will establish itself in the Promised Land, Nehemiah's request of Artaxerxes – which the Persian king (like his literary counterpart in Exodus) understands as a temporary leave of absence (Nehemiah 2:6) – anticipates the recreation of 'Israel' in that same land; and Nehemiah's prayer in the preceding chapter (recalling the promises made to Moses) closes with the anticipation of an important motif outlined above: YHWH's intervention in the decision-making process of 'enemy' rulers (Nehemiah 1:11; cf. Ezra 7:27-28).[73] These are no passing coincidences. Instead, they are carefully constructed allusions to the 'mission' of Moses, through which the author retrospectively legitimates Nehemiah.[74] Yet there are slight differences: whereas Moses'

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[72] See further Fried, 2003: 38. Also Knowles, 2004: 57-61, highlighting the differences between the accounts.

[73] Cf. above on the 'hardening of the heart' and other parallels. Nehemiah's quick (presumably silent) prayer for success precedes his request in Neh. 2:5.

[74] It is difficult to know which of the two 'Persian period' heroes are more in line with the literary Moses – Ezra is, of course, the teacher and promulgator of the Torah (Ezra 7:6, 10; Neh. 8); while Nehemiah, a

obstacles came in the form of the Egyptian establishment, for example, Nehemiah's are in the land to which he will return.[75] What is important here is that, while the king in Exodus rejects Moses' request – albeit at the behest of YHWH – the Persian king acquiesces and is, in fact, the source of Nehemiah's authority. Imbued with this authority, the re-creation of 'Israel' in post-exilic Jerusalem is off to a good start: by inverting the outcome of the opening sequences, the expectations for the future of this 'Israel' are decidedly positive. Yet there are more telling indications of discontinuity.

The tried and tested vehicle of apostasy dominating the Primary History – the consistent focus on Bethel embedded in Exodus 32 and running through all of the memory contexts heretofore discussed – is significantly absent from Ezra-Nehemiah. It might be that their 'Israel' is seen collectively by the time of the composition of these stories as those who returned (or are still to return) from exile; and as such, only non-Israelites are a threat to this new 'Jewishness' (as opposed to Israelites who repeatedly 'lapsed' into syncretism, as in the Primary History). With both Ezra and Nehemiah closing with references to the (albeit idealised) expulsion of marriages to foreign women (this is only implied in Nehemiah 13:23-27) and the 'purification' of their new 'Israel', these narratives are primarily concerned with claiming *successful disassociation from external elements* (unlike the uncompleted conquests of Joshua's 'Israel'), and any hint of *internal strife* such as that dramatised in Exodus 32 would have been anathema to the idealisation of their 'Israel'.[76] Of course, by the time of the composition of

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great orator, prays to YHWH for strength (Neh. 6:14), and through him receives instructions (7:5) as he seeks to organise (Neh. 4:13, 16; 7:), motivate (2:17; 4:8) and defend the rights of his 'congregation' (5:6-13).

[75] It is reasonable, as above, to envisage a memory of the contemporary importance of Mizpah and Bethel as the true source of contention during the (apparently prolonged) period of reconstruction of the temple. In relation to this contention and the issue of *discontinuity* (see further, Conclusion), Ezra's mission claims success in comparison with the episode in 2 Kgs. 17:27-41 of the priest – notably returning from deportation to live in *Bethel* – who tries to homogenise the worship of YHWH in the conquered province of Samaria. If the land was emptied of Israelites and repopulated with Assyrian subjects (from various regions; 2 Kgs. 17:24), as the texts claim at this juncture, why would there be any concern with these people obeying the laws of YHWH? This story set in the Assyrian period, then, has more to do with inspiring hope for Ezra's mission than describing an historical event.

[76] I would temper Goswell's suggestion (2008: 684) that "the [...] placement of Neh 13:4-31 demonstrates the people's inability to keep" the pledge of Neh. 10; or that, as a whole, "Ezra-Nehemiah shows the failure of God's people to reform themselves". Both Ezra and Nehemiah conclude with the respective 'hero' correcting the problems; and those observed by Nehemiah occurred in his absence (Neh. 13:6) and are specifically blamed on 'foreign' elements (Neh. 13:30). The inference is that

these texts, Jerusalem had acquired the central status distinct from other sanctuaries which characterises the aspirations of the Primary History; and as such it had no reason to maintain polemic against any such sites.[77] The interdependent thread of polemics against Bethel occupying the Primary History identify it as a significant marker of Jerusalemite identity, and its relevance in the Persian period as a site *against which* embryonic 'Biblical Israel' defined itself constitutes an important mnemohistorical anchor for locating the composition of the Primary History not only during the Persian period, but before the received version of Ezra-Nehemiah within which context it has no relevance. For the writers of Ezra-Nehemiah, the rivalry between Bethel and Jerusalem – and thus the potency of this motif for its allusive connection to the migration tradition – was a thing of the past.[78] Thus, while the authors of Ezra-Nehemiah were clearly concerned with alluding to the migration tradition with regards to rooting the authority to make claims concerning identity reformulation, they were much more focused on promoting their vision of 'Israel' as a more promising one insofar as its future was concerned. Focus on suffering and oppression within an endless cycle of apostasy was the purview of the Primary History, not the writers of Ezra-Nehemiah. They were considerably more future-oriented in their aspirations, using the lessons of the past not merely to castigate their audience, but to precipitate real change. I will elaborate on the literary aspects of this process in my conclusion, but it is sufficient to note here that the fully developed migration tradition informing the ideologies of the Primary History had not only crystallised long before the received form of Ezra-Nehemiah was composed; it had become a generic vehicle for identity renegotiation the characteristic motifs of which could be appropriated selectively towards a desired outcome. The authority of this generic vehicle was so embedded in collective memories of 'coming out of Egypt' that its motifs were imbued with that same authority.

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internally, this new 'Israel' has hope for the future, once it rejects foreign influences; precisely what is emphasised in the allusions to the Primary History (cf. Neh. 13:18).

[77] While the memory context of these legendary figures might have been contemporary with ongoing contention between Jerusalem and rival sites, a late Persian (or even Hellenistic) period setting for the composition of these texts in more or less their received form would have seen rival sites diminish in significance with regard to the promotion of an 'official' authoritative history (which would likely have seen the rejection of other competing histories insofar as Second Temple Judaism was legitimated; cf. Wesselius, 2000: 18).

[78] Where Bethel is mentioned in Ezra 2:28 and Nehemiah 7:32 (noting the slight variation in the latter), it occupies a list of towns to which exiles returned; and the men of Bethel (and Ai) fall under the heading of "men of the people of Israel" (Ezra 2:2b; Nehemiah 7:7b), a telling tempering of the attitude towards Bethel.

As to the question, "Why Egypt?", one could summarise by saying that the construction of identity in Persian period Yehud, from which the ethno-religious entity 'Biblical Israel' emerged, focused on Egypt – and not Babylon – to such great extent because Egypt had long (if not always) been the counter-identity and the counter-culture through which 'Israel' defined itself. It was upon the awareness of this truth preserved in the cultural memory not only of returnees but also of 'remainees' that the Jerusalemite intelligentsia focused their attention. Recognising the need to placate and incorporate the concerns of a diverse population, the authors (or redactors) of Exodus made only minimal appeal to their experience in Babylon while at the same time imbuing a revered tradition of Israelite identity with the reality of that experience so that attention would be drawn to the timeless trauma of dislocation and disassociation from one's ancestral home. Insofar as the demonisation of Egypt in Exodus might have borne political connotations, one might envisage a general framing of the Pentateuch within the context of deference to Persia related to a sense of obligation to the empire which had facilitated the rebuilding of the temple and the recreation of 'Israel' in Judah.[79] Yet while the geopolitical climate of the day might support such a scenario, we should be careful not to overestimate the 'evidence' for Persian authorisation of Nehemiah's mission or Ezra's 'law'; or from generalised conclusions regarding Persian approaches to provincial religious practices drawn from such documents as the 'Cyrus Cylinder'.[80] The former, as I will show in my conclusion, may owe more to literary convention than historical fact (that is, the convention

[79] Cf. Greifenhagen, 2002: 246-247. Fried (2003: 39-40, 50-51) makes a convincing argument for seeing an historical kernel to the special reverence afforded Cyrus with regard to the impetus for rebuilding the temple. For Fried, it is the reference in Ezra 1:7-11, wherein Cyrus returns the "vessels of YHWH", which articulates a contemporary understanding that it was not until the likeness (29) or iconography of the deity was returned to a temple which had been destroyed that rebuilding could begin (30-33). Just as the destruction would have been interpreted as the deity having abandoned the site (cf. the vision of YHWH's journey to Babylon in Ezek. 10-11), restoration went hand in hand with the return of the deity. Cyrus may not have made an official decree instigating the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, but in his capacity as the king who returned gods to their homes, this general practice was magnified out of respect for his actions. Related to this is Fried's argument that "[t]he language of [Ezra 1:1, 2] fits the language of a building inscription" (2003: 38). Cf. Edelman, 2005: 159-162. Interestingly, the text of Ezra 6:1-5 which credits Darius I with appealing to Cyrus' decree for the resumption of the work (cf. Greifenhagen, 2002: 226) has an air of retrospective legitimation akin to Josiah's 'reform'.

[80] Cf. especially the closing comments of Kuhrt, 1983 (94-95; emphasis mine): "The assumption that [...the Persians were...] more tolerable than [...the Assyrians...] is based [...] on the limited experience of one influential group [...] which *happened to benefit* by Persian policy[.]"

appropriates an awareness of standard legal-administrative practices);[81] while the latter likely conforms to imperial propaganda regarding the pacification of subject peoples and related expectations of cultic restoration.[82]

To finish, I would like to return attention to the dichotomy in the Pentateuch regarding the dual origins in Canaan and Egypt, particularly with regards to the ideology of disassociation from all things considered representative of the archetypal 'Egypt'. In facilitating the descent into Egypt, the patriarchal traditions anchored the origins of Israel the people in Canaan, while laying the foundation for a redefined 'Israel' in terms of purgation endured in Egypt. Of course, this would have accorded with the rhetoric of Babylonian 'returnees', but I would maintain that the allegorical connection loses its significance over time (particularly as developing Judaism had by no means endured its final 'trial'), despite the reality of the 'exile' having influenced the reformulation of the migration tradition and – as I will show in my conclusion – the 'threading' of its major themes through the Primary History. This is the true potency of the concept of 'exile and return' inspired by the dramatisation of the events of the Babylonian and Persian periods in Yehud. It essentially defines not only the form but the content of the history of the

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[81] Claims of imperial authorisation of both Ezra's law and Nehemiah's mission might indicate a response to contention designed to attack the religio-political establishment in the face of (recently) established norms (cf. Frei, 2001: 22-23, on Udjahorresne [sic]). Such claims defer accountability to higher (likely inaccessible) authorities – to whom request for support might have been made by the new Jerusalemite ascendancy – who might otherwise evince no interest in local matters so long as stability was maintained (cf. Knoppers, 2001c: 129-134; also Blenkinsopp, 2011: 477-478, on the potential for instability arising from "Ezra's policy of ritual ethnicity"). For our purposes, it is also possible that by relating the "דָּת אֱלָהָּךְ" (Ezra 7:14) approved by Artaxerxes to the "תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" (Ezra 7:6), the author of Ezra 7 sought to put Moses (whose laws ostensibly came from YHWH) on a par with lawgivers respected enough in Persian eyes to earn such approval. By extension, building upon the *tradition* of Darius 'codifying' much respected Egyptian laws (which had long been perceived as deriving from the gods via Pharaoh; Redford, 2001: 140-144, and *passim* regarding the reality behind the tradition), Moses could be elevated to a position of great honour for both a local and international audience (see further Römer, 2013). More importantly, of course, this would imbue the legal-administrative system of Yehud with an authenticity on a par with ancient, sophisticated Egypt; thus necessitating reinvigoration of the migration tradition insofar as its great antiquity (and that of 'Israel') was concerned.

[82] See Fried, 2003: 36, who argues that the Cyrus Cylinder was "a foundation document for the restoration of the Esagil, the temple of Marduk in Babylon", using "language and idioms of the Babylonian priesthood". See also Mitchell, 2013: 283; Pearce, 2011: 268-269; Satlow, 2014: 55-57. Stolper (2013: 41) suggests that the form of the cylinder may intentionally resemble "its older counterparts that commemorate Neo-Assyrian kings"; while Knauf (2006: 303, and n. 59) makes it clear that we should read the cylinder in a solely Babylonian cultic context.

people 'Israel', connecting memories of perceived significance by way of a singular over-arching concept: that *political transition brings moments of crisis in which identity is questioned and reformulated*. Crisis, however, is also a time for optimism insofar as identity reconstruction is concerned; indeed, such a process requires optimism. How the Persian period 'crisis' inspired the final *major* redaction of the migration tradition (and shaped the interdependent Primary History) will be the subject of my conclusion.

CONCLUSION

On Subordinating Memory to the Historiography of Identity

> Historians of ancient Israel and Judah and their descendants still must wrestle with how they can determine what events and details included in the various narratives and poetic texts in the Hebrew Bible might relate to past reality and in what way. Social memories can be grounded in past reality but need not be; some collective memories can be created to give a group a common past and sense of shared identity. Once accepted as significant by a group and perpetuated, they become equally meaningful and important for the group with those that were experienced by the ancestors of the group and memorialized [sic] because they were deemed significant in defining those involved in the experience in some way.[1]

5.1 Introduction

I have speculated heretofore upon the motivations of the intelligentsia in Israel and Judah with regard to their repeated redefining of the past "as the historical circumstances required", a methodological context conforming in the main to the scholarly consensus on identity (re)construction.[2] Along the way, however, I have suggested that because we are dealing with the 'final' or 'received' form of texts deemed relevant for this construction, we are by extension dealing with the legitimation of *an identity contemporary with that received form*. I believe that this identity and the means by which it was legitimated were not formulated in a socio-historical vacuum with no connection to the past. The very notion that identity construction occurred implies that a previous (unifying) identity had eroded or was under threat, while the related idea that legitimation was required infers that such construction took place in contentious circumstances. That the constructed identity 'Biblical Israel' – foundational for Second Temple Judaism – flourished as it did is, to my mind, testament to its (albeit measured) *incorporation and adaptation* of contentious ideas and ideologies; and such a process would undoubtedly have required an appeal to an actual shared past, no matter how contorted and compromised that past may eventually have become. Considering the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch contains relatively minimal alterations in order to appeal to its adherents, we are left with the conclusion that at least *a core aspect* of the greater narrative composed during the Persian period – which for many scholars was relevant only to a comparative handful of

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[1] Edelman, 2013: xix

[2] Person, 2012

'returned exiles' – had a strong foothold in the collective memory of those in Samaria.[3] While the Deuteronomistic History was not relevant to an audience in post-exilic Samaria (it revered Jerusalem to the detriment of all other cultic and political sites), the story of the 'Exodus' from Egypt – overwhelming the Pentateuch as it does – must have been known in an earlier form to the people still inhabiting the territory of the former 'northern kingdom'.[4] In saying that, and because the surviving populations of the former 'northern' and 'southern' kingdoms bore collective memories of deportation, the Pentateuch appealed to both audiences in terms of how they understood their ancestral pasts and how they would orchestrate their future orientation. Of course, I am concerned in this thesis with the ethno-religious identity 'Israel' – or 'Biblical Israel' – as it was legitimated by *the appropriation of and reflections upon the Primary History* (as attested in Ezra-Nehemiah; especially Nehemiah 9:6-37; see below), and so focus must return to the intelligentsia of Jerusalem and their application of the collective memories – pervading the Primary History – of coming out of Egypt. In the pages to follow, I will focus on a single literary motif favoured by the scribal establishment whose task it was to articulate the 'official' history of this Jerusalemite 'Israel'. I have made passing reference throughout this thesis to the memories in the Bible of transitions in political power, but here below I will make it clear why I have focused so much attention on it with regard to the *construction of continuity* in the Primary History as *facilitated by the received form of the migration tradition*.

5.2 The Transition in Power – The Consistency of Discontinuity

> Much of the Bible is concerned with establishing links to the past, and we are left to work out how far these links are organic and how much they reflect the fresh effort of writers to address moments of crisis and transition.[5]

As discussed in 3.4, above, it has long been noted that the writers of the Deuteronomistic History were primarily concerned with explaining the destructions of Samaria and Jerusalem in terms of the religious infidelity of the kings of Israel and Judah; yet the Primary History is

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[3] Cf. Edelman et al., 2012: 7 (see also 85-88).

[4] Wesselius (2000: 6, n. 11) suggests that while "Jerusalem Judaism in the Persian and Greek world" gained a particular status "from the possession of [...the...] Primary History", the Samaritans "wanted to emulate this [status] by accepting the part [that is, the Pentateuch] where the stress on the southern traditions is implicit only or could be modified with small changes in the text".

[5] Fleming, 2012: 306

framed by stories of expulsion from YHWH's land – the first of the ultimate ancestors of mankind from mythical Eden, the last of the aristocracy of Jerusalem (a literary arrangement likely designed to affirm ideological correlation between the two). With the cumulative reflections on the Samarian and Jerusalem deportations, expulsion came to be seen as "formative for Jewish identity";[6] and as such the motif of expulsion is an important key to appreciating the connections between the memories of Samaria and Jerusalem as they provide the inspiration for two major episodes in the Pentateuch facilitating the creation of a homogeneous Israel: i) going down to Egypt (the Joseph story); and ii) coming up out of Egypt (Exodus). Transitions are everything in this process of reflection, functioning as *literary-ideological palimpsests* facilitating the creation of something *selectively related* to that which came before. The past remains relevant, but it must also be shown that a turn of events has occurred sufficiently significant to alter the course of history. The following two lines – the first Exodus 1:6, the second Exodus 1:8 – arguably constitute the most significant transition in the Pentateuch:

> Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. [...] A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph.

We are not told immediately that this transition incorporates four centuries of the 'Sons of Israel' living in Egypt, but in disconnecting from Joseph's generation and in emphasising that the king of Egypt in this new story was unaware of favour shown to Joseph by any earlier Pharaoh, the stage is set for the sequence of events which leads to the creation of something far removed from the starving, pitiful family who came down to eat the scraps from Pharaoh's table. Exodus 1:7 markedly accentuates the difference between what came into Egypt, and what will eventually leave:

> But the Sons of Israel were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

This is no longer a people to be dominated and humiliated; it is now a nation awaiting its moment of renewal and restoration, an outcome necessitating purgation (see further below). The length of the transition between Joseph's death and the new king is irrelevant, but the emphasis on political transition marks it as ideologically significant in that it facilitates immense socio-political change. This new king who did not know Joseph initiates a program of

[6] Halvorson-Taylor, 2011: 200

oppressive labour, forcing his Hebrew slave population to build cities for him, and his attempts to cull this population – a rather illogical move justified by his words in Exodus 1:9 – result in the adoption into his own family of the Hebrew child who will eventually come to free the labour force. The creation of a homogeneous 'Israel' resulting from the liberation from Egypt, however, is precipitated not by this first Pharaoh (who dies in Exodus 2:23), but by his successor, the Pharaoh who increases the burden upon the Hebrews (Exodus 5:7-9); and upon whom the judgement of YHWH is made manifest through the plagues. It is clear that this transition in power is the most significant, and it was noted in 3.2, above, that the distinction between Solomon and Rehoboam in their dealings with the 'House of Joseph' incorporates this same motif of increasing hardship to the point that Jeroboam leads a rebellion precipitating the creation of Israel. In fact, this resounding motif, applied either overtly or discreetly (and eventually inverted, as I will show below), informs and connects all of the memory contexts dealt with to this point: i) the inception of the kingdom of Israel; ii) the annexation of Israel and its reduction to an Assyrian province; iii) the failed 'reformation' of Josiah in his bid to create a Judean 'Israel'; and iv) the deportation of Judeans and the subsequent reformulation of 'Israel'. In the first three instances, this motif permeates the Deuteronomistic History (the Nebuchadnezzar-Cyrus transition is not part of the narrative); but with its application in Exodus, it also becomes the predominant literary-ideological connection between that work and the Pentateuch, contributing to arguments for their interdependency within a composite work – the Primary History.

Of course, the Pentateuch appears distinct from the Deuteronomistic History in its form and content, an observation which has led scholars over the past two centuries to apply distinct methodologies in their approach to these collections of writings. As a coherent narrative, the Pentateuch maintains a perpetual detachment from the chronological realities to which human experience is inevitably subject, while the Deuteronomistic History is subordinated to concepts of chronology more palatable to modern sensibilities. These concepts reduce history to the rise and fall of powerful figures, with everything and everyone else attached only incidentally. The leaders and kings of the Deuteronomistic History, then, should not be seen as historical in the modern sense. While this does not require that they did not exist, it means instead that their personalities and actions – and even the lengths of their reigns – were determined in the history by the roles assigned to them as literary devices. The same applies to the motif of the 'Second Pharaoh', and it is not about whether one or the other ruler is interpreted as 'good' or 'bad' (in Exodus both kings are 'bad'); instead it is about placing the second ruler in a position whereby his actions facilitate i) the movement of 'subject' peoples; ii) the coalescence of these moved peoples in terms of their ethnic self-identification; and, by extension iii) the creation of a 'new' identity. In short, the understanding of political transition in the memory of Israelite

historiographers is that it both produces instability and presents opportunity with regards to ethnic identity.

The 'Second Pharaoh' of Exodus; Rehoboam; Sargon II; and Necho II fulfil this role, but not all of them are overtly commemorated as doing so. Instead, the times in which they were active resonate, accurately or not, *as significant periods of transition* in relation to the reformulation of the identity of 'Biblical Israel', and through the validating lens of the Nebuchadnezzar-Cyrus transition (which has itself been 'condensed' to exclude interim kings and polarise the two deemed most significant[7]), the compilers of the Primary History imbued the past with a renewed relevance of this repeating motif, recalling or perceiving significant historical contexts as periods in which the idealised identity 'Israel' was threatened; periods which for us as historians rise from the mnemohistorical depths to present us each time with the transition between two foreign rulers.[8] The case with Sargon is confounded, of course, by his relative absence in the biblical text (he is mentioned only in passing in Isaiah 20:1); while that of Necho reduces the Egyptian king to a literary device only as the story of Josiah comes to a close.[9] Whereas Sargon's role in overseeing the reduction of the vanquished Israel to an Assyrian province has been 'forgotten' by the writers (see n. 12, below); and *the ideological proximity* of Necho's Egypt with regard to the political propaganda of Josiah's program of ethnic renegotiation has been obscured by the twisted relevance afforded him by the later

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[7] I have previously mentioned the 'forgetting' in Jewish memory of Babylonian kings following Nebuchadnezzar II. Of particular interest is how and why Nabonidus, the eventual (stable) successor (cf. Van De Mieroop, 2007: 277-278), faded from history. On how Nabonidus had "exhausted his interest for the Jews", possibly amidst the ideological conflict between pro-Babylonian and pro-Persian factions in Babylon post-539 BCE, see especially Newsom, 2013. While Stökl (2013: 258) observes that "Nebuchadnezzar becomes a code-name for [...] a destructive king", he also argues for an ambidextrous approach to the Babylonian king in that he is also presented in the Bible as "the repentant sinner". Of course, as noted in the previous chapter, this is testament to the reconstruction of the image of Nebuchadnezzar in relation to understanding the Babylonian conquest as the will of YHWH (cf. Satlow, 2014: 54). As Stökl says of the writers of Dan. 4 (268), "without Nebuchadnezzar, YHWH's plan could not have worked".

[8] While my focus here is primarily on the Primary History, the perception of a crisis of identity – either in socio-religious or ethnic terms – pervades the prophetic texts (see 3.3, above) to the extent that they were ideologically aligned with said history, particularly as the characters therein are seen to apply the migration tradition to castigate their (implied) audience.

[9] This view of the use of Necho II in 2 Kings 23:29 does not negate the historicity of some kind of interaction between Josiah and the Egyptian king (whether at Megiddo or elsewhere), and I see no reason to doubt the account which follows of Necho's intervention in Judean political and economic affairs.

Yahwist rendering of what actually occurred in Judah at the time, their mnemohistorical significance becomes clear when we postulate latent memories of political transition brought to life by the literary motif of the 'Second Pharaoh' (ironically, Necho facilitates the transition in power in Judah which 'reverses' the good work of Josiah).[10]

There are memories in the Bible of what really occurred in each of the historical contexts dealt with in this thesis; distorted, as we have seen, but memories nonetheless. By latching on to the ideological potency and historical proximity of the Nebuchadnezzar-Cyrus transition and projecting it back through time, the Primary History preserved the significance of historical *and traditional* figures to such an extent that they not only *magnified and re-contemporised* the historical contexts to which they *might have belonged*;[11] they redefined those contexts *and their 'historical' actors* based upon that same ideological potency. 'Israel' in the Primary History can be seen as having been 'created' again and again, surviving against great odds each time: i) in an ancient primordial Egypt in which slaves were led to safety to find their ancestral home; ii) in the forgotten foundation of a kingdom in which oppressed labourers rose up against their masters; iii) in the wake of destruction and deportation brought about by the depravities of social imbalance and religious infidelity (conspicuously connected with a king of the same name as the preceding context); and iv) in the centralisation of political and cultic administration foundational for claims of ethno-religious solidarity (with all four memory contexts connected by the pervasive threat of a 'rival' sanctuary). It is within the context of these claims of *normative solidarity* that the ideologies fundamental to the next great renegotiation of 'Israelite' identity (the foundation of 'Biblical Israel') were articulated; but for this to occur, the motif of political transition prevalent in the Primary History needed some adjustment.

In this regard, focus shifts to Nehemiah 9:6-37, in which the Primary History is recounted; and Nehemiah 10, in which the people pledge to end the cycle of suffering wrought upon their idolatrous ancestors. I believe that these chapters constitute the crux of the creation of 'Biblical Israel', in that it is characterised by claims of *discontinuity* of behaviour seen as the antithesis of ancient laws, the normative nature of which is legitimated through claims of *continuity* with a

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[10] Significantly, they frame the seventh century program later cast as a Yahwistic 'golden age': Sargon's actions precipitate the movement of Israelites into Judah, while the influence of Necho's Saite Egypt (provoking a resurgence of the migration tradition) lends ideological credence to the ethnic consolidation of a Judean 'Israel'. This is a time when the historical 'Israel' envisaged by the biblical writers is *presented as having come close* to their much later ideal. Who better to blame for its demise than an Egyptian king who stormed in to take up the fallen reigns of the Assyrians and stopped the 'Saviour King' of Judah in his tracks?

[11] The jury is still out on Jeroboam I, while claims to have identified the anonymous Pharaohs of Exodus are no longer taken seriously.

history in which those laws were formulated. While the text itself need not be considered contemporary with the Persian period 'crisis' of identity, I believe that there are memories here of religiously-articulated vows taken by a renewed congregation aspiring to leave the (demonised) past behind them. These people are 'Israel', but they will no longer be the 'Israel' which suffered deportation and exile; and to ensure that, they need to break the cycle attested in the Primary History. Therein, the motif of political transition always resulted in the worsening of the situation: the Pharaoh of Exodus increased the burden (Exodus 5:6-9); Rehoboam promised to replace the whip with scorpions (1 Kings 12:14); Sargon's annexation of Israel resulted in the deportation of its people (2 Kings 17:6; 18:10);[12] Necho's assumption of control over the Assyrian province of 'Beyond the River' saw the death of Josiah and initiated a trajectory towards the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:29ff.). Only when we come to Ezra-Nehemiah and the last great transition in power overtly recorded in the Bible – the demise of Babylon and the rise of Persia (Ezra 1:1) – does the reverse occur: a fortunate outcome for 'Israel'. This *inversion* of the usual consequences of political transition so prevalent throughout the Primary History accentuates an ideological climax to the history of 'Israel' designed to imply re-formation brought about not only by continuity (which is, of course, important for legitimation), but more importantly by *discontinuity*; and with the ill-fated chain of causality seen to be broken in Ezra-Nehemiah, the past can be seen as something which *will not repeat itself* in a carefully constructed pattern of YHWH's control over the historical trajectory of his people. Where Pharaoh's heart was 'hardened' by YHWH so that the climactic 'Exodus' was

[12] Of course, this is not recounted in the biblical text (neither is the historical transition between Shalmaneser V and Sargon II), but decades of scholarship on the survival of 'northern' traditions and its incorporation into Judahite collective memory have, I believe, convincingly shown that the use of the eponym 'Israel' by Judeans (or Yehudites) in Persian period Yehud (and arguably during Josiah's 'reformation'; cf. 3.4, above) attests to a history of the incorporation of people from the vanquished northern kingdom. A section of the Assyrian inscriptions (*ANET* 284-87) describing Sargon II's activity in the region (the 'Display Inscriptions', lines 23-26) suggests that, following his deportation of 27,290 inhabitants of Samaria and forming "from among *them* a contingent of chariots", he "made *remaining* [inhabitants] assume their [social] positions" (from Pritchard, 2011: 266; emphasis mine). Whether or not the "remaining [inhabitants]" refers to (Israelite) people left in Samaria or those remaining from amongst the deportees after forming the contingent of chariots is not entirely clear, but I find it difficult to believe that every single inhabitant was removed and replaced with Assyrian citizens. The biblical claim that this was the case (2 Kgs. 17:6, 24; 18:10) is concerned with its version of an ostensibly *Judean* 'Israel' asserting discontinuity with the people of these lands.

delayed (Exodus 4:21ff.);[13] where YHWH caused Rehoboam to ignore the protests of his labour force (1 Kings 12:15);[14] where Assyria had been sent to punish Israel in a conquest long planned by YHWH (2 Kings 19:25; cf. Isaiah 10:5); and where YHWH's refusal to forgive the people despite Josiah's reform saw that king killed by Necho (2 Kings 23:26-29) and the country eventually devastated, this pattern of endless punishment for ancient sins is perceived as concluded with the accession of Cyrus. This idealisation of the implications of Cyrus' accession – whether politically motivated or not – inspired the reflections on political transition in the Primary History in terms which saw all those rulers who had gone before as initiating crises of identity (to which chronologically appropriate memories of prophets and legendary figures were attached); but that idealised picture of Cyrus was not narrativised until later (at least, insofar as we can deduce from the canonical texts). Just as the experience in Egypt came to be seen as the polar opposite to that of a renewed Jerusalem in the Persian period, the Pharaoh of the 'Exodus' came to be seen as the antithesis of the *literary* Cyrus.[15]

The writers of Ezra-Nehemiah, then, in seeking to articulate an ideological disconnection from the themes of the Primary History, inverted the motif of transition not to merely imply that deference to imperial power need not bring about the loss of ethnic identity (hence pandering to imperial overseers may have played a part); but to emphasise that in order to create a new beginning, a disassociation with the past was absolutely imperative. By appropriating particular motifs of the Primary History, Israel's past could be presented as having come full circle; and with motifs prevalent to that history anchored in the migration tradition, those appropriating that tradition became the masters of an ideology significant to

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[13] Interestingly, the story in Gen. 20 of Abimelech of Gerar – whose actions have been contrasted with those of the anonymous Pharaoh in Exodus – has YHWH both accusing Abimelech of 'taking' Sarah (Gen. 20:3) while 'admitting' to have kept Abimelech from doing any such thing (Gen. 20:6). Hagedorn (2011: 46-47) observes this 'universalistic' aspect of YHWH, in that he is "equally the God of Abimelech and [...] the God of the whole world"; the implication being that unfolding history is the purview of YHWH.

[14] This intrusive explanation appears to override the reasons given in 1 Kgs. 12:8-11.

[15] In this regard, Cyrus might best be understood as the personification of the Persian Empire. After all, the motif of supplication connecting the request of Moses and Aaron brought to Pharaoh to that of Nehemiah brought to Artaxerxes (cf. also the correlation between Moses and Pharaoh and Ahaziah's three delegations to Elijah in 2 Kgs. 9-16; see Loewenstamm, 1992: 121-122) is inverted in the latter narrative (see 4.2, above). Smith-Christopher (2002: 38ff.) relates such narratives to a general "culture of permission" in the Ancient Near East, and argues that it evinces a contempt for the reality of subordination and officialdom where the biblical type-scenes of standing before or communicating with the 'great king' (found also in Joseph, Daniel, and Esther) are designed to invert that reality. For an analysis of ancient historiographical presentations of Cyrus, see especially, Vanderhooft, 2006.

more people in Yehud and Samaria than just these 'returnees'.[16] This emphasis on the prevailing themes of the Primary History not only marks a break from a traditional history which must have existed in more or less its received form *when Ezra-Nehemiah was composed*;[17] it also suggests the established potency of the themes of the Primary History with regard to identity negotiation. Thus, memories of the Persian period creation of 'Biblical Israel' interpolated into Ezra-Nehemiah and later associated with those eponymous legends were preserved by way of the select motifs of the Primary History – the work which actually facilitated the inception of that ethno-religious identity – while at the same time articulating an inversion of their consequences. In a sense, the pervasion of the Primary History by these motifs constitutes a 'levelling out' of the chronological horizon for composition; while the concerted *inversion of the consequences* of those motifs in Ezra-Nehemiah presupposes that composition insofar as the *ideology of discontinuity* is concerned. It is not that everything in Ezra-Nehemiah is later than the Primary History – in fact, I think some aspects of it are contemporary with its production – but rather the received form looks back upon the Primary History as reflecting an era necessitating rejection and disassociation. Ironically, this is precisely what is occurring in Exodus regarding the creation of Israel as the antithesis of Egypt.

What we learn by looking at how the writers of Ezra-Nehemiah used the motifs of the Primary History is that they were concerned with appealing to it as the foundation upon which they would legitimate the creation (or continuation) of their new 'Israel'; and that by their recognition of the significance of the migration tradition as it was long associated with legitimating identity re-negotiation (as I have argued throughout), they ensured its codification as the fundamental marker of the identity of 'Biblical Israel'. It is by recognising this reverence of the tradition that we can confidently locate its composition in the Persian period, during a time in which the identity of 'Biblical Israel' was first conceived.

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[16] On the retrospective legitimation of the "Ezra group", see Becking, 2006.

[17] Cf. Wesselius, 2000: 7. In fact, Wesselius argues for a date for composition of the Primary History (between 440 and 420 BCE; *idem*: 6) which accords well with the mid-fifth century date assumed of both Ezra's and Nehemiah's presence in Yehud (see 4.2, above).

5.3 A Biblical Mnemohistory of the 'Exodus'

> The memory of the Exodus is not just a memory of historical events, but a conflation of history and memory that suits the conditions of different qualities of time. To view the Exodus with an eye to only one of these – whether to historical events, social functions, or enduring themes – is to misjudge the complexity and multiplicity of the whole. The mnemohistory of the Exodus is a story of various pasts as they converge in the intersecting times of ancient lives, a particular people, and humanity writ large.[18]

The application of 'mnemohistory' to the study of the Hebrew Bible is certainly not for me a desperate grab for the potential historicity of any biblical narrative (I began my studies with a determined scepticism which might otherwise have found solace with the 'minimalists'); nor do I think it constitutes a concession from the perspective of those who would relegate all such narratives to as late an era as possible. Niels Peter Lemche, for example, in making a strong case for seeing the 'Old Testament' as an "invented history"; and "ancient Israel" as a "monstrous creature [...] sprung out of the fantasy of [...] historical-critical scholars of the last two hundred years", nevertheless appeals to archaeological evidence from the Ancient Near East *which correlates with names and events* from the biblical texts.[19] This dependence upon the Bible *even to reject its historicity* is testament to the preservation of facts remembered by its authors centuries after events and people significant to their story occurred and lived. Certainly, 'memory' in this sense can be invented, but biblical narratives preserving historical detail through which we might posit the origin of such memories (by way of the correlation used by 'minimalists' to highlight inconsistencies or discrepancies) have been shaped by ideologies contemporary with the worldview of their authors. Of course, the Hebrew Bible "has totally distorted our view of ancient Palestinian history";[20] but is that not the purview of any historian concerned with legitimating his or her worldview in a world where there are others?

The details correlating with extra-biblical evidence tell us not only that specific periods, events and people based in historical fact resonated in the collective memories of developing 'Israel' (thus continuing to hold the people in thrall); but also that the historical contexts in which the narratives were retold or reworked were understood through an appeal to memories preserving circumstances relevant to contemporary events. Exodus is a fictional work, but its repeated relevance to circumstances contemporary with its retelling highlights, in my opinion,

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[18] Hendel, 2005: 72-73

[19] Lemche, 2000: 14

[20] Lemche, 2000: 12

a fundamental truth of its original subject matter as a tradition of migration or retreat from an oppressive regime. In its received incarnation, it has merged numerous retellings of an ancient – and likely simplistic – tale of coming out of Egypt, which may or may not have been experienced by people *who thought themselves 'Israelite'* at the time the original story was told. Indeed, the original story may not even have been based on *a physical journey out of Egypt*; rather, in mythical terms, it may envisage *a cultural retreat* from all things related to an archetypal 'Egypt'.[21] This thesis is based upon an understanding that the evolution of this story (heretofore explored through an analysis of 'memory contexts' obscured by the repeated reimagining of the past), which developed into a tradition of a great 'coming out' of Egypt – and which in turn became a culturally encoded 'memory' of migration and a foundation myth with myriad applications for socio-cultural distinction – crystallised in *a work of literary symbiosis defined by a set of motifs* applied to reflect upon the entire history of 'Israel'. This reflection, articulated under the auspices of the elite of Persian period Jerusalem, was provoked by the *multiple returns* of Judeans generations after the destruction of that city who needed to ingratiate themselves to the greater population for whom 'exile' was merely a word.

The construction of a homogeneous identity in Persian period Yehud was evidently a literary enterprise, and its creators would have recognised the importance of telling engaging stories imbued with mnemonic and didactic elements.[22] The authenticity and promulgation of engaging stories, however, required adherence to tried and tested conventions of storytelling; and the application of established, respected and *popular* literary motifs – sometimes overtly adhered to, at other times discreetly inverted – meant that a flexible arsenal of artistic material could be used to imbue the most ideologically or theologically complex concepts with a simplicity necessary for instruction and education ensuring longevity and resilience against both internal and external cultural changes. In short, literary motifs, with their underlying generic characteristics, were fundamental to protecting the timelessness of these stories. Throughout this thesis, I have toyed with almost nautical metaphors in my articulation of how memory shapes the production of history. There have been 'mnemohistorical waters', 'islands' and 'anchors' – even the 'perfect storm' – but perhaps a different metaphor will better illustrate how I understand the vital contribution of the literary motifs utilised by the biblical

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[21] While this might appear to echo Mendenhall's 'Peasant Revolt' hypothesis, any idealised memories of the rejection of 'Canaanite' urbanisation might have been no more than an elaborate romanticising of a 'retreat' undertaken by a minimal group of disillusioned highland settlers. Notably, any reflection on such an undertaking later cast as an escape from Egypt would require an Egyptian-themed foundation brought about by memories of interaction with Egypt, at the very least in general terms.

[22] Cf. Mullen, 1997: 165.

writers in their quest to construct ideological unity and chronological continuity; particularly as I envisage an evocation of past events facilitated by motifs *related to* the historical event in relative chronological proximity to the production of these texts.

Imagine, if you will, a great hole in the ground through which we might peer into the past. Naturally, the past is dark and seemingly inaccessible (it no longer exists), but there are glimmers of light in the depths of this pit, their incandescence maintained by collective memories of significant events. These events have survived the onslaught of time, but without the correct tools to recall them, they occupy the past in disconnection to everything that has occurred since. They are what Freud called latent memories, waiting to become what Nietzsche called 'islands' of memory. What is needed is a mechanism of *re*-call (with purposeful emphasis) to haul them up from the depths, something which will attract them all to whatever line might be thrown down. I propose not just that the biblical reverence afforded Cyrus II of Persia was built upon an appreciation that his conquest of Babylon facilitated the recreation of 'Israel' in contemporary Yehud (which is not in itself a new reading of events);[23] but that a concerted reflection on this fundamental 'eureka' moment in the history of 'Biblical Israel' was this 'mechanism' used to pierce the darkness of the past and shape the reconstruction of 'Israelite' history.[24] Where the return from Babylon of those who would go on to restructure the society within which context Judaism was founded evoked reflection upon the history of the people, the transition in power from Babylonia to Persia was the catalyst for applying the motif of transition to plumb the depths of collective memory so that the creation of this new 'Israel' could be aligned ideologically with the repeated survival of an ancient people called Israel in the face of threats to or questions regarding its identity.

The idea that the received story of the 'Exodus' from Egypt was born from contemporary reflections on the return from Babylon is also not by itself new;[25] but the idea that some of the

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[23] Cf., for example, Middlemas, 2009: 175: "It is only following Deutero-Isaiah's depiction of Cyrus as the earthly redeemer [...] of the people in exile that the Persian king takes on a greater role in the historical portrait of ancient Israel." The importance of Cyrus' decree to the Chronicler, in that he closes his work with reference to it (2 Chron. 36:22-23; as opposed to the Primary History closing with Jehoiachin's release from prison [2 Kgs. 25:27]), implies to my mind its crystallisation *before the Hellenistic period* as a central facilitator of Israel's re-establishment in the Persian period. See also Japhet, 2003: 82: "Cyrus constitutes a new beginning [...], historically and theologically."

[24] Of course, the written articulation of this reflection was imbued with legitimacy through claims to Cyrus' (and later Persian kings') patronage of the restoration of Jerusalem; even if the reality might have been somewhat less grandiose and rather incidental.

[25] Cf. Ben Zvi, 2013: 28-29. Also Halvorson-Taylor, 2011: 199: "[T]he construction of the Pentateuch [...] reflects a deliberate decision to mark the end of the narrative with Moses and Israel perched on the edge

major motifs of Exodus were 'threaded' back through the joint history of Israel and Judah to contemporise stories and traditions through which it became magnified as the foundation myth *par excellence* introduces greater specificity to the deconstruction of its historicity. As I argued in Chapter 4, it is insufficient for the rejection of the historicity of Exodus to simply identify correlations with the accounts of the returns from Babylon (in Ezra-Nehemiah), particularly when those accounts are more likely dependent upon the veracity (or at the very least, the potency) of the migration tradition – which they appropriate to their own end – perceived at the time of their composition. In approaching the Primary History, to which the writers of Ezra-Nehemiah also paid necessary homage for the legitimacy of their ideals, presuppositions as to the direction of dependence of stories featuring and borne by the ideological weight of the migration tradition regularly dominate arguments as to which account came first. As I have shown in Chapter 3, details, themes and motifs of the migration tradition *that we know as Exodus* pervade these stories, but we cannot presume the crystallisation of these correlations *in any of these stories* earlier than the period within which reflections on the nature of 'Biblical Israel' were articulated.[26] With this particular 'Israel' anchored geographically and ideologically in Jerusalem (and, by extension, Judah), the 'Jerusalemite lens' of these stories should be understood as the tool used by the scribal elite of Persian period Jerusalem (at the earliest) in constructing *the thematic and ideological symbiosis* connecting the major narratives pertaining to *the repeated reformulation of Israelite identity* with which I have dealt in this thesis. In this sense, it serves us better to consider the impact of the historical events informing the last major retelling of the migration tradition as a prerequisite for the construction of the interdependence of all of the major narrative sequences in the Primary History.[27] This does not reject the pre-existence of older traditions preserved therein (neither does it automatically negate the potential primacy of origin of any motif characteristic of a particular tradition), but rather it recognises them as constituent elements of a coherent work subordinated to the literary-ideological concerns of authors with a singular purpose. As such, it is not that Exodus alone is the end result of that purpose and I am inverting the historical

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of the Jordan; this decision [...] expresses the returned exiles' sense of the paradigmatic nature of their recent exilic experience."

[26] For Davies, Philip R. (2005a), this negotiation of identity, although subordinating Benjaminite (Israelite) traditions to Judean (and Jerusalem-centred) ones, is the historical context wherein the ethno-religious identity 'Israel' is recreated and its history reconstructed through a Judean lens. Cf. especially Fleming, 2012.

[27] Or 'First History', as per Davies, Philip R., 2008: 47ff.

primacy of all other narratives appearing to presuppose it; instead, all of those narratives connected by repeating motifs are *as a whole* the end result of that authorial purpose.[28]

If the Primary History is seen as a work characterised by these motifs, there is an inherent 'danger' of the loss of veracity for all the major narratives therein. Yet while the repeated use of these motifs suggests homogeneity of ideology and a singular literary purpose, the reality of the extra-biblical correlates I have discussed throughout this thesis attests to the survival of *earlier reflections* on the original historical contexts to which these motifs allude. Certainly, those reflections have been distorted over time, but not to the extent that some of the most pertinent historical data has been lost. It is this data which preserves the original context and, from a literary-ideological point of view, anchors much later reflections on those contexts to their ancient settings so as to imbue them with greater credibility for an audience rarely given credit by modern historians as being able to recall major contexts of historical transition.

With a reconsideration of what the word 'history' might mean as we apply it to the Bible, and an understanding – as discussed in Chapter 1 – that historiography concerns itself as much (if not more) with the present as with the past, it is not difficult to see how the 'Exodus' from Egypt came to be seen as analogous with the 'return' from Babylon. I argued in Chapter 4, however, that the consequence of a ready acceptance of Exodus as a purposeful allegory concerned solely with theologising and magnifying the experience in Babylon and the 'pilgrimage' to Jerusalem deprives that tradition of an earlier existence, and of earlier layers of significance (as well as *overestimating the relevance of 'exile'* to a population continuing to occupy Judah) to the extent that the relative antiquity of every tradition and text associated with Exodus by analogy, allusion or presupposition is thrown into doubt (as shown in both Chapters 2 and 3). While Exodus may have been composed in the form we have it to legitimise socio-religious and socio-political norms and theological concepts developed in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersal of its (First Temple Period) intelligentsia, this does not require that it was invented wholesale *with no foundation in tradition* during or after the Babylonian deportation. In fact, legitimation of such norms and concepts would be afforded

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[28] I would like to clarify that while the motif of political transition upon which I have particularly focused is a significant element of the Egyptian *Tale of Sinuhe* – a story containing parallels found in a number of biblical stories (as discussed in Chapter 1) – this by no means moves the composition of Exodus (or the Joseph story) back to the time of the composition of *Sinuhe*; nor does it mean that the motif of political transition prevalent in the Primary History (and opening Ezra-Nehemiah) is entirely dependent upon its generic impact. Instead, with an awareness of the historical effects of political transition (as well as recognising the longevity of popular tales such as *Sinuhe*), what it tells us is that writers of the Ancient Near East recognised that with such transition arose the potential for a crisis of identity, and a platform for its reformulation.

considerably greater weight by interpolating them into a pre-existing framework of cultural normalcy;[29] and I have argued throughout this thesis that it was through association with and appeal to this ancient migration tradition that i) crises of identity were addressed (no matter how subjective such crises may have been); and ii) political and socio-religious changes were legitimated. What occurred in the wake of the Babylonian deportations and the subsequent returns to Jerusalem with regard to the migration tradition was a purposeful reinvigoration of an established tradition long afforded a platform of authority *into which could be interjected* claims of legitimacy. As I have intimated throughout and as I trust I have made clear above, this reinvigoration of the tradition *which became Exodus* not only inspired a retelling of *important moments of political transition and identity reformulation* to produce a collection of narratives (and prophetic traditions; as I argued in 3.3) appearing to presuppose *that story as we have it*; it also *determined their form and content, providing the criteria* for determining which traditional and historical figures and events would eventually find their way into (and be legitimated by) the Primary History. The clues to this complex interdependency are scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible, and they can be identified through the resounding clarity of the favouring of specific literary motifs resonating in cultural memory even to this day. The story of the 'Exodus' from Egypt, that grand narrative which *codified and crystallised* the identity of post-exilic 'Israel', legitimated the ideological foundation upon which the Primary History was constructed, a history indebted to the *symbiotic relationship* between the development of Israelite identity and the evolution of the tradition of migration from Egypt.

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[29] Cf. the closing thoughts of Fleming (2012: 321-322) on the distinction between 'invented' and 'genuine' tradition: "[I]f it is 'invented', cut off from any strand of social experience that would connect it to earlier times, the tradition will have little to say about any time before the moment of its creation. There is, however, a world of 'genuine' tradition [and] such genuine tradition offers a way back into the past, the possibility of connection to habits and ideas that are the shared property of some community across time".

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