

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

(RE)-CONSTRUCTING JUDEANNESS:  
HOMELAND, DIASPORA, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF JUDEAN IDENTITY IN THE  
6<sup>TH</sup> AND 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES BCE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED  
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY  
MARSHALL ALLEN CUNNINGHAM

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2020

## DEDICATION

To Emily and Gus:

אל אשר תלכו אלך

ובאשר תלינו אלין

עמכם עמי

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables	iv
Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgments	viii
Abstract	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction: Jews, Judeans, and the Legacy of the Exilic Rupture Model	1
Chapter 2: Defining “Judeanness”	37
Chapter 3: Elephantine and Judeans in Egypt	93
Chapter 4: Judeo-Babylonians	221
Chapter 5: Judea	353
Chapter 6: Conclusions	472
Bibliography	492

## TABLES

1. John W. Berry's Model of Cultural Responses to Immigration	78
2. Commodity Count from the Reign of Cambyses – Xerxes I	262

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 Vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983
BE	<i>The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania</i> (Philadelphia 1893 ff.)
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
CAL	<i>The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon</i> . Edited by Stephen A. Kaufman, et al. ( <a href="http://cal.huc.edu">http://cal.huc.edu</a> )
Camb	J. N. Strassmaier, <i>Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon</i> (= BT 8–9, 1890)
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative ( <a href="http://cdli.ucla.edu">http://cdli.ucla.edu</a> )
<i>COS</i>	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
DJBA	<i>A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods</i> . Michael Sokoloff. Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash, and Targum 3; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
<i>DNWSI</i>	<i>Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions</i> . Jacob Hoftijzer and Karen Jongeling. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E.J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
Joüon	Joüon, Paul. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
TAD	<i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Egypt</i> . Edited by Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. 4 vols. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986–1999
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
ThWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970–
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997

<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980
TMH	Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection. Jena, (Leipzig 1932–1934)
UCP	University of California Publications in Semitic Philology (Berkeley 1907 ff.)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Just like so much of the biblical literature I have analyzed in this project, no dissertation is the work of any one person on his/her/their own. It is therefore an honor to acknowledge the many people and institutions who have made this project possible.

I would like to thank The Martin Marty Center, the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, the Fuerstenberg Foundation, and the University of Chicago Divinity School for the fellowships that supported the writing of this dissertation.

Even before I began my doctoral studies at University of Chicago, I had the opportunity to work with a number of exceptional scholars who exerted significant influence on the trajectory of my studies. This includes the Hebrew Bible faculty at the Yale Divinity School — Professors Joel Baden, John Collins, Caroline Sharp, and Robert Wilson. I am also thankful for Professor Baruch Schwartz who gave me an opportunity at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem when nobody else would, and for Elnathan Weissert who introduced me to the joys of Akkadian while I was there.

The friendships that carried me through the years at Yale and Hebrew U have remained a significant part of my intellectual and personal life. Thank you to John Tracy Thames, Joshua Clark, Jason Price, and The Fish Friends — Olivia Stewart Lester and Kim Bauser McBrien.

I would like to those who have participated in discussions or offered responses to the portions of this project I have presented over the years. I would especially like to thank my

cohort of The Martin Marty Junior Fellows and our workshop leader, Prof. Ryan Coyne. I would also like to thank the coordinators and members of University of Chicago's Hebrew Bible Workshop and the participants and respondents of the Society of Biblical Literature's Formation of the Book of Isaiah and Assyriology and the Bible groups.

During my time at the Divinity School I had the opportunity to work alongside a number of excellent colleagues, whose intellect and energy enriched and expanded my approach to our shared objects of study. I want to thank in particular Sun Bok Bae; Jessie DeGrado; and Liane Feldman, my co-conspirator in the colloquium where I first conceived of this project. A special thank you to Kelli Gardner, my partner in languages, libraries, and (much-needed) libations. It's a privilege to call you both a colleague and a friend.

In addition to my colleagues in the Divinity School, a special thanks goes to those fine citizens of the Oriental Institute — Andy Wilent, Oren Seigel, and Joey Cross (TWK!) — whose knowledge of the doors, walls, and very small novels of the ancient world is rivaled only by their appreciation of cheap beer, all-you-can-eat buffets, and discussions about baseball held at exceedingly high volumes. I never would have survived this without you.

I am thankful for the support of my family — my mother, Lynne Wilhite, my stepfather, Dr. Ralph Wilhite, and my sister, Dr. Sarah Cunningham — who never disowned me in spite of what must have seemed like a baffling project and profession. Thank you for pizzas in the mail, lunches in Hutch, beers on the beach, and all the other ways you've supported and celebrated my work. I know you're almost as relieved and proud to see it completed as I am.

A sincere תודה רבה to my committee members, the late Gary Knoppers, Steven Weitzman, Jeffrey Stackert, and Simeon Chavel, for your thorough and invaluable feedback. Your willingness to read all 540 pages (I'm so sorry) of this dissertation is remarkable and so very appreciated. A special thank you to Professor Chavel for nearly a decade of guidance. Your creativity and enthusiasm were vital to this project, from its very first pages to its last.

To Gus, my son, who arrived about three quarters of the way through this project: you certainly did not make things any easier, but you absolutely made them better. I will remember fondly the hours spent writing with you bundled to my chest and the enthusiastic way you would break into the office as I was trying to work. You're the best kid a dad could ask for and I'm so glad that I'm getting to share this accomplishment with you, even if it has meant a lot more sleepless nights and many (many) more days of writing. Thank you for being you and for being here.

Finally I want to offer my deepest and most heartfelt thanks to my wife and partner Emily Crews, who has stood by me throughout this entire process. Those who know you and your work will recognize your influence weaved throughout these pages. You've read countless drafts, deciphered my convoluted flow charts and diagrams into comprehensible lines of argumentation, and helped me to transform long, rambling, unintelligible sentences into the good plain English you find within this project (the run-ons and typos are, of course, all my own fault). From our first discussion of Safran and Gilroy in the Ex Libris Cafe so many years ago, to your cheers at my very first SBL paper, to your help in writing these very acknowledgements, you have been with me for every step of this process. Your support (emotional, intellectual, financial) — in

good times and in bad — has made all the difference in transforming a 50-page colloquium paper into this dissertation. I cannot imagine having made it this far without you. Words can't express how proud I am to share this success with you and to call you my wife, my colleague, and my partner. I love you.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the construction of social identity among Judeans following the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The prominent view among biblical scholars holds that the primary experience of the fall of the Jerusalem temple and the subsequent dispersion of a portion of Judah's population was a universally traumatic one, and that this trauma came to define the new community it produced. It transformed these *Yehudim* from a cultural-political entity into a religious community defined by the "exile" and its theological (and geographical) consequences. This formulation is problematic in that it fails to consider the numerous ways in which 'Judeanness' is expressed, conceived, and constructed during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Rather than a monolithic cultural concept defined by trauma and displacement, I show that the 'Judeanness' of the post-monarchic period was instead a complex, contextual, and continuous process of identity formation that was undertaken, consciously or unconsciously, by individuals and communities in a variety of contexts, producing new hybrid identities. Through a novel combination of the traditional tools of the historical-critical paradigm of Biblical Studies and a theoretical framework developed from the fields of Trauma, Diaspora, and Ethnicity Studies, I demonstrate the dynamic and historical nature of social identity in the ancient world and the myriad ways that identity might be expressed (and/or imposed). According to this framework, members of communities in different geographical, cultural, and political circumstances (including Babylonia, Egypt, Samaria, and Judea) would

have conceived of and expressed their Judean identity differently. Crucially, these differences — often the product of the intercultural interactions facilitated by population movement — do not signal a dilution or diversion from some ‘ideal’ or ‘natural’ form of ‘Judeanness’; rather they reflect productive and adaptive processes that defined the diaspora experience for Judeans in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Jews, Judeans, and the Legacy of the Exilic Rupture Model

#### Introduction

##### *Ahaz, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah: יהודים in Translation*

Following the introduction and summary of Ahaz's reign in 2 Kgs 16.1–4, the Deuteronomistic narrator begins to narrate the event referred to in biblical scholarship as the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, the efforts of a coalition led by Rezin of Damascus and Pekhah of Israel to coerce Ahaz of the kingdom of Judah<sup>1</sup> into rebelling against the Assyrian empire. Introduced in v. 5, the narrator records Ahaz's appeal to Assyria for support in vv. 7ff. Intervening between these two verses in v. 6 is a brief notice of the loss of some of the kingdom of Judah's territory to an enemy.

According to the MT,

בעת ההיא השיב רצין מלך ארם את אילת לארם וינשל את היהודים מאילות ואדומים באו  
אילת וישבו שם עד היום הזה

---

1. Throughout this dissertation I will use “Judah” only to refer to the Iron Age kingdom whose capital was in Jerusalem and was eventually dissolved in the wake of a failed rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. When referring to this political entity, I will always preface Judah with “the kingdom of.” On the polyvalence of “Judah” (יהודה) in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, see my discussion in ch. 2. Otherwise I will refer to the territory associated with that kingdom during the monarchic period and beyond as “Judea”

The NRSV renders this passage into English as follows:

At that time the king of Edom recovered Elath for Edom, and drove the Judeans from Elath; and the Edomites came to Elath, where they live to this day.

This translation reflects a significant emendation of the MT, in which “the king of Edom” in v. 6a replaces “Rezin, the king of Aram.” The NRSV translation is supported on historical grounds by the recounting of this event in 2 Chr 18.17, which does not mention Aram and states that it was Edom alone who was the aggressor. It is possible that Edom and Aram were allied in a common cause against the Assyrians, and that Rezin received credit for the annexation in 2 Kings as a result of his leadership in the rebellion.<sup>2</sup> These historical and text-critical questions need not detain us here. The more important issue is the NRSV’s rendering of יהודים as “Judeans” for this record of an event from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

Meanwhile, the book of Nehemiah opens with an interaction between Nehemiah, an official in the Persian court in Susa in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and an envoy from Judea — the approximate territory once held by the Iron Age kingdom of Judah. Nehemiah, who narrates the encounter in the first person, claims that he inquired of the envoy concerning the wellbeing of the community in that territory:

ויבא חנני אחד מאחי הוא ואנשים מיהודה ואשאלם על היהודים

Here is how the NRSV renders this encounter:

[O]ne of my brothers, Hanani, came with certain men from Judah; and I asked them about the Jews.

---

2. For a full discussion of this passage, see Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 186–187.

In this case, the translation has rendered יהודים — the exact same term translated in the 2 Kings account as “Judeans” — as “Jews.” Of course, the situation had changed dramatically for the יהודים between the times in which the events narrated are purported to have taken place. During the reign of Ahaz, the kingdom of Judah was subjugated to the hegemony of the Assyrian empire. However, its kings could still claim a particular geographic area of authority, a royally supported and fully functioning temple in their capital city, the attendant cultic apparatus required for the temple’s operation, and a kingdom of tax-paying subjects on whom they could rely for taxes and military service.

In the time of Nehemiah, however, the situation in the territory once ruled by monarchs of the kingdom of Judah was dramatically different. The native monarchy was no more, and the temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians, had only recently been rebuilt, and to a much less impressive scale if scenes in Ezra 3 and Haggai 2 are to be seen as evidence. Furthermore, along with a significant number of other יהודים, Nehemiah found himself living well beyond the boundaries of the old kingdom of Judah.

It is possible, then, that the choice to use different translations for יהודים in each case reflects a scholarly recognition of the significantly different political, cultural, and temporal contexts represented in these two texts. That conclusion, however, is complicated by a passage from the book of Jeremiah. Having recently fled to Egypt (against his will) with a group who feared reprisal for the assassination of a representative of the Babylonian government, Jeremiah is called on by the deity to address his community in ch. 44. That message is introduced in v. 1 with the following description of the prophet’s audience:

דבר אשר היה אל ירמיהו אל כל היהודים הישבים בארץ מצרים

The NRSV translates this passage as follows:

The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Judeans living in the land of Egypt. As was the case in the passage from 2 Kings, the translator has opted to render יהודים as “Judeans.” However, the historical circumstances presented in Jer 44 are closer to the situation in the book of Nehemiah than in 2 Kings. Jeremiah’s oracle, which is delivered in the Egyptian diaspora, follows chronologically the fall of the kingdom of Judah and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. It would therefore appear that it was not the change in political and geographical circumstances that suggested these different English renderings, but rather some other factor or set of factors. What changed between the early Babylonian period and the mid-Persian period that justifies the shift in English terminology? Or, to put it differently, when and how did Judeans become Jews?

I want to suggest that the translation decision in the NRSV is the result of a long held view in critical biblical scholarship that understands the deportation of a significant portion of the kingdom of Judah’s population during the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and subsequent Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods to be the moment when the יהודים transformed from a geo-political entity, as reflected in the translation “Judean,” to a primarily religio-cultural one, as reflected in the translation “Jew.” Despite its status as a long-standing and scholarly consensus, the view is based on a problematic foundation with its roots in anti-Jewish ideology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than continuing to take this understanding for granted, I approach the question of

what it meant to consider oneself or be considered among the יהודים/יהודיא/*Yāhūdāya* with a new approach to the available evidence.

*Defining the Project: Judean Identity Formation in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE*

In this dissertation I take as my primary question the construction of social identity among Judeans following the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. As I will show below, the prominent view among biblical scholars holds that the primary experience of the fall of the Jerusalem temple and the subsequent dispersion of a portion of the kingdom of Judah's population was a universally traumatic one, and that this trauma came to define the new community it produced. It transformed these יהודים (or יהודיא in Aramaic, *Yāhūdāya* in Babylonian) from a cultural-political entity into a religious community defined by the "exile" and its theological (and geographical) consequences. This formulation is problematic in that it fails to consider the numerous ways in which 'Judeanness' is expressed, conceived, and constructed by the communities who produced the literature of the Hebrew Bible. Rather than a monolithic cultural concept defined by trauma and displacement, I show that the Judeanness of the post-monarchic period was instead a complex, contextual, and continuous process of identity formation that was undertaken, consciously or unconsciously, by individuals and communities in a variety of contexts, producing new hybrid identities. Through a novel combination of the traditional tools of the historical-critical paradigm of Biblical Studies and a theoretical framework developed from the fields of Trauma, Diaspora, and Ethnicity Studies, I demonstrate the dynamic and historical nature of social identity in the ancient world and the myriad ways that

identity might be expressed and/or imposed. According to this framework, members of communities in different geographical, cultural, and political circumstances (including Egypt, Samaria, Babylonia, and Judea) would have conceived of and expressed their collective Judean identities differently. Crucially, these differences — often the product of the intercultural interactions facilitated by population movement — do not signal a dilution or diversion from some ‘ideal’ or ‘natural’ form of Judeanness; rather they reflect productive and adaptive processes that defined the diaspora experience for Judeans in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of a recent revival of the question of how to translate *Ἰουδαῖοι*, the Greek rendering of יהודים, in the literature of the Second Temple period: Jew or Judean. Having outlined the issues at stake in that ongoing conversation, I will then turn to James Pasto’s efforts to date the origin of the hypothesis that the dissolution of the native monarchy of the kingdom of Judah, the fall of its capital city Jerusalem, and the experience of deportations under Nebuchadnezzar catalyzed the transformation of Judeans into Jews. This model, what Pasto has described as a (post-)exilic rupture model,<sup>3</sup> is at least as concerned with arguments about national and religious identity in the burgeoning nation state of Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it is about describing what is observable in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.

Through the work of W. M. L. de Wette and Julius Wellhausen, this views of the experience of

---

3. James Pasto, “Who Owns the Jewish Past? Judaism, Judaisms, and the Writing of Jewish History,” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1999), 77; James Pasto, “When the End is the Beginning? Or When the Biblical Past is the Political Present: Some thoughts on Ancient Israel, ‘Post-Exilic Judaism,’ and the Politics of Biblical Scholarship,” *SJOT* 12 (1998): 179; James Pasto, “WML de Wette and the Invention of Post-Exilic Judaism: Political Historiography and Christian Allegory in Nineteenth-Century German Biblical Scholarship.”, in *Jews, Antiquity, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* (eds. Hayim Lapin and Dale B. Martin; Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2003), 43.

deportation under the Babylonian empire and its theological and literary repercussions have become foundational in the field, even as scholars have recognized the problematic nature of their ideological underpinnings. I argue that this uncritical acceptance has had negative effects on the field of Biblical Studies, both in how the field has come to view Judaism and in its failure to accurately describe the different manifestations of social identity that are present in evidence from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Finally, I will offer brief summaries of the dissertation's body chapters.

#### Ἰουδαῖος: Jews and/or Judeans in the Second Temple Period

##### *The Ἰουδαῖος of the Second Temple Period*

For scholars of the second temple period and the New Testament, the issue of Jew vs. Judean concerns the English rendering of the Greek term Ἰουδαῖος, a Graecization of the Hebrew and Aramaic designation יהודי. A debate has recently been reignited in response to the treatment of the term in Brill's commentary series on the works of Josephus. Steve Mason, the editor of that series, made the decision to translate the term as "Judean" rather than the more traditional rendering, "Jew," and briefly supported that decision in a footnote in the introduction to the series' first volume.<sup>4</sup> He later supplemented that footnote with an extended discussion of the

---

4. *Judean antiquities 1–4* (FJTC 3. ed. Steve Mason. Boston: Brill, 2004), xiii..

reasoning behind his choice in an article for Brill's *Journal for the Study of Judaism* entitled "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History."<sup>5</sup>

Mason's position boils down to a preference for representing 'native' categories in his translation of ancient texts. He argues that the Ἰουδαῖοι of the Second Temple period were a social group identified (in Greek categories) as an ἔθνος: "According to both insiders and outsiders, the Ἰουδαῖοι (just like Egyptians, Syrians, Romans, etc.) were an *ethnos* with all of the usual accoutrements."<sup>6</sup> Mason argues against the presence of a distinct category that modern scholars would identify as "religion" in the centuries immediately before and after the turn of the era.<sup>7</sup> In the absence of such a category, "Jew" — an explicitly religious designation for Mason — lacks the insider perspective of the historical context of the term in question. Instead, he proposes that the term Ἰουδαῖος (and its adjectival counterpart, Ἰουδαϊκός) should be rendered in translation as an ethnonym (Judean): to treat the terms differently in translation by using an English religious title rather than an ethnonym would put undue emphasis on one particular characteristic of the group's identity through the imposition of an anachronistic category.

In proposing this continuity of meaning for "Judean" as an ethnonym through the Second Temple period, Mason is arguing against a trend in scholarship that identifies the transition of the Ἰουδαῖος from one kind of social group — one marked by the traditional geographic and political

---

5. Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457–512.

6. According to Mason, "Each *ethnos* had its distinctive nature or character (φύσις, ἦθος), expressed in unique ancestral traditions (τὰ πάτρια), which typically reflected a shared (if fictive) ancestry (συγγενεία); each had its charter stories (μῦθοι), customs, norms, conventions, mores, laws (νόμοι, ἔθη, νόμιμα), and political arrangements or constitution (πολιτεία)." Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism," 484..

7. Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism," 480..

characteristics of an ἔθνος — to another — one that is primarily identified by its culture and cultic or religious practice. For example, in his book *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Shaye J. D. Cohen argues that this shift took place during the reign of the Hasmoneans, pointing to passages in 2 Maccabees as the earliest written evidence for this transition.<sup>8</sup> According to Cohen, the semantic shift of Ἰουδαῖος (and the related abstraction Ἰουδαϊσμός) in which it transitioned from representing an ethnic / political entity to a social group with shared cultural traits paralleled the semantic expansion of Ἑλληνισμός (Hellenism) during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.<sup>9</sup> Just as the world came to adopt the culture of Alexander in the decades and centuries following his conquests (Ἑλληνισμός), so too did Judea’s neighbors adopt the cultural traits of the conquest-minded Hasmoneans during their brief period of independent rule. By forcing the conquered to “convert” — to adopt the practices and beliefs of Ἰουδαϊσμός — the Hasmoneans effected a significant shift in what it meant to be among the Ἰουδαῖοι. What was once a term that reflected geographical, political, and kinship associations shifted to the particular religious and cultural practices of that group. This transition is best reflected through the English translation of Jew/Judaism.

Mason does not deny that such a semantic transition took place for Ἰουδαῖος and Ἰουδαϊσμός; rather, he argues that it occurred at a later date, well into the Christian era. As Christianity began to swell in the Roman empire, its adherents actively engaged in the project of self-definition. Unlike the Ἰουδαῖοι and the other ἔθνοι of the period, Christians did not have a

---

8. 2 Macc 6.1–11; 9.13–17

9. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (HCS 31; University of California Press, 1999), 132–135.

particular land or polity to call their own, recourse to kinship ties and common ancestry, or a set of shared cultural conventions; they were therefore deemed strange and unusual by outsiders.<sup>10</sup> In the absence of these standard characteristics, Christians defined themselves by emphasizing the small (but important) differences between themselves and the group otherwise most closely identifiable with them, the Ἰουδαῖοι.<sup>11</sup> In their polemical attacks on this group, early Christians defined themselves and their dynamic identity as followers of Christ over against “a homeless and humiliated people in a perpetual state of aporia who could only cling to a few strange-seeming practices.”<sup>12</sup> It is only as a result of Christianity’s success and its dominance of historiographical writings from antiquity going forward that the term Ἰουδαῖος was stripped of its original geographic and political valences and transformed into the static “religious” category of the Church Fathers’ “Judaism.”

One of Mason’s strongest opponents, Adele Reinhartz, has steered the conversation of “Jew vs. Judean” away from transition and rupture to focus instead on continuity. Her critique of Mason’s translation choice inspired a special edition of *MARGINALIA* devoted to the topic.<sup>13</sup> In her contribution to that publication, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity,” Reinhartz argues that the

---

10. Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 475..

11. “The most important group for Christian self-definition had always been the Ioudaioi, and so they were the group most conspicuously reduced to such treatment, which generated a static and systemic abstraction called Ἰουδαϊσμός / Iudaismus.” Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 476. This is a fundamental element of Karl Barth’s famous redefinition of ethnicity, to be discussed at greater length in the next chapter. Fredrik Barth, “Introduction,” (London: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin, 1969), 9–38.

12. Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 504..

13. *Jew and Judean: A MARGINALIA Forum on Politics and Historiography in the Translation of Ancient Texts* (ed. Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton. Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014).

decision to translate Ἰουδαῖος as “Judean” rather than “Jew” is potentially harmful because it creates a conceptual break between modern Judaism and its ancient ancestors.<sup>14</sup> Contra Mason, the modern English term “Jew” is not *strictly* a religious one for Reinhartz.<sup>15</sup> Instead, she argues that it should be understood “as a complex identity marker that encompasses ethnic, political, cultural, genealogical, religious and other elements in proportions that vary among eras, regions of the world, and individuals.”<sup>16</sup> Rather than limiting Ἰουδαῖος to the religious sphere, the translation “Jew” — with all of its modern English valences — better captures all of the sentiment expressed by the original Greek in the centuries surrounding the turn of the era. Furthermore, it maintains the link between contemporary Jewish communities and their ancestors while refusing to let the anti-Jewish sentiment that has frequently been identified in the New

---

14. Brettler makes a similar argument for describing the religion of ancient Israel as “earliest Judaism.” Marc Zvi Brettler, “Judaism in the Hebrew Bible? The Transition from Ancient Israelite Religion to Judaism,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1999): 429–447.

15. And here she is not alone. She cites a Pew Research Center study on American Judaism from 2013 that gives the the following results: “The report revealed that 22% of the participants in the Pew Survey of Jewish Americans claim to have ‘no religion’ and that the majority of respondents do not see religion as the primary constituent of Jewish identity. Fully 62% ground Jewish identity primarily in ancestry and culture, only 15% in religion. Among Jews who gave Judaism as their religion, 55% based Jewish identity on ancestry and culture, while 66% did not view belief in God as an essential component.” Adele Reinhartz, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity,” (eds. Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014), 5.

16. Reinhartz, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity.” 10.

Testament, (a reason often given for the preference of “Judean” over “Jew,” especially in the Gospel of John)<sup>17</sup> to be unchecked and forgotten.

Daniel Schwartz, another contributor to that *MARGINALIA* volume,<sup>18</sup> has also taken issue with Mason’s approach, dedicating a short monograph to the issue of “Jew” vs. “Judean.”<sup>19</sup> For Schwartz, the real issue is the broad semantic range covered by Ἰουδαῖος and Ἰουδαϊσμός in the ancient world. Where Greek speakers (and writers) had only one word to describe a variety of phenomena, the modern English language has two, namely “Jew” (and the related “Judaism”) and “Judean.” That being the case, Schwartz endorses a contextual approach to translation, preferring to represent the Greek term with “Judean” in the context of groups living in Judea and rooted in that territory and applying “Jew” to those living in the diaspora, detached from the geographic and political entity of Judea. Through a series of exemplary binaries (First Maccabees vs. Second Maccabees; *War*-era Josephus vs. *Antiquities*-era Josephus; Priestly Judaism vs. Rabbinic Judaism), Schwartz highlights the different attributes indexed by Ἰουδαῖος (and Ἰουδαϊσμός) in each context. Within Judea (First Maccabees, *War*-era Josephus, and Priestly Judaism), issues of the land and the state are at the fore for the Ἰουδαῖοι. Here the geopolitical term “Judean” is more appropriate and informative. Meanwhile, in the diaspora

---

17. See, for example, Malcolm Lowe, “Who Were the IOYΔΑΙΟΙ?,” *NovT* 18 (1976); Malcolm Lowe, “Ἰουδαῖοι of the Apocrypha: A Fresh Approach to the Gospels of James, Pseudo-Thomas, Peter and Nicodemus,” *NovT* 23 (1981); Malcolm Lowe, “Concepts and Words,” (eds. Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The *MARGINALIA* Review of Books, 2014).

18. Daniel Schwartz, “The Different Tasks of Translators and Historians,” (eds. Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The *MARGINALIA* Review of Books, 2014).

19. Daniel R. Schwartz, *Judeans and Jews: Four Faces of Dichotomy in Ancient Jewish History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

(Second Maccabees, *Antiquities*-era Josephus, and Rabbinic Judaism), communities separated from the “homeland” emphasized their ancestry and religious practice as *the* defining elements of their Ἰουδαῖοι identities, and are therefore better described as “Jews.” Thus the English language affords modern translators a privilege unavailable to the Greek speakers of antiquity, namely the increased precision of a second term to represent the broad range of phenomena encapsulated by Ἰουδαῖος.

In making their cases, each of these scholars has considered two primary sets of issues. On the one hand, they have tried to determine the contextually salient elements of the social groups identified by the terminology (geographical location, religious practice, language, insider/outsider perspective, etc.) that may be mustered in support of one translation over another. On the other hand, they have addressed what is at stake for them as scholars in defending a particular translation and classification choice. For Mason, the most important concern is representing categories that are more at home in the world(s) of the texts he is studying. For Reinhartz, the primary issue is the relationship between modern and ancient phenomena, and the ability of language to establish continuity or breakage. In both cases, the scholars made a classificatory choice that reflects their predispositions in how they defended their translation of Ἰουδαῖοι and how they determined the details and boundaries of the category that such a translation represented.

*The יהודים of the Hebrew Bible*

When we turn to the question of how to translate יהודים in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, the issue seems to be far less controversial. First of all, there is a general trend in scholarship that argues for or assumes that a transformation of the social identity of יהודים occurred that warranted a shift in the language used to define that community. Secondly, among those who recognize such a shift, the clear consensus marks the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE as the period when that shift occurred. Spanning the Neo-Babylonian victories over Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, the subsequent displacement of a significant portion of their population, and the rise of Cyrus the Great and the Persian empire, the 6<sup>th</sup> century has traditionally been identified as *a*, if not *the* most important anchoring point in the development of the culture and religion of the kingdom of Judah and the moment when it becomes appropriate to begin calling יהודים and worshippers of Yahweh “Jews.” It is a non-controversial position to take. For example, the first volume of the *Cambridge History of Judaism* begins with studies of the Persian period. Its editors do not offer an argument for why the series should start here, stating only that the “Critical study of Judaism, by which is meant the form which the religion of Israel assumed in and after the Babylonian exile, is of comparatively recent origin.”<sup>20</sup>

As I briefly outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the יהודים of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE faced significant political and geographical upheaval in the wake of the fall of the kingdom of Judah. In many respects we should expect a variety of changes in the social structures of the יהודים in the decades and centuries that followed. However, identity as a social phenomenon is

---

20. *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Introduction: The Persian Period* (1. ed. Louis Finkelstein and W. D. Davies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), v.

never static, but rather always in motion and always changing.<sup>21</sup> Even the passages from 2 Kings and Jeremiah that I cited above, in which the the NRSV rendered יהודים as “Judean,” the collective to which that term refers is quite different. In the account from 2 Kings, the יהודים are representatives of the king of Judah and forced out of the territory he once claimed to be his own, while in Jeremiah, the יהודים are refugees who fled to Egypt fearing Babylonian reprisals. And yet, the 6<sup>th</sup> century remains a “watershed” in the history of the יהודים,<sup>22</sup> the beginning “of the history of early Judaism.”<sup>23</sup> As noted by Kristin Weingart, “Many influential scholars subscribed to this reconstruction, making it an almost undisputed fact of twentieth-century exegesis.”<sup>24</sup> What is it about the sixth century, and the Babylonian exile in particular, that has allowed such a strong consensus its role as *the* pivotal shift in the development of the worship of Yahweh and the societal and social constructions of that deity’s adherents so as to warrant a change in scholarly

---

21. Harold R. Isaacs, “Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe.,” *Ethnicity* 1 (1974): 15–41; Barth, “Introduction,” 9–38; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1987), 94ff; Katherine E Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10: An Anthropological Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40–41; Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 31ff.

22. Lester Grabbe, “Introduction,” in *Leading Captivity Captive: ‘The Exile’ as History and Ideology* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 278; Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 10.

23. Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century BCE* (Studies in Biblical Literature 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Lit, 2003), 1.

24. Among notable scholars who support this position, Weingart notes Martin Noth, Herbert Dohmer, and Rainer Albertz. Kristin Weingart, “What Makes an Israelite an Israelite? Judean Perspectives on the Samaritans in the Persian Period,” *JSOT* 42 (2017): 156 n. 3. For an in-depth treatment of scholarship, see the review of literature in Kristin Weingart, *Stammevolk - Staatsvolk - Gottesvolk?: Studien zur Verwendung des Israel-Namens im Alten Testament* (FAT 68; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 8–37.

terminology?<sup>25</sup> In order to answer this question, we will turn our attention to the work of James Pasto and his identification of 19<sup>th</sup> century German scholar W. M. L. de Wette as the founder of the category of second temple Judaism in critical biblical scholarship.<sup>26</sup>

## de Wette, the German *Volk*, and the Creation of Second Temple Judaism

### *Introduction*

In his 1813 *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik in ihrer historischen Entwicklung dargestellt*, Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849) narrated the religious history of ancient Israel as follows:

After the destruction of the kingdom (*Reichs*) of the ten tribes and their deportation, the same fate befell the Judean kingdom. The sojourn in a foreign land under a foreign people of completely a different outlook and religion, in addition to the impact the destruction of the state (*Staats*) had upon the people, must have been of decided influence upon their religion. This influence was so great that we must view the nation (*Nation*) after the Exile *as a different one, with a different world-view and religion*. We call the people in this period Jews (*Juden*), and in the period before Hebrews (*Hebräer*); and what belongs to the post-exilic culture is called Judaism (*Judenthum*), while in the pre-exilic culture it is called Hebraism (*Hebraismus*).<sup>27</sup>

---

25. Approaching the question from the opposite direction, but with the same concerns for continuity, Brettler asks: “The real issues, then, are how much continuity there was between the preexilic and postexilic periods, and what circumstances might justify the use of ‘Jew’ and ‘Judaism’ for the preexilic period despite the anachronism that this would impose.” Brettler, “Judaism in the Hebrew Bible?,” 430.

26. Pasto, “Who Owns the Jewish Past?” 94.

27. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette, *Biblische Dogmatik Alten und Neuen Testaments oder kritische Darstellung der Religionslehre des Hebraismus, des Judenthums und Urchristentums. Zum Gebrauch akademischer Vorlesungen* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1831), §76.; Quoted from Pasto, “Who Owns the Jewish Past?” 95. *emphasis* his.

In his dissertation and in subsequent work, Pasto has argued that through this periodization, as outlined in the *Lehrbuch*, de Wette created *new* scholarly categories to describe the religious expression of ancient Israel during the Mosaic through monarchic periods against the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. He was, in Pasto's view, "the real founder of 'post-exilic' Judaism."<sup>28</sup> In this section I will review Pasto's work along with other treatments of de Wette's influence<sup>29</sup> in order to present the foundation of a — if not *the* — prevailing view of Judean (Jewish) identity in critical biblical scholarship. In so doing, I hope to highlight the problematic nature of these early constructions of the categories of "Judaism" and "Jew" and the contexts that produced them. I also hope to demonstrate the markedly different conclusions that might be reached when they are not assumed and scholars appeal to the evidence — old and new — without the weight of these presuppositions.

In the first part of this section I will follow Pasto's outline of de Wette's model of exilic rupture in Israel's religious history, paying special attention to his scholarly influences and the historical context in which his work was set, especially with regard to the German national project. In the section's second part I will turn my attention to Julius Wellhausen and his role in popularizing de Wette's model. Introduced in Wellhausen's hugely influential *Prolegomena* — with a few small but significant tweaks — the exilic rupture model rose to the status of scholarly consensus, a position it still maintains, despite the problematic nature of many of the assumptions that undergird its primary claims.

---

28. Pasto, "Who Owns the Jewish Past?" 94.

29. Pasto, "When the End is the Beginning?" 157–200.

*de Wette's Exegetical Approach*

W. M. L. de Wette (1780–1849), often considered one of the pioneers of modern biblical criticism,<sup>30</sup> is perhaps best known for his *Dissertatio* and the identification of the book of Deuteronomy with the “book of the law” (ספר התורה) that was “discovered” during the reign of Josiah and inspired the king’s pious reforms that are recorded in 2 Kgs 22–23.<sup>31</sup> De Wette’s identification of these documents, even as it has come under criticism,<sup>32</sup> remains an anchoring point in scholarship for the periodization and development of Israelite/Israelian/Judean religious history.

Following the *Dissertatio*, de Wette’s approach to the study of the Hebrew Bible was defined by a skepticism of its veracity as a historical document and its value as a repository of Israel’s myths, the reflections and expressions of the religious sentiment of the ages in which its

---

30. Or, as John W. Rogerson called him in the title of his 1992 biography, *The Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism*, (emphasis mine).

31. However, see the translation of his dissertation along with commentary by Paul B Harvey Jr and Baruch Halpern, “W. M. L. de Wette’s “*Dissertatio Critica...*”: Context and Translation,” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 14 (2008): 47–85. Harvey and Halpern note that this position is not so much *argued* in the dissertation, but rather suggested (without further comment) in a footnote (n. 5). The primary thrust of the *Dissertatio* was a literary argument for a later dating of Deuteronomy among the Pentateuchal legal material, an argument based primarily on a consideration of style (73).

32. On the implausibility of the found law book narrative in 2 Kgs 22–23 based strictly on literary grounds and a helpful review of literature, see, recently David Henige, “Found But Not Lost: A Skeptical Note on the Document Discovered in the Temple Under Josiah,” *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7 (2007): 2–17.

sources were composed.<sup>33</sup> This meant that while it was not possible to access the historical plains of Moab through Deuteronomy, the religious views of Josiah and his court — the purported context of Deuteronomy’s composition according to de Wette’s hypothesis — could be available to the insightful critic. According to de Wette, “One cannot learn history from [the Old Testament]...[but one] can learn about the spirit and the character of the poet.”<sup>34</sup>

In applying this approach to the study of the Hebrew Bible, de Wette developed a four-stage periodization of Israel’s history. He evaluated positively the de-mythologized monotheism of the Mosaic period (1)<sup>35</sup> and the impromptu spirituality of the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century prophets (3),<sup>36</sup> highlighting the natural expression monotheistic ideas during these periods. However, he is less kind to the polytheistic sentiment that defined the early centuries of the monarchy (2) as well as the period between Josiah’s reforms and the exile (4), a time marked by formalization. According to Pasto, it was through this periodization that de Wette became the first critical scholar to explicitly associated the birth of Judaism with the experience of the exile.<sup>37</sup>

---

33. Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34–56; J. W. Rogerson, *W.M.L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography* (JSOT Supplement Series 126; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 46–55, 107ff; Rudolf Smend, “De Wette and the Relationship between Historical Biblical Criticism and Philosophical System in the Nineteenth Century,” (eds. Edward Ball and Margaret Barker; Society for Old Testament Study Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 219.

34. de Wette, *Beitrag*, 398–399; Cited from Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, 34.

35. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, “Ueber Religion und Theologie: Erläuterungen zu seinem Lehrbuche der Dogmatik,” (1815): 86–87.

36. Rudolf Smend, *Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wettes Arbeit am Alten und am Neuen Testament*. (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1958), 74.

37. Pasto, “When the End is the Beginning?” 163.

The spontaneous and inspired Hebraism of the mosaic and monarchic periods gave way to new forms of religious expression during the exilic and post-exilic periods that were defined by repentance, foreign influence, and a zealousness for the law and ritual.<sup>38</sup> In this new form, which de Wette called “Judaism,” the trauma of the exile caused the deportees and their descendants to reflect on the activity that led to the fall of the kingdom of Judah, thereby inspiring a zealous rededication to the law of the Mosaic period. Driven by an urge to repentance and a fear of the consequences of unfaithfulness, Judaism came to be defined by adherence to the (static) letter of the law rather than the (dynamic) divine spirit that had inspired the Hebraism of the previous era.<sup>39</sup>

Pasto also highlights in de Wette’s formulation the salience of foreign influence in Judaism, most notably the philosophy of ancient Persia.<sup>40</sup> Severed from their ancestral homeland, exilic Jews came into contact with teachings of early Zoroastrianism, a form of religious expression that was far inferior to even the Hebraism of the Josianic period. It was through this contact with foreign culture on foreign soil that a number of inferior religious elements were introduced to Judaism — messianism, demonology, resurrection<sup>41</sup> — and through which the legal dogmatism that came to define Judaism was reinforced. While exilic and post-exilic Judaism were not totally devoid of value — de Wette saw great promise in the expression of ethical monotheism in Isa 40–66 and the Psalms — the transition, in the main, represented a significant

---

38. De Wette, *Biblische Dogmatik*, §75–§77.

39. De Wette, *Biblische Dogmatik*, §72.

40. Pasto, “WML de Wette,” 41.

41. De Wette, *Biblische Dogmatik Alten und Neuen Testaments oder kritische Darstellung der Religionslehre des Hebraismus, des Judenthums und Urchristentums. Zum Gebrauch akademischer Vorlesungen.* ,§79–81.

religious regression. “In de Wette's eyes, the Babylonian exile was the nadir of Judaism, for during this time foreign myths, arid theological speculation, and the exalting of the Old Testament to literal truth (*Buchstaben des Gesetzes*) supplanted the positive elements in early Judaism and the prophets.”<sup>42</sup>

### *Herder and the Volk*

Scholars of de Wette have made much of the philosophical influences on the scholar's biblical hermeneutic, particularly the work of Schlegel and J. F. Fries, his contemporary and colleague at Heidelberg.<sup>43</sup> In this section I want to focus on the work another important influence in de Wette's approach, the Romantic Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). De Wette often attended Herder's sermons as a young man growing up in Weimar and greatly admired his scholarship.<sup>44</sup> Herder even administered an exam to de Wette while he attended the university there.<sup>45</sup> Herder's views on the relationship between land, language, and nation are particularly instructive for understanding de Wette's interpretation of the Babylonian exile and its role in the development of ancient Israelite religion.

While Herder's interests in the arts led him to all manners of criticism, he is perhaps best known for the theories he presented in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91). It was within this four-volume set that Herder put forth his theory on the

---

42. Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, 66.

43. On the influence of Fries, see Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, 43–49..

44. Rudolf Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries* (Translated by Kohl, Margaret. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 44; Rogerson, *Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism*, 15.

45. Harvey Jr and Halpern, “de Wette's “*Dissertatio Critica...*” 23.

differentiation of humankind into distinct yet equal subgroups, or *Völker*. Bruce Lincoln presents

Herder's three determining factors as follows:

First is variety in the climates they inhabit... As they live in a region over long periods of time, their features are brought into close correlation with those of the landscape, for they both bear the imprint of the same climate... A second formative factor is language, which reflects a *Volk's* environs and historic experience and structures their thought and social relations. Finally, there is *Nationalbildung*, the development process through which groups acquire their cultural identity and individuals acquire identity as members of these groups.<sup>46</sup>

It was the coalescence of these factors that gave a group — a *Volk* — its distinct identity. Within this model, myths played an important role. “A crucial resource for collective identity, myths are the linguistic form that mediates between climate and *Nationalbildung*.”<sup>47</sup> Thus myth could be used to understand “how idiosyncratic narrative details correspond to the values, character, climate and experience distinctive of the *Volk* who tell them.”<sup>48</sup>

As a Pietist pastor, Herder took particular interest in the bible as an object of inquiry and source of myth. He saw in the literature of the Hebrew Bible — especially the Davidic portions of the book of Psalms — an ideal coalescing of the elements of land, language, and *Nationalbildung*. The myths contained within this literature — particularly as they related to the Hebrews' national god — served as an epitome of nationalized *Volk*. For Herder, “the Hebrew god's local providence over the promised land was designed to attach the people to a homeland.

---

46. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 53.

47. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 53.

48. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 54.

Rather than mere superstition, this concept portrays the people's spirit as being *inextricably linked* to the rules of the fathers and the land."<sup>49</sup>

In the literature of the Hebrew Bible, Herder found a paradigm for the contemporary development of German nation. Where the French had claimed the Graecized traditions of the New Testament, the Hebrew literature of the Old Testament represented a simpler and more fundamental model of the building blocks of nationhood. Herder was still critical of what he understood to be later developments with the traditions of the Hebrew Bible, particularly what he deemed to be its more ritual and dogmatic based elements: "Finally, all these appendages, the offspring of fear, superstition, and priestcraft, belong to later times. The ideas of the most ancient religions are grand and noble. The human seems to have been originally furnished with a fine treasure of knowledge, unbiased and uncorrupted; but their degeneracy, their wanderings and misfortunes, have alloyed it with baser metal."<sup>50</sup> When appropriately refined, however, the myths of the Old Testament could serve as paradigms for national religion and national culture.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, as argued by Ofri Ilany, we can see in the work of Herder and his engagement with Hebrew poetry and myth the potential for biblical exegesis to engage in a broader political discussion in the early days of the developing German nation state.<sup>52</sup> This point is no less valid for the work of de Wette, whose own periodization of Israelite history, including its ideal moments under Moses and the late monarchic period prophets, runs parallel to an increased

---

49. Ofri Ilany, *In Search of the Hebrew People: Bible and Nation in the German Enlightenment* (Translated by Mishory, Ishai. 2018), 104.

50. Herder, *Hebrew Verse*, in Burton, Feldman, and Robert D. Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680–1860* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2000), 240.

51. Ilany, *In Search of the Hebrew People*, 106.

52. Ilany, *In Search of the Hebrew People*, 86–144.

interest in Germany's own mythological history.<sup>53</sup> According to Ilany, "The creation of the Hebrew national epos, as described by de Wette, strikingly resembles the romantics' creation of a 'German mythology,' exhibited, for example in a growing interest in the *Nibelungenlied* and in German folk tales."<sup>54</sup> As we will see, the exilic rupture model is inextricably bound up with this broader political concern for identifying a purer, unalloyed representation of the religious and cultural expressions of the past.

#### *The Politics of de Wette's "Judenthum"*

In summarizing De Wette's work, Pasto identifies four fundamental elements in approach to the Hebrew Bible: 1.) the Hebrew Bible is an unreliable source for the religious history of ancient Israel; 2.) Judaism is distinct from Hebraism, and heavily influenced by foreign (Persian, Babylonian) practice; 3.) contemporary Protestantism is the inheritor of pre-exilic Hebraism; and finally, 4.) Israel's history is only significant in that it informs contemporary Protestantism.<sup>55</sup> De

---

53. See especially the work of Bruce Lincoln on this topic. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 47–140; Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011); Tom Shippey, "A Revolution Reconsidered: Mythography and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous* (ed. Tom Shippey; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 291; Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 13–24.

54. Ilany, *In Search of the Hebrew People*, 133.

55. Pasto, "Who Owns the Jewish Past?" 102–103.

Wette's approach therefore serves as a paradigmatic example of what Pasto calls "Judeography," the creation of a Jewish past that serves the needs of a Christian present.<sup>56</sup>

Within this model, the Judaism of the post-exilic period, with its foreign influence, strict religious hierarchy, and emphasis on legalism, was understood as the antithesis of the (ideal) expression of the religion of the monarchic period prophets, Jesus, and Luther; a religion with limited hierarchy and a focus on faith and intuition rather than dogma. According to de Wette, "[Pre-exilic Hebraism] is the life-source from which Christianity, after having died in Catholicism, true Christian Protestantism has emerged, and with Christianity and Protestantism, the critical spirit of the Neo-European culture."<sup>57</sup> The Jewish (or Catholic) article of beliefs, with its historical rootedness and immutability, was the enemy of true religious expression which must be able to change with the mood and mode of any particular contextual moment if it is to remain "true."<sup>58</sup> The exilic rupture model was an exercise in Judeography. It allowed de Wette to periodize phases of religious development, distinguishing historically the value of a Reform Christianity that found its roots in the liberal prophetic religion of the period *before* the fall of the first temple. These values also lined up well with those championed by his contemporaries who

---

56. "By Judeography I mean specifically the writing of the Jewish past in the context of Christian origins and history, and on the basis of the de Wettian model of a disjunction between a pre-exilic Hebrews and post-exilic, contradictory, Jews." Pasto, "Who Owns the Jewish Past?" 153.

57. "Und das ist jener geistige Lebensquell, aus welchem das Christenthum, und nach Ertödtung desselben im Katholizismus, der ächt christliche Protestantismus hervorgegangen ist, und mit Christenthum und Protestantismus, der Forschungsgeist der neu-europäischen Bildung." De Wette, *Biblische Dogmatik*, §83. Cf. Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20; Boston: Brill, 2009), 80.

58. Rogerson, *Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism*, 123.

sought to uncover the “native” religion of ancient Germany. De Wette’s model simultaneously disparaged the Judaization of the German *Volk* by the aberrant and divergent Christianity (Catholicism and dogmatic Christianity) that traced its origins to the distinct phenomenon of second temple Judaism.

According to Pasto, the “creation” of Second Temple Judaism allowed de Wette to simultaneously acknowledge Judaism’s negative role in the development of German identity alongside his peers searching for an idealized German past while also managing to uphold the value of Reform Christianity. By presenting the latter as distinct from the former, and by demonstrating its commensurability with the values of the *Volk* and the critical spirit of the day, de Wette was able to preserve a dynamic Hebraic (prophetic) Christianity that could develop with the changing needs of history.

*de Wette on his Head: Wellhausen and the Exilic Rupture Model*

De Wette’s radical approach to biblical criticism was not universally accepted among his peers, and received resistance for decades from positivist and pietist biblical critics who fought to maintain the historical value of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>59</sup> It was only with the work of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the success of his *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* that de Wette’s exilic rupture model gained authoritative status.<sup>60</sup> In this

---

59. See the discussion in Pasto, “Who Owns the Jewish Past?” 160–166.

60. “The *Prolegomena* gave de Wette’s model the authoritative status it had thus far failed to achieve, and it also authorized the discursive features of that model so that they henceforth would serve as rules for the foundation of further scholarship. It is therefore with the *Prolegomena* that we can begin to speak of Judeography as the dominant discourse of the Jewish past.” Pasto, “Who Owns the Jewish Past?” 202.

highly influential work, Wellhausen presented a Romantic retelling of Israel’s political and religious history, maintaining — with de Wette — the exile as *the* flash point in an ongoing process of gradual alienation of the Israelites from their land.<sup>61</sup> However, in employing de Wette’s approach in his own schema, Wellhausen made a small but critical alteration to the framework of the exilic rupture model that he inherited. Where de Wette had understood the book of Deuteronomy and its centralization prescriptions as the latest source in the Pentateuch, Wellhausen argued that in fact the source he termed Q, or what scholars now refer to as the Priestly History or Source,<sup>62</sup> contained the Pentateuch’s *latest* material and pushed its composition into the era of the second temple period. Paul B. Harvey, Jr. and Baruch Halpern note that “Wellhausen thought he had found de Wette standing on his head, and so turned him upside down.”<sup>63</sup> As a result of this overturning, the dichotomy between the “prophetic” Israelite religion of the monarchic period and the “legalistic” religion of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian

---

61. Centralization — the invention of Deuteronomy — was another key moment for Wellhausen’s schematization of Israel’s history because it was the primary catalyst in instigating this process. “Religious worship was a natural thing in Hebrew antiquity; it was the blossom of life, the heights and depths of which it was its business to to transfigure and glorify. The law which abolished all sacrificial seats, with a single exception, severed this connection... The consequences which lie dormant in the Deuteronomic law are fully developed in the Priestly Code.” Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel with a Reprint of the Article Israel from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 76–82, here 77.

In his critique of Wellhausen’s critics, Barton helpfully demonstrates that — like de Wette before him — Wellhausen’s reliance on Herder’s Romantic approach to history, illustrating just how pervasive the mode of thinking was in the discourse of 19th century German scholarship. John Barton, “Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*: Influences and Effects,” in *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Essays of John Barton* (Society for Old Testament Study Monographs. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 169–179.

62. Ernest W. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 17–21.

63. Harvey Jr and Halpern, “de Wette’s “*Dissertatio Critica...*” 72.

periods and beyond was further anchored in the literature of the Hebrew Bible. This small change, supported by previous claims to the relative “youth” of the legalistic portions of the Pentateuch,<sup>64</sup> propelled Wellhausen’s version of the exilic rupture model to the status of scholarly consensus.

John Barton notes just how influential Wellhausen’s updated model of the development of Israelite religion became for critical biblical scholarship:

Of course people before [Wellhausen] knew that [the Exile] had happened, but so long as the Priestly Work was dated early, there was no reason to think that the Exile had changed anything in the inner constitution and temperament of the Israelites and their religion. It was an event which had happened to the body of the nation. But Wellhausen showed *for the first time* that it had also decisively affected the nation’s soul. The experience of being exiled in a foreign land, without national institutions such as the monarchy and the Temple, had made the Israelites turn in on themselves and ask questions about their religious identity. The leading people among them had developed the blueprints for life in a restored community, where obedience to carefully devised rituals would replace the chaotic spontaneity which had encouraged the syncretistic tendencies now being punished by Yahweh. Israel could become a confessional, rather than a national community.<sup>65</sup>

As outlined by Barton, it is difficult to underestimate the importance of Wellhausen’s work — particularly his views on the effects of the Babylonian exile — for future biblical scholarship.<sup>66</sup>

And while Barton incorrectly attributes de Wette’s “discovery” to Wellhausen, the mistake is a productive indicator of just how important that latter’s work was to the popularization of the

---

64. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 3.

65. Barton, “Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena*.” 178. *emphasis* mine.

66. Barton highlights, for example, Daniel Smith-Christopher’s *Religion of the Landless*. On that work’s importance for the study of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, see ch. 2 below.

exilic rupture model.<sup>67</sup> It is through his work that the model is crystalized and gains traction in the discourse of subsequent biblical scholarship.

Like de Wette, Wellhausen is also very much a product of his era, and his critics have been active in problematizing his views on the development of Israelite religion as presented in his *Prolegomena*, and have done so on numerous grounds,<sup>68</sup> including the work's (d)evolutionary approach to religious development<sup>69</sup> and for its anti-semitic or anti-Jewish stance.<sup>70</sup> However, the basic structure of the exilic rupture model that was crystalized in Wellhausen's work has nonetheless managed to maintain a firm foothold in critical biblical scholarship. For example, in

---

67. Wellhausen's popularization of the exilic rupture model is part of a greater trend in his work in which he builds on the theories of his predecessors and contemporaries. For further examples, see the discussion in the introduction to Jeffrey Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law and Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3ff.

68. For a helpful summary of the primary criticisms leveled against Wellhausen, see Barton, "Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*." 173–178.

69. Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 1. The evolutionary model is properly qualified as "devolutionary" in Barton, "Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*," who attributes this approach to Romantic views of religious development in the work of Herder

70. LH Silberman, "Wellhausen and Judaism," *Semeia* 25 (1982): 75–82. who helpfully notes that *the work* is anti-Jewish, and not necessarily Wellhausen himself, or at least he was no more so than his contemporaries. Barton has — think correctly — qualified this typical criticism of Wellhausen's work. While the work is frequently and explicitly anti-Jewish ("In dogmatic theology Judaism is a mere empty chasm over which one springs from the Old Testament to the New;" *Prolegomena*, 1), Wellhausen's real targets seem to have been the Catholic and dogmatic Lutheran Churches. "What Wellhausen was against in religion was empty formalism, legalism, the letter instead of the spirit, authoritarian structures instead of the freedom of the individual. The contemporary manifestations of such aberrations, as he saw them, were not in Judaism but in the Christian churches: not only in Catholicism, which like all nineteenth-century Protestants he would have accused of such abuses, but in the Lutheran church in which he had grown up but in which he had come to feel that he could no longer serve as a Professor training men for Christian ministry — with the well-known consequence that in the years after writing the *Prolegomena* he moved to Halle, and took up a post teaching Arabic studies in the Faculty of Arts." Barton, "Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*." 175.

his 2015 publication, *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah*, Reinhard Kratz can confidently (and without further argument) claim that “In his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Wellhausen analyzed the literary tradition’s development and reconstructed the cultic and religious history of Israel and Judah, on the one hand, and Judaism, on the other — a reconstruction *still accurate in its essentials*.”<sup>71</sup> In the very first sentence of the second volume of his *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, Rainer Albertz states, “Although — as has become evident — the transitions were historically quite fluid, the period of exile, which is traditionally put between the years of 587 and 539, marks a deep rift in the history of Israelite religion.”<sup>72</sup> Albertz further indicates this transition through a significant shift in terminology in the second volume of his history in which the population that is the focus of his study, identified as Israelite / Judean in his first volume, are referred to exclusively as Jews in the second. Notably, Albertz offers no explanation for this shift, assuming the explanation to be self-evident.

## Conclusion

### *Leaving the Exilic Rupture Model Behind*

---

71. Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah* (2015), 51–52. Emphasis mine. Kratz also attributes the origination of the model to de Wette in a footnote at the end of this quote, n. 9.

72. Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (The Old Testament Library II: From the Exile to the Maccabees; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 369.

The unexamined propagation of the exilic rupture model is problematic and potentially pernicious on a number of fronts. First of all, from an ethical perspective, the exilic rupture model was built on a premise that has long been recognized as problematic. As argued by Pasto, “nineteenth century scholars presented their post-exilic Judaism of contradiction and repression as a metaphor for hierarchical Christian forms and as a critique of a distinctive Jewish identity in Germany;”<sup>73</sup> it was a constructive project at as much as it was engaging critically with the texts in question. A concept or model whose foundation is built on outdated or hostile presuppositions is not *necessarily* invalidated simply as a result of those presuppositions.<sup>74</sup> However, if that model produces a persistently negative judgment with regard to a particular people or institution, as does the exilic rupture model with regard to Judaism and its adherents, it should at least cause hesitation for the one who would apply it.<sup>75</sup>

Beyond the ethical concerns that the exilic rupture model raises, there is also the issue of its hermeneutical value for critical biblical scholarship. Does this view of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century productively inform the texts and historical communities of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, or does it presumptively and unduly skew interpretations towards a view of religious and social identity that the model presupposes? As I will demonstrate over the course of this

---

73. Pasto, “When the End is the Beginning?” 196.

74. See, for example, the conclusions of James A. Loader concerning the contributions of Abraham Kuenen, a contemporary of Wellhausen and arguably the real “founder” of the Graf/Wellhausen hypothesis. James Loader, “The Exilic Period in Abraham Kuenen’s Account of Israelite Religion,” *ZAW* 96 (1984): 3–23.

75. Brettler makes this point clearly and succinctly in his article on the topic: “The scholarly distinction between ‘ancient Israel’ and ‘Judaism’ may be probed for an additional reason: to some extent, the distinction continues to justify the negative connotations that Judaism has carried within biblical scholarship.” Brettler, “Judaism in the Hebrew Bible?,” 430.

project, the latter is in fact the case, and the exilic rupture models fails to convincingly account for the phenomena it serves to explain.

In place of the model developed by de Wette and refined by Wellhausen, I offer an alternative formulation of social identity in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries that I call “Judeanness” or Judean identity.<sup>76</sup> I refer to the יהודיא/יהודים/*Yāhūdāya* whom it describes as Judeans. I have chosen this terminology for a number of reasons. First, as I will argue in the next chapter, contemporary models of ethnicity offer productive insights into how these communities perceived themselves and how they were perceived by those around them. Following Mason’s work on Ἰουδαῖος, I use the term “Judean” as an ethnonym to reflect this position. Secondly, I have chosen this terminology over against “Jew” and “Judaism” in order to distance myself and my approach from the exilic rupture model and the scholarship that has taken it for granted. This is not to discount the descriptive power of “Jew” and “Judaism” for contemporary English-speaking communities, a point demonstrated by the Pew research cited by Reinhartz and discussed above, nor is it meant to assert discontinuity between modern Jewish communities and those groups that are the topic of this study. Rather, the choice reflects, at least in part, a recognition of the ideologically fraught use of this terminology in the history of critical biblical scholarship.

---

76. I first encountered the use of “Judeanness” to define the abstract relationship between Judeans in the work of Stewart Moore. Stewart Alden Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 171; Boston: Brill, 2015), 1 n. 1. It seems, however, to be an established concept in New Testament Studies, and has been in use since at least the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See, for example the use of the term in an analysis of ethnic hierarchy in Pauline materials in Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline E Johnson Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 235–251.

## *Chapter Outline*

In chapter 2, I outline the theoretical framework that I have developed to analyze the various kinds of evidence available that speak to how Judeanness was expressed and recognized among the communities who are the subjects of this study. I have drawn from the insights of three social scientific subfields — Trauma, Diaspora, and Ethnicity Studies — in order to offer a new model of Judeanness that was flexible and dynamic. I argue that Judeanness was a social identity that was able to adjust with the developing historical realities of a world in which the kingdom of Judah was no longer a politically independent entity.

In chapter 3, I begin my discussion of Judean communities with the colony of Judean imperial soldiers on the island of Yeb on the Nile's first cataract, modern day Elephantine. The chapter addresses a variety of kinds of evidence. It begins with a summary of what is known about the community, before moving on to a discussion of its *mythomoteur*, the story Judeo-Egyptian leaders told about their arrival on the island, and what the details of that story can tell us about the group's values. In the chapter's next section, I discuss the role of religion and the community's temple to Yahu in the construction of its identity. By applying insights from the study of congregationalism among modern American immigrants, I argue for the importance of religion and religious institution in the (re)production of collective identity. Finally, in the chapter's last section, I highlight the ways in which the community's adaptation to its Egyptian context are visible in the evidentiary record. It appears that as these Judeans accommodated many elements of the cultures of their neighbors, they also contributed to a broader cultural

koine among the other ethnic minorities and subjected Egyptians settled around them on the island.

In chapter 4, I will address the situation of Judean communities in Babylonia. The chapter begins with a reflection on the significance of the discovery and publication of Late Babylonian administrative documents from Āl-Yāḥūdu in the environs of Nippur. In my treatment of these tablets, written exclusively by Babylonian scribes in the employ of the imperial government, I identify the salient features of Judeanness from an outsider imperial perspective. By reading these texts in their historical context, I will analyze the value and function of the category of *Yāḥūdi* for the Babylonian and Persian administrations and the effects it might have had on those to whom it was applied. As we will see, this material is indicative of a diasporic community adapting to its new geographic, political, and cultural context over the course of a few generations, with varying degrees of financial and social success.

From these administrative records, I then move on to a study of the Book of Ezekiel, a highly theologized and ideologized narrative set in the Judeo-Babylonian diaspora written from the viewpoint of a member of a community in the same region as Āl-Yāḥūdu. I argue that the Book of Ezekiel expresses a view of Judeanness that is incompatible with life in the diaspora, at least in the long term. Rather, the work is careful to construct boundaries (religious, social, economic) in order to maintain a distinct Judean community that Yahweh would, in time, restore to its ancestral homeland of Judea.

In the chapter's penultimate section, I explore the relationship between particular constructions of social identity and the decision of Judeo-Babylonians and contemporary

diasporic communities to undertake return migration in the first decades of Persian rule. As a result of their associations with religious institutions and commitment to what I call a theology of place, they privileged residence in their ancestral homelands over the hybrid experience of life in the diaspora. Finally, through a close reading of Isa 40–48, and 40.1–11 in particular, I argue that the rhetoric employed by the composition’s author is meant convince Judeo-Babylonians who had come to feel at home in Babylonia that return migration was the divine will and that they were to play a definitive role in announcing that plan.

Then, in chapter 5, I shift focus from the diaspora to Judea. Rather than a complete break in local communal identity in Judea between the monarchic and Persian periods, as suggested by the so-called “Myth of the Empty Land,” I analyze a local form of material culture — storage jars impressed with stamp seals — as evidence of a continuous sense of Judean identity that was constructed and reproduced widely among the local population of Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period. The production of the stamped jars was supported by a new class of local elites who stepped into the power vacuum left behind behind those deported under Nebuchadnezzar and was able to maintain the system of redistribution of which the storage jars were a part. In so doing, this group also facilitated the reproduction of the symbolic value of that institution and its material output to the degree that when the Persians took control of the region in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, they recognized it as יהודי and thus named the region after the self-designation of its inhabitants.

I then move from the widespread discourse of material culture to the narrow focus of a series of *mythomoteurs* for the community in Judea during the Persian period. I have identified

four *mythomoteurs* — the book of Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, Ezra 9, and Nehemiah 9 — that reflect on the contours of Judean identity in Judea during the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. These origin stories offer self-conscious narrative accounts of new beginnings and make implicit and explicit claims about in- and out-group boundaries. These *mythomoteurs* are also important to the broader aims of this study because scholars have relied so heavily on them for reconstructing the history of Judea during this period. They have often served as primary sources for the periods in which their narratives are set and have had significant influence on how scholars have understood the nature of Judeanness during the Persian period.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I offer a conclusion that reflects on the variety of constructions of Judeanness in the different communities studied as well as the ways in which the differences in evidence for those constructions — medium, audience, point of view — inform our expectations for the kind of identity that is presented. I also outline some issues that I hope to address in future work based on the foundations I establish in this project.

## Chapter 2

### Defining “Judeanness”

#### Social Scientific Approaches to Identity Construction

##### *Introduction*

In the previous chapter I made a predominantly negative argument against what James Pasto has identified as the exilic rupture model, a scholarly reconstruction of the post-monarchic period that took the fall of the kingdom of Judah as *the* turning point in ancient Israel’s political, social, and religious history and the defining element of subsequent יהודי identity, transforming Judeans into Jews. The Babylonian exile and its memory became the fundamental building blocks in all subsequent constructions of identity.

In this chapter, I lay the groundwork for an alternative formulation of that social identity, what I am calling “Judeanness,” in the post-monarchic period. This Judeanness was not solely defined and driven by the trauma of exile, but was instead flexible, adaptive, and dynamic. The

Judeanness of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian period adjusted with the developing historical realities of a post-monarchic world.

To flesh out this sense of Judeanness, I have drawn from the insights of three social scientific subfields on which the Hebrew Bible and scholarly constructions of the Babylonian exile have had significant influence: Ethnicity, Trauma, and Diaspora Studies. In this chapter I will briefly discuss the value and limitations of these approaches for my own treatment of Judean communities of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. In the chapter's final section, I will gesture to the detailed work of the project's individual chapters, highlighting some of the ways in which Judean identity persisted and transformed over the course of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a particular focus on institutions that may have supported positive associations with Judean identity.

### Ethnicity and a Judean "*Ethnos*"

#### "*Judeans*"

As I argued in the Introduction, critical scholarship since the 19<sup>th</sup> century has argued that the exile resulted in a radical transformation of those who experienced and treated the יהודים of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries as "Jews," a primarily religious community (or communities) that preceded the diaspora Judaism of the early Modern Era. The drawbacks to this approach have already been

enumerated. The field of ethnicity studies has provided an alternative model of Judean identity in the post-monarchic period.<sup>1</sup>

In his foundational monograph *The Religion of the Landless*, Daniel Smith-Christopher made the following claim: “If a social group is facing the kind of crisis that we have thus far considered [namely, the Babylonian exile], in what way can we refer to the ‘mazeway,’ the social construction of reality, that groups have? The most fruitful way to approach this problem is a consideration of *ethnic identity*, including the question of (1) the preservation of self-definition, (2) identity in a minority context, and (3) a minority under domination.”<sup>2</sup> Smith-Christopher’s suggestion provides an intriguing entry point for understanding the collective relations that I am calling Judeanness during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. It has the potential to overcome the apparent disunity caused by the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah by providing a different standard of social unity: ethnicity. But to apply this category to these ancient communities also raises a

---

1. Scholars of the pre-monarchic period have also turned to ethnicity to understand or argue for continuity in Israelite identity prior to the state. This is especially the case for archaeologists. See, for example, William G. Dever, “Cultural Continuity, Ethnicity in the Archaeological Record and the Question of Israelite Origins,” *ErIsr* 24 (1993): 22–33; Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II* (Translated by Ludlum, Ruth. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 255–268; Shlomo Bunimovitz and Avraham Faust, “Building Identity: The Four-Room House and the Israelite Mind,” in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors From the Late Bronze Age Through Roman Palaestina: Proceedings from the Centennial Symposium W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research Jerusalem, May 29–May 31, 2000* (eds. Seymour Gitin and William G. Dever; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 411–423. For more skeptical views on the value of the archaeological record for reconstructing what Dever calls “proto-Israelites,” see Raz Kletter, “Can a Proto-Israelite Please Stand Up,” (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 573–586; Raz Kletter, “In the Footsteps of Bagira,” *Approaching Religion* 4 (2014): 2–15.

2. Daniel L. Smith (-Christopher), *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989), 51.

number of issues. For example, what does it mean to call the יהודים of this period an “ethnic group,” a term so closely associated with the modern nation-state?<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, what set of phenomena does one identify in employing the modern scholarly category of “ethnicity” in describing the social identification of ancient Judeans? Before going forward with Smith-Christopher’s proposal, it will be productive to address these questions.

### *Instrumentalism and Primordialism*

Critical discussions of ethnicity and ethnic identity typically begin with Frederick Barth’s seminal 1969 edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*,<sup>4</sup> and Barth’s introduction to that volume, in particular.<sup>5</sup> In this essay, Barth offered a drastically new approach to the study of ethnicity, challenging the prevailing view of ethnic groups as simply static reflections of an unchanging culture, a view that is typically termed “primordialism.” Prior to the late 1960s, anthropologists had, on the whole, defined “ethnic groups” in the following way: “a population that is (1) biologically self-perpetuating; (2) shares a fundamental, recognizable, relatively uniform set of cultural values, including language; (3) constitutes a partly independent

---

3. “Ethnicity” as a category of social unity often seems to be retroactively developed in light of a formed nationstate, or in the struggle to create one.

4. Of course Barth’s approach was not spawned ex-nihilo. Stewart Moore’s recent monograph on Judeo-Egyptian identity during the Hellenistic period does an excellent job of tracing the roots of Barth’s Introduction: Stewart Alden Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 171; Boston: Brill, 2015), 7–44, esp. 26–42. For a recent, thorough, and indispensable review of scholarship on the study of ethnicity and its utility for the study of the Hebrew Bible in particular, see ch. 2 in Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*, 19–72.; for an extended review of approaches to ethnicity from the anthropological side, see Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

5. Barth, 1969, #41510@9–37

‘interaction sphere’; (4) has a membership that defines itself, as well as being defined by others, as a category... and (5) perpetuates its sense of separate identity...”<sup>6</sup> Rather than just the social presentation of this cultural “stuff,” Barth argued that ethnic identity was a matter of *social organization*, and that it was conditioned by context and interaction rather than some innate or primordial character. According to Barth’s model, ethnicity is activated — or at least most salient — at social boundaries, as a means of distinguishing a community’s in-group from an out-group, a proximate other. Because the proximate other can change in different historical/economic/political situations, so too can the contours of ethnic identity of the group that responds to it. This means that the most salient “ethnic markers” of such a community are not necessarily its most “original” or “authentic,” those most deeply rooted in its static “culture,” but rather those that are most functional or productive at a boundary at any given moment.

According to this model, ethnicity is most strongly asserted at the borders of a community and is therefore primarily *reactive* and *reflexive*. The creation of opposition through boundary assertion brings members of the in-group closer together by asserting certain traits as communal idiom. These traits, or markers of *dis*-continuity, typically serve to contrast the in-group with communities that would otherwise *seem* closest to it. “An imagined community is promoted by making a few such diacritica highly salient and symbolic, that is by an active

---

6. This definition is cited by Raz Kletter from an article by archaeologist William Dever. Dever claims to have derived it from Barth’s essay (pgs. 10–11), but, as Kletter has pointed out, “Fredrik Barth (1969: 10–11) did indeed mention this definition — though not as his own, but as a *former* definition; one which he strongly rejected a few lines later.” Kletter, “In the Footsteps of Bagira,” 2, emphasis original; Dever, “Cultural Continuity, Ethnicity in the Archaeological Record and the Question of Israelite Origins,” 23. Cf. G. Carter Bentley, “Ethnicity and Practice,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 24–25.

construction of a boundary.”<sup>7</sup> This means that ethnicity is best understood as “ongoing *process* of ethnic identification.”<sup>8</sup>

While widely applauded for its reformulation of ethnic identity as a social process, Barth’s approach — dubbed “instrumentalist” in subsequent scholarship — has also been criticized for its lack of attention to the symbolic resources<sup>9</sup> around which ethnic borders were developed,<sup>10</sup> and for proposing that identity assertion (and its motives) are conscious and intentional.<sup>11</sup> Barth’s model fails to account for the un/subconscious feeling of “we/us” that must precede the recognition of “them.” This does not nullify Barth’s observations about ethnicity’s interactionality, but reverses his cause and effect. For example, Eugene Roosen defines ethnicity as “a feeling of belonging and continuity-in-being (staying the same person(s) through time)

---

7. In this later reflection on his earlier work, Barth borrows the term “imagined community” from Benedict Anderson’s work of the same name. Fredrik Barth, “Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* (eds. Hans. Vermeulen and Cora. Govers; Hague, Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 16. Anderson, who was making an argument about the rise of nationalism, uses the expression to define the nation as “an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” While the latter two points are less important for a discussion of ancient ethnic groups, his idea of “imagined” has been quite generative: “[The Nation] is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* ( New York: Verso, 2006), 5–6, emphasis original.

8. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* ( Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 15.

9. For the expression “symbolic resources,” see Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 90.

10. See, for example, Anthony Cohen’s contribution to the volume dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Barth’s famous work: Anthony P. Cohen, “Boundaries of Consciousness, Consciousness of Boundaries. Critical Questions for Anthropology,” (eds. Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers; Hague, The Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 59–80.

11. Bentley, “Ethnicity and Practice,” 24–27.

resulting from an act of self-ascription, and/or ascription by others, to a group of people who claim both common ancestry and a common cultural identity.”<sup>12</sup> While the sense of an ‘other’ is still important to this construction, it is the internal sense of belonging that really counts, while the sense of contrast to outsiders need only be vague.

In his review of scholarship on ethnicity in anthropology, Marcus Banks characterizes these two approaches — the instrumentalist and the primordialist — according to the following analogy: the instrumentalists understand ethnicity like the *head*. As a social process, it serves to achieve an end, or is the (conscious) result of socioeconomic or historical circumstances. Primordialists, on the other hand, see ethnicity as the *heart*, the internal sense of continuity that appears fundamental to groups and exists for its own sake.<sup>13</sup> The dichotomy highlights what A. D. Smith sees as the two-fold “historical” nature of ethnic communities: “Such collectivities are doubly ‘historical’ in the sense that not only are historical memories essential to their continuance but each such ethnic group is the product of specific historical forces and is therefore subject to historical change and dissolution.”<sup>14</sup>

Recognizing the apparent and unresolvable tension between the primordial and functionalist approaches, Siân Jones has offered a processual and relational approach. She defines ethnicity and ethnic groups as follows:

---

12. Eugene Roosens, “The Primordial Nature of Origins in Migrant Ethnicity,” (eds. Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers; Hague, The Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 84.

13. Banks, *Ethnicity*, 180–184. See also Bentley’s application of Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* to ethnic identity. He makes a compelling case for the unconscious nature of the “decisions” often associated with the instrumentalist approach. Bentley, “Ethnicity and Practice,” , 24– 55; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 14–18.

14. Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 19–25, here 20.

*Ethnic groups are culturally ascribed identity groups, which are based on the expression of a real or assumed shared culture and common descent (usually through the objectification of cultural, linguistic, religious, historical and/or physical characteristics). As a process ethnicity involves a consciousness of difference, which, to varying degrees, entails the reproduction and transformation of basic classificatory distinctions between groups of people who perceive themselves to be in some respect culturally distinct. The cultural differences informing ethnic categories are, to varying degrees, systematic and enduring, because they both inform modes of interaction between people of different ethnic categories, and are confirmed by that interaction; that is, ethnic categories are reproduced and transformed in the ongoing processes of social life.*<sup>15</sup>

Jones' model is helpful in that it recognizes the continuity experienced by members of the in-group with one another that is reproduced over time, thus creating a repertoire of shared symbolic resources for members of the in-group.<sup>16</sup> It is through this process that cultural capital can be produced and reproduced, and a sense of "us" can develop. At the same time, the relevance or salience of any single symbol or cluster of symbols from that repertoire is dependent on interactions with a proximate other and the contexts in which those interactions occur. Through Jones' approach we can recognize the content of the identity claims made by ancient communities as well as the contextualized nature of those claims.

### *The Process of Constructing Judeanness*

Having identified ethnicity as a social process that makes recourse to a repertoire of shared symbolic resources, I must now state what processes, traits, and characteristics I identify when I

---

15. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 84–105, here 84. emphasis original.

16. I would push back, however, on Jones' emphasis on the importance of a claim of common descent to the construction of ethnic identity. As Konstan demonstrates, shared descent is just one of many symbolic resources that *can* be emphasized in a group, but need not be. David Konstan, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (1997): 97–110. See my extended discussion of his work in the ch. 3.

apply the category to the the יהודים / *Yāhūdāya* / יהודייה of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. First of all, it means that I have identified a social group or groups to which these titles (and others, like יעקוב, ישראל, etc.) were ascribed, either through self designation or as applied by outsiders.<sup>17</sup> This identification was part of an ongoing social process between ‘Judeans’ and ‘others,’ including Mesopotamian imperial powers, similarly displaced minority groups, subjugated Egyptians, and other communities with more and less cultural overlap.

Secondly, by applying the analytical category of “ethnicity” to Judeans of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, I identify between them an observably shared repertoire and repository of symbolic resources for in-group members. I observe in the available evidence from communities in Egypt, Babylonia, Samaria, and Judea some clustering of the following traits: 1) a myth of shared ancestry, 2) elements of a distinct common culture (language, diet, dress, practice, etc.), 3) religion,<sup>18</sup> and 4) a relationship with the geographic territory of the former kingdom of Judah.<sup>19</sup>

---

17. Jenkins highlights the distinction between self-ascriptions, “internal,” and ascription by outsiders, “categorization.” The difference between the two is power or authority. According to Jenkins, “Social categorization, in particular, is intimately bound up with power relations and relates to the capacity of one group successfully to impose its categories of ascription upon another set of people, and to the resources which the categorized collectivity can draw upon to resist, if need be, that imposition. To acknowledge the significance of the distinction between group identification and categorization is to place relationships of domination and subordination on the theoretical centre-stage.” Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 23.

18. The category of religion is notoriously slippery when it comes to describing phenomena in the ancient world. In my own usage, I follow the lead of scholars like Brent Nongbri and Stanley Stowers who use the term as a redescriptive analytical category rather than one that was native to the Judeans in question. In this regard I use the category, as do many other scholars of the ancient world, “mostly to discuss things involving gods or other superhuman beings and the technologies for interacting with those beings.” The category is one facet of a broader social matrix that played a sometimes significant — although not always so — role in the processes of individual and group definition. Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 132–160, for the quote, see 157.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive; it provides a productive point of departure.<sup>20</sup> It is also important to note that while these traits may *seem* to have had a long continuous history among Judeans, they were not in fact static or “primordial.” Rather, this pool of potential diacritica was a resource available for a complex and continuous process of identity formation that was undertaken, consciously or unconsciously,<sup>21</sup> by Judean individuals and communities. As Katherine Southwood keenly observes, a clustering of these attributes might crystalize as “Judeanness” under a given set of social, religious, economic, and geographic situations, but that identity was nonetheless dynamic and could be “reinvented, or reinterpreted, in every generation.”<sup>22</sup>

#### *Tribal Identity in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries?*

In interpreting the titles יהודיא/יהודים/*Yāhūdāya* applied to the communities in question as variations of an ethnonym, and translating that ethnonym as “Judean,” I am explicitly drawing a connection between these communities and the territory of Judea where they or their ancestors had previously belonged. In so doing, I am intentionally creating distance between my own reconstructions of these communities and those that have been influenced by the exilic rupture model. However, the Hebrew name “Judah” (יהודה) is not solely applied to the Iron Age

---

19. This list is informed by Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 21–31; Smith, *National Identity*, 21; Simeon Chavel, personal communication.

20. Southwood is critical of the “checklist” approach as found in the work of A. D. Smith. However, she recognizes its value as a starting point in the evaluation the social processes that produce a sense of ethnic community in a given historical context. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*, 31–34.

21. Bentley, “Ethnicity and Practice,” 32–40.

22. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*, 30.

kingdom that held this territory within the literature of the Hebrew Bible, but is in fact polyvalent. In addition to the kingdom of Judah, it can also refer to territory, a tribal entity who inhabited that territory, or the eponymous ancestor of that tribal entity.<sup>23</sup> Because the tribe (Hebrew שבט or מטה) seems to have been the highest level of kinship association in the pre-monarchic and monarchic periods<sup>24</sup> and purported kinship is often theorized as a primary diacritic of the ethnic group,<sup>25</sup> there is the potential for significant overlap between these two spheres of identity. This raises an important question for the construction of Judeanness in the 6<sup>th</sup>

---

23. Hans-Jürgen Zobel, יהודה, *TDOT* 5: 485–486. According to Zobel’s count, יהודה occurs approximately 480 times in reference to the territory or political entity, 290 times in reference to the tribe, and 40 times in reference to an individual.

24. Although the tribe was the highest level of kinship association during these period (according to the literature of the Hebrew Bible), it was really the lower orders of relations that “have more of an influence upon behavior and elicit more group loyalty.” T. M. Lemos, “Kinship, Community and Society,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (ed. Susan Niditch; Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 380. These lower orders included the clan (משפחה) and below that, the family (בית אב). This ordering is famously attested in the search for the materials looted from the חרם of Jericho in Joshua 7. The search for the looted items narrows from tribe (שבט), to clan (משפחה), to family (בית אב) in v. 14. For a discussion of kinship groups during the pre-monarchic and monarchic periods, see Baruch Halpern, “Sybil, or the Two Nations? Archaism, Kinship, Alienation and the Elite Redefinition of Traditional Culture in Judah in the 8th–7th Centuries B.C.E.,” in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21st Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (eds. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz; 291–338. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 293–303. For the correlation of these units as presented in the literary record and the archaeology of Iron I & II, see David Vanderhooft, “The Israelite *mišpāḥā*, the Priestly Writings, and Changing Valences in Israel’s Kinship Terminology,” in *Exploring the Longue Duree: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager* (eds. J. David Schloen and Lawrence E. Stager; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 485–496. Smith-Christopher argued that the lower orders of kinship relations — the בית אב in particular — underwent significant changes in the Babylonian diaspora. Smith (-Christopher), *The Religion of the Landless*, 93–126.; cf. Lemos, 308–310.

25. For the importance afforded to kinship in scholarship on ethnicity, see my introduction to the excursus on the Samaritans in ch. 3.

and 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE: what role, if any, did tribal affiliation play in the construction of social identity during this period?

The short answer, at least according to the evidence surveyed for this project, is that the situation is unclear. First of all, the literary tradition that includes Judah as one of the twelve sons of the Patriarch Jacob / Israel and the eponymous ancestor of a tribal entity outlives the kingdom that shared his name. This tradition, which is preserved in a relatively fixed form in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History,<sup>26</sup> is a cornerstone of the vision of the future temple and its organization in Ezekiel 40–48 and seems to be implicitly assumed in a number of passages from Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>27</sup> However, the tradition is best preserved in the genealogies that compose chs. 1–9 of 1 Chronicles. Here, while the Chronicler’s focus is clearly on Judah and to lesser degrees Benjamin and Levi, he/she nonetheless offers genealogies for all twelve tribes (with the exception of Zebulun, and perhaps Dan).<sup>28</sup> This indicates that even as he/she was primarily concerned with describing the kinship networks of Judah and the territory that those

---

26. Although not *completely* fixed; see, for example, the different formulation of the league in a text like the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), which ignores Judah, Simeon, Manasseh, and Gad, but includes Machir and Gilead (and Meroz?). For a brief review of literature and the relevant points on this issue, see the recent discussion in Kristin Weingart, “All These Are the Twelve Tribes of Israel’: The Origins of Israel’s Kinship Identity,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 82 (2019): 24–31.

27. For example, the community offers twelve goats in Ezra 6.16–17, and anoints twelve priests in 8.24–25. For the relevance of these passages to the relationship between Judeans and Samaritans, see the excursus on Samaria in ch. 3.

28. Neither Zebulun nor Dan appears in the MT. However, the editor of BHS suggests emending עיר in 1 Chron 7.12 to דן in order to include Dan prior to the list of the descendants of the northern tribes of Naphtali (בני נפתלי in v. 13) and Manasseh (בני מנשה in v. 14). This suggestion is based on Gen 46.23 where Hushim is identified as the only son of Dan (ובני דן חשים). However, for an argument against this emendation, see H. G. M Williamson, “Note on 1 Chronicles 7:12,” *VT* 23 (1973): 375–379.

networks held, the Chronicler was nonetheless constrained by the tradition of the twelve-tribe league of the Patriarchal period.<sup>29</sup>

In each of these literary examples, the salience of tribal identity is closely related to the possession and division of the territory of Judea, either in the present of the narrative or in its anticipated or hoped-for future.<sup>30</sup> This connection is clear in the case of the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9, and the few explicit references to tribal affiliation in Ezra-Nehemiah appear in the narration of the diaspora community’s preparation for return migration and their eventual resettlement in Judea.<sup>31</sup> Within the Book of Ezekiel’s temple vision, the reassembly of the twelve-tribe league is part-and-parcel to the broader restoration project of Israel in its former territory.<sup>32</sup>

In general, however, Judean literature traditionally dated to the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods does not appeal to tribal identity in its various reconstructions of collective identity. Instead, the communities of this period are addressed using higher order titles like Jacob and Israel.<sup>33</sup> The title Judah does occur as well, but with reference to the socio-political entity

---

29. Weingart, “‘All These Are the Twelve Tribes of Israel’,” 27.

30. The most glaring exception to this rule is Mordecai in the book of Esther whose great grandfather, Kish, is identified as an **אִישׁ יְמִינִי**, presumably a Benjaminite (2.5). Mordecai himself, however, is introduced earlier in the verse as an **אִישׁ יְהוּדִי**.

31. E.g. the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi: Ezra 1.5; 4.1; 8.15, 18; 10.9; c.f. Neh 11.4, 7, 31.

32. See also the call for the restoration of the twelve tribes to Judea in Isa 49.6 and their association with that territory in Zech 9.1.

33. On the use of these titles within the literature of the diaspora. see my discussions of the Book of Ezekiel and of Isaiah 40–48 in ch. 4.

rather than to a tribal one.<sup>34</sup> The same holds true for the non-biblical evidence surveyed in this study. I did not encounter a single reference to tribal identity in the evidence from the Judean diaspora (Yeb and Āl-Yāḥūdu) or in the non-literary evidence from Judea.

This suggests that while traditions of tribal affiliation survived the end of the monarchy and persisted well into the Persian (if not Hellenistic) period, their salience as a diacritic of collective identity was limited to (or at least most salient in) the context of the division of territory in Judea, either historical or ideological. This is not to say that tribal identity ceased to be important during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, or to invalidate its importance in previous centuries; rather, this claim simply reflects the narrow field in which the evidence is currently available. As such, tribal identity will not be a prominent feature of my analysis going forward, except in those cases when it is used as part of a broader approach to defining in- and out-group dynamics.

## Trauma

### *Ethnicity and Trauma: The Babylonian Exile*

In the conclusion to his article “Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE)” Smith-Christopher made the following observation about

---

34. While not definitive, the strongest evidence for associating “Judah” in this material with the former geo-political entity rather than the tribal tradition preserved in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History is the absence of a reference to Benjamin in works like Haggai and Zechariah. The Persian period entity known as “Yehud” clearly incorporated traditionally Benjaminite territory, but there is no appeal to it or its inhabitants from the broader Judean body in terms of the collective entity represented. For the delineation of Judean territory during this period, see ch. 5.

the experience of those Judeans who had been forcibly removed to Babylonia for the fall of Jerusalem as represented in biblical texts that reflect on the experience<sup>35</sup>:

Furthermore, it is clear that the exilic, and particularly post-exilic, community reveals the typical behavior patterns of a minority community that has closed ranks tightly to maintain identity and faith. Any and all theological reflection on the exilic experience... must first contend with the enormity of the physical, social, and psychological trauma of this experience in the life of Ancient Israel, and only then proceed to an assessment of theological themes that are part of the recovery process of a frankly heroic survival of domination in the ancient Near East.<sup>36</sup>

According to this assessment, it was the events of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century — the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation of its population — and the trauma that these events caused that first and foremost came to define that population in subsequent generations and centuries. But what does it mean to locate trauma as a central node of identity, and how does one go about evaluating the merits of such a claim? To address these questions and others like them, I will begin with a discussion of scholarly definitions of “trauma” and what it means to call those who endured the experience of exile (and their descendants) as “traumatized.”

---

35. Smith-Christopher deals with a number of texts ranging in time of composition from the Priestly History (which he dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> century) to the much later book of Daniel. He argues that “contemporary assessments of the exile must not simply dismiss” the negative reflections on exilic experiences in these works “as purely metaphorical with no historical basis.” Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, “Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE),” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James M. Scott; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism. Leiden: Brill, 1997), 30–31.

36. Smith-Christopher, 34–35.

The word “trauma” has a long history. In ancient Greek, the term τραῦμα (or τρῶμα) represented a significant bodily wound and could be abstracted to refer to a loss in battle.<sup>37</sup> For example, Herodotus called the Persian loss at Marathon τὸ ἐν Μαραθῶνι <τῶν Περσέων> τρῶμα, “the Persian trauma at Marathon.”<sup>38</sup> Herodotus records the battle as an Athenian rout of the Persian navy, and so the historian’s use of τραῦμα emphasizes the utter defeat of the latter, and the shift of momentum in the war to the Greek side.<sup>39</sup> In modern discussions of trauma in the fields of psychology, literary criticism, and within the social sciences, the term retains this violent and transitional connotation. It has come to refer to the result or product of an event that is so forceful and disruptive that it marks a distinct before and after for the victim or victims. Trauma, broadly defined, is thus an experience that produces traumatic consequences.

Within the field of psychology, traumatic events are understood to produce a disconnection between the patient and the social world that he or she once knew.<sup>40</sup> According to Judith Herman, traumatic events “undermine the belief systems that give meaning to the human experience. They violate the victim’s faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a

---

37. *LSJ* s.v. τραῦμα. [www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.proxy.uchicago.edu/lsg/](http://www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.proxy.uchicago.edu/lsg/)

38. VI.132.1; Cited from N.G. Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae* (2 vols.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015: vol. 1: 3–436; vol. 2: 439–844. Retrieved from: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.proxy.uchicago.edu/Iris/Cite?0016:002:1009785>.

39. Cf. i.18 and the “defeats” of the people of Miletus. David Grene actually translates ἐν τοῖσι τρώματα μεγάλα διφάσια as “two great reverses.” Herodotus, *The History* (Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 40; Eve-Marie Becker, “‘Trauma Studies’ and Exegesis,” in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (eds. Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Doehorn et al.; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica. Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 17–19.

40. According to Judith Herman’s foundational psychoanalytical work on individual trauma: “In each instance, the salient characteristic of the traumatic event is its power to inspire helplessness and terror.” Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 34.

state of existential crisis.”<sup>41</sup> These events create a break that results in a boundary between an old reality and the new. One of the most common symptoms for trauma survivors is the inability to reconstruct the moment in which the trauma occurred. Instead, the event injects itself into the life of the victim in fragmentary form, often without warning. Herman calls this unpredictable and repetitive interjection of partial and unsettling memories “intrusion.”<sup>42</sup> These intrusions — often non-linear, frozen, and wordless — reflect the mind’s “spontaneous, unsuccessful attempt at healing.”<sup>43</sup> It is often only with the help and support of a patient’s family and community that true healing can begin.<sup>44</sup>

Literary approaches to trauma focus on the manifestation of these symptoms in the writings of victims. Pioneering works in the field by Cathy Caruth<sup>45</sup> and Geoffrey Hartman<sup>46</sup> emphasize the break created by the traumatic event, the insurmountable distance between the registering of the event in the psyche, and the subject’s actual experience of it. The victim is

---

41. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 51.

42. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 35–51.

43. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 41.

44. “Sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of a meaningful world. In this process, the survivor seeks assistance not only from those closest to her but also from the wider community. The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends, first, upon public acknowledgment of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of community action. Once it is publicly recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury. These two responses — recognition and restitution — are necessary to rebuild the survivor’s sense of order and justice.” Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 61–73, here, 70.

45. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

46. Geoffrey H. Hartman, “On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies,” *New Literary History* 26 (1995).

unable to straightforwardly, scientifically, or referentially re-present the moment of trauma in spite of a driving urge to do so. Instead, according to Caruth, “the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.”<sup>47</sup> The literature of victims or survivors mimics the way that trauma intrudes on everyday life by means of non-linear genres techniques in poetry, biography, and fiction rather than “straightforward” narrative or history. Within this framework, the traumatic event remains forever “unrepresentable and pathological.”<sup>48</sup> It is to some extent “unspeakable,” and, according to David Garber, only accessible through the “fissures in language, puns, wordplay, and multiple levels of meaning”<sup>49</sup> that typically define the works produced by survivors. In short, the experience of trauma makes it impossible to produce the kinds of accounts that scholars typically seek in support of historical reconstructions.

However, it is not necessarily the case that the event, the moment of trauma that created the psychological disjuncture, is completely out of reach for the critic. Rather, as argued by Geoffrey H. Hartman, “[t]he interpreter’s task is always to sort out the relations between split or rupture (*schize*), place of [first] encounter, repetition and subject.”<sup>50</sup> Like the community whose job it is to restore the victim’s fractured sense of the social order,<sup>51</sup> it is up to the interpreter to

---

47. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 11.

48. Michelle Balaev, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered,” (ed. Michelle Balaev; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.

49. David G. Garber, “Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 14 (2015): 26.

50. Hartman, “On Traumatic Knowledge,” 543.

51. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 61ff.

create the narrative — the straightforward or referential account — that eludes the victim by triangulating the available material, which includes the victim him or herself.<sup>52</sup>

This is exactly what scholars of biblical studies have attempted to do for the experience of the Babylonian exile and its literary representation in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>53</sup> For example, a recent SBL volume on this subject<sup>54</sup> contains a number of productive and thoughtful essays that address the bizarre and often jarring physical and psychological phenomena narrated in the Book of Ezekiel,<sup>55</sup> the response to the impending (and eventually fulfilled) destruction of Jerusalem in the book of Jeremiah,<sup>56</sup> and the restorative role of the elegies and dirges preserved

---

52. Of course the context or goal of the project matters a great deal, here. This project is not entirely the same when dealing with living subjects who survived recent catastrophes. Here, as Hartman points out, it is the patient whose version should ultimately be decisive: “As in literature, we find a way of receiving the story, of listening to it, of drawing it into an interpretive conversation. Medical or political reductionism is avoided. The experts are not given the last word. The story, Kathryn Hunter says, ‘must be returned to the patient.’” Hartman, “On Traumatic Knowledge,” 541, citing Kathryn Montgomery, *Doctors’ Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

53. Garber, “Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies,” 26.

54. *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma* (SemeiaSt 86. ed. Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

55. Ruth Poser, “No Words: The Book of Ezekiel as Trauma Literature and Response to Exile,” in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*, 27–48.

56. Christopher G Frechette, “The Old Testament as Controlled Substance: How Insights from Trauma Studies Reveal Healing Capacities in Potentially Harmful Texts,” *Int* 69 (2015): 20–34.

in the poetry of Lamentations.<sup>57</sup> In some cases the field of trauma studies has been able to elucidate passages in these works that had long been inaccessible to scholarship.<sup>58</sup>

Some, however, have called into question the assertion of the “unspeakability” of traumatic events and the impossibility of their straightforward presentation in literature. It is argued, somewhat paradoxically, that it is the *attempt* to create a narrative that often plays a decisive role in a victim’s recovery. In a volume edited by Michelle Balaev,<sup>59</sup> a number of prominent thinkers in the field have problematized what they determined to be a limiting view of potential modes of representation in favor of a more contextualized approach to trauma and its artistic expression. For example, Barry Stampfl critiques the trope of the invocation of the “unspeakable” as the sole available response available to the survivors of traumatic events. He

---

57. Elizabeth Boase, “Fragmented Voicess: Collective Identity and Traumatization in Lamentations,” in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*, 49–66.

58. See, for example, Odell’s interpretation of the somewhat elusive צלמי זכר in Ezek 16.15–22. Applying Shoshana Feldman’s theory of memory fragmentation, Odell argues for an association with these otherwise unattested “cult” images and physical symbols of imperial power, most likely statues reflecting Assyrian and Babylonian kingship. Rather than an example of religious disobedience, the erection of such statues *by Jerusalem* serves to critique improper alliances between Judahite kings and Mesopotamian imperials, highlighting the irony of the many lives lost as a result of misplaced trust in foreign rulers for safety rather than in Yahweh. Margaret S. Odell, “Fragments of Traumatic Memory: *Šalmê zākār* and Child Sacrifice in Ezekiel 16:15–22,” in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*, 107–124, esp. 115–117.

59. *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (ed. Michelle Balaev. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

argues instead for the “unspeakable” as a phase rather than a predetermined endpoint for those who live with trauma.<sup>60</sup> These “unspeakable” pasts are therefore recoverable, at least in principle.

*The Transmission of Trauma Along Vertical and Horizontal Axes*

Sigmund Freud, an innovator in the study of trauma in the field of psychology, was primarily concerned with the development of the psyche in response to traumatic events. However, in his final published work, *Moses and Monotheism*, he expanded his foci along both the horizontal and vertical axes to explore the communal experience of trauma and its intergenerational transmission. In this monograph, Freud argued that the contemporary collective psychology of the Jewish people was the product of an ancient traumatic event that forcefully interjected itself into Judaism at an early developmental phase. Applying insights from his own work on the suppression, latency, and reemergence of trauma responses in individuals, Freud made the case that the communal psyche of social bodies function in much the same way as those of individuals, albeit over a much longer period time.<sup>61</sup> “The masses, too, retain an impression of the past in unconscious memory traces.”<sup>62</sup> Applying this model to the history of ancient Israel and its religion, Freud argued that an original traumatic event — the communal murder of Moses

---

60. This is especially the case within the context of post-colonial studies. According Stampfl, it is a phase *imposed* on the colonized community by the regimes in power. Barry Stampfl, “Parsing the Unspeakable in the Context of Trauma,” in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (ed. Michelle Balaev. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 14–31.

61. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (Translated by Jones, Katherine. New York: Knopf, 1939), 107–147.

62. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, 151.

following the Exodus<sup>63</sup> — was suppressed and confined to memory traces in the communal psyche, only to reemerge in distorted fashion generations later. That reemergence produced a profound feeling of guilt and need for punishment that drove subsequent developments in the tradition.<sup>64</sup>

While Freud's theory of communal memory traces has been rejected within the field of psychology,<sup>65</sup> his concern with the transmission of trauma raises an important question for this study. First of all, can the experience and effects of a traumatic event be transmitted along a diachronic axis to later generations, and if so, how? Much of the evidence analyzed in this study is dated decades or centuries after the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of much of its population, raising the question of how later generations received and processed that event. Intertwined with this point is the question of how this trauma was transmitted along a social axis among members of the community. Previous reconstructions of Judean identity have emphasized the shared experience of trauma as a cornerstone of collective identity, raising the question of how communities process these kinds of events.

Regarding the intergenerational transmission of traumatic responses, there has been significant research done on this phenomenon within the burgeoning field of epigenetics.

---

63. The reconstruction of this event is the premise of pt. I of his study. Freud argued that the only way to account for the preservation of traditions that speak to Israel's original failures to adhere to Mosaic religion is some psychological imperative to record them, an imperative he argues is best understood through trauma and its subsequent developments in the human psyche. For a discussion of the academic milieu from which Freud drew the specific idea for the murder of Moses as this event, see Steven Weitzman, *The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 174–190.

64. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, 208–216.

65. See the discussion in Weitzman, *The Origin of the Jews*, 183–190.

Epigenetics, as defined by Natan PF Kellerman, is “the study of heritable changes in gene expression that are not due to changes in the underlying DNA sequence”<sup>66</sup> and seeks to understand the environmental factors that are responsible for these changes. One area that has received significant research is the role of trauma in these kinds of changes.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, there have been studies that suggest that the kinds of genetic changes caused by trauma can, in some cases, be passed from parents to children. These inherited traits may then influence how subsequent generations respond to potentially traumatic events.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the biological or genetic traits that might be passed on, there is also the issue of trauma inherited through socialization. Secondary traumatization, the traumatization of latter generations through verbal or non-verbal expressions of the original trauma by the survivor, remains a debated topic in psychology.<sup>69</sup> Regardless of where one stands on this issue, the experiences of a traumatic event by the initial generation may nonetheless play important

---

66. Natan PF Kellermann, “Epigenetic Transmission of Holocaust Trauma: Can Nightmares Be Inherited,” *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences* 50 (2013): 34.

67. For a summary and bibliography of this topic, see Kellermann, “Epigenetic Transmission of Holocaust Trauma: Can Nightmares Be Inherited,” 33–39.

68. For these effects in the second generation, see the study in Rachel Yehuda, Martin H Teicher et al., “Parental Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as a Vulnerability Factor for Low Cortisol Trait in Offspring of Holocaust Survivors,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 64 (2007): 1040–1048. However, see Abraham Sagi-Schwartz, Marinus H van IJzendoorn et al., “Does Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Skip a Generation? No Meta-Analytic Evidence for Tertiary Traumatization with Third Generation of Holocaust Survivors.,” *Attach Hum Dev* 10 (2008): 105–121.

69. See the summary of previous scholarship in the studies of Sagi-Schwartz, van IJzendoorn et al., “Does Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Skip a Generation? No Meta-Analytic Evidence for Tertiary Traumatization with Third Generation of Holocaust Survivors.,” 105–121; Marinus H Van IJzendoorn, Marian J Bakermans-Kranenburg et al., “Are Children of Holocaust Survivors Less Well-Adapted? A Meta-Analytic Investigation of Secondary Traumatization,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 16 (2003): 459–469.

roles in the socialization of their descendants and their interactions with the world.<sup>70</sup> As suggested by M. Gerard Fromm, “what human beings cannot contain of their experience — what has been traumatically overwhelming, unbearable, unthinkable — falls out of social discourse, but very often on to and into the next generation as an affective sensitivity or a chaotic urgency.”<sup>71</sup> This transmission can manifest in many ways within the social formation of the next generation,<sup>72</sup> but it nonetheless has the power to shape the identity of those who would receive it.

This discussion of the transmission of trauma on the individual or familial level directs us next to this process on the broader communal level, the focus of trauma studies in the social sciences. For example, Kai Erikson have argued that communities respond to trauma in ways that resemble the experiences of individual victims as outlined above. He likens the community to a living organism, and just like the individual who has lost faith in his/her “core beliefs,” so too does the community call into question the social bonds that bind its members into a distinct entity.<sup>73</sup> Traumatic events cause a fracturing within the communal organism as “these disasters (or near disasters) often seem to force open whatever fault lines once ran silently through the structure of the larger community, dividing it into divisive fragments.”<sup>74</sup>

---

70. See, for example, Carol Kidron’s study of non-verbal expressions of trauma between Holocaust survivors and their children: Carol A. Kidron, “Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel,” *Current Anthropology* 50 (2009): 5–27.

71. Fromm, *Lost in Transmission: Studies of Trauma Across Generations* (ed. M. Gerard Fromm. London: Karnac, 2012), xvi.

72. See the studies in ed., *Lost in Transmission: Studies of Trauma Across Generations*.

73. Kai Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (ed. Cathy Caruth; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 186–188.

74. Erikson, “Notes,” 189.

But even as response to trauma manifests as a centrifugal force within the community, it can also, paradoxically, re-bind members of an affected community to one another. According to Erikson, “that shared experience becomes almost like a common culture, a source of kinship.”<sup>75</sup> Erikson’s work deals primarily with communal responses to natural or technological disasters, but his observations are also applicable to political catastrophe. Irene Visser, for example, has made a case for a similar phenomenon in post-colonial contexts. She argues that rather than necessarily creating isolation and fracture, traumatic experiences can galvanize or solidify social groups. In fact, it is often through the narrativization of trauma and the labeling of it as such that social bonds are forged and solidified.<sup>76</sup>

Erikson’s approach is built on a belief in the naturally occurring nature of trauma. According to this view, there are objective and empirical events that deprive individuals and communities of their basic needs — security, order, love, connection — and these events produce traumatized patients and communities. In his 2012 book, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, Jeffery Alexander calls this the “lay theory” of trauma, and argues that it drives much of the sociological and psychoanalytic research on the subject. According to the lay theory, traumatic events shake the foundations of the social world, and produce cognitive distortions in individuals that can only be resolved by recovering or accepting the “truth” of the event. But this approach falls into what Alexander calls the “naturalistic fallacy” of trauma. In contrast, he argues that “events do not in and of themselves, create collective trauma.”<sup>77</sup> Instead, it is *communities* who create collective

---

75. Erikson, “Notes,” 190.

76. Irene Visser, “Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies,” (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 109.

77. Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2012), 13.

trauma, who do the work of meaning-making in their interpretation of events. Evaluating whether the kinds of changes typically associated with trauma actually occurred is not an objective or scientific exercise, but rather a socio-cultural process that is affected by the power structures and skills of reflexive social agents. According to Alexander:

At the level of the social system, societies can experience massive disruptions that do not become traumatic. Institutions can fail to perform. Schools may fail to educate, failing miserably even to provide basic skills. Governments may be unable to secure basic protections and may undergo severe crises of delegitimation. Economic systems may be profoundly disrupted, to the extent that their allocative functions fail even to provide basic goods. Such problems are real and fundamental, but they are not, by any means, necessarily traumatic for members of the affected collectivities, much less for the society at large. For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises. Events are one thing; representations of these events are quite another. Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors "decide" to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go.<sup>78</sup>

---

78. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 15.

Alexander attributes meaning-making in the “trauma process” to the “carrier group,” the members of the community who construct the most persuasive narrative about the event.<sup>79</sup> The carrier group “interprets” the event in terms that fit the needs of the current community, including concerns for the present and future, but may also include the reconstruction of the group’s past.<sup>80</sup> This means that the significance of an event deemed “traumatic” — the trauma itself — is contextual; it can change over time in order to address different communal needs at different periods in history.<sup>81</sup>

According to Alexander, a successful trauma narrative must address the following issues: 1) the nature of the pain, “what *actually* happened,” 2) the nature of the victim, “what group was affected by the event,” 3) the relation of the victim to the wider audience, and 4) the attribution of responsibility, “who did it.”<sup>82</sup> If the carrier group can construct a narrative that persuasively answers these questions, then a new “master narrative” is created for the community that the event produced. This means that while trauma *can* serve as a centripetal communal force,<sup>83</sup> it

---

79. The narrative that comes to dominate is by no means pre-determined. Rather, according to Alexander: “Via the symbolic media of communication, ‘claims’ are proposed about what has just happened and what it means. If an event becomes significant, there is a struggle over representation, and in the course of this struggle, meanings can be changed, sometimes in drastic ways.” Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 118.

80. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 26–27.

81. Cf. Alexander’s reconstruction of the changing meaning of the Holocaust over the course of the second half of the 20th century. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 31–96.

82. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 17–19.

83. According to Erikson, while trauma does not strengthen preexistent communal bonds, “that shared experience [of trauma] becomes almost like a common culture, a source of kinship.” Erikson, “Notes,” 190.

does not do so “naturally,” nor need it do so at all.<sup>84</sup> Instead, it takes the efforts of a carrier group to create a trauma narrative that (re)establishes and (re)creates the communal bonds in reference to the event.

Returning now to the quote that opened this section, Smith-Christopher is certainly correct in asserting that the trauma of the exile must be taken into account in scholarly reconstructions of the theological underpinnings of the resultant communities. However, in recognizing this reality, one must also consider the *constructed* nature of communal trauma and how it integrates within a larger matrix of identity formation. For a catastrophe to have occurred is not enough to create a community. Nor is it necessary that such an event would inject itself into the construction of a particular community’s identity, at least as it is represented in the literature that it produces. Rather, it takes *someone*, or better, *someones*, to mobilize that catastrophe into a narrative that acts in the service of some greater project of subject formation and community construction. Thus instead of just looking for records of potentially traumatic events and individual responses there to, biblical scholars should be identifying and analyzing the arguments offered by communal leaders about those events, about how and what to remember.

## Diaspora

---

84. Alexander’s discussion of the absence of the “Rape of Nanjing” from Chinese historiography for roughly half a century is a particularly productive example of why a community may want to *avoid* embracing trauma in identity construction.

### *Judean Dispersion*

The fall of the kingdom of Judah brought with it a new geo-political reality, one in which a significant portion of that kingdom's population suddenly found itself living well outside the fallen state's traditional borders. While there were those who continued to inhabit their homeland under new imperial rulers, Judeans could also be found in communities spread throughout the Babylonian and Persian Empires, from the Nile's first cataract in Upper Egypt to the irrigated fields of Nippur, southeast of Babylon. As I will demonstrate, this new geo-political reality did not necessarily sever ties between Judeans at "home" and those "abroad." Instead, through a number of complex social processes, individuals and communities in Babylonia, Egypt, and Judea preserved and constructed relationships with each other, creating a sense of collective identity that transcended or transgressed the traditional geopolitical boundaries of the kingdom of Judah. They formed what might best be called a Judean diaspora.

The definition of "diaspora" has a long history in theological and critical scholarship, one that has been expertly traced in Stefane Dufoix's masterful work, *The Dispersion: A History of the Word Diaspora* (2017). Despite shifting referents and flexible meanings throughout its history of use, "diaspora" at its base describes the situation in which communities maintain (and derive) their identities despite and because of distance and territorial discontinuity.<sup>85</sup>

---

85. Stephane Dufoix, *The Dispersion: A History of the Word Diaspora* (Brill's Specials in Modern History 1; Boston: Brill, 2017), 16.

Like “trauma,” “diaspora,” too, has its roots in the Greek-speaking world. The verb on which the noun is based (διασπείρω) is attested already in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE,<sup>86</sup> but the noun (διασπορά) appears to have been coined by the translators who produced the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.<sup>87</sup> This process is typically understood to have been spearheaded by Judeans living in Alexandria, and so it seems particularly fitting that this community coined the term modern scholarship would use to describe them some 2,000 years later. However, there is a notable gulf in use of διασπορά by these ancient Judeans in the translation of their authoritative literature and its application in modern scholarship.

*A Centralized or “Jewish”<sup>88</sup> Model of Diaspora*

Within the Greek Bible, the noun διασπορά occurs eight times in translations of extant Hebrew material,<sup>89</sup> and another four times in Greek books without attested Hebrew counterparts.<sup>90</sup> Dufoix

---

86. For earlier attestations, including Herodotus, Sophocles, and Plato, see the entry in the *LSJ* s.v. διασπείρω. [www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.proxy.uchicago.edu/lsg/](http://www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.proxy.uchicago.edu/lsg/); cf. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 31ff.

87. Dufoix dispels claims like that found in the work of Robin Cohen that διασπείρω, the Greek verb behind the English noun diaspora, was originally used by the Greeks to describe colonization. Instead, Dufoix argues based on previous scholarship that it was a neologism invented by Septuagint translators. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 28–49.; for an example of Cohen’s argument, see the introduction to Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), 2; and also Robin Cohen, “Rethinking ‘Babylon’: Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 21 (1995): 6.

88. By “Jewish” I do not mean to say that these are emic views of the experience held by ancient and modern Jews, but rather that this is the scholarly model derived from the analysis of the Jewish experience of diaspora.

89. Deut 28.25; 30.4; Neh 1.9; Psa 146.2; Is 49.6; Jer 15.7; 41.17; Dan 12.2.

90. Judith 5.19; 2 Mac 1.27; Sol 8.28; 9.2.

notes that while the term translates a variety of Hebrew terms,<sup>91</sup> διασπορά is never used to represent גלות or its verbal root, *g-l-y*, the terminology most frequently applied to the historical circumstances of the Babylonian exile.<sup>92</sup> Instead, διασπορά almost exclusively exists in the realm of *potential* and *threat* rather than historical reality within the Greek Bible.<sup>93</sup> According to Dufoix, “It follows that *diaspora* belongs, not to the domain of history, but to that of theology, and that its meaning, at the moment when the translators of the Septuagint created the word, is unique, as distinct from that of *galuth*.”<sup>94</sup> According to this usage, the διασπορά was an unrealized threat of dispersion, while *g-l-y* and גלות referred to its realization in history. The community as such was referred to as the גולה.<sup>95</sup>

In the more than 2,000 years since the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the semantic range of “diaspora” has shifted dramatically, particularly within scholarly discourse.

---

91. It actually covers a broad range of Hebrew roots, including *z-’-y*, *n-d-h*, *z-r-’*, and *n-p-š*. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 42–49.

92. For גלות and the Babylonian exile, see 2 Kings 25.27; Is 45.13; Jer 24.5; 28.4; 29.22; 40.1; 52.31; Ezek 1.2; 33.21; 40.1; Obad 1.20. In the causative stem, the verbal root *g-l-y* was frequently used with the meaning of “to exile” or “to forcibly migrate” in prophetic and historiographic material. See the discussion in C. Westermann and R. Albertz, “גלה,” *TLOT*, 1:314–315, *s.v.* def. 3.

93. The following is a summary of Dufoix’s comparative findings on גלות and διασπορά: 1) διασπορά *never* translates *gly*; 2) διασπορά almost always has a negative connotation, including horror, dishonor, ruin, and banishment, 3) although it can be balanced with a measure of hope; and 4) it is almost *always* future-looking, and not a description of the present or accomplished past. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 46. The one exception to the last point is the passage from Judith, which reads: καὶ νῦν ἐπιστρέψαντες ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τῆς διασπορᾶς, “and now, having turned back to their god, they have come from the dispersion.” The usage thus reflects its modern sense of a community of dispersed peoples, or “the dispersion,” to use Dufoix’s terminology.

94. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 49.

95. On the use of גולה as an in-group identifier, see ch. 5 below.

While still grounded in the history of Judean and Jewish dispersion, scholarly use of “diaspora” has transformed it from the realm of threat to reality. In fact, the historical event of the Babylonian exile, with its concomitant displacement of a significant portion of Judah’s population, is often seen as *the* paradigm for how to understand the modern phenomenon of diaspora. For example, in his field-defining article “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” written for the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora*, William Safran claims that “we may legitimately speak of the Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek, and perhaps Chinese diasporas at present and of the Polish diaspora of the past, *although none of them fully conforms to the ‘ideal type’ of the Jewish Diaspora.*”<sup>96</sup> Robin Cohen’s *Global Diasporas*, a important volume in the field, quotes Ps 137 in the epigraph to the book’s opening chapter, itself dedicated to a discussion of the Jewish diaspora.<sup>97</sup>

Safran’s article was explicitly an effort to “unmuddy” what had become so broad a range of meanings for “diaspora” that the term was rendered useless for scholarly discourse.<sup>98</sup> In service of this clarifying effort, he laid out the six attributes which he understood to be constituent of diaspora communities. In order for a community to be considered a diaspora, it should include most, if not all, of the following:

---

96. William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1 (1991): 84, emphasis mine.

97. Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 1.

98. Dufoix’s *The Dispersion* does a masterful job of tracking the trajectory of the term from its use by Alexandrian transmitters, through Christian polemics, and into modern era for non-Jewish entities including the Armenians and a host of other ethnic or national groups in the time prior to the publication of Safran’s article. As a resource for the history of the study of diaspora, the book’s value cannot be overstated.

1. They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions.
2. They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history, and achievements.
3. They believe that they are not — and perhaps cannot be — fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.
4. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate.
5. They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity.
6. They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.<sup>99</sup>

Safran’s list places heavy emphasis on a community’s relationship to its ancestral homeland. In order to be considered a diaspora, a community must see itself as fundamentally out of place in its current cultural, political, or geographic setting.

Following the publication of the first volume of *Diaspora*, a number of scholars critically engaged with Safran’s model. Cohen, both in his book and in a series of articles, made a number of important changes to the rubric. First of all, he subdivided the broader category of “diaspora”

---

99. Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies,” 83–84.

into subtypes in order to transcend the “Jewishness” of the concept and to allow for a more inclusive and nuanced classification system: victim diasporas (Jews, African Americans, Armenians),<sup>100</sup> labor or imperial diasporas (Indians during the colonial period, the English and Dutch), and trade diasporas (Chinese, Lebanese). He also offered a few additions and changes to Safran’s six-point list. Most important for the current discussion is his emphasis on the role of trauma in the diasporic experience. Concerning Safran’s first category, he remarks: “I would amend the first stated feature by adding that dispersal from an original centre is often accompanied by the memory of a single traumatic event that provides the folk memory of the great historic injustice that binds the group together.”<sup>101</sup>

This emphasis on trauma features prominently in Cohen’s model, particularly within victim diasporas, but also in his other typologies.<sup>102</sup> This experience of trauma is exacerbated by continued separation from the homeland and a persistent feeling of being out-of-place. For both Safran and Cohen the homeland and the urge to return are at the center for diasporic communities. They are in fact *the most important* factors in how the identities of the social units are formed. These perspectives are representative of a secular and centralized view of diaspora

---

100. The category of “victim diaspora” is essentially the “classic” model which encompasses those communities forcibly removed like Armenians, Jews, and Africans. Communities in this category retain a strong focus on the homeland as a result of the pressures of non-conformity in a modern nation-state. “[V]ictim diasporas only saw a way out through strengthening or creating their own nation-states and promoting a return movement to their homeland, real or imagined.” Cohen, “Rethinking ‘Babylon’,” 16.; cf. ch. 2 in Cohen, *Global Diasporas*.

101. Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 23.

102. Cohen speaks to varying degrees of coercion in the creation of these diaspora communities, ranging from indentured servitude among Indians working in tropical plantations to the push/pull factors that led to the Chinese trade diaspora. The degree to which these circumstances defined the experiences of these communities varied, but Cohen nonetheless maintains some degree of coercion in their construction.

that developed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one that takes “diaspora” to signify 1) diffusion from a point of origin and 2) a minority community within a larger group.<sup>103</sup> And while not all theorists of the period took the Babylonian exile and subsequent image of the “wandering Jew” as the sole paradigmatic example,<sup>104</sup> the dominant view of diaspora has been heavily influenced by the biblical depictions of displaced Judeans weeping for a return to Zion on the shores of Babylonian irrigation canals in Psalm 137.

Like the 19<sup>th</sup> century exilic rupture model discussed in the previous chapter, these modern definitions of diaspora interpret the experiences of diasporic communities through a problematic and traditional view of the Babylonian exile.<sup>105</sup> Their models take at face value and as universal

---

103. Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 134–153.

104. Dubnow’s entry on “diaspora” from the 1931 edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* expanded the model to include Greek colony city-states and Armenians: “Diaspora is a Greek term for a nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among other nations but preserving its own national culture. In a sense Magna Graecia constituted a Greek diaspora in the ancient Roman Empire, and a typical case of diaspora is presented by the Armenians, many of whom have voluntarily lived outside their small national territory for centuries. Generally, however, the term is used with reference to those parts of the Jewish people residing outside of Palestine. It was first used to describe the sections of Jewry scattered in the ancient Greco-Roman world and later to designate Jewish dispersion throughout the world in the 2500 years since the Babylonian captivity.” Simon Dubnow, *Diaspora*, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 4: 126–127.; cited from Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 143. However, as Tölöyan points out, the entry on “diaspora” had been dropped altogether from the 1968 edition. “Indeed, up until the late sixties, on the rare occasions when western scholars thought of diasporas, they took the Jewish diaspora to be the paradigm case and the Armenian and Greek dispersions to be the two other noteworthy examples of it.” Khachig Tölöyan, “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5 (1996): 9.

105. Note, for example, Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s analysis of Safran: “Reading Safran’s criteria, it seems that the Hebrew Bible’s treatments of exile (and the Jewish history following the exile) have paved the way to the modern definitions of exile (and diaspora).” Dalit Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts Between the Exiles and the People who Remained (6th-5th centuries BCE)* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 275.

the negative reflections on life outside “The Land” that have been preserved in the literature of the Hebrew Bible. In so doing they applied this pessimistic view of cultural discontinuity not just to Judean and Jewish history, but also to a much broader human phenomenon. Although not as overtly motivated by theological predispositions as de Wette and Wellhausen, the use of this characterization of the Babylonian exile (and subsequent expulsions of Judeans from Judea in the first and second centuries CE) has had similarly deleterious effects on scholarship; application of the “paradigm” has *re*-inscribed the view not just on the ancient community or communities in question, but also on subsequent examples of similar phenomena, mirroring the experience in perpetual communal longing and an interminable sense of out-of-placeness. These negative feelings could only be resolved through 1) *return* to the ancestral homeland or 2) *assimilation*, the abandonment of all ties one’s former identity in order to blend into one’s new cultural, economic, and political surroundings.<sup>106</sup> In this way, the fundamental tenets of the exilic rupture model, including the trauma of displacement and yearning for the homeland, were introduced into the social scientific study of the diaspora experience.

### *The Decentralized Model*

The Babylonian exile and the subsequent Jewish diaspora, paradigmatic for the centralized model outlined above, were not the only historical models from which scholars drew their models. Two years after Safran’s article, Paul Gilroy published *The Black Atlantic: Modernity*

---

106. On the complicated notion of “assimilation,” see below.

*and Double Consciousness*.<sup>107</sup> In it, Gilroy takes the African diaspora as his model and argues that it is best understood when *routes* are privileged over *roots*, the experience of migration over the “home” that was left behind in the modern construction of “blackness.”<sup>108</sup> Gilroy’s work is part of a broader movement in scholarship that has conceived of diaspora in deterritorialized terms; identity is not primordial or *rooted* in an ancestral homeland, but rather constantly constructed and reconstructed through the experiences of the community, even if it is *presented* as “fixed.”<sup>109</sup> Ambiguity and contextuality are the *status quo* for diaspora communities in this model, while hybridity and creolization are to be understood as positive and productive rather than betrayals of authenticity.

This turn towards hybridity and contextuality has also been productive in analyzing Jewish experiences of diaspora. For example, in his 2015 book, *A Traveling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud*, Daniel Boyarin embraces hybridity in a discussion of diaspora by analyzing ancient Jewish communities in Palestine and Babylonia and their relationship to one another

---

107. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1993).

108. Gilroy’s work has been criticized for presenting an overstated absence of reference to Africa in his reconstructions and for too strongly erasing it from the data he presents. Brah, writing a few years later, does a better job of complicating the picture while maintaining the basic tenets of Gilroy’s argument. She allows members of diaspora communities to hold feelings in tension: “It bears repeating that the double, triple, or multi-placedness of ‘home’ in the imaginary of the people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement... identity is always plural and in process, even when it might be construed or represented as fixed.” Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (Gender, Racism, Ethnicity; New York: Routledge, 1996), 188–204, here 191.

109. Cf. James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): 302–338.; Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, 1–16; 175–207, esp. 192–194; For further bibliography and discussion of this trend, see Dufoix, *The Dispersion*, 356–368.

through the Talmud. Instead of a “paradigmatic” home-focused identity, Boyarin argues for a decentralized model. He proposes that

diaspora be understood as a synchronic cultural situation applicable to people who participate in a double cultural (and frequently linguistic) location, in which they share a culture with the place in which they dwell but also with another group of people who live elsewhere, in which they have a local and a trans-local cultural identity at the same time. None of this needs [*sic*] imply trauma, an original sense of forced dispersion, a longing for homeland, or even the existence of a myth of one homeland.<sup>110</sup>

This definition rejects the fundamentality of *roots* emphasized by proponents of the centralized model,<sup>111</sup> while also calling into question the inherent trauma experienced by diaspora communities. Boyarin challenges the conception that the homeland equals the “center,” with authority, power, and prestige flowing out from it (the homeland) to the periphery (everywhere else). Instead, he argues that the relationship between Palestine and Babylon was closer to equal, with the two communities exchanging positions of greater and lesser authority over time, the Babylonian Talmud functioning as the medium of cultural interchange. According to this model, the communities in Palestine and Babylon engaged with and participated in the cultures that surrounded them while maintaining and reaffirming their Jewishness through their relationships and interactions with each other. As part of this translocal identity, they could simultaneously feel at home in their countries of residence while sharing a culture with people a thousand miles away.

---

110. Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 19.

111. “None of [the elements of his definition] needs imply trauma, an original sense of forced dispersion, or even the existence of a myth of one homeland.” Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland*, 19.

Decentralized models that capture and embrace the value of hybridity and contextuality allow for a more diverse and productive range of responses to the territorial discontinuity that defines the diaspora experience. As we will see over the course of this study, an expanded and more dynamic view can also better address the social realities of Judeans in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries of diaspora communities more broadly. The evidence will show that a desire or impulse to “return” to the ancestral homeland was not a given for Judeans in Babylonia or Egypt, nor did Judeans in Judea see themselves as inherently superior or completely distinct from communities settled outside of their traditional geographic boundaries.

### *Exile as One Kind of Diaspora*

What I have hoped to have demonstrated in the preceding analysis is that there is not a single response to the experience of geographic dislocation among individual or groups. Rather, there is a range of possible reactions to that experience, including what might be best described as a

feeling of *exile*. To quote Edward Said, exile is an

unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history present heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind for ever.<sup>112</sup>

Said is speaking to the experience of individuals who reflect on their dislocation from a homeland as exile, but his insights are also productive for our discussion of how communities

---

112. Edward W. Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

process events that might come to be interpreted as traumatic. If, as outlined by Alexander, a community's leaders produce a persuasive trauma narrative in response to dispersion or dislocation that takes as its primary foci feelings of alienation and an ongoing desire to return, then that response might be appropriately be described as "exile." Importantly, it is not only (or even primarily) the circumstances that led to the creation of a diaspora community that determine whether or not the community understands its experience in terms of exile. To use Cohen's categories, a victim diaspora is not necessarily a community in exile. Rather, there are a variety of other factors beyond the circumstances of the initial displacement that may contribute to how the diaspora experience is interpreted, including, for example, political and economic status within the new geographical setting, institutional affiliation and participation, and resettlement patterns. Exile is thus one of many ways in which an individual or community can interpret and respond to dislocation.

#### Application: Recognizing Judeanness in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries

##### *Cultural Contact and Strategies of Adaptation*

Taking the preceding discussion into account, we turn now to the processes and interactions that produced and reproduced a sense of ethnic identity among Judeans of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. As argued by Barth and Jones, the processes behind the construction of ethnic identity are most salient and observable at a community's borders, and so in identifying manifestations of Judeanness it is best to begin with Judean contact with the 'other.' For the Judeans of the 6<sup>th</sup> and

5<sup>th</sup> centuries, ‘others’ ranged from representatives of the Babylonian and Persian empires, to other displaced minority groups in the Nippurian countryside, to members of an Egyptian priesthood, and even other Judeans “returning” from their erstwhile exile. These encounters at the cultural, geographical, and political borders of Judeanness would have asked fundamental questions of individual and communal Judean identity, resulting in a host of potential social outcomes.

To better understand the range of responses available to these communities, I appeal to the work of cultural psychologist John W. Berry. Berry has outlined four social strategies typically undertaken by minority groups and individuals<sup>113</sup> who come into contact with a dominant culture:<sup>114</sup> 1) *assimilation*: the community does not maintain its distinct cultural integrity and actively participates in the dominant culture; 2) *separation*: the community strongly retains its own culture and eschews contact with the dominant culture; 3) *integration*: the community retains some elements of cultural distinction while also engaging with the dominant culture; and 4) *marginalization*: the community neither retains its own distinct cultural traits nor interacts with the dominant culture.<sup>115</sup>

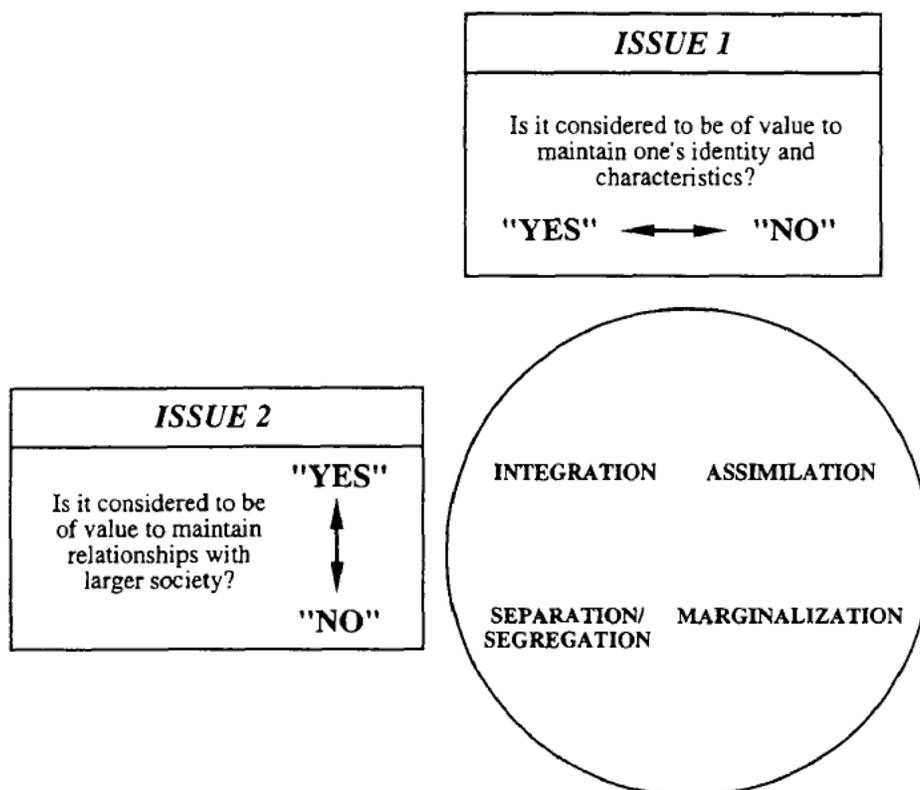
---

113. In Berry’s usage, “minority” refers to the non-culturally dominant culture. This is typically the culture of the immigrants in discussions of migration, but Berry’s usage also allows for other kinds of cultural contact; e.g. between imperial and native or indigenous cultures.

114. Berry has written extensively on this topic, but the following discussion draws primarily from John W. Berry, “Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation,” *Applied Psychology* 46 (1997): 5–34

115. Berry, “Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation,” 9.

Table 1: John W. Berry's Model of Cultural Responses to Immigration



SOURCE: Berry, John W. "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation." *Applied Psychology* 46 (1997): 16.

These responses are based on a group or individual's positive (conservation) or negative (rejection) response to cultural maintenance and contact with and participation in the dominant culture, what Berry calls "adaptation."<sup>116</sup> For example, a Judean refugee fleeing to the Nile Delta in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century who held fast to his cultural roots (positive) but rejected extensive or in-

<sup>116</sup>. According to Berry, adaptation "refers to changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands." Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," 13.

depth contact with his new Egyptian neighbors (negative) would have engaged in *separation*. For the full range of Berry's model, see the chart above.

While perhaps overly simplified,<sup>117</sup> Berry's model provides a good starting point and helpful terminology to understand the fundamental questions of identity with which Judeans — particularly in the diaspora — were faced in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. In the next section, I will examine the two most predominant responses I have observed in evidence available for these communities, *assimilation* and *integration*.

### *Assimilation*

In his famous 1964 study, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*, Milton Gordon argued for the trend (and *value*) of assimilation among the children and grandchildren of immigrants to life in the United States.<sup>118</sup> According to his famous “melting pot” model,

immigrant groups are encouraged, through social and cultural practices and/or political machinations, to adopt the culture, values, and social behaviors of the host nation in order to benefit from full citizenship status. In this view of assimilation, over time, immigrant communities shed the culture that is embedded in the language, values, rituals, laws, and perhaps even religion of their homeland so that there is no discernible cultural difference between them and other members of the host society.<sup>119</sup>

---

117. For example, the line between *integration* and *separation* can be quite blurry. While it may be possible to identify communal *tendencies* towards the latter, it is often possible to detect cultural exchange that subverts these inclinations.

118. Milton Myron Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 233–265.

119. Siobhan Holohan, “Assimilation,” *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (2012).

Although one may continue to hear America described as a “melting pot,” Gordon’s model has been critiqued on a number of accounts. First of all, his book focused primarily on the experience of white, Christian, European immigrants and failed to account for the different circumstances met by those who did not fit these criteria, including people of color, non-Europeans, and non-Christians. The so-called “New Immigrants” who entered the United States following the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 had a very different experience than those who preceded them.<sup>120</sup> Secondly, Gordon’s model assumed the cultural superiority of the host country (America) and a one-way supply of cultural exchange. “American” culture was understood as a static standard that remained unaffected by those who would appeal to it. Finally, the “melting pot” placed the burden of accommodation solely on the immigrant community without any expectation for the host country to reciprocate.<sup>121</sup>

Richard Alba and Victor Nee have attempted to revive Gordon’s model by arguing for accommodation and expansion of the “mainstream” of the dominant culture to include more elements of minority culture. Assimilation, which they now define as “the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences,”<sup>122</sup> looks more like the “melting pot” Gordon envisioned rather than the “pressure cooker” his model actually prescribed. In the updated model,

---

120. Many of these issues and complications were already recognized or predicted in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1963).

121. These critiques summarize Holohan, “Assimilation.” and Rick Bonus, “Assimilation,” *Encyclopedia of American Studies* (2016).

122. Richard D. Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 11.

Individuals' ethnic origins become less and less relevant in relation to the members of another ethnic group (typically, but not necessarily, the ethnic majority group), and individuals on both sides of the boundary see themselves more and more as alike, assuming they are similar in terms of some other critical factors such as social class; in other words, they mutually perceive themselves with less and less frequency in terms of ethnic categories and increasingly only under specific circumstances.<sup>123</sup>

These modifications go a long way towards solving the problems within Gordon's original model and better reflect the cultural milieu of modern America. The updated version expands what Alba and Nee call the "mainstream" so as to "Americanize" or familiarize cultural alternatives and strip them of their exoticness.<sup>124</sup> It also provides the dominant culture with a dynamism it lacked in Gordon's model. As the demographic makeup of a culture, broadly construed, changes, so too is it reasonable to conclude that the culture will change along with it. This means that ethnically-distinct diacritics like Mexican food and Afro-Caribbean dance can become "American."

### *Integration*

The far more frequently observable example of Berry's strategies among Judeans of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries is integration; this is the strategy by which the minority group maintains certain elements of its distinct identity while also engaging and embracing elements of the dominant or host culture. According to Berry, integration — alternatively "hybridity," "duality," or "creolization" to borrow language from the study of diaspora outlined above — is the most consistently successful of the strategies when it comes to a group or individual's positive adaptation to a new cultural context.<sup>125</sup> This strategy, which requires a willingness on each side to

---

123. Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 11.

124. Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 60–61, 277–287.

125. Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," 23–27.

accommodate the other, leads to substantial changes within the minority group while allowing it to intentionally maintain some level of observable distinction. The specific ways in which the dominant or host cultures influenced Judean identity (and occasionally, vice versa) will be the subject of detailed discussion in later chapters. At this point I will outline some of the methods and institutions that supported the construction of a distinct Judean identity in the decades and centuries after the fall of Judah.

Berry's work addresses the strategies employed by first generation immigrants and minority groups, but it remains to be seen how this plays out over generations. Perhaps the most important element for the preservation of identity among the descendants of immigrants is the cultural environment in which an individual or a group finds itself. According to Alba and Nee, the supply-side of ethnicity, the group and community context, may be decisive to the outcome at the individual level. If at the community level the opportunities to express ethnicity are meager or socially inappropriate, the intent to maintain ethnicity, assuming it exists, may be thwarted or transformed. The desire to find ethnic modes of behavior and expression, then, is likely to succeed where the supply-side of ethnicity is fairly rich in possibility.<sup>126</sup>

Put differently, if there are systems and institutions in place that encourage and foster maintenance of an individual's ethnic identity, he or she is more likely to identify with that culture than to assimilate to the mainstream. If, however, those systems are weak or nonexistent, or if the dominant culture is hostile to that of the individual, the latter is less likely to maintain his or her ethnic identity.<sup>127</sup>

---

126. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 235.

127. This is consistent with Berry's assertion that integration is a reciprocal endeavor.

Taking seriously the conclusions of Alba and Nee, this raises the question as to which systems and institutions were available to 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century Judeans in the service of identity (re)production. Many institutions that serve this function in the modern world, including community- or cultural-centers, immigrant clubs and associations, and state-sponsored cultural education were not available to Judeans in Babylonia or Egypt. There is limited evidence, however, from both the Judean and imperial sides that some systems were in place to support Judean identity. As I will demonstrate, the Babylonians, Saites, and Persians often organized displaced minority groups into ethnically-distinct military, agricultural, and economic units. While the primary function of these groupings was typically to serve the administrative needs of the central government, they simultaneously worked to re-inscribe boundaries between ethnic groups and to foster pre-existing social networks. As I will argue, there is evidence for the continuation of Judean social structures in the diaspora that may have played a role in reinforcing positive associations for continued identification with Judeanness.

Religion and its institutions also played a major role in cultivating ancient Judean identity. Research on modern immigrant and diaspora communities has demonstrated the constructive role of religion and its institutions in cultural maintenance and (re)production. A number of studies have argued that congregational religion — belief systems that require frequent participation of its members in a communal setting — can “help their participants preserve their cultural traditions and ethnic identity.”<sup>128</sup> The congregational model typically offers

---

128. Pyong Gap Min, *Preserving Ethnicity Through Religion in America: Korean Protestants and Indian Hindus Across Generations* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 10. Min presents a summary of previous scholarship on the “congregational model” in the introduction and first chapter of his book. For further discussion, see ch. 3.

language training for immigrants and their descendants and provides a readymade social network. The buildings in which these groups meet often embrace elements of distinct cultural architecture and can symbolically bridge the distance between a diaspora community and its ancestral homeland.<sup>129</sup> Non-congregational religion, that is religion that is primarily practiced in the home, can be similarly productive in reenforcing ethnic identity through similar representative means.<sup>130</sup> In both cases, religion and its institutions are most effective in the service of culture reinforcement when religion and ethnic identity are closely intertwined.<sup>131</sup>

Throughout the course of this study, in addition to fleshing out what constituted Judeanness in a given historical and cultural context, I will also attempt to identify the institutions — political, social, religious, or otherwise — that may have facilitated the preservation and production of Judeanness in a variety of settings.

---

129. For example, in Tweed's analysis of Cuban Catholics and their shrine to Our Lady of Charity in Miami, he argued that the shrine fostered a sense of ethnic identity that transcended geographic discontinuity. According to Tweed, "It is a supralocal or transregional cultural form, an imagined moral community constituted by the diaspora and those who remain in the homeland." Thomas A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 86. Cf. Steven Vertovec, "Religion and Diaspora," in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion* (eds. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz et al.; 2; Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 281–282; Peggy Levitt, "Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging: The Institutional Character of Transnational Religious Life," *Sociology of Religion* 65 (2004): 3–4; Shampa Mazumdar and Sanjoy Mazumdar, "Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion," *JRitSt* 20 (2006): 51; Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 1–54.

130. Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*,

131. Cf. Indian Hindus in America: Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 121; Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in the Netherlands: Mieke Maliepaard, Marcel Lubbers et al., "Generational Differences in Ethnic and Religious Attachment and Their Interrelation. A Study Among Muslim Minorities in the Netherlands," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 33 (2010), 451–472; and Cuban Catholics in Miami: Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 86.

### *How to Spot a Judean*

Before moving on to the conclusion of this chapter, I need to briefly discuss the nature of the evidence that has been analyzed for this project. As a scholar of 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century Judeans, I do not have access to the same kinds or amounts of data for my subjects as did many of the scholars outlined in the preceding discussion. Instead of interviews, observations, and personal experience, I rely on a rather motley assemblage of disparate kinds of evidence, including a (long-standing, heavily interpreted, and frequently theologized) collection of literature, inconsistently preserved administrative and personal documents, and a limited material record available for only a very small percentage of the communities in question. Nonetheless, the robust interpretive model outlined in this chapter provides me with an opportunity to approach this evidence from a new and innovative perspective, even if that model is limited in the kinds of questions that it might ask of that evidence.

The following points have been made before,<sup>132</sup> but they are worth rehearsing in the context of the preceding theoretical discussion. Apart from the occasional explicit affiliation of an individual with the Judeans (יהודי) in the Egyptian material,<sup>133</sup> or one's residence in Nippurean *Āl-Yāhūdu*,<sup>134</sup> the primary evidence for identifying Judeans outside of the literature of

---

132. Eg. cf. Ran. Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2002), 10–13.

133. However, the identification of the same figures as both Judean (יהודי) and Aramaean (ארמי) in different contexts calls into question the parameters of Judeanness for both insiders and outsiders at Elephantine and Syene. See the discussion of this issue in my introduction to ch. 3.

134. This, too, is not without complication. The oldest datum from the settlement records a transaction between two (apparent) Babylonians, indicating that the town contained a number of ethnic elements from a very early phase. See my discussion of this issue in ch. 4.

the Hebrew Bible is through onomastics. Among the cuneiform receipts and marriage contracts, Aramaic letters and deeds, and various ostraca bearing Hebrew and Aramaic language in block script, we identify Judeans by looking for names that bear Judean markers:<sup>135</sup> names that bear what we have determined to be distinct and exclusive markers of Judeanness like a Hebrew lexeme or a Yahwistic theophoric element.<sup>136</sup> The argument is that it would have been highly unlikely for such a small and relatively unimportant group like the Judeans to have influenced the onomasticon of individuals outside its cultural circle. And because it is quite unlikely that

---

135. A number of studies on onomastics in the kingdom of Judah have demonstrated a strong preference for names bearing Yahwistic elements to the essential exclusion of other deities. The density of Yahwistic names in particular seems to increase 1.) as one approaches the time of the kingdom of Judah's fall chronologically and 2.) as one approaches the capital, Jerusalem, geographically. The data has been most recently analyzed in Mitka R. Golub, "Personal Names in Judah in the Iron Age II," *JSS* 62 (2017): 19–58, but see also earlier studies with similar conclusions in Richard Hess, "Aspects of Israelite Personal Names and Pre-Exilic Israelite Religion," (ed. Meir Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2007), 301–311; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 5–20. The nature of the onomastic data — derived primarily from seals, bullae, inscriptions, and biblical literature — may disproportionately reflect the kingdom's upper class, including its political, cultural, and cultic elite. The results of the studies cited above may not, therefore, reflect broader trends in onomastics for Judeans of the lower classes (see the argument in Diana Vikander Edelman, "Introduction," [ed. Diana Vikander Edelman; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 45–72.).

136. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 14–31; Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia." 32–40; Laurie E. Pearce, "Identifying Judeans and Judean Identity in the Babylonian Evidence," in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (eds. Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 7–32; Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 133–145. For a comparable argument in the service of identifying Neirabians, cf. Gauthier Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back: The Neirab Archive," in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478. ed. Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 63–74.

Yahweh was worshipped outside the kingdoms of Israel and Judah prior to their fall,<sup>137</sup> those individuals with names featuring Judean markers can be comfortably identified as “Judean.”

Using onomastic evidence to identify ethnic identity can be a complicated endeavor because personal names need not carry symbolic meaning. However, broad trends in naming practices<sup>138</sup> and instances in which adults change their names can be particularly instructive for understanding how groups and individuals might imbue names with symbolic meaning.<sup>139</sup> And even on a smaller scale, if a name does not speak directly to the social location of its bearer, it still may provide evidence for the complex social locations of his or her parents, “expressing what kind of name-givers, or social beings in a more general sense, the parents wanted to be

---

137. See the discussion (and dismissal) of three potential Aramaean Yahwists from the Iron Age in Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 37–38.

138. Beaulieu offers a number of helpful examples of this for the ancient Near East. “Yahwistic Names in Light of Late Babylonian Onomastics,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 245–266. For similar approaches to Judean naming patterns in the late Monarchic period, see also Golub, “Personal Names in Judah,” 19–58; Hess, 301–311; Edelman, 45–72; for a study of Judean naming practices in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Sylvie Honigman, “The Birth of a Diaspora: The Emergence of a Jewish Self-Definition in Ptolemaic Egypt in the Light of Onomastics,” in *Diasporas in Antiquity* (eds. Shaye J. D. Cohen and Ernest Frerichs; BJS 288; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 93–127.

139. The issue of name changes among Middle Eastern immigrants in European countries with accepted-name registries like Sweden has received significant scholarly attention. A major motivation for name changes seems to stem from stigmatization (and racism) against Middle Easterners in these places, rather than signify the full “assimilation” of these individuals. As Bursell has argued, it is part of a strategy that allows for the kind of dual or hybrid identity we will encounter in our analyses of ancient Judeans. Moa Bursell, “Name Change and Destigmatization Among Middle Eastern Immigrants in Sweden,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (2012): 471–487. Cf. Mahmood Arai and Peter Skogman Thoursie, “Renouncing Personal Names: An Empirical Examination of Surname Change and Earnings,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 1 (2009): 127–147; Shahram Khosravi, “White Masks/Muslim Names: Immigrants and Name-Changing in Sweden,” *Race & Class* 53 (2012): 65–80; Stephanie J. Nawyn, Linda Gjokaj et al., “Linguistic Isolation, Social Capital, and Immigrant Belonging,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 41 (2012): 255–282.

perceived as.”<sup>140</sup> This is because despite their arguably indexical nature,<sup>141</sup> “names function not only as tools for identification but also as tools for the social classification of an individual. A personal name therefore tells a community who the individual is and, secondly lets the individual know what his or her place in the community is.”<sup>142</sup>

However, not every individual whom we will label Judean had a name with these markers. Throughout the course of this project we will encounter individuals with Babylonian, Aramaic, Egyptian, or otherwise non-Judean names who will still be included in our Judean data pool. The issue is further complicated by rise of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the Babylonian and Persian empires and with it the frequent breakdown of clear linguistic barriers between

---

140. Emilia Aldrin, “Creating Identities through the Choice of First Names,” in *Socio-onomastics: The Pragmatics of Names* (Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 275; Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017), 51.

141. Following the philosopher J. S. Mill, a thing’s proper name does not actually tell us anything about that thing. “The only names of substance which connote nothing are proper names . . . A proper name is merely an unmeaning mark . . . which we endeavor to connect with the idea of the object in our heads. . . . Objects thus ticketed with proper names resemble, until we know something more about them, men and women in masks. We can distinguish them, but can conjecture nothing with respect to their real features.” (cited from Gabriele Vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn, “‘Entangled in Histories’: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming,” [eds. Gabriele Vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 5–6.). To demonstrate this point, Beaulieu uses the example of Origen, the Christian Church Father whose name recognized Horus, an Egyptian deity. The theophoric element ‘Horus’ tells us nothing about the religious convictions of the man who bore the name; and in fact, in this case, actually leads us astray. Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names,” 246–247.

142. Terhi Ainiala and Jan-Ola Östman, “Introduction: Socio-onomastics and Pragmatics,” in *Socio-onomastics : The Pragmatics of Names* (Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 275; Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017), 3–4; Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn, “‘Entangled in Histories’.” 3–4.

ethnic groups.<sup>143</sup> In these cases classification will have to be made through an appeal to context, including — but not limited to — the individual’s ancestry or social networks — those people with whom he or she might interact in a variety of settings.<sup>144</sup> But even here, as we try to construct a Judean social network, we do so predominantly through names, and so the role of onomastics remains paramount.

It may be argued that the limitations of this approach beg the question with regard to identifying Judeans. While I believe the argument for identifying individuals with Yahwistic or Hebrew elements in their names as Judeans is strong, recognizing a Judean with a non-marking

---

143. It is likely that even before the rise of Nebuchadnezzar Aramaic was already the administrative language of the Neo-Assyrian empire. See, for example, the famous relief from Sennacherib’s palace of an alphabetic (Aramaic) scribe standing beside a cuneiform one on the battlefield (BM 124955, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1856-0909-1\\_5](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1856-0909-1_5)). See also the presentation of the interaction between the Judean officials and the Rab Shakeh in 2 Kgs 18: דבר נא אל עבדיך ארמית כי שמעיים אנחנו ואל תדבר עמנו יהודית באזני העם אשר על החמה “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic because we understand. Please stop speaking Judean within earshot of the people on the wall.” (v. 26). Cogan dates the version of Sennacherib’s thrice-told invasion of which this verse is a part (Unit 2, 2 Kgs 18.16–19a, 36–37) to some time after Sennacherib’s assassination in 680 BCE, but before the composition of Unit 3 (19.9b–35), which likely dates to the rise of the Babylonian empire. Mordechai Cogan, “Sennacherib’s Siege of Jerusalem: Once or Twice?” *BAR* 27 (2001): 40–45, 69. This means that the author of the passage imagined that already in the 8<sup>th</sup> century interactions between imperial officers and Judeans were expected to be conducted in Aramaic, even if that expectation reflected the circumstances of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. On the shift in imperial *lingua franca* during the Neo-Assyrian period, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium BC Mesopotamia,” in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Culture* (ed. Seth Sanders; OIS 2; 2006), 187–216. On the complications that linguistic shift causes for ethnic identification by means of onomastics, see Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names,” 252–254.

144. For an example social network analysis for Judeans in Babylonia, see Caroline Waerzeggers, “Locating Contact in the Babylonian Exile: Some Reflections on Tracing Judean-Babylonian Encounters in Cuneiform Texts,” in *Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon: Scholarly Encounters Between Jews, Iranians, and Babylonians in Antiquity* (eds. Uri Gabbay and Shai Secunda; Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 131–146.

names is indeed a problem. Any individual who may have self-identified as “Judean” (or was recognized as such by an outsider) but had a name without observable Judean markers (or documented contact with someone who did) essentially disappears from our data pool. Without the aid of these clues or access to his/her social network, a Judean trader with an Aramaic name — the primary language of many Judeans in the generations after the fall of Judah<sup>145</sup> — will likely go unrecognized. This evidentiary reality means that the data pool is necessarily biased towards those Judeans who continued to give their offspring marked names and may therefore disproportionately represent those of particular social and economic strata.

## Conclusion

### *Application*

Throughout this chapter, I have tried to lay the theoretical groundwork for a formulation of Judeanness in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries that serves as an alternative to the exilic rupture model outlined in the Introduction. By using insights from the fields of trauma, diaspora, and ethnicity studies, I propose a sense of Judeanness that was flexible and dynamic; a social identity that was able to adjust with the developing historical realities of a post-Judah world. Having established

---

145. Aramaic is the only attested language of the Judeans of Elephantine and Beaulieu has argued based on onomastic and settlement evidence that it was also in use as the day-to-day language of the Judeo-Babylonians. Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names,” 252. Ezra–Nehemiah may also attest to the spread of Aramaic among the Judeans of the Yehud in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but this point is not without controversy.

the contours of those categories, I would like to conclude by gesturing toward how these insights will be applied to Judean identity within this project's case studies.

First, while trauma no doubt played a major role in the lives of those Judeans who survived the fall of Judah as well as in the lives of their descendants, it need not be the case that it was *the* or *sole* defining element in their lives. Following the work of Alexander on communal trauma, I will argue in ch. 5 that groups of return migrants and their descendants mobilized 'the exile' to make claims for authority, authenticity, and prestige in historiographical accounts of the reconstruction of Jerusalem and its environs during the Persian period.

Secondly, I would argue that while some early models of "diaspora" were hampered by insufficiently critical views of the experience of the Babylonian exile, a decentralized perspective (like that of Gilroy and Boyarin) can provide a more nuanced view of identity construction between geographically non-contiguous communities. Throughout the body chapters I will challenge long-held views that 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century Judeans in the diaspora were simply waiting for the opportunity to "return" to their ancestral homeland. I will demonstrate instead that while these communities often maintained a relationship with the territory that had once been Judah, they also and at the same time felt "at home" in their diaspora contexts.<sup>146</sup> This is especially the case for the Judean farmers and entrepreneurs in Babylonia discussed in ch. 4 and the Judean military colony of Yeb that is the focus of ch. 3. For those who did decide to undertake return migration from Babylonia early in the Persian period, it was not simply a perpetual longing for

---

146. As Brah argues, "The *concept* of diaspora places the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, *inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourse of fixed origins.*" Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, 189, *emphasis* original.

the homeland that eventually motivated their emigration, but rather a combination of economic, cultural, and religious concerns.

Finally, through the use of the category of ethnicity, I will demonstrate the dynamic ways by which Judeans came to understand and define themselves in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Judeans shared a common repertoire of symbolic resources over time and space, but it was context — cultural, political, economic — that defined which of those elements were salient in a given moment. Hybridity was not the exception but the rule for members of the diaspora and for those who remained in Judea, and the variety of circumstances in which Judeans found themselves produced a similarly wide variety of hyphenated Judeanness; Judeo-Babylonian, Judeo-Egyptian, and return migrant-Judean, to name just a few. To identify an individual from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century as ‘Judean’ is therefore only the first step in describing a far more complex identity matrix.

## Chapter 3

### Elephantine and Judeans in Egypt

#### Introduction

##### *Request for a Letter of Recommendation*

In a drafted letter dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of Darius II's 17<sup>th</sup> year (407 BCE),<sup>1</sup> a certain Yedaniah and his colleagues wrote to Bagowahiya, the governor (פחה) of Judea (יהוד). They sought Bagowahiya's support in their efforts to gain permission from the Egyptian satrap Aršama to rebuild the temple to their deity Yahu on the island of Yeb on the first cataract of the Nile — modern day Elephantine. Through a brief, pathos-filled narrative, the letter's authors describe how a group of Egyptian priests, led by a local Persian official named Vidranga, destroyed their temple and looted its treasures. The letter writers, who claimed unwavering

---

1. The letter is actually preserved in two copies. Both appear to be drafts — with mistakes and markups — of a final version that was actually sent off to Judea. Based on a memo discovered at Elephantine (A4.9) that recorded responses from Bagowahiya and Delaiah, the son of the governor of Samaria who is also mentioned in the letter, it would appear that a letter concerning roughly this subject matter was received in Judea (and Samaria).

loyalty to the imperial power Bagowahiya represented, had been in deep mourning since the temple's destruction in 410 BCE, fasting and wearing sackcloth for more than three years.

Previous appeals to the religious authorities in Judea had gone unanswered, and so Yedaniah and his colleagues turned to Bagowahiya as their last hope for positive intercession.

This letter, which Bezalel Porten has titled a Request for a Letter of Recommendation (RLR),<sup>2</sup> provides a window into the complex web of political, religious, and cultural ties navigated by a community of Judeans living in Upper Egypt at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. It is one strand in the rich tapestry of evidence upon which this chapter is based. Using textual evidence from the corpus of Elephantine papyri, analysis of the limited material remains from the city, and the theoretical foundations outlined in chapter 2, I will offer a new reconstruction of how members of this community understood their own Judeanness within their poly-ethnic diasporic context. I will ultimately argue that the Judeo-Egyptians of Elephantine lived a hybrid life between their roles as soldiers, neighbors, and friends.

The chapter begins with an introduction to this community and a brief reflection on the nature of the evidence that I will be using to make the case. Next I will turn to the question of the community's origins. I will put what I have identified as a short or abbreviated myth of the community's founding — its *mythomoteur* — into conversation with three other accounts that narrate the arrival of Judeans to Egypt under the Saïtes and Persians. By comparing all four accounts, I will show how members of the Judeo-Egyptian community recalled laying down

---

2. Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Idocument et Monumenta Orientis Aniqui 22; Boston: Brill, 1996), 138–147.

roots on the island and what that story had to say about their own self perception. I then address the question of how the distinct Judean identity that was encapsulated in that story was reproduced over the span of more than a century, by interrogating the systems and institutions — both external and internal to the community — that likely played a role in that process. Finally, by focusing on the religious identity of the community, I argue that we should understand the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and Syene as having embodied a dual or hybrid diaspora identity that accommodated elements of local culture while also contributing thereto.

*The Elephantine Papyri and the Judean Community of Yeb*

Unlike the newly-published cuneiform evidence from Āl-Yāḥūdu that will be treated in the next chapter, the documentary evidence for the Judean community settled on the Nile’s first cataract has been available to scholars for roughly a century. This means that much of the work that was required to contextualize the diasporic setting of Āl-Yāḥūdu has already been done. In this section, I will lay out the foundation from which I will be working based on previous scholarship on the community.

First of all, the Judean community of Elephantine, or Yeb (יב) as it is called in the Aramaic and Demotic sources, is known from hundreds of documents discovered on the island through excavations around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> These documents range in date from the

---

3. Of the 1042 known Aramaic documents that were written in Egypt during the Persian period that Esko Siljanen considered in his recent dissertation, some 570 were discovered (or likely discovered) in Elephantine. Another 285 were discovered in the Memphis-Saqqara region. Esko Siljanen, “Judeans of Egypt in the Persian Period (539–332 Bce) in Light of the Aramaic Documents,” (PhD diss., Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki, 2017), 89–91.

end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE to the very beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Their discovery on the antiquities market prompted a series of excavations by French and German archaeologists that was frequently interrupted by lapses in funding and the World Wars.<sup>4</sup> The most recent excavations of the site have been carried out by a German team led by Cornelius von Pilgrim. After previous efforts failed to do so, Cornelius and his team have been able to identify the site of the Yahu temple as well as confirm Porten's mapping of the so-called Aramean Quarter,<sup>5</sup> the residential area in which many Judeans are thought to have lived. Nevertheless, the majority of the community's material remains has been lost to centuries of subsequent settlement on the site and the erosion of the island by the Nile.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of the documents that were discovered has been published in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni's four-volume series *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*

---

4. Cornelius von Pilgrim, who led the most recent excavations of the site at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, offers a helpful and engaging narrative of the history of the site's excavations. Cornelius von Pilgrim, "'Anyway, we should really dig on Elephantine some time.' A Short Tour through the Research History of the Towns Along the First Nile Cataract," in *Zwischen den Welten: Grabfunde von Ägyptens Südgrenze = Between Worlds: Finds from Tombs on Egypt's Southern Border* (eds. Ludwig D. Morenz, Michael. Hoveler-Muller et al.; Rahden/Westf: VML, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2011), 85–96.

5. This settlement complex gets its title from the journal notes of Otto Rubensohn who led two seasons of a German expedition to Elephantine between 1906–1907. It was in this area where he discovered a significant number of Aramaic papyri in late 1906 and early 1907. Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 1–5. For Porten's reconstruction of the area's ancient layout, see TAD B, 174–175.

6. Cornelius Von Pilgrim, "Tempel des Jahu und 'Strasse des Königs'—ein Konflikt in der späten Perserzeit auf Elephantine," in *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World: Studies in Honor of Jan Assman* (ed. Sibylle Meyer; Brill, 2003), 303–317; Cornelius Von Pilgrim, "Textzeugnis und archäologischer Befund: zur Topographie Elephantines in der 27. Dynastie," in *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens, Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet* (eds. Heike Guksch and Daniel Polz; Mainz am Rhein : Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1998), 485–497

(TAD)<sup>7</sup> and in Helene Lozachmeur's *La collection Clermont-Ganneau: ostraca, epigraphes sur jarre, etiquettes de bois* (CG).<sup>8</sup> These volumes contain a wide variety of documents, including letters, court records, deeds, and marriage contracts. Judeans — identified primarily by their Yahwistic and/or Hebrew names<sup>9</sup> and through the use of the ethnonym יהודי/יהודיים — play a significant role in the texts that have survived. Based on these documents, we can say a number of things about the Judean community of Yeb with some confidence.

Second, while the evidence for the community is in many ways comparable to what we will encounter with Āl-Yāhūdu in Babylonia — much of the Elephantine material is administrative and deals in the mundane aspects of life as an imperial colony — the datasets do differ in one particularly significant way: many of the documents and letters from Yeb are written by members of the community rather than by non-Judean scribes. As we will see, our non-Biblical evidence for the Judeo-Babylonians of Nippur all comes from the perspective of the Babylonian scribes who recorded their activities. In ancient Yeb, however, many Judeans worked as scribes or could write for themselves;<sup>10</sup> this means that much of the material reflects the in-group perspective of a community member.

---

7. Bezalel. Porten and Ada. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (4 vols.; Winona Lake, IN: Hebrew University, Dept. of the History of the Jewish People; Distributed by Eisenbrauns, 1986–1999).

8. Helene Lozachmeur, Pascale Ballet et al., *La collection Clermont-Ganneau: ostraca, epigraphes sur jarre, etiquettes de bois* (2 vols. *Memoires de l'Academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 35; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2006).

9. Esko's dissertation provides a number of helpful appendices, including a list of all Yahwistic and Hebrew names that appear in the corpus Aramaic documents from Egypt (343–346), as well as names that occurred in both Babylonia and Egypt (348).

10. For a discussion of Judean scribal activity on Elephantine, see Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 192–197.

The evidence from Elephantine also includes a number of both formal and informal letters. These missives, which address topics ranging from temple reconstruction to childcare, offer a very different view into the day-to-day lives of ancient Judeans living in the Egyptian diaspora than legal and administrative documents. This includes clues to how the community understood its relationship to Judea and, unlike the administrative material from Babylonia, to Yahu, their deity. The Elephantine material thus offers significant insight into the facets of the community's religious identity. A primary focus of this chapter will therefore be an examination of how the community's religious expression facilitated the (re)production of its distinct social identity as well as its adaptation to their Egyptian context, including the contributions it made to the local culture in which it participated.

Next, many of the Judean men of fighting age who lived on the island of Yeb or in Syene (סון, modern day Aswan), a settlement directly across from Yeb on the Nile's east bank, served in the local military stronghold (בירתא)<sup>11</sup> that, during the time of our documentation (approximately the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE), was under the control of the Persian empire. As members of a garrison (חיל), the Judeans served with under primarily Persian commanding officers and alongside other soldiers from the Levant, Anatolia, and Greece who had also (been) settled in the

---

11. The term is derived from Akkadian *birtu* and refers to a citadel or castle within a city or to a fort located strategically outside of one. "בירה," *HALOT*, 5:1833; Cf. *CAD* b s.v. *birtu* A 261–263.

region.<sup>12</sup> Yeb was the home of the Judean garrison while Syene housed an Aramaean (אַרְמִי) garrison. The ethnonyms attached to each may have had significance at the time of their establishment; however, according to Jacob Wright, by the time of our documentation they likely described “membership in distinct military detachments rather than a designation of national origins.”<sup>13</sup> As representatives of the Persian imperial apparatus, the Judeans of Yeb and other

---

12. “Mercenary” is the standard title given to these foreign soldiers in the secondary literature. To be a mercenary in the ancient world, according to one recent treatment, required “(1) recruitment for service in a foreign army (2) in order to participate in armed conflicts (3) for the purpose of private gain as a result of his participation.” Benjamin M. Sullivan, “Paying Archaic Greek Mercenaries: Views from Egypt and the Near East,” *The Classical Journal* 107 (2011): 33. While this definition does well in defining the activity of the soldiers to be discussed in this chapter, it lacks a critical diachronic component. Does the term apply equally to a soldier who resides in Egypt only long enough for a single campaign as it does to one who remains after the battle, only to acquire land, raise a family, and continue to serve a foreign king? Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, citing the work of Tuplin (1987) and Duinberre (2013), maintains the term while qualifying it. She recognizes the importance of duration for the communities in question, adding that in the context of Saite and Persian Egypt, “mercenaries” were ethnically-distinct soldiers (non-indigenous or non-native Egyptian) who settled (or who were settled) in maintained military communities. Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult of Yhwh in Judean Garrisons: Continuity from Pharaonic to Ptolemaic Times,” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy* (eds. John J. Collins, Joel S. Baden et al.; Boston: Brill, 2017), 377–379. While Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s definition offers improvement through specification, it is still imperfect (does this new understanding apply equally well to the descendants of this first generation of settlers? Does being born and raised on the land once granted to your father for military service change the status of one’s military work?) I will therefore avoid the term. Instead, I refer to the members of these military colonies as “imperial soldiers,” that is representatives of the Persian empire and the Saite dynasts who ruled Egypt before them.

13. Jacob Wright makes a strong case for how to understand confusing instances in which a Judean — identified by a Yahwistic name — is called אַרְמִי. The issue had been particularly confused by the case of a certain Maḥsaiah son of Yedaniah, the father of Mibṭaḥia, who is identified as both an Aramaean of Syene (B2.1:2; 2.6:2) and a Judean of Yeb (B2.2:3; 2.9:3). It would seem that the garrison titles froze while the ethnic identities of those who served in them changed over time. Jacob Wright, “Surviving in an Imperial Context: Foreign Military Service and Judean Identity,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achemind Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 520–522, here 520.

communities of imperial soldiers like them occupied a privileged status over their subjected Egyptian neighbors, a reality that has been theorized to have created resentment among that population and led to conflict between the groups during the period of Persian rule (see below).

Finally, the Judean garrison of Yeb and its fort featured a temple dedicated to the deity Yahu whose name is spelled both *YHW* and *YHH* in internal communal documents.<sup>14</sup> Yahu, the primary focus of the community's religious expression, has traditionally been associated with the deity Yahweh who was worshipped in Judea, although no literature associated with the worship of the deity (ritual manuals, explicitly theological literature) has been preserved to confirm the association.<sup>15</sup> In any case, Yahu was not the only deity recognized or acknowledged by the Judeans of Yeb. As I will argue in the last section of this chapter on the community's diasporic religious identity, the Judeans of Yeb and Syene participated in a diverse religious atmosphere in which Yahu was one of many deities whose agency and efficacy were recognized. Also included were Levantine deities like Anat and Bethel who feature in the preserved written record, albeit much less frequently than Yahu. One question that has frustrated scholars since the discovery of the Elephantine material has been whether or not these gods were incorporated into the religious

---

14. The former spelling is by far the more common of the two, while the latter occurs most frequently in ostraca, and only occasionally in the papyri (B2 7:14; B3 3:2; D7 16:3, 7; 18:3; 21:3; 35:1). The full Tetragrammaton, however, is unattested.

15. Porten has argued that the full spelling of the Tetragrammaton was limited to literary texts during this period, which would explain its absence from the letters and administrative texts discovered at Elephantine. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 105–106. For a history of scholarship on the pronunciation of the divine name based on these spellings, see Angela Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel und Kult der Judäo-Aramäer von Elephantine: Archäologische und schriftliche Zeugnisse aus dem perserzeitlichen Ägypten* (AOAT 396; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 107–111.

traditions of the Judeans prior to their settlement on Yeb. Did they bring these deities with them when they migrated or were they introduced to their religious expression through contact with their neighbors of Levantine origin in Upper Egypt?<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, an in-depth discussion of the topic is beyond the scope of this chapter; it would take us too far afield of the study of the community in its 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Egyptian context. There is no evidence in the material from Yeb that speaks to when or how these deities entered the community's pantheon — as we will see,

---

16. In his treatment of the Elephantine papyri, Cowley appealed to Jer 44 to understand the worship of these deities among the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb. According to his analysis, these Judeans — freed from the reforms of Josiah — returned to an older form of their religion that had once included the worship of these deities. A. E. Cowley and Ahikar Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), xvii. Porten, on the other hand, argued that these deities were introduced to the Judean religious system through exposure to the Arameans settled in Syene. He draws especially on the Hermopolis papyri (TAD A2.1–7) and the pantheon attested therein. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 151–185, esp. 164–173. More recently, van der Toorn has argued that these deities were introduced into the Israelian and Judean pantheon by Syrians migrating south during the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. While not “native” to Israelian and Judean religious systems, they were nonetheless introduced prior to their migration to Egypt. Karel Van der Toorn, “Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine,” *Numen* 39 (1992): 80–101. Cf. Van der Toorn's reconstruction of the historical circumstances that led to the production of Papyrus Amherst 63. Like Van der Toorn, Rohrmoser identifies Israelian and Syrian influence in the Judeo-Egyptian pantheon, but is hesitant to state whether those traditions mingled in Jerusalem following migrations south by Syrians and Israelians or were introduced within the Egyptian context. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 126–152. Knauf, too, hesitates to state definitively where and when these deities entered the Judeo-Egyptian pantheon, but claims that it is likely that the community and their ancestors had traditionally been polytheists (regardless of which deities they worshipped). Ernst Axel Knauf, “Elephantine und das vor-biblische Judentum,” in *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden* (ed. Reinhard Kratz; Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 22; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag Gütersloh, 2002), 183–184.

Persian period Yeb offered numerous opportunities for cultural contact — and arguing for their associations with the community’s Samarian origins runs the risk of circular reasoning.<sup>17</sup>

## Origin Stories

### *The Origin of the Yeb Colony*

Unlike the Babylonian experience, which was the subject of significant reflection in literature preserved in the Hebrew Bible, there is a dearth of literary and theological reflection on the presence of Judeans on the Nile’s first cataract. There are bits of circumstantial evidence regarding a Judean presence in Egypt during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the narrated migration of a small group of Judeans to the Eastern Delta in Jeremiah 40–44 — although this narrative makes no reference to Yeb or Syene — and a tantalizing but problematic reference to “the land of the Syenians” in Isa 49.12.<sup>18</sup> In general, the Hebrew Bible has preserved far less

---

17. For example, if the deities are from Syria then the most likely place the community’s ancestors would have encountered them is if they were from Samaria, but the case for their Samarian origins (they are never called “Samaritans” in the evidence from Yeb) rests on their contact with Syrians who worshipped these deities.

18. According to the MT of Isa 49.12, Yahweh will gather his dispersed people from far off, the north and the west, and finally, מארץ סיניים. The final word of v. 12, סיניים, is a *hapax legomenon*, and the earliest translations offer dramatically different readings. The LXX reads “ἐκ γῆς Περσῶν,” suggesting a Hebrew *Vorlage* of מארץ פרסים, while the Targum preserves a more understandable מארע דרומא, “from the Southland,” thereby completing the list of cardinal directions. The Great Isaiah scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), however, reads סוניים, a plural gentilic of סונה, the ancient Hebrew spelling of Syene (Aramaic סון; cf. Ezek. 29.10 and 30.6 where it appears with מגדל to represent the extremities of the kingdom of Egypt). Much like the Targum, this reading completes the cardinal directions, with Syene (and its inhabitants) representing the southernmost point of the known world.

literary reflection on the Egyptian diaspora, and does not include a narrative of the arrival of Judeans to Yeb.

The Elephantine papyri, too, offer very little help in this regard. The documents that have survived do not provide a narrative of the community's arrival on the island, the circumstances under which that occurred, or even the duration of its residence there. The earliest datable document containing Judean names, names that have Yahwistic or Hebrew elements, is an inheritance document from the reign of Darius I (495 BCE). This short contract, which details a rather complicated inheritance division,<sup>19</sup> provides a *terminus ad quem* for the settlement of the garrison; it is however possible (if not probable) that the community was established at a (significantly) earlier date.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond the specific circumstances of the community's founding, scholars have looked to evidence of the community's religious practices in order to address significant questions for the history of concepts like cult centralization and monotheism that feature in the literature of the Hebrew Bible. For example, the community has its own temple in direct violation of D's prescriptions for cult centralization. If one accepts the historical reality and broad reach of Josiah's implementation of this policy as narrated in 2 Kgs 22–23, as Porten does,<sup>21</sup> then the Yahu temple of Yeb must have been built prior to that moment or reflects praxis that diverges

---

19. TAD B5.1, a quitclaim between a pair of sisters with a Judean patronym (Sallu'ah and Yatumah daughters of Kenaiah) and another woman with a Yahwistic name (Yahu'ur daughter of Šelomam) is dated to the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Darius, 491 BCE. The document was actually part of a more complicated inheritance procedure. On the details of the agreement see Annalisa Azzoni, *The Private Lives of Women in Persian Egypt* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 83–87.

20. See below on scholarly reconstructions of the community's arrival.

21. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 13.

significantly from the king's reform movement. If, however, the Judeans arrived later as representatives of Persia, then that might undermine claims to a wide-spread acceptance or longevity of Josiah's reform, or even its historical reality. Because of this variety of issues at stake, scholars devoted significant effort towards identifying the timing and circumstances of the community's arrival in Egypt.

### *The Mythomoteur and Judeans on Yeb*

As I argued in ch. 2, there is no definitive set of criteria, no particular clustering of traits that is inherent to an ethnic group. However, scholars frequently highlight the important role of the founding myth, the *mythomoteur*, in the construction and maintenance of group identity. Theorists like John A. Armstrong and A. D. Smith have stressed the importance of the *mythomoteur* as a constitutive element of pre- and proto-national groups,<sup>22</sup> and foundational works in the study of diaspora have similarly focused on the role of myth in maintaining links between the ancestral center and the dispersed periphery.<sup>23</sup> Even theorists who eschew the geographic "rootedness" of diaspora identity in favor of more dynamic hybrid constructions still recognize the value of the shared stories that support and reinforce the boundaries of the group.<sup>24</sup>

---

22. John Alexander Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 7–9, 129–167 (in the context of empire), see also his discussion of Nostalgia at 14–53; Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 21–68, esp. 57–68; Anthony D. Smith, "Nations Before Nationalism? Myth and Symbolism in John Armstrong's Perspective," *Nations & Nationalism* 21 (2015): 165–170. Cf. Anthony D. Smith, "Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some Religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals," *Nations and Nationalism* 5 (1999): 331–355.

23. Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83–99, esp. 91–95; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 22–25.

24. Eg. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*. 57–58, 188–220.

As narrativized ideology,<sup>25</sup> myths evince the values of the group who shares them and support its institutions (social, religious, political, etc.). As a sub-genre of myth, the *mythomoteur* reinforces group boundaries by “stressing individuals’ solidarity against an alien force,”<sup>26</sup> narratively establishing the community’s “us” by outlining that salient values that define it over against a perceived “them,” while rooting those values in a purportedly shared past. The historical reality of that narrative — whether set in the mythic past or just a few years prior — and the actual or perceivable difference with the “other” are far less important than the ability of their narrativization to evoke and establish bonds between would-be members of the ethnic collective.

There is one internal reference within the papyri to the Judeo-Egyptian community’s tenure on Yeb. In the RLR, Yedaniah and his colleagues made a striking claim about the antiquity of their temple and the long-standing presence of their ancestors in Egypt. According to the letter’s authors:<sup>27</sup>

ומן יומי מלך מצרין אבהין בנו אגורא זך ביב בירתא וכזי כנבוזי על למצרין אגורא זך בנה  
השכחה ואגורי אלהי מצרין כל מגרו ואיש מנדעם באגורא זך לא חבל

In the days of the pharaohs our ancestors built that temple [to Yahu] in the Yeb garrison and when Cambyses entered Egypt he found that temple (already) built. The temples to the gods of Egypt they destroyed each one, but no one dared touch anything in that temple [to Yahu].

This short notice offers no details concerning *how* the ancestors of these Judeo-Egyptians came to settle on the island or the circumstances under which they built their temple. The most that can

---

25. As stated succinctly by Bruce Lincoln, “Myth, then, is not just taxonomy, but *ideology* in narrative form.” This quote is part of a larger discussion about the role of narrative in political taxonomy, hierarchy, and categorization. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 141–159, here 147.

26. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 9.

27. TAD A4.7:13–14; cf. TAD 4.8:12–13.

be said with confidence is that the community claims to have been settled prior to 525 BCE, the year of Cambyses' conquest of Egypt.

Yedaniah's reference to his community's pre-Persian roots is best understood as a *mythomoteur*, or at least a portion or distillation of one. As such, it could provide insight into how the community understood its own settlement on the island and the role that its tenure there played in the construction of Judeanness for Yedaniah and his contemporaries. In order to get a better sense of the salient elements of Judean identity emphasized or actualized in the RLR's tantalizingly brief reference, it will be productive to put it into conversation with other narratives that, while not directly referring to the Yeb community, are concerned with the arrival of Judeans in Egypt during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. First, I will discuss the narrative in Jer 40–44 and its role as an anti-*mythomoteur* for the Judeo-Egyptians from the perspective of non-Egyptian communities in the Levant and Babylonia. Second, I will move on to the Hellenistic *Letter of Aristeas* and its presentation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Alexandrian community's deep martial roots in the land of the pharaohs. Next, I will analyze a pericope from col. xviii of Papyrus Amherst 63 that narrates the arrival of Judean and Samaritan refugees at an unnamed royal outpost. Finally, I will return to Yedaniah's claim to pre-Persian roots in the RLR with insights from the other narratives to make some claims about contours of Judeanness that the short *mythomoteur* constructs and reinforces.

*The Biblical Account: Jeremiah 40–44 and the Incommensurability of Judeanness with Life in Egypt*

The most detailed account of Judean migration to Egypt during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries is presented in chs. 37–44 of the book of Jeremiah (MT).<sup>28</sup> These chapters provide a longer narrative of the reign of Zedekiah and the aftermath of Judah’s fall in 587/6 than the book of Kings. This includes the assassination of Gedaliah in ch. 40 and the flight of a group of his supporters and their families to Egypt in chs. 40–44. The narrative takes a decidedly negative stance on the group’s decision to flee, sentencing them to suffer the same fate as Jerusalem (chs. 42–43) and ultimately pronouncing divine abandonment (44.21).

This account raises a number of questions of questions for our discussion of Judeo-Egyptian identity. First, who would write something like this? It seems highly unlikely that members of the migrating community would describe themselves in such negative terms,<sup>29</sup> but who else would be interested in narrating its arrival and settlement in Egypt? Secondly, and closely related, what is at stake for these authors that they should judge a Judean diaspora community in Egypt so harshly? The last point is particularly striking when one contrasts chs. 41–44 with the essentially positive view of the Babylonian diaspora as represented in Jeremiah’s letter to the “elders of the *Golah*” (ch. 29).<sup>30</sup>

---

28. MT 30.1–3, 14.18 // LXX 46.1–3, 14–18; MT 39.4–13 is missing from the L. MT 40–44// LXX 47–51. Eric Trink, “‘If You Will Only Remain in This Land’: Migration Decision Making and Jeremiah as a Religiously Motivated Nonmover,” *CBQ* 80 (2018): 585–586.

29. Corinne Lanoir, “Jérémie 44: pourquoi maudire les exilés égyptiens,” *FoiVie* 114 (2014): 38.

30. There is no negative judgment passed in the letter addressed to these community leaders for their current condition, only advice for life in the diaspora. See below for the reasoning behind the privileging of this diaspora experience over that of Judeo-Egyptians of Migdol, Tahpanes, Memphis, and Patros (Jer 44.1).

In his book *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45*, Mark Leuchter argues that both sets of questions are part of a larger trans-geographical debate over the fundamental elements of Judeanness. According to Leuchter, the author responsible for compiling Jer 26–45,<sup>31</sup> a textual unit within the book of Jeremiah that he identifies as “The Supplement,” was making a claim about the territoriality of Judeanness during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The author of this unit, who was likely located in the Babylonian diaspora,<sup>32</sup> was guided by a Deuteronomic view of history that privileged the experience of the Exodus from Egypt as a definitive element of collective identity. According to the book of Deuteronomy (and to the author of the Supplement who was guided by it), to be an Israelite (or a Judean) required rooting one’s past in the deliverance from Egypt.

---

31. While Leuchter prefers to use the singular “author,” he suggests that it could have been a tight circle of scribes who were responsible for this literary unit. He argues, however, that their point of view and poetics are so similar that it is quite difficult to identify distinct hands at work. Leuchter’s singular “author” — used here, as well — thus represents the singular viewpoint that we as readers perceive in the work — the implied author — rather than a singular historical individual. As we will see, there does seem to be ideological continuity with regard to the view of the migration to Egypt in these chapters, so Leuchter’s observations are productive.

32. Leuchter argues that the whole of the Supplement is shaped to narrate a transition of authority from the Zadokite-led cult and its Zion Theology to the prophetic tradition that was inherited by the diasporic Levitical scribal authority that was embodied in the text by the figure of Baruch. Mark Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 136–141. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer has critiqued Leuchter’s work for the specificity he is willing to assert regarding the dating of biblical materials and about the plausibility of attributing the work to the Shaphanide and Levitical scribal circles in Babylonia. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Review: The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45 Mark Leuchter,” *VT* 3 (2009): 508. Leuchter responded in a subsequent issue of *VT* (Mark Leuchter, “The Levites in Exile: A Response to L.S. Tiemeyer,” *VT* 4 [2010]: 583–590). I, like Tiemeyer, am skeptical of his precise dating. I also think that Leuchter is too willing to accept the word of the biblical authors (eg. Ezra’s list of returning Levites) at face value. In the end, I am not convinced of his greater argument regarding the composition of the Supplement; I do, however, find his explanation of the ideological underpinnings of Jer 41–44 persuasive.

Leuchter argues that, in the eyes of The Supplement's author, a *willing* return to Egypt was equivalent to rejecting this fundamental element of a defining component of Judeanness.<sup>33</sup>

Through the recounting of the events in Jer 40–44, the author of The Supplement narratively alienates those who migrated to Egypt from membership in a broader, translocal ethnic community that included Judeans who had been deported to Babylonia as well as those who remained in Judea. According to Leuchter: “The Supplement has been shaped to demonstrate that those who are now in Egypt have been transformed into a foreign nation.”<sup>34</sup> The author accomplishes this through a number of rhetorical steps. First, the cult of the Queen of Heaven, claimed to be “traditional” by the addressees of ch. 44, is presented as תועבה, “foreign.”<sup>35</sup> The prophet argues that despite the longevity and persistence of the practice that the Judeans of Patros claimed, making offerings to the Queen of Heaven had *always* been inconsistent with Judeanness (44.4, 22). There is also a critique of the community's political

---

33. “The message in Deuteronomy is absolute: regardless of clan or individual ethnic origins, Israel as a nation was born in the Exodus from Egypt. It is this profound belief that underlines the oracle in Jeremiah 42, resulting in a simple but severe message: returning to Egypt would constitute an annulment of Israelite status.” Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile*, 130. Goldstein, in a discussion of the afterlife of Jeremianic traditions in the Second Temple period, also argues that the narrative of Jeremiah's descent to Egypt, and Jer 42, 44 in particular, reflects a pro-Babylonian perspective that includes the Judeo-Egyptian community in a long history of stubbornness and rebelliousness. He associates this kind of retrospective with the confessional prayers of the Persian and Hellenistic periods (on this genre, see ch. 5). Ronnie Goldstein, “Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions,” *DSD* 20 (2013): 444–447.

34. Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile*, 135.

35. For the translation of תועבה as “foreign” or “non-Israelite,” see my discussion of the use of the term in the Book of Ezekiel (ch. 4), and C. L. Crouch, “What Makes a Thing Abominable? Observations on the Language of Boundaries and Identity Formation from a Social Science Perspective,” *VT* 65 (2015): 516–541.

allegiance; rather than aligning themselves with Yahweh's servant Nebuchadnezzar (27.6; 43.10), Jeremiah's traveling party threw their lot in with Pharaoh Hophri (43.9–10; 44.30).

Finally, and most perhaps most importantly, The Supplement makes clear through its narration of the events that led to the community's migration (chs. 42–43) that these Judeans *chose* to abandon their homeland and flee to a foreign land.<sup>36</sup> In the prophet's diatribe against the Judeans of Patros in ch. 44, Yahweh re-emphasizes the agency of those who migrated to Egypt, while making it clear that they have jeopardized their membership among his people through their flight. "Why are *you* doing this great harm to *yourselves*, to cut yourselves off (להכרית לבם) — man and woman, infant and child — from Judah?" (44.7; cf. vv. 8, 11). The langue used here to define separation from the ancestral homeland, a *hiphil* infinitive of the root *k-r-t*, is important and intentional. It recalls similar usage in literature associated with the Jerusalemite priesthood. As part of a formula found frequently in the Holiness Code and the Book of Ezekiel, *k-r-t* in either the *hiphil* or the *niphal* signified an individual or community's exclusion from the עדה, the congregation of Israel and Yahweh's chosen people.<sup>37</sup> The parallel usage in the passage from Jeremiah confirms that communal membership was also at stake for the prophet and the Judean of Egypt. According to the author of the passage, these Judeans ignored Jeremiah's admonition and others like it, forsaking their homeland for a country from which Yahweh had already redeemed them.

---

36. Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile*, 130–136.

37. Walther Zimmerli, "Die Eigenart der prophetischen Rede des Ezechieh: Ein Beitrag zum Problem an Hand von Ez. 14 1–11," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 66 (1954): 13ff, esp. 19; cf. "ברת," *HALOT*, 2:500.

Through this re-telling, this anti-*mythomoteur* for the communities of Judeans who settled in Egypt following the fall of the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, the author responsible for Jer 40–44 makes strong claims about the fundamental elements of Judeanness. First, the author re-affirmed a religious component of Judean identity that was centered on the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic tenets of Yahweh-alone theology and Jerusalem-centered worship.<sup>38</sup> Despite claims to the antiquity of practices like the worship of the Queen of Heaven, they still transgressed the covenant between Yahweh and Israel when they first became his people and ultimately led to the loss of the land he promised them.

Secondly, the author delegitimizes the voluntary flight of Judeans from their ancestral homeland. According to the author, only those who remained in Judea and the Babylonian diaspora remained members of Yahweh's community and preserved their Judean identity.<sup>39</sup> For those in Babylonia, their sojourn was forced, temporary, and part of a broader divine plan meant to purify and restore Yahweh's chosen people. Those Judeans who fled to Egypt, however, failed to recognize the importance of life in Judea to their social identities and renounced their claim to that territory through their flight.<sup>40</sup> In her study of Jer 44, Corinne Lanoir asked, "peut-on vraiment, quand on est Judéen, habiter en Égypte? Peut-on y séjourner comme immigré? Et peut-on en revenir vivant?"<sup>41</sup> The answer to all of these questions, according to the author of the chapter and the literary unit of which it is a part, is a clear and definitive "no."

---

38. Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile*, 131–135.

39. Lanoir, "Jérémie 44," 46–47.

40. Trink, "If You Will Only Remain in This Land," 592–594.

41. Lanoir, "Jérémie 44," 43.

*The Alexandrian Account: The Letter of Aristeas and Making Oneself at Home in Egypt*

Another tradition preserved in a document from Hellenistic Egypt also situates the arrival of a significant Judean population in Egypt during the period of Saite rule. The so-called *Letter of Aristeas* is a Greek epistolary novella, an extended narrative framed as a letter,<sup>42</sup> that was likely written in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE by a Judean living in Alexandria or another Egyptian city with a significant Judean presence.<sup>43</sup> Purporting to be a letter between a certain Aristeas and his correspondent, Philocrates, the document recounts how, in an effort to fill out his Alexandrian library, Ptolemy II Philadelphus ordered the translation of traditional Judean documents from Hebrew to Greek and describes (in great detail) how that task was accomplished.

After an introduction that previews the contents and direction of the letter, Aristeas briefly digresses to describe an exchange between Demetrius, the newly appointed royal librarian, and Philadelphus concerning the translation of the traditional literature of the Judeans (§§ 9–11). Aristeas, who had apparently been present for this conversation, took the opportunity to beseech the king concerning a group of Judeans forcibly deported under Philadelphus' father (τῶν μετηγμένων ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως, §12), Ptolemy I Soter, who reigned from 305 to 282 BCE. In describing how this deportation came about, Aristeas mentions

---

42. L. Michael White and G. Anthony Keddie, *Jewish Fictional Letters from Hellenistic Egypt: The Epistle of Aristeas and Related Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 5.

43. On the location of composition and Judean identity of the document's author, see the introduction to the new translation and commentary by Benjamin G. Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas: 'Aristeas to Philocrates' or 'On the Translation of the Law of the Jews'* (CEJL; Boston: Degruyter, 2015), 16–30, 62–74. Cf. the introduction by R. J. H. Schutt in his translation in James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the 'Old Testament' and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (vol. 2; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 7–11.

that prior to Soter's campaigns in Coele-Syria, there was already a long history of Judeans

fighting for local and foreign kings in Egypt:

ἤδη μὲν καὶ πρότερον ἱκανῶν εἰσεληλυθότων σὺν τῷ Πέρσῃ, καὶ πρὸ τούτων ἐτέρων  
συμμαχιῶν ἐξαπεσταλμένων πρὸς τὸν τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν βασιλέα μάχεσθαι σὺν Ψαμμίτιχῳ·  
ἀλλ' οὐ τοσοῦτοι τῷ πλήθει παρεγενήθησαν, ὅσους Πτολεμαῖος ὁ τοῦ Λάγου μετήγαγε·

Already a considerable number [of Judeans] had come previously with the Persian [Cambyses], and before these, other auxiliaries had been sent out with Psammetichus in order to fight the king of the Ethiopians, but these did not number as many as those Ptolemy son of Lagos deported (§13).<sup>44</sup>

While praising the valor of those deported under Soter, Aristeas — with a little help from divine intervention — was ultimately able to persuade Philadelphus that it would be better to release these noble Judeans rather than maintaining them as forced soldiers or slaves. After including a copy of Philadelphus' letter of manumission and describing its execution, Aristeas began recounting how a perfect Greek translation of the traditional literature of the Judeans was produced at the request of a benevolent Egyptian ruler.

Long understood in critical scholarship to be a literary fiction rather than a historically accurate account of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek,<sup>45</sup> *Aristeas* functions as a *mythomoteur* that focuses on the sacred text of the Judeans of Alexandria, the LXX.<sup>46</sup> According to Benjamin G. Wright's recent commentary, by the time of *Aristeas*'s composition, the status of the LXX among the Judeo-Egyptians of Alexandria had shifted dramatically; developed originally as a companion piece to its Hebrew *Vorlage*, the LXX soon reached authoritative

---

44. Translation from Wright, *Aristeas*, 121.

45. Moore identifies Humphrey Hody's 1685 *Contra historiam Aristeae de l interpretibus dissertatio: In qua probatur illam a Judaeo aliquo confictam fuisse ad conciliandam auctoritatem versioni Graecae* as the first work of scholarship to make this claim. Moore, *Walls of Iron*, 204.

46. Wright, *Aristeas*, 14.

status as a stand-alone sacred text venerated by the Greek-speaking Judeans of Alexandria. This transformation in status from translation to sacred text required properly sacred origins for the translation, and so the author of *Aristeas* set out to “to offer a myth of origins for the primary basis on which a *Jewish* identity should be built, the Greek version of the Pentateuch, the Septuagint.”<sup>47</sup>

As an epistolary novella that purports to be an exchange between two non-Judeans, *Aristeas* claims outside validation of the *mythomoteur* contained within. The letter’s purported author reports *favorably* an extended origin myth for the Judeo-Egyptian community of Alexandria and its authoritative text that is reflexively concerned with defining what it means to be part of the group for whom the LXX would be sacred,<sup>48</sup> and in turn claiming the text as a node of identity. In this regard, *Aristeas* is remarkable for the neutral if not positive way it recalls Judean military activity in Egypt. Beyond the seemingly anecdotal reference to Judeans under the command of the Saites and Persians noted in §12–14, *Aristeas* records the eventual incorporation of liberated Judeans into the regular Ptolemaic army (§36) and perhaps most notably, makes the only recorded reference to Alexandria’s Judean πολιτευμα (§310).<sup>49</sup> A local

---

47. Wright, *Aristeas*, 66. *emphasis* original.

48. In his treatment of Ptolemaic ‘Judeanness’ as reflected in *Aristeas*, Stewart Moore argues that its author highlights outwardly observable diacritics like dietary restrictions and displays of traditional symbols like special garments, hand bindings, and sayings posted to doors and gates (cf. §158–159), and makes a particular point of emphasizing the Judeo-Egyptian community’s geographical ties to Jerusalem and Judea. Moore, *Walls of Iron*, 204–254.

49. The reference is particularly striking in contrast to the institution’s absence in the works of Josephus and Philo. Honigman argues that membership in the πολιτευμα would have excluded Judeans from full citizenship in Alexandria at the time when the two authors were working, and so both Philo and Josephus talk *around* the institution (so as to still allow for their citizenship) while still alluding to some of its functions for the community. Sylvie Honigman, “*Politeumata*’

political institution of Hellenistic Egypt, the *πολίτευμα* was a minority group social organization that had its roots in military service.<sup>50</sup> The Judean *πολίτευμα* of Alexandria, like the contemporary Judean *πολιτεύματα* in Heracleopolis and Leontopolis,<sup>51</sup> was almost certainly a military institution at the time of its founding.<sup>52</sup>

Sylvie Honigman's research has shown that the *πολίτευμα* is anachronistic in *Aristeas*'s 3<sup>rd</sup> century literary setting.<sup>53</sup> The institution almost certainly originated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, most likely under Ptolemy VI.<sup>54</sup> Despite the anachronism, *Aristeas*'s appeal to the role of Judeans in Egypt's military history was still important for how its audience understood and presented itself. On the one hand, it has been argued that soldiers in Hellenistic Egypt held superior status, both in terms of cultural prestige and taxation, to subjugated Egyptians. If this analysis is correct, then the distinction would have incentivized Judeans to distinguish themselves from the subjugated Egyptian population.<sup>55</sup>

---

and Ethnicity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt," *Ancient Society* 33 (2003): 91–93. Cf. Wright, *Aristeas*, 66–67.

50. On the military roots of the *πολίτευμα* and the role of the institution in defining/maintaining Judean identity during the Ptolemaic period, see Honigman, "*Politeumata*," 61–102; Sylvie Honigman, "Soldiers and Civilians in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Jewish *Politeuma* at Heracleopolis," *Scripta Classica Israelica* I (2002): 1–16.

51. Honigman, "*Politeumata*," 91–97; Sylvie Honigman, "The Jewish *Politeuma* at Heracleopolis," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002): 251–266.

52. See

53. Honigman, "Soldiers and Civilians in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Jewish *Politeuma* at Heracleopolis," 1–16; Honigman, "*Politeumata*," 69ff.

54. Honigman, "Soldiers and Civilians in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Jewish *Politeuma* at Heracleopolis," 5.

55. This point is controversial among scholars of Judean identity in Hellenistic Egypt. See the discussions in Honigman, "*Politeumata*," 81–82; Wright, *Aristeas*, 67.

In addition to (or perhaps aside from) serving this pragmatic purpose, *Aristeas*'s claim to a long (and storied) military history would also have served an important ideological purpose for its Alexandrian audience. In an article on the importance of imperial military service for shaping Judean identity after the fall of the southern kingdom, Jacob Wright has pointed to the role that military service can play for in the construction of identity among minority communities. Citing Persian war epigrams from Athens in the ancient world and memorials to African- and Jewish-American military service in the modern U.S., Wright observes that:

[o]ne of the most popular ways for individuals and political communities to claim rights and privileges is to affirm that they are soldiers or have a history of fighting in defense of a collective — whether it be the empire, a kingdom, or in more modern times, the nation-state. Nothing is more politically effective than the message that one is willing to sacrifice his or her life — or belongs to a family or community that has shed its blood for the sake of a ruler or a people.<sup>56</sup>

By highlighting the community's history as soldiers — and particularly skilled ones, at that — in the service of Egypt, *Aristeas* further demonstrates not only the commensurability of Judeanness with Hellenism, but also its value to the broader cultural milieu of Alexandria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> (and 2<sup>nd</sup>) century BCE.

---

56. This may not, however, include mercenaries, who, by definition, serve only temporarily and in exchange for payment. However, this could change over time or due to the needs of the king or ruler who employed the mercenaries. As we will see below, many mercenaries from Greece and Anatolia came to settle in Egypt and make it their home. Wright, "Surviving in an Imperial Context," 519.

As a founding myth, the *Letter of Aristeas* is ultimately concerned with validating the LXX as the community's primary sacred text and demonstrating the commensurability of Judean identity with Alexandria's Hellenistic cultural milieu. In service of these goals, *Aristeas* appeals — if only briefly — to a long history of Judean military activity in Egypt under Egyptian, Persian, and Greek leadership. In so doing, the narrative takes a positive view of this history and validates it as an important element of the Judeanness of the day. It argues that members of the text's implied audience are just the latest in a long line of Judeans who made their way to Egypt to serve in an imperial army — sometimes willingly, sometimes less so — and later settled in the land of their service. This history has made them valuable to the powers who would come to rule over Egypt but was also inconsistent their own identification as Judeans.

*The Outsider's Account: Papyrus Amherst 63 and the Creation of New Community*

In addition to the above examples from the book of Jeremiah and the *Letter of Aristeas*, there also exists a short but intriguing account of Judean and Samaritan refugees being received in an unnamed city among the documents compiled in Papyrus Amherst 63 (P. Amh. 63). This 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE manuscript<sup>57</sup> has drawn significant scholarly interest for, among other things, its

---

57. There remains a great debate concerning the dating of the manuscript. Bowman, who first recognized that the language of the document was Aramaic, believed with his collaborators at the Oriental Institute that the Demotic script used was from the Persian period. Raymond A. Bowman, "An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script," *JNES* 3 (1944): 219, 223, 230. When study on the document began again in the 80s, scholars proposed a range of dates, from the early fourth century (Sven P Vleeming and Jan W Wesselius, "An Aramaic Hymn from the Fourth Century B.C.," *Bibliotheca Orientalis Leiden* 39 [1982]: 501–509.) all the way to the late second (Charles F. Nims and Richard C Steiner, "A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2–6 from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *JAOS* 103 [1983]: 262, 271). Recent treatments have (tentatively) preferred a fourth century date for the document (Tawny L. Holm, "Nanay and Her

unique rendering of Semitic language with Egyptian script, the broad pantheon of deities the compilation honors, and perhaps most importantly for scholars of the Hebrew Bible, its preservation of an Aramaic hymn that is remarkably similar to Psalm 20.<sup>58</sup> Acquired by its namesake William Tyssen-Amherst in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of a cache of Greek papyri discovered in Egypt,<sup>59</sup> the document's cryptic writing system and the absence of a full edition of the text have prevented in-depth analysis of much its contents. A full publication of the manuscript only became available in 1997 with Richard Steiner's English translation for the first volume of the *Context of Scripture*.<sup>60</sup> More recently, the mysterious document has returned to scholarly focus. After a 20 year gap, Steiner published the first transcription, transliteration, translation of the document in 2017 with very limited annotation.<sup>61</sup> Karel van der Toorn published his own critical edition of the document with an extensive introduction and

---

Lover: An Aramaic Sacred Marriage Text from Egypt," *JNES* 76 [2017]: 3 n. 12; Karel van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63* [AOAT 448; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2018], 37–39), and that is the position taken here. In any case, the date of P. Amh. 63 does not provide a date for the *composition* of the documents which have been compiled within it, only a *terminus ante quem*.

58. For a discussion of this psalm, see p. 217 below.

59. Holm, "Nanay and Her Lover," 2.

60. Richard C. Steiner, "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script (1.99)," in *The Context of Scripture* (eds. William W. Hallo, K. Lawson Younger et al.; 4; New York: Brill, 1997).

61. Steiner also credits his long-term but deceased partner in the decipherment of P. Amh. 63, Charles Nims, in the publication of the work. Richard C. Steiner and Nims, Charles, "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: Text, Translation, and Notes," (2017): [cited [https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The\\_Aramaic\\_Text\\_in\\_Demotic\\_Script\\_Text\\_Translation\\_and\\_Notes](https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The_Aramaic_Text_in_Demotic_Script_Text_Translation_and_Notes)].

commentary in the AOAT series in 2018.<sup>62</sup> Another full edition is expected from Tawny Holm in the SBL series *Writings from the Ancient World*.<sup>63</sup>

This flurry of new publications and commentary presents an opportunity to take a fresh look at the distinct compositions contained within P. Amh. 63. While the entire text is fascinating for a discussion of the cultural and religious milieu in which the Judeans of Yeb might have found themselves in the 5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>64</sup> there is one section that is particularly germane to our discussion of Judeans arriving in Egypt: the short narrative poem contained in the first six lines of col. xvii.<sup>65</sup> This text, which serves as the introduction to an extended sacred marriage composition,<sup>66</sup> narrates the arrival of Judean and Samaritan refugees to an unnamed city.

Set in the first person, the narrator says he witnesses a caravan of Samaritans (*šmryn*) appearing before the king (*bmry mlk'*; l. 2). When asked their place of origin, a spokesman for the caravan answers:

ʾ[n(h)] ʾmn <sup>1</sup> -[y]hwd ʾt(h) ʾhy mn-šmryʾn <sup>1</sup> myʾt <sup>1</sup> (y) pkʾt ʾdm ʾm <sup>1</sup> sq ʾḥty myrwšlm	[I] come from [Y]ehud my brother is brought from Samaria and now <sup>67</sup> a man is bringing my sister
--	--

---

62. van der Toorn, *Papyrus 63*.

63. According to Holm's bio on her Penn State faculty page, "Her forthcoming volume for the SBL series 'Writings from the Ancient World' (WAW) is devoted to the ancient Aramaic literature from Syro-Palestine and Egypt and includes an edition of Papyrus Amherst 63, which contains several different compositions and is written in Aramaic but with Demotic Egyptian script." <http://cams.la.psu.edu/directory/tawny-holm> Accessed 6/26/18.

64. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see below.

65. This is col. xvi in Steiner's 2017 edition.

66. See the most recent treatment edition and treatment of col. xvii and a discussion of the relationship between the first six lines and the sacred marriage text in Holm, "Nanay and Her Lover."

67. The conjunction *p-* appears in the two Aramaic inscriptions from Sam'al (*KAI* 214–215) and, according to Greenfield, likely represents a dialectal variant. Jonas C. Greenfield, "The Dialects of Early Aramaic," *JNES* 37 (1978): 94. Cf. Holm, "Nanay and Her Lover," 8.

up from Jerusalem.

In response, the king offers exceptional hospitality and to treat the members of the caravan to a feast. After the feast is described, the text transitions — without a marked break<sup>68</sup> — into a sacred marriage hymn for the goddess Nanay.

This short narrative is striking for a number of reasons. First of all, it preserves an ancient extra-biblical account of the migration of Judeans and Samaritans and presents them as a unified group. The Judean spokesman uses familial language to describe the members of his traveling party — his “brother” from Samaria and his “sister” from Jerusalem.<sup>69</sup> Next, while the details surrounding the scene are vague, there is strong evidence to suggest that the Judean and Samaritan caravan is seen as a group of refugees, displaced soldiers and their families fleeing war and seeking shelter. First of all, the narrator identifies the band of Samaritans as a *gys*, a “troop” (l. 1).<sup>70</sup> Although previously attested only in later Aramaic dialects,<sup>71</sup> *gys* occurs again in a broken but clearly military context in col. i.17 of P. Amh. 63 where it refers to a group under the control of Aššurbanipal’s general. Van der Toorn’s transcription of the column’s fragmentary opening line, which reconstructs more text than either the edition by Holm or Steiner, adds that

---

68. The scribe who compiled P. Amh. 63 often, though inconsistently employed the Demotic sign *sp*, “remainder,” perhaps representing Aramaic *sōp*, “end,” to divide between distinct literary sections on the papyrus. The marker appears after line 19 of col. xvii, apparently to mark the end of the current composition. Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 22, 36.

69. On the relationship between the Judeans and Samaritans during the Persian period, see below.

70. All three recent editions of the text translate *gys* as “troop.” Steiner and Nims, “The Aramaic Text,” 63; van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63, 75*, 203–205; Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 6–7.

71. Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 7. Cf. [cal.huc.edu](http://cal.huc.edu), s.v. *gys*, for examples (accessed 6/30/2018).

the group consisted of *'nš dgy*, “broken men.”<sup>72</sup> This speculative reading would suggest a group of soldiers and their families battered by war and in search of refuge.

Finally, there may be further evidence of the refugee status of the caravan at the end of line 5, which concludes with the Demotic signs *nys* + '. The recent editions disagree in how they interpret this unit. Steiner understands the Demotic sign to reflect Aramaic *nsy*, and interprets the form as a 1<sup>st</sup> common plural imperfect form from the root *ns*’, “to lift.”<sup>73</sup> Holm prefers to take *nys* as a passive participle from the root *nws*, “to flee” and translates “refugee.”<sup>74</sup> Van der Toorn offers a third option, reading *nys* as the noun “*nēs*,” battle flag or banner, “a pars pro toto for a military unit, ‘battalion.’”<sup>75</sup> While none of these readings is definitive, either “refugee” or “banner” would better fit the sense of the local syntax,<sup>76</sup> and both readings provide support for interpreting the passage in terms of military refugees.

---

72. van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 203.

73. He translates: “the plants, with everything else, *we will carry* (for you).” Steiner and Nims, “The Aramaic Text,” 64.

74. This would be a masculine singular Gp participle, with the singular standing in for the entire group. Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 9.

75. He continues, “what in the Elephantine Papyri would be referred to as the *degel*.” van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 204

76. The key factor in each case is how to render the Demotic sign *NT*‘ that precedes *nys*. The phrase *kl nys* seems to be in apposition to *mk*, “your people,” suggesting that the sign *NT*‘ should represent a verbal form to create a clause. Steiner rather unconvincingly translates “plant,” a comparatively late noun known from Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (see *DJBA*: 745b). Also, it is unclear what it would mean for the king and his subjects to “carry plants” in this context. Holm suggests a D-stem first person common plural imperfect of *t'm*, “we will feed,” while van der Toorn prefers a G imperfect of *nd*‘, “we will know/recognize”.

The sad state of the Judean and Samaritan refugees is offset by the kindness and hospitality of the unnamed king who receives them. “Come in, young man. Let us host you.”<sup>77</sup> Rather than turning the caravan away, the king offers them shelter and sustenance. A series of clauses with imperfect verbs describe the bountiful future that the refugees might have in the king’s land, and his own investment in their success:

nt‘m ‘mk kl nys	We will feed you people, every refugee. <sup>78</sup>
‘l ptwrk ysm ’gnt	On your table bowls will be set.
wmn kl m‘yn yyn	From every fountain, wine (will flow)
[’gnt] wmn kl mn mnt špr	[Bowls?] and from every vessel, <sup>79</sup> a great portion.

As a result of the king’s generosity, the refugees find their circumstances greatly improved, at least for the time being.

The name of this new homeland and its king are conspicuously absent from the narrative, although van der Toorn<sup>80</sup> and Holm<sup>81</sup> have each offered tentative suggestions for the identity of

---

77. The form *n’rḥk* (split between ll. 4–5), a first person common plural jussive form with a second person masculine singular suffix, is likely in the otherwise unattested C-stem for the root *’-r-ḥ/h* (“to visit, travel” in the G). Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 9. It is based on the same root as the name of the patriarch of a family of Judean merchants (the Ariḥ family) from Sippar discussed in ch. 4. For a discussion of unmarked jussive forms in Egyptian Aramaic, see Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (HOS; New York: Brill, 1998), §24k.

78. Following Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 5–6, 9.

79. Following Holm, who interprets *mn* as the noun *mn* or *m’n*, “vessel.” Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 10. Cf. CAL, s.v. *m’n* (accessed 7/24/2020)

80. Van der Toorn argues that the place of refuge for the diverse communities reflected in col. xvii and its broader literary context was the desert fortress of Palmyra. Based on a number of historical clues that he sees in the text, he argues that the text recounts an otherwise unattested flight of troops from Judah to the Syrian stronghold in the wake of Sennacherib’s Levantine campaign at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Among those clues, van der Toorn highlights the presence of Samaritans under the authority of a Judean general, which he argues would have been most likely after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 720 but before refugees from Samaria would have been fully integrated into the kingdom of Judah; the reference to a *ḥlš tmr*, “fortress of

each. Here I would like to offer my own (admittedly highly speculative) suggestion: the basic contours of the P. Amh. 63 account are consistent with the story of the flight of Judean and Samaritan refugees early in the 6<sup>th</sup> century that is presented in Jer 40–44, even as the Aramaic version provides a much more sympathetic perspective. First, each narrative indicates that the party of refugees included both soldiers and their families.<sup>82</sup> Second, although few in number, the traveling party in Jeremiah also included a group of Samaritans who had been taken captive by Ishmael outside Mizpah.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the Jeremiah narrative offers a plausible location for where

---

Palm,” as a reference to Palmyra; and the parallels between the pantheon of Palmyra in the Roman period and the variety of deities recognized in section four, particularly the association between the god Bol and Bethel. van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 8–36 In general, van der Toorn’s suggestion is incredibly speculative, with each layer of argument building on previous speculations. It also adds significant complexity to the process of transmission without corroborative evidence.

81. Holm tentatively suggests that the king who welcomes the Judean and Samaritan refugees could be an Egyptian and that some of those responsible for compiling/producing P. Amh. 63 “had come most immediately from Judah and Samaria.” Holm’s suggestion avoids the problem of an otherwise unattested migration to Palmyra by Judean and Samaritan forces. It treats Egypt as the location of the cultural and religious “mixing” demonstrated by the document, a point that is, as we shall see, well-attested in the historical record. Further, depending on when one dates the migration narrated in ll. 1–7, taking Egypt as the land of the benevolent king significantly closes the gap between the actual event and the inclusion of its narration in P. Amh. 63. Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 22, here 28.

82. Stated explicitly in the Jeremiah narrative (41.16; ch. 44), it is strongly suggested by the presence of the Judean leader’s sister (*’hty*). On this latter point, see Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 23.

83. According to Jer 41.10–16, Ishmael intercepted a group of 80 worshippers coming from Schechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. He spared 10 of them and it is reasonable to conclude that they were included in “the remnant of those people whom Yismael ben Nataniah captured at Mizpah after he assassinated Gedaliah ben Aḥiqam,” (Jer 41.16).

these refugees might have encountered a beneficent Egyptian king willing to take them in:

Tahpanhes.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, it is impossible to draw any direct or concrete connections between the events narrated in Jer 40–44 and in col. xvii of P. Amh. 63, if, in fact, either of these migrations actually took place. Nor can we positively identify a (potential) direction of influence.<sup>85</sup> There is simply not enough evidence to make a definitive claim. If, however, the king in col. xvii is meant to be a pharaoh of the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty — as either a historical or literary figure — then P. Amh. 63 represents a 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE reflection on the arrival of Judeans (and Samaritans) to Egypt in

---

84. The renewed study of finds from Tell Dafana (Hebrew תַּחְפָּנֶחַ; Greek Δαφνη) have challenged the long-held view, argued originally by none other than W. M. F. Petrie, that the tell is the site of an ancient border fort that housed Greek mercenaries, specifically the στρατοπεδα that Psameticus I is said to have established for Ionian and Carian mercenaries, according to Herodotus (ii 154; cf. ii 30, 107); W. M. F. Petrie, *Tannis II — Nebesheh (Am) and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)* (London: 1888), 48. A recent reexamination of Petrie's discoveries in the British Museum coupled with a new excavation led by François Leclère and Jeffrey Spencer have produced a radically different picture of Tahpanhes/Daphnae in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Rather than a military outpost showing considerable Greek influence, Leclère and Spencer argue that the site's architectural features "correspond to those of a classical temple town functioning as a frontier post, and it is to this specific context that the presence of [Greek] imports must be understood." As a royal temple city and a gateway to the Levant, Tahpanhes/Daphnae was the first large Egyptian town which travelers from Asia encountered as well as a point of departure for Egyptian travels east. François. Leclère, A. Jeffrey. Spencer et al., *Tell Dafana Reconsidered: The Archaeology of an Egyptian Frontier Town* (Research Publication 199; London: The British Museum Press, 2014), 1–40. Anecdotally, Petrie noted that the locals encountered during his expedition called the site 'Kasr el Bint el Yehudi,' or 'the Palace of the Jew's daughter.' Petrie, *Defenneh*, 47.

85. If there is any dependence between the two compositions (P. Amh. 63 and Jer 40–44) or if they share a tradition about migration to Egypt, it is entirely possible that the the account in P. Amh. 63 was earlier (Persian period?) and reflects a more apologetic towards a flight to Egypt while the author of Jer 40–44 set his/her account in the Neo-Babylonian period to further highlight the negative aspects and rebellious elements in the story. (Simeon Chavel, personal communication)

the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Unlike the account from Jer 40–44, the short narrative poem in col. xvii looks upon the Judean refugees with pathos; they are humbled rather than arrogant, desperate rather than defiant. Told from the perspective of the welcoming king or one of his representatives, Egypt is presented as a land of opportunity and entry is a relief for the weary travelers. Through the king’s warm greeting, the broken soldiers and their families are welcomed into a broader community.

### *Reconstructing the Events of 410*

Before describing how the authors of the RLR presented themselves in light of the destruction of their temple to Yahu, I should offer a brief note on the historical circumstances that led to the shrine’s fall in the first place. Rather than history’s earliest recorded pogrom that pitted vindictive Egyptian priests against a defenseless Jewish community, as the event has often been understood,<sup>86</sup> recent approaches have come to understand the encounter as a conflict over city planning.<sup>87</sup> Von Pilgrim’s excavations of the so-called Aramean quarter suggest that the southeastern temenos wall of the Yahu temple complex dramatically impeded easy travel on the King’s Road, the primary thoroughfare within the city. The priests of Khum, whose own temple

---

86. See, for example, Grelot, who described the incident as a “pogrom anti-juif.” Pierre Grelot, *Documents arameens d’Egypte: Introduction, traduction, présentation* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1972), 406.

87. Briant offers a particularly persuasive reconstruction along these lines based on the textual evidence, and von Pilgrim has recently argued in support of this position through the city’s material records. Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 603–617. Cf. Lisbeth S Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California 10; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 95–106; Von Pilgrim, “Tempel des Jahu,” 303–317.

complex stood opposite that of the Judean community on the King's Road, took the issue of the street's blockage up with Vidranga, the local Persian administrator in charge of resolving settlement disputes among members of the garrisons and arranging for grain deliveries to the broader district.<sup>88</sup> That Vidranga, in his position as governor, should have agreed with members of the subjugated Egyptian population over imperial soldiers in service of the Persian army suggests that the Judean building violation was particularly egregious.<sup>89</sup> While the overzealous destruction of the temple in addition to the offending wall may have been a symptom of simmering tensions between the priests of Khnum and the Judean community,<sup>90</sup> the trigger for the encounter was most likely a bureaucratic issue rather than a religious or ethnic clash.

#### *The RLR: A Community Speaks for Itself*

Having surveyed these three *mythomoteurs*, it is now time to look at the story that the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb told about their own beginnings. Unlike the preceding texts, the RLR is not an intentional piece of literature. Rather, it seems to be a (draft of a) *practical* letter sent to an actual

---

88. The governor (פרתרדך) in Tišretes, the Southern District in which Yeb was included, was one of two officials responsible for governing the district. Along with a general (הפטחפת) in Persian, although more frequently attested in Aramaic as רבחיל), the governor was part of a Saite system of government that was inherited and maintained by their Persian successors. Alexander Schütz, "Local Administration in Persian Period Egypt According to Aramaic and Demotic Sources," in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen" aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire* (eds. Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann et al.; *Classica et Orientalia* 17; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 492–493, 506.

89. Von Pilgrim, "Tempel des Jahu," 315.

90. On this tension, see below.

official in the Persian administration with the goal of effecting real action in history. This does not mean, however, that the letter is un-selfconscious or that it lacks the kind of ideological shaping that we observed in the previous materials. It is not, in this sense, objective data. Rather, like the literary accounts of the arrival of Judeans in Egypt just evaluated, the identity and thoughts of its author(s) are *constructed*; that is, they are intentionally presented with strong consideration for the addressee.<sup>91</sup> In this regard, the line between practical and literary (fictional) letters from the ancient world is far blurrier than once thought. According to Patricia

Rosenmeyer,

Epistolary technique always problematizes the boundaries between fiction and reality... it has a huge impact on our reading of letters, whether literary or practical (i.e. actually sent). Whenever one actually writes a letter, one automatically constructs a self, an occasion, a version of the truth. Based on a process of selection and self-censorship, the letter is a construction, not a reflection of reality.<sup>92</sup>

As was the case in the literary *Letter of Aristeas*, Yedaniah and his colleagues constructed a particular image of their community and their cultic institutions in the service of a goal. Their appeal to Bagowahiya highlights and emphasized their antiquity, loyalty, and shared traditions with Judea in order to effect action by the Judean governor and his counterparts in Samaria.

In the RLR, Yedaniah and his colleagues claimed that their ancestors (אבִיִּהֶן) were settled in Elephantine already “in the days of the king(s) of Egypt.” As we will see in the next section, the Saite use of Judean troops at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century is at least plausible and consistent with their policy of using foreign troops to protect border regions; however, in this case (and arguably

---

91. Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–21, here, 11.

92. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 5.

in the case of similar claims in the *Letter of Aristeas*) the *assertion* of the community's antiquity is at least as important as any memory that may support it. Judean presence on Yeb predated even Persia's; the community claimed roots that ran deep into the island's past.

This leads to the second point highlighted in the RLR's *mythomoteur*, namely the longstanding and productive relationship between the Judeans of Yeb and the Persian administration. From the outset, the two groups had cooperated. No less than Cambyses himself had recognized the legitimacy of the Judean community and its temple by sparing them from the damage wrought on their Egyptian neighbors. According to the Judeo-Egyptian version of events, *ואגורי אלהי מצרין כל מגרו ואיש מנדעם באגורא זך לא חבל*, "The temples to the gods of Egypt, they destroyed each one, but no one dared touch anything in that temple [to Yahu]" (A4.7:17). There is no material evidence to suggest that Cambyses actually destroyed *any* Egyptian temples during his conquest of Egypt as described in the RLR or in similar traditions that have been preserved in Herodotus and other classical historians.<sup>93</sup> However, in defining themselves and their traditions against those of their subjugated Egyptian neighbors, the authors of the RLR were emphasizing a particular element of their diasporic identity; their mutual relationship with Persia.

The RLR does not provide an explicit explanation as to why Cambyses would have destroyed Egyptian temples while sparing Yahu's, but it is likely that the claim was meant to convince Bagowahiya and Sîn-uballit's sons that the Egyptians had a long history of rebellion against Persian authority, while the Judeans of Yeb were loyal subjects. In an earlier letter also

---

93. Reinhard Kratz, "The Second Temple of Jeb and of Jerusalem," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 260–261.

connected to the events of 410 (TAD 4.5), the leaders of the Judean community emphasized their loyalty over against the rebelliousness of their Egyptian neighbors. Addressed to an unnamed Persian official referred to as “our lord,” (מֶרְאֵן, l. 10), the letter makes it clear that the Judeans of Yeb played no part in the “rebellion” of Egyptian priests of Khnum whose actions resulted in the destruction of royal property *and* the Yahu temple. Rather, the community’s leaders claim that they “did not abandon” their posts nor did they engage in any other wrongdoing (ll. 1–2). In this earlier letter, it is clear that the primary and most important diacritic for distinguishing Judeans from their subjugated Egyptian counterparts was loyalty in military service. The Judean appeal for imperial support needed to make clear who exactly was asking for what and so emphasized a social boundary between the two groups in terms of loyalty and the privileged status that should come with it. The same boundary seems to be at stake in Yedaniah’s claim that Cambyses spared the temple of Yahu. Thus a defining diacritic of Judean identity in Egypt — at least as conceived of within the RLR — was loyalty to the Persian state and Persian recognition.

Through these elements of the *mythomoteur*, it is clear that Yedaniah and his colleagues positioned themselves as loyal representatives of the Persian regime who served imperial interests in Upper Egypt. They emphasized a long and productive relationship between the two parties and hoped to avail of that good will in the service of achieving the ultimate goal of getting permission to rebuild a destroyed temple. At the same time, they also emphasized their continued ties to their ancestral homeland of Judea.

That Yedaniah and his priestly colleagues (יְדַנְיָהּ וּכְנֹתָהּ כֹּהֲנֵי זֵי בֵּיב בִּירְתָּא) should have appealed to the Jerusalemite priesthood and its temple’s high priest in the first place is strong

evidence for a perceived bond between the two communities, even if a prolonged silence from Judea might suggest that view was one-sided (4.7:18–19).<sup>94</sup> It demonstrates that they — the Judeo-Egyptians — saw themselves as continuous with the Jerusalem temple apparatus, using a Hebrew term (כהן) to describe the priesthoods in both locations, reserving the standard Aramaic term (כמר) for the priests of Khnum. The term is used in the appeal to Bagowahiya in Judea (A4 7:1, 18; 8:1, 17), but also in documents internal to the community (A4 3:12; C3A 28:85, 113–114). The distinction in terminology does not appear to carry with it a value judgment as it does when כמר occurs in the Hebrew Bible<sup>95</sup> — there is never a suggestion that these priests are inferior or that their gods are illegitimate. Rather, כהן seems to be a traditional Judean term reserved for priests of Yahu/Yahweh, while כמר functions more generically, describing priests in service of any other deities. The counter designation, even if not overtly hostile toward כמרין, nonetheless creates distance between the two types of priests in order to show unity between Yeb and Jerusalem.

---

94. The RLR claims that the community had previously appealed to the officials of the Jerusalem temple in 410 BCE, but received no response (TAD A4.8:17–19). See below on the role of Hannaniah as an ambassador of sorts representing religious institutions in (most likely) Judea during a trip to Egypt in the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

95. The term occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible and always in the context of condemned religious practice: 2 Kings 23.5; Hos 10.5; and Zeph 1.4. In the case of the passage from Hosea, the prophet is critiquing the improper worship of Yahweh in Bethel. The כמרים are therefore illegitimate. For Zephaniah, the כמרים are part of larger list of religious professionals who serve gods other than Yahweh, including priests (כהנים) who worship the Queen of Heaven and Milcom along with Yahweh (vv. 4–6). Finally, in the account of Josiah’s reform in 2 Kgs 23, the כמרים are associated with illicit Yahweh worship at the high places and perhaps also with worship of Ba‘al and the heavenly bodies.

In addition to sharing this nomenclature with the Jerusalem priesthood, the Judeans of Yeb also claimed that Yahweh/Yahu was present with them in Egypt. In their plan to destroy the Judean temple, the priests of Khnum and Vidranga are quoted in the RLR describing the building as “אגורא זי יהו אלהא זי ביב בירתא.” The relationship between the relative clause marked by the second זי is ambiguous, and could qualify the temple (“the temple that is to the god Yahu, that is the temple in the Yeb garrison”)<sup>96</sup> or the deity (“the temple that is to Yahu, the god who is in the Yeb garrison”). A similar clause in real estate contract from 402 (B3.12:1–3) may clear up the confusion.<sup>97</sup>

ב10+2 לתחות שנת 3+1 ארתחששש מלכא אדין אמר ענני בר עזריה לחן זי יהו ונשין תפמת  
אנתתה לחנה זי יהו אלהא שכן יב ברתא לענני בר חגי בר משלם בר בסס ארמי זי יב ברתא  
לדגל נבוכדרי

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of Thoth, during the 4<sup>th</sup> year of King Artaxerxes, Anani son of Azariah, steward<sup>98</sup> of the Yahu, and lady Tapmet, his wife [and] and stewardess of the god Yahu dwelling in Yeb, the stronghold, say Anani son of Haggai son of Meshullam son of Busasa, an Aramean of Yeb, the stronghold:

The expression is quite similar to the one in the RLR; the only difference is that the ambiguous relative pronoun has been replaced by שכן, a singular participle that can only refer to the deity

---

96. This is what Holmsted would identify as a case of resumption through relative clauses. He identifies only one example of this use of the relative in Official Aramaic from Egypt (and not our line) in TAD B3.10–11:

אגרא זי הנפנא זי בנהו מצריא הו

“the wall that protects, that the Egyptian built it.” (Holmsted’s translation, with with both “thats” marker to refer to the all).

Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew* (Linguistics Studies in the Ancient World 10; 2016), 265–266.

97. Herbert Niehr, *Baalsamem: Studien zu Herkunft, Geschichte und Rezeptionsgeschichte eines phönizischen Gottes* (OLA 123; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 191–195.

98. On Aramaic *lhn*, see n. 214 below

and not the temple.<sup>99</sup> This strongly suggests that the speech quoted in the RLR also makes a claim for Yahu's presence in the Yeb temple, and that the inhabitants of the island — both Judean and Egyptian — recognized the presence of the deity.<sup>100</sup> This means that living in Egypt did not alienate the Judeans from Yahweh; rather, the letter writers argued that Yahweh/Yahu *also* dwelled with them in Yeb.

Religious expression and the worship of Yahu were not the Yeb community's only expressed ties to their Judea. Despite the community's claims to a long and loyal history in Egypt, the RLR makes clear that Yedaniah and his colleagues still strongly identified with Judea, evincing a translocal sense of Judean identity. The clearest evidence for this is the use of the same ethnonym, יהודיא, by the authors of the RLR in reference to themselves (TAD 4.8:22, 26)

---

99. According to the CAL's KWIK function, this verb occurs only three times in imperial Aramaic. Here, in a badly broken context in the Sheik Fadl cave inscription (*yškn* in TAD D23.1 Panel 11 l.3; however that reading is disputed. See Lemaire's rendering of the same verb as *yšmr* below Porten and Yardeni's transcription in TAD), and in an inscription from the eastern Persian empire (CAL does not offer a source for the inscription, only classifying it under "Miscellaneous Inscriptions from Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan"). In the last case, it follows what may be an Iranian divine or personal name: *whšwprtbg*. I was unable to locate the name in Tavernier, but *Whšw*, \*Uxšapā-, "protector of the bulls," is an attested Iranian name from the Persian period Jan Tavernier, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Linguistic Study of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords, Attested in Non-Iranian Texts* (OLA 158; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 4.2.1764.

On *škn* in our passage, see Gard Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaean Community at Elephantine* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 488; Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 105.

The possibility of the singular participle referring to either Anani or Tapment (cf. singular אַנַּנִּי in the introductory formula) is unlikely based on its absence from the qualification of Anani son of Haggai who is also associated with Yeb.

The equivalent expression in Hebrew occurs frequently to describe Yahweh's presence on Earth, typically in Jerusalem/Zion, in the Hebrew Bible. See "שָׁכֵן," *HALOT*, 4:1496; s.v. def. 5; Victor P. Hamilton, "שָׁכֵן," *TWOT*, 2:925.

100. Herbert Niehr, *Baalsamem*, 191–195.

and to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem (4.8:19).<sup>101</sup> The repetition of the title indicates a perceived or asserted continuity between the groups that transcended geographical distance or displacement. The presence of another community and another temple in Judea in no way invalidated the Yeb community's presence in Egypt. This is all the more striking when compared with the firm boundary delineation we observed in the narratives from the book of Jeremiah. Rather than being "cut off," the authors of the RLR assert unity between Judea and the diaspora through this shared ethnonym.

As part of their identification with their ancestral homeland, the Judeans of Egypt also seem to have recognized ongoing political and bureaucratic ties between their community and the local Persian authorities in Judea (and Samaria!<sup>102</sup>). The RLR demonstrates that they believed that the governor of Judea (פחה) would be willing to intervene on their behalf with Aršama the satrap of Egypt, the administrator who ultimately would have had the authority to authorize the rebuilding project.<sup>103</sup> On the one hand, the appeal to Bagowahiya can be understood in strictly practical terms: according to their own version of events, the most proximate administrator who might have advocated for them to the satrap had already sided with the Egyptians. According to

---

101. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 29–32.

102. See the discussion on p. 120 above for P. Amh. 63's treatment of Judeans and Samaritans as members of the same collective and a discussion of the Judean spokesman's use of familial language to describe his 'sister' from Jerusalem and his 'brother' from Samaria.

103. The archival material from Persian-ruled Bactria suggests that *all* building projects, no matter how small, had to be okayed by the satrap. A local governor did not have authority to reassign members of his local workforce without the satrap's consent. See the discussion of Fried on the relationship between Bagavant the governor (פחה) and Akhvamazda the Satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana. Lisbeth S. Fried, "The Role of the Governor in Persian Imperial Administration," in *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten* (ed. Alejandro F. Botta; CHANE 60; Boston: Brill, 2013), 317–331.

the RLR, Vidranga, the *frataraka* (פרתרדך) of Tišretes, had given the order to level the temple to Yahu, and his own son, Nafā'ina the garrison commander (רב חילא), carried it out with the aid of the local Egyptian population. It is hard to imagine that Vidranga, would have been willing to advocate for the reconstruction of a temple whose destruction he had previously authorized.<sup>104</sup> Or, perhaps more to the point, it is hard to imagine that the Judean authors of the RLR would have trusted Vidranga to advocate on their behalf to Aršama considering he had already acted so dramatically against their interests in siding with the priests of Khnum.

On the other hand, the turn to Bagowahiya and to the sons of Sîn-uballit must also indicate some further sense of social, religious, and cultural continuity between Yedaniah and his colleagues and Judea, one that could be managed for political ends. It may have been that the writers understood Bagowahiya to be a member of their ethnic collective, a fellow Judean of significant standing in the Persian regime who would be sympathetic to their cause. A number of Judeans — or at least individuals with marked Judean names — held the position of governor of Yehud (פחת יהוד) during the course of Persian rule,<sup>105</sup> and while Bagowahiya's name is Persian, that does not necessarily preclude him from identifying as Judean (cf. Avastāna brother of Anani

---

104. Or at least its (new?) temenos wall.

105. Of the ten individuals known to have held the position based on literary, numismatic, and inscriptional sources, five have Yahwistic names (יהועזר, אוריו, יחזקיה, נחמיה, אחזי), two are Hebrew (חננה and אלנתן), two more are Babylonian (Shesbazar and Zerubabel), and only Bagowahiya is Persian. Fried argues that despite their names, all of these figures should be considered “Persian,” in that they were appointed by the Persian administration. Her point is well taken within the broader discussion of native rule in which it appears, but it is less productive for understanding how these individuals might have self-identified ethnically, or how they may have been identified by the Judeans over whom they ruled. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King*, 183–187.

and Ḥurrī, both explicitly identified as יהודיִּא in A4.7:18–19). The same can be said for the Samarian governor Sîn-uballit, who bears a Babylonian name but gave both his sons Yahwistic names (Delaiah and Šelemiah).<sup>106</sup> Even if Yedaniah and his colleagues did not consider Bagowahiya to be an ethnic Judean, they nonetheless seem to have wagered that his role as the governor of Judea would nonetheless make him amenable to their cause.

### *The Judeo-Egyptian Mythomoteur*

The self-presentation of the Judean community of Yeb in the RLR and the brief narrative concerning their temple's founding contained within it emphasize a number of important diacritica that constituted Judeanness in the Egyptian diaspora according to (at least some of) its members. First of all, the community's claims to a pre-Persian settlement on Yeb roots them firmly in their Egyptian setting. As we saw in the *Letter of Aristeas* and in col xvii of P. Amh. 63, this community could present themselves as welcomed and at home in their Egyptian setting. This is what made the assault on their temple so troubling; according to their telling, the Egyptian destruction of their temple was presented as a violation of their long-standing status as a legitimized community. To be a Judean in Egypt was to demonstrate loyalty to the Persian imperial apparatus. Despite their pre-Persian presence on Yeb, the Judeo-Egyptians had long

---

106. Scholarship associates the סנאבלט of the RLR with סנבלט of the book of Nehemiah (chs. 2–6, 13). There he is given the title הֶהֱרִנִּי, “the Horonite.” It is possible that this refers to one of two towns named בית הרן in NW Judea, but a number of other suggestions including Harran and Moab (Mt. Horonaim) have also been offered to suggest a foreign origin. See the discussions in Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; Westminster John Knox Press, 1988), 216–217.; H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (Word Biblical Commentaries 16; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 182–184.

been recognized as loyal subjects, particularly in comparison to their rebellious Egyptian neighbors.

Secondly, these Judeans were dedicated to the worship of Yahu, the deity who made his home in Yeb. That the community identified this deity with the Yahweh who dwelled in Jerusalem seems to be confirmed by the RLR's note of a previous appeal to the Jerusalemite priesthood for support. As we will have an opportunity to see, this did not exclude the worship of other deities, but it does indicate a strong bond between Yahu and the community, a bond they understood to share with those lived in their ancestral homeland of Judea.

Finally, the authors of the RLR saw more than a shared religious identity with their fellow Yahwists in Judea (and Samaria). Indeed, through the use of a shared ethnonym and an expectation that political representatives from their ancestral homeland might intercede on their behalf, the Judeans of Yeb expressed the kind of complex identity we come to expect in diaspora communities. On the one hand, they were clearly integrated to a significant degree in their home context of the island of Yeb as representatives of imperial authority. On the other hand, they demonstrated elements of a clearly shared culture with those who lived in Judea. In this regard, these Judeans embraced a dual or hybrid identity as Judeo-Egyptians. In the next section, we will explore how members of the community managed to construct and reproduce a distinct and identifiable social identity in their Egyptian setting.

Excursus: When are Samaritans “Judean”?

### *A Letter to Samaria?*

The preceding analysis raises an important question regarding the relationship of Judeo-Egyptians to Samaria and between Judeans and Samaritans more broadly. As I argued above, Yedaniah and his colleagues' use of the ethnonym יהודיא indicates a perceived (or asserted) continuity between their community in Yeb and the one in Judea, a continuity that transcended geographical distance or displacement. However, their relationship to Samaria and its local imperial representatives is far less clear. Samaria and Yehud were distinct provinces throughout the Persian period,<sup>107</sup> the Yeb community makes no claims to Samaritan origin, and the ethnonym “Samaritans” (שמרונים)<sup>108</sup> is not attested in the papyri from Elephantine. However, as noted by

---

107. In his *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Albrecht Alt argued that Judea was not, in fact, an independent province during the first decades of Persian rule. Rather, it was under the administrative authority of Samaria. Jerusalem remained the cultic center of the province, but the political center was in Samaria. It was only with the mission of Nehemiah that Judea received political independence, prompting Samaria to construct its own cult site at Gerizim Albrecht Alt, “Zur Geschichte der Grenze zwischen Judäa und Samaria,” in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (3 vols.; 2; München: C.H. Beck, 1953), 353–360. While it does appear that Samaria held more political and economic influence than its neighbor to the south (see discussion below), more recent scholarship has rejected Alt's hypothesis (see the critique [including bibliography] in Kenneth G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah* [SBL Dissertation Series 125; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1992], 69–86.). Rather, Judea appears to have been a political entity distinct from Samaria from the very beginning of the Persian period. For an argument in favor of this position, see Oded Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 19–52.

108. This ethnonym is only attested in P. Amh. 63 among Aramaic material from the Persian period. The plural (*šmrnym*) occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 17.29) and is rendered as *šwmrwn* in the Targum. A stele from the reign of Adad-Nirari III notes that he received tribute (*mandattu*) from Jehoash of <sup>kur</sup>*Sa-me-ri-na-a-a* (l. 8). For the text and discussion, see Stephanie Page, “A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah,” *Iraq* 30 (1968): 139–153.

Gary Knoppers, “the Elephantine colonists must have felt some affinity with the Samaritan community or they would not have written to ask for help.”<sup>109</sup>

One solution to this problem has been to identify the origins of Yeb’s Yahweh worshipping יהודיא in Samaria rather Judea. For example, Karl van der Toorn has argued, based on the pantheon represented in the Elephantine papyri, that the original Yahweh-worshipping colonists at Yeb came from Samaria and were heavily influenced by a prior influx of Aramaic-speaking Syrian immigrants. It was only a later wave of Judean immigrants that gave the community its Judean coloring.<sup>110</sup> However, as I argued in the previous section, there is simply not enough evidence to conclusively reconstruct the circumstances under which Yeb’s Judeo-Egyptian community was established. If we cannot confidently historically reconstruct and Israelian origin for the community, how else might we explain the group’s decision to reach out to the Samaritan dignitaries Delaiah and Šelemaiah?

This situation offers an excellent opportunity explore further the historical and contextual nature of collective identity in the ancient world. Samaritans and Judeans of the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries shared a number of diacritica that members of the same collective might claim as shared, including language, many aspects of religious practice, neighboring geographic territory, and a myth of shared ancestry. However, as we shall see, it was not a given that a Judean would recognize a Samaritan as a member of the same collective; rather, that relationship was fluid and dependent on a host of other factors.

---

109. Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 119–120.

110. Van der Toorn, “Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine,” 80–101. Cf. Karel van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 26–39.

*“According to the traditions, teachings, and commandment which Yahweh commanded the sons of Jacob, whom he named Israel”*

We will begin our inquiry with the question of whether or not the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb would or could have perceived (or asserted) a shared ancestry with Delaiah and Šelemaiah, the Samaritans to whom they addressed their request for assistance. This question is important because of the prominence granted to (myths of) shared descent in constructions of ethnic identity. For example, in A. D. Smith’s construction of ethnicity, (purported) shared ancestry takes pride of place. According to Smith: “The *sine qua non* of ethnicity, the key elements of that complex of meanings which underlie the sense of ethnic ties and sentiments for the participants, myths of origins and descent provide the means of collective location in the world and the charter of the community which explains its origins, growth and destiny.”<sup>111</sup> In Jonathan Hall’s foundational study on ethnic identity in the ancient Greek world, he identified shared ancestry as *the* definitional attribute of ethnic groups. Unlike the attributes that are typically associated with ethnic groups (e.g. language, religion, and material culture — what Hall calls “indica” of identity) that are volatile over time and space, an assertion of shared descent is a fundamental criterion of the discursive process of ethnic identity formation: “Above all else, though, it must be the myth of shared descent which ranks paramount among the features that distinguish ethnic from other social groups, and, more often than not, it is proof of descent that will act as a defining criterion of ethnicity.”<sup>112</sup>

---

111. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 24.

112. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 17–33, here 25.

There is no reference to shared ancestry in the RLR between the Judeo-Egyptians and Samaria; nor, however, do Yedaniah and his colleagues define their relationship to members of the Jerusalemite priesthood in such terms. The language used for the relationship between Judeans and Samaritans in P. Amh. 63 (“My brother is from Samaria, my sister is being brought from Jerusalem”) certainly suggests that that text’s author perceived shared kinship for the two groups, but this evidence is by no means conclusive for the views of the authors of the RLR. There is simply not enough evidence from the Elephantine material to make a decision, one way or the other.

The evidence from Judea, however, indicates that the (purported) shared ancestry of Judeans and Samaritans was a live issue for at least some portion of the population during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Because the Judeo-Egyptians went to such lengths to establish a translocal sense of shared Judeanness with their Judean counterparts in the RLR, the evidence from Judea — if imperfectly — may help to shine some light on the issues that may have been in play between the Samaritans and Judeo-Egyptians.

Our starting point for this analysis is 2 Kgs 17 due to the weight afforded to genealogy in studies of ethnicity. Prior to this point in the narrative of the Deuteronomistic History, the work had taken as a fundamental premise the shared ancestry of the northern and southern kingdoms through their ancestor, the patriarch Jacob/Israel. That changes, however, with the dissolution of the kingdom of Israel and the provincialization of its territory by the Assyrian Empire. According to 2 Kgs 17, the History’s record of the kingdom’s fall, the territory of Samaria was completely depopulated by Assyria, only to be repopulated by deportees from elsewhere in the empire,

including “Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim” (v. 24). With a closing verse that records the continuous and generational syncretistic worship of Yahweh alongside other deities (v. 41), the Historian effectively severs the genealogical ties between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah as he shifts his full attention to the history of the South.

This passage makes a strong claim concerning boundary construction in the aftermath of the kingdom of Israel’s fall. Despite the resettled population’s eventual inclusion of Yahweh in their broader pantheon (vv. 32–33), they remain among the גוים and are not qualified for inclusion among the בני יעקב (v. 41). As argued recently by Kristin Weingart, “it is not adherence to the law or even faith in YHWH” that determines communal boundaries, “but the assumption or denial of descent shared with the Judeans.”<sup>113</sup> By this standard, the recently resettled population in Samaria remained outside the social boundaries of Israel, even if Yahweh was satisfied enough with their worship.

The demarcation of this boundary by this criterion is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, while it quite likely that Sargon II did resettle deportees in the former territory of the kingdom of Israel and Philistia,<sup>114</sup> the archaeological record does not support the total turnover in population asserted in 2 Kgs 17. While excavations at the primary urban sites of Iron Age Samaria, especially in the Galilee and northern Transjordan, have shown significant disruption during the Neo-Assyrian period, surveys at more rural sites in the hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim show a mixture of continuity and discontinuity. Furthermore, there is

---

113. Weingart, “What Makes an Israelite an Israelite?” 159.

114. Nadav Na’aman and Ran Zadok, “Sargon II’s deportations to Israel and Philistia (716–708 BC),” *JCS* 40 (1988): 36–46.

relatively little material evidence of Mesopotamian material culture to support such a drastic demographic change, especially when one accounts for evidence of the Assyrian imperial presence. On the contrary, as noted by Knoppers, “There is a fundamental material continuity in the Iron II period at Samaria, in spite of whatever political discontinuity the Assyrians introduced.”<sup>115</sup> This is not to discount either the general depopulation of the territory<sup>116</sup> or the resettlement of a deported community;<sup>117</sup> however, it does indicate that neither was “complete.”<sup>118</sup>

---

115. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 36.

116. According to Knoppers, there is evidence for significant destruction and depopulation in parts of Israel, especially in the Galilee and in northern Transjordan. However, these areas appear to have been outliers within Assyria’s approach to the region. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 28–42.

117. Na’aman and Zadok, “Sargon II’s deportations to Israel and Philistia (716–708 BC),” 36–46. For a survey evidence of Assyrian hegemony in the material culture of Israel and Judah, see Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE* (II; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 14–45. However, in his discussion of post-720 Samaria, Stern notes that there is very little evidence Mesopotamian or Iranian influence on the material culture so far discovered from this period (42–45). Cf. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 39–44.

118. Interpretation of the archaeological remains have shown that there was initial destruction of all major sites throughout the region, with the exception of the capital city itself. In the decades that followed, the area around Samaria was slowly rebuilt, with many sites demonstrating continued habitation into the Persian period. On the evidence for the survival of Samaria during the first wave of invasions in the 730s, see Ron E. Tappy, “The Final Years of Israelite Samaria,” in *“Up to the Gates of Ekron”: Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin* (eds. Seymour Gitin, Sidnie White Crawford et al.; Jerusalem: published by the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, the Israel Exploration Society, 2007), 258–279. For overviews of the general destruction and rebuilding efforts in the region, see Stern, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*, 49–52.

Assyrian rule in the Levant has traditionally been understood as hands-ons. Gitin’s studies on Tel-Miqne (biblical Ekron) and its 7<sup>th</sup> century oil presses was foundational in this regard. (Eg. Seymour Gitin, “Tel Miqne-Ekron: A Type-Site for the Inner Coastal Plain in the Iron Age II Period,” *AASOR* 59 [1989]: 23–58, esp. 48–50. Cf. the review of scholarship in Avraham Faust, “The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West: Olive Oil Production as a Test-Case,” *JESHO* 54 [2011]: 63–65.) However, this conclusion has been called into question. Schloen, for example, has argued persuasively that the significant development in oil production that Gitin associated

Instead, there seem to have been some signs of continuity in both population and material culture in the territory surrounding the city of Samaria and not the wholesale replacement of Israelians with “foreigners” as asserted by the narrative in 2 Kgs 17.

Secondly, there are inconsistencies within the Deuteronomistic History itself concerning the population of Samaria following Sargon’s conquest. Despite the clear and explicit characterization of the Samaritan population as non-Israelian in 2 Kgs 17 (הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה in v. 41), the narrative of Josiah’s purging of the Bethel sanctuary approximately a century later (2 Kgs 23) takes for granted that at least some portion of the city’s population had descended from Israelian ancestors.<sup>119</sup> How else would the bystanders have been familiar with the prophetic condemnation of the site from the reign of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13)?<sup>120</sup> According to Knoppers, “Either the teaching of the repatriated Israelite in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century was remarkably detailed [2 Kgs 17.27–28] or the story of Josiah’s reforms presupposes that he is dealing with his northern kin.”<sup>121</sup> The apparent contradiction between these two passages reflects a broader ambiguity that characterizes Judea’s with direct Assyrian economic intervention was more likely a byproduct of the breakup of rural kin-based social organization resulting from the destruction of Assyrian campaigns. While this phenomenon, too, was the result of Assyrian intervention, increased oil production was not the intention. In fact, the influx of urban oil production was inefficient from an imperial economic perspective. According to Schloen, “The economic inefficiency brought about by this forced urbanization should not surprise us, for there is no evidence that the Assyrians understood or were concerned with the economic development of the territory they ruled except in the most rudimentary sense of making it easy for themselves to tax or confiscate its wealth.” J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the archaeology and history of the Levant; 2; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 141–147, here 146. Cf. Faust, “The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West: Olive Oil Production as a Test-Case,” 62–86, esp. 70–77.

119. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 62–65.

120. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 64–65.

121. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 63.

relationship to Samaria in the literature of the Hebrew Bible. For example, Ezra-Nehemiah depicts a primarily antagonistic relationship between the citizens of both polities during the Persian period, with the book of Ezra explicitly drawing on a tradition of Samaria's repopulation with foreign settlers by an Assyrian king (Ezra 4.1–5). But even here there are clues that the boundaries between the two communities were more flexible than fixed. Ezra 1–6 maintains the symbolic value of the Israelian/Samaritan-inclusive 12-tribe system on a number of occasions, even as it narrows its narrative focus on the Southern tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi.<sup>122</sup> And while one of Nehemiah's primary goals seems to be to (re)assert a boundary between the Samaritans and the population of Judea, the great effort he was forced to exert to do so (and the limited, short term success of those efforts) suggest that any such boundary was perceived by the author of this material as in need of reinforcement.<sup>123</sup> I will address both of these literary compositions in greater length in ch. 5, but for now it is worth noting that even within the works that seem to establish the firmest boundaries between Judean and Samaritan populations, there are clear indicators that the issue was by no means settled.

Returning now to the work of Jonathan Hall, can we talk about Judeo-Egyptians and Samaritans as an ethnic group in the absence of any clear indications of shared kinship between the two communities and in light of the muddled picture of Samaritan genealogy offered by the Judean literary evidence? Can we argue that the Judeo-Egyptians and Samaritans were part of the

---

122. Weingart highlights a number of occasions in which this is the case: 6.16–17 (12 goats); 8.35 (12 bulls, 12 goats, 96 rams, and 77 lambs); 8.24–25 (12 priests); 8.1–14 (12 clans); and Ezra 2/Neh 7 (12 leaders). Weingart, "What Makes an Israelite an Israelite?," 171.

123. See Knoppers's characterization of Nehemiah as a "hardliner" whose views on boundary construction and maintenance did not necessarily line up with those of the broader population he oversaw. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 139–166.

same *ethnos* in the absence of clear evidence for this defining criterion? In his review of Hall's groundbreaking work, David Konstan praised the scholar's recognition of the discursive role of genealogy in the construction of ethnic identity in the ancient Greek world. "Genealogy is a way — on Hall's view, the most fundamental way — in which any population (or some segment of it) defines itself as an ethnic group. The need for such an identification arises especially where power or authority is contested; in turn, the form that a mythical ancestry assumes is conditioned by the political circumstances that give rise to it."<sup>124</sup> Konstan, however, challenges Hall's assertion of the *primacy* or *uniqueness* of genealogy in the construction of ethnicity. Rather, it is one of many traits to which a group might appeal (most notably language in Hall's work) to assert sameness or difference. Konstan argues that there is nothing particular to genealogy that makes it a more or less productive marker of co-ethnicity. Rather, according to Konstan, "it is to the general currency of and competition among asseverations of ethnic identity, each availing itself of the traits most suitable in the *context*, whether common blood or customs or gods or language, that one ought to apply the name of ethnic discourse."<sup>125</sup> The absence of clear, unambiguous claims for genealogical evidence for the two communities does not, therefore, disqualify them from consideration as an ethnic group from either an insider or outsider perspective. In what follows, I will try to highlight other potential areas of overlap between the Judeo-Egyptians and the Samaritans to which they could have appealed in order construct boundaries in which both were included.

---

124. Konstan, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," 104.

125. Konstan, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," 109, emphasis mine.

“From where are the people of your speech?”: Linguistic Overlap

The Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb composed their letter to Bagowahiya in Achaemenid Official Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire. In addition to the RLR and its related letters, all of the documents discovered at Elephantine pertaining to its Judeo-Egyptian community were composed in this language. The Samaritan papyri from Wadi Daliyeh, a collection of administrative documents from Samaria and dated to the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE,<sup>126</sup> were composed, according to Douglas Gropp, in “virtually the same language in which the Elephantine legal papyri were drawn up.”<sup>127</sup> The language from Wadi Daliyeh is also quite similar to the letters in the Aršama archive (TAD A6:1–16).<sup>128</sup> This observation is not, in itself, surprising. Recent discoveries from the Eastern province of Bactria (modern day Afghanistan) attest to remarkable uniformity in the use of Official Aramaic across the Persian empire;<sup>129</sup> this is likely the result of scribal training as part of the imperial administrative apparatus.<sup>130</sup> While it is

---

126. Dušek has argued persuasively that the collection of 37 papyri most likely belonged to two personal archives: Yehonur son of Laneri and that of Yehopada(y)ni and his son Neṭira’. It is possible that the archive holders belonged to the same family. Jan Dusek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450–332 av. J.-C.* (CHANE 30; Boston: Brill, 2007), 454–466.; Cf. Andre. Lemaire, *Levantine Epigraphy and History in the Achaemenid Period (539–332 BCE): The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 2013* (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2015), 79.

127. Douglas M. Gropp, “The Wadi Daliyeh Documents Compared to the Elephantine Documents,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Major Issues and New Approaches : An International Congress, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, July 20–25, 1997* (eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov et al.; Jerusalem: The Israel Museum : Israel Antiquities Authority : The Hebrew University of Jerusalem : Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 826–827. Cf. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 110.

128. Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (HOS 111; Boston: Brill, 2015), 159–160, 168.

129. Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic*, 198–201.

130. Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic*, 168–177.

also likely that both the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and Samaritans spoke local dialects of Aramaic, Holger Gzella has argued that no clear evidence of such vernaculars has survived in the written record (however, see below).<sup>131</sup>

The evidence from P. Amh. 63 may provide evidence that the vernacular spoken by Judeans (and Samaritans?) in Egypt was recognizable to outsiders and, importantly, inflected with Hebrew.<sup>132</sup> In his initial address to the Judean spokesman, the unnamed Egyptian king in the text asks: “Where are you from, young man? From where are the people of your speech?” (l. 3).<sup>133</sup> First, it is noteworthy that king associates homeland and speech for the refugees in that it demonstrates the foreignness of both to the text’s Egyptian literary context. Next, the spokesman’s response, which notes that he and the members of his party come from Samaria and Jerusalem (ls. 3–4), contains two potential Hebraisms.<sup>134</sup> First, he refers to the man transporting his sister as *’dm*, a common NW Semitic word for “human” that, aside from P. Amh. 63, is otherwise unattested in Aramaic until the Common Era, and only then in Jewish dialects influenced by Hebrew.<sup>135</sup> Secondly, the *nun* of the partitive *min* in “from Jerusalem” fully assimilates (*myyrwšlm*), another standard feature of Hebrew that is quite rare in non-Jewish

---

131. Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic*, 189.

132. For a full treatment of this passage, see the discussion that begins on p. 117 above.

133. According to the transliteration in Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,”  $mn^{\Gamma}n^{\Gamma} <t> glm^{\Gamma} mn^{\Gamma}n^{\Gamma} [^{\Gamma}m (m)mlk$ .

134. The so-called “Paganized” version of Psalm 20 also preserves a number of Hebraisms. See the discussion in Zevit for the importance of these Hebraisms in tracing the origins of the psalm. Zevit, “The Common Origin of the Aramaicized Prayer to Horus and of Psalm 20,” *JAOS* 110 (1990): 213–228.

135. The noun *’dm* does occur multiple times within P. Amh. 63, including three times in col. xvii (ls. 4, 17, 19) Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 8.

Aramaic dialects.<sup>136</sup> The motif of “style switching” — the intentional use of foreign linguistic elements in quoted speech to indicate the foreignness of a character or figure — is a well-attested phenomenon in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>137</sup> The heavily Aramaicized speech of Balaam the seer in Num 22–24 is a parade example.<sup>138</sup> Typically, the authors of the literature within the Hebrew Bible switched styles by including Aramaisms in the speech of non-Israelian/Judean

---

136. According to Muraoka and Porten, “there is not a single case of <n> of the preposition מן assimilated to the following consonant” within the corpus of Egyptian Aramaic surveyed for their grammar. Muraoka and Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*. For the assimilation of the *nun* in this preposition in Biblical Hebrew, see GKC §19c; Joüon §17g. Within the broader field of Aramaic evidence, Holm sees the assimilated *nun* of partitive *min* most frequently in JBA, although notes its presence already in Daniel (*miṭṭûra* ‘in 2.45; *miṣṣad* in 6.5) Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 8.

137. Kaufman used the term to describe this phenomenon in the literature of the Hebrew Bible. Stephen A. Kaufman, “The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof,” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1985): 55. Rendsburg has argued for its use in three particularly literary contexts including a work’s narrative setting in a foreign land, the appearance of a foreigner in any scene, and in prophetic addresses to foreign nations. Gary A Rendsburg, “Linguistic Variation and the ‘Foreign’ Factor in the Hebrew Bible,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 15 (1995): 177–190. Cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, “Kabbîr in Biblical Hebrew: Evidence for Style-Switching and Addressee-Switching in the Hebrew Bible,” *JAOS* 112 (1992): 649–651. Recently, Bompiani has argued that it also appears occasionally in biblical presentations of foreigners from the Transjordan region, including Jethro in Exod 18 and Esau in Gen 25. Bompiani also notes the use of a Transjordanian dialect used by Hebrew speakers (Naomi and Boaz) in addressing the Moabite Ruth. On this last point, my colleague Jessie DeGrado arrived at a similar conclusion (personal communication). Brian Bompiani, “Style Switching in the Speech of Transjordanians,” *HS* 57 (2016): 51–71.

138. The list of Aramaisms in Balaam’s speech include the retention of final *yod* in the form גַּטִּי (24.6), the use of the *hitpael* rather than *niphal* stem for יתחשב (23.9), the only such occurrence of this root in this stem in the Hebrew Bible, and a number of lexical items that are quite rare in Hebrew but common in Aramaic. For a full list, see Rendsburg, “Linguistic Variation and the ‘Foreign’ Factor in the Hebrew Bible,” 189–190. Interestingly, in his case for the Transjordanian Aramaic dialect of the Deir ‘Allā inscription (*KAI* 312), Kaufman argued that the dialect that biblical author is trying to imitate in Num 22–24 is *different* from that of the Balaam narrative from Deir ‘Allā. The Balaam from the account in Numbers uses Hebrew *bn* for “son” (e.g. בְּנוּ in 23.18), while the Aramaic *br* is used exclusively in Deir ‘Allā (e.g. בלעם ברבער in the direct speech of l. 4).

characters. In the case of P. Amh. 63, we may have an example of the same device: the inclusion of Hebraisms in an otherwise Aramaic text to indicate the foreignness (and perhaps Aramaic vernacular) of the joint Judean-Samaritan traveling party.

Evidence of this hypothetical Hebrew-inflected Aramaic is almost non-existent in the Elephantine Papyri. However, it is clear that Hebrew continued to be of cultural value for the construction of personal names, and the appearance of occasional Hebrew lexemes in religious (*khn*) and judicial (*'dh*)<sup>139</sup> settings may further suggest its importance for the community.

Moreover, the syntax of the Vidranga section of the RLR (TAD A4.7:16–17a // A4.8:15–16a) may indicate the use of Hebrew beyond preserved lexemes in liturgical settings. The primary historical issue raised by this passage concerns the status of “that wicked Vidranga” at the time of the letter’s composition: was he alive and in power or dead, having been punished severely? The sequence of five verbs in these two lines (*hḥwyn*, *hnpqw*, *'bdw*, *qtylw*, and *ḥzyn*)<sup>140</sup> has

---

139. Whether or not the *'dh* was a particularly Judean institution and if the term is Hebrew loan remain controversial topics. Nutkowicz (according to Granerød’s summary; Nutkowicz’s original article was unavailable in an accessible format at the time of writing) argues that the institution represented by the term is not exclusively Judean; rather it is a traditional Egyptian court known as a *kenbet*. H  l  ne Nutkowicz, “Note sur une institution juridique   l  phantine, ‘dh, la « cour »,” *Transeuphrat  ne* 27 (2004): 181–185. Regardless of the origin of the institution, the term *'dh* is rare and appears only in three marriage contracts, each featuring at least one Judean party (B2.6:22, 26; B3.3:7; 8:21). This has suggested that it is actually a Hebrew loan into Aramaic. Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 49; Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 181 n. 41. Cf. Graner  d, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 50–51.

140. This according to A4.7; the orthography is somewhat different in A4.8: *ḥwyn*’, *hnpqw* [*'bdw*], *qtylw*, and *ḥzyn*.

traditionally been interpreted as a string of perfects narrating the simple past — the events of Vidranga’s humiliation and death.<sup>141</sup> See, for example, Porten’s translation:

And when this had been done (to us), we with our wives and our children sackcloth were wearing and fasting and praying to YHW the Lord of Heaven **who let us gloat** over that Vidranga, the cur. They **removed** the fetters from his feet and all goods which he had acquired **were lost**. And all persons who sought evil for that Temple, all (of them), **were killed** and we gazed upon them.

However, A3.9, a letter dated to 399 BCE, mentions Vidranga’s role in the release of a Judean (l. 7), which indicates that a Vidranga was still alive and in a position of authority some eight years after the RLR was composed. Rather than suggest the existence of another Vidranga at the site, James Lindenberger has proposed a different reading of the verbal sequence in question. Instead of five verbs in the perfect representing events in the simple aorist past, Lindenberg has argued that the sequence actually begins and ends with imperatives that bracket three verbs in the perfect.<sup>142</sup> As part of a volative chain, the three perfect forms should therefore be understood as precative perfects with optative force. According to this interpretation, Vidranga would still be alive in 407 while the members of the community desperately pray for their deity to punish him.

Bezalel Porten and Takamitsu Muraoka have argued against Lindenberger’s interpretation on the grounds that precative perfects do not exist in Egyptian Aramaic: “Our idiom does not use the perfect with optative force to indicate a wish. Hence Lindenberger’s [translation] is

---

141. James M. Lindenberger, “What Ever Happened to Vidranga? A Jewish Liturgy of Cursing from Elephantine,” in *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (3 vols.; eds. P. M. Michele. Daviau, John William. Wevers et al.; Journal for the Old Testament Supplement Series 325; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 145–147. The morphology allows for either interpretation.

142. Lindenberger, “What Ever Happened to Vidranga?” 145–147.

unlikely.”<sup>143</sup> They do not consider, however, that this particular use of the perfect may reflect an expression of Judeo-Egyptian vernacular. As noted by Lindenberger and, more recently, Gard Granerød,<sup>144</sup> the precative perfect is well attested in Biblical Hebrew, and particularly in the context of prayer.<sup>145</sup> See, for example, Ps 22.22:

Deliver me from the mouth of the lion	הושיעני מפי אריה
And from the horns of the wild bull, answer me! <sup>146</sup>	ומקרני רמים עֲנֵיתָנִי

In this case, the key to recognizing the precative use of the perfect is the imperative (הושיעני) that initiates the verbal sequence.<sup>147</sup> This maps well onto the verbal sequence in the RLR. As argued by Lindenerger, this sequence would represent direct discourse; the verbs would represent the *actual prayer* that the community has been offering (הוין וצימין ומצלין ליהו מרא שמיא), “we have

---

143. Muraoka and Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*. §51e.; cf. Porten’s conclusions in the notes to his translation: Lindenberger’s translation “founders on the past tense of the verbs.” Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 144 n. 58.

144. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 155–160.

145. Waltke and O’Connor call this use of the perfect the “perfect of prayer.” They offer as examples Pss 22.22; 31.5–6; and 4.2. Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §30.5.4c–d.

146. Note, however, the translation in the NRSV, which adds a paragraph break between the two lines in an effort to maintain the simple past sense of the perfect form:

Save me from the mouth of the lion!  
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me... (NRSV Ps 22.21–22)

This decision breaks up the parallelism between the two lines and forces the perspective of the hymn’s speaker out of the present/future into the past, only to immediately pull them back into the present/future, in this case marked by a shift to the imperfect (אספרה שמך...). Compare the NJPS:

Deliver me from a lion’s mouth;  
from the horns of wild oxen rescue me.

147. According to Waltke and O’Connor: “This use of the perfective form can be recognized by the presence of other unambiguous forms in the context signifying a volitional mood.” Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. §30.5.4d. cf. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 159. Granerød further notes Waltke and O’Connor’s frustration over modern biblical scholars’ failure to recognize these cues.

been fasting and praying to Yahu, the lord of the heavens”) introduced by the relative particle *zy*.<sup>148</sup> We might hypothesize then that this particular use of the precative perfect in the RLR — a usage otherwise foreign to Official Aramaic — is transferred from the community’s use of Hebrew in cultic or liturgical settings.<sup>149</sup>

The inscriptional evidence from Samaria indicates that while Aramaic remained the primary spoken language of Samaritans into the Hellenistic period, the community also continued to use Hebrew in religious and ideological contexts.<sup>150</sup> A small number of inscriptions that were discovered in the temple complex on Mt. Gerizim were composed in Hebrew.<sup>151</sup> As a group, these inscriptions share features related to the cult or the Gerizim priesthood. For example, two inscriptions refer to temple priests (*khn/khnym*)<sup>152</sup> while a third may refer to a high priest.<sup>153</sup> In addition to this inscriptional evidence, what would become the sacred text of the later Samaritans

---

148. Lindenberger, 147. For an example of the relative pronoun introducing direct discourse in Biblical Aramaic, see Daniel 5:7.

149. On the use of Hebrew in such settings, see p. 170 below.

150. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 110.

151. Izchak Magen, Haggai Misgav et al., *Mount Gerizim Excavations* (Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology, Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria : Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004), nos. 381–388. However, a number of these inscriptions are too fragmentary to confidently identify their language of composition. They were all, however, composed in what Magen, et. al. have called “Neo-Hebrew Script,” which may point to Hebrew as their language of composition. However, no. 389, which refers to the “priests” (*khny*’) seems to have been composed in Aramaic language but written with the Neo-Hebrew Script. For further discussion of scripts, see below.

152. Magen, et. al, *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, no. 382 and no. 388. In addition, no. 389 also references priests (*khny*[’]), but is likely composed in Aramaic (see *br pnhs* in the inscription’s first line and the Aramaic definite article ’, albeit reconstructed).

153. The final line of Magen, et. al. *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, no. 384 concludes with *hgdl* and its context (including the name Pinhas in l. 1 and its similarity to inscriptions with clear cultic associations) suggest a the adjective is part of the title “the high priest.”

community, the Samaritan Pentateuch, was also composed in Hebrew and may speak to the vibrance of Hebrew as a sacred (if not spoken) language at this time.<sup>154</sup>

Joseph Naveh has pointed out that in addition to the use of Hebrew and Aramaic languages, the Judeans and Samaritans also shared scripts. This included the standard Aramaic script traditionally used with documents composed in Imperial Aramaic and Paleo-Hebrew,<sup>155</sup> a script associated with religious and ideological texts. According to Naveh: “No differentiation whatsoever is discernible in the scripts used in Judah and Samaria during the Persian period.”<sup>156</sup> Notably, the only occurrence of the tetragrammaton among the inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim was written in the Paleo-Hebrew script.<sup>157</sup> Again, the use of the standard Aramaic script is consistent with what we should expect for scribal activity during the Persian period and is well attested in the Elephantine papyri and in the inscriptional evidence from Samaria (eg. the Wadi Daliyeh papyri and provincial coinage). However, the preservation of a *shared* local script

---

154. A discussion of the role of the Pentateuch in the development of Judean and Samaritan communities is beyond the scope of the current discussion. For an overview of the issues at stake, see Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 169–216, and also Stackert’s review, Jeffrey Stackert, “Review of Gary Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*,” *Conversations with the Biblical world* 35 (2015b): 181–188. For further and up-to-date bibliography, see Benedikt Hensel, “On the Relationship of Judah and Samaria in Post-exilic Times: A Farewell to the Conflict Paradigm,” *JSOT* 44 (2019): 18–19, nos. 109–110.

155. This is the traditional name of this script. However, the editors of the the Mt. Gerizim excavation finds prefer to call this script ‘Neo-Hebrew’ to distinguish it from its older, monarchic period predecessor. Magen, et al., *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, 33.

156. Joseph Naveh, “Scripts and Inscriptions in Ancient Samaria,” *IEJ* 48 (1998): 91; cf. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 110.

157. Magen, et al., *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, no. 383. According to Magen, et. al., only priests used this script and the deity’s proper name. In Hebrew-language / Aramaic-script inscriptions, the deity is referred to as “my lord” (*’dwny*) while Aramaic language/script inscriptions prefer “the god” (*’lh*). See their discussion in their introduction, 22–23.

alongside it and its specialized use for ideological and religious literature may speak to its importance in as a diacritic of shared corporate identity.<sup>158</sup>

### *Onomastics*

Closely related to the issue of shared language, the names of identifiable<sup>159</sup> Judeo-Egyptians continued to be constructed with Hebrew and Yahwistic elements. Porten notes that Judeo-Egyptian onomasticon “include[s] almost no Aramaic names and exhibit[s] little Aramaic influence.”<sup>160</sup> The Samaritan onomasticon as attested in the Wadi Daliyeh papyri and Mt. Gerizim dedicatory inscriptions points to a similar trend among the inhabitants of the province. Within the Wadi Daliyeh papyri, roughly 64% of names are what Ran Zadok would call “Israelite” — names that are Hebrew and/or include a Yahwistic theophoric element — against approximately 26% which were foreign or otherwise unfamiliar.<sup>161</sup> While this breakdown may suggest significant diversity among Samaria’s population, the province’s relative wealth and stability, its location on a main trading route between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean coast, and the nature of the transactions recorded — they are primarily slave sales — strongly suggests that many of the non-Israelite names attested in the documents belonged to merchants who were

---

158. On the importance of the Hebrew language and for development of a sense of corporate identity during the Iron Age — and its alphabet in particular — see the discussion in ch. 4. of Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009).; see also my discussion of the (disputed) Paleo-Hebrew inscription on the edge of CUSAS 28 no. 10 in ch. 4.

159. I recognize the potential circularity of this argument. See my discussion of the difficulty in using onomastics to determine ethnicity or collective affiliation in ch. 2.

160. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 133–150, here, 148.

161. Ran Zadok, “A Prosopography of Samaria and Edom/Idumea,” *UF* 30 (1998): 783–785; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 116–117.

passing through and not local to Samaria.<sup>162</sup> This would mean that the percentage of “Israelite” names attested in the archive would be disproportionately low with regard to the broader Samaritan population.

The inscriptional evidence from Mt. Gerizim also speaks to a predominantly Hebrew/Yahwistic Samaritan onomasticon,<sup>163</sup> with Hebrew names making up more than half (35) of the 55 discreet names attested.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps most remarkable in the onomastic evidence from Mt. Gerizim, Yahweh is the only deity so far attested as a theophoric element.<sup>165</sup> The numbers from Wadi Daliyeh are on par with the contemporary onomasticon of Yehud.<sup>166</sup> Taking into account the economic and political segment of the community who would have had the resources for such inscriptions, the evidence from Gerizim suggests that the majority of late 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century (elite) Samaritans embraced, like their contemporaries in Egypt,<sup>167</sup> Judea, and even Babylonia,<sup>168</sup> a Yahweh- and Hebrew-centric onomasticon.

---

162. Dusek, *Les manuscrits araméens*, 601.

163. It is likely that most of the onomastic evidence from Mt. Gerizim dates to the Hellenistic period temple and not to the Persian period structure. However, as argued by Knoppers, they reflect communal development from the perspective of the *longue durée* and are therefore valuable for understanding the values of the earlier community. For his full discussion, see Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 125–131.

164. In addition to Hebrew names, the editors identify thirteen Greek, for Arab, one Palmyrene, and one Persian name, as well as two names of unknown origin Magen, Misgav et al., *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, 25.

165. Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 209–216.

166. Zadok, “A Prosopography of Samaria and Edom/Idumea,” 785; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 116–117.

167. For a discussion of the Elephantine papyri onomasticon, see Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 84–86.

168. For the onomastica of these communities, see chs. 4–5 as well as my general discussion of onomastics in ch. 2.

There is one particularly notable feature about the Samaritan onomasticon that separates it from what we encounter in Judah. At least one individual of significant standing — either a governor, high priest, or another notable administrator — bore the name Jeroboam, a name that does not appear in inscriptional evidence from Judea. This name occurs on a five coins minted in Samaria,<sup>169</sup> including one that may bear a Samaritan cultic scene on its reverse.<sup>170</sup> According to Mary J. W. Leith, “The persistence of the name over the half millennium between Jeroboam I and the fourth-century-Samaritan Jeroboam connotes Israelite awareness.”<sup>171</sup> I will discuss the potential cultural continuity between the populations of the northern kingdom of Israel and the Persian province of Samaria in more detail below, but the reappearance of the name Jeroboam is part of a broader archaizing trend that Knoppers has observed in the Samaritan onomasticon which includes, in addition to Hebrew and Yahwistic names, a number of names from the Pentateuchal traditions — Pinḥas, Jacob, Joseph, and Miriam.<sup>172</sup> While the name Jeroboam is not attested among Judean communities in either Judea or the diaspora, the name Judah does appear among the inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim.

---

169. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 132.

170. The coin is no. 45 in Meshorer and Qedar. The front of the coin features a Persian hero staring down the shaft of his arrow, while the reverse depicts what may be a scene in a temple courtyard between a woman and a goddess. The Jeroboam inscription (*yrb ‘m* in Aramaic script) is centered in the cult scene. For a full description of this coin and an argument for its association with traditional Israelite/Israelian Asherah worship, see the discussion in Mary Joan Winn Leith, “Religious Continuity in Israel/Samaria: Numismatic Evidence,” in *A “Religious Revolution” in Yehûd?: The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case* (eds. Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny et al.; OBO 267; Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 267–304, esp. 284–295.

171. Leith, “Religious Continuity,” 291.

172. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 125–131.; Cf. Honigman’s discussion of the preference for Patriarchal and Egypt-related names among the Judeo-Egyptian communities of the Hellenistic period. Honigman, “The Birth of a Diaspora,” 93–127.

### *Yahweh Worship*

The predominance of Yahwistic names in the known Samaritan onomasticon points to perhaps the most relevant point of overlap between Judeans and Samaritans for our discussion of the RLR: the shared worship of Yahweh/Yahu. In addition to the those found at Yeb and Jerusalem, Samaria boasted its own Persian period temple dedicated to Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim. Previously thought to have been founded during the Hellenistic period, recent excavations have shown that there was, in fact, a sacred precinct on the site already in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Like its counterparts in Judea and Egypt, the Gerizim temple featured “monumental architecture and a sacrificial apparatus.”<sup>173</sup> It was staffed by its own priesthood (כהנים), including (perhaps) a high priest,<sup>174</sup> and while no remains of a Persian period altar have been recovered, the identification of the remains of an ash house by the excavators almost certainly indicate’s its existence.<sup>175</sup>

The presence of a temple on Mt. Gerizim also demonstrates that the community did not subscribe to the exclusivity of Jerusalem as the site of Yahweh’s presence as claimed in two texts from the Hebrew Bible. This does not mean that (at least some) Yahweh-worshipping Samaritans did not believe that Yahweh’s exclusively resided *somewhere* — the Samaritan Pentateuch is perhaps best known for the explicit inclusion of Mt. Gerizim as “the place that Yahweh has

---

173. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 125.

174. See n. 153 above.

175. Yitzhak Magen, “The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 160–161.

chosen to establish his name” in the book of Deuteronomy<sup>176</sup> — but Delaiah’s ultimate support of the Judeo-Egyptian community’s efforts to rebuild suggests that at least some member’s of Samaria’s elite did not take issue with the claim that Yahweh/Yahu could also reside in Egypt.

As I noted in the introduction to this excursus, scholars like van der Toorn have argued for the Samarian origin of the Judeo-Egyptian community at Yeb by appealing to their “northern” worship practices. The evidence from Samaria during Persian period does not invalidate that hypothesis; nor, however, does it necessarily support it. Unlike the situation for the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, there is no evidence for the worship of other deities at the temple on Mt. Gerizim.<sup>177</sup> As in the literary depictions of its counterpart in Jerusalem, the Samarian temple seems to have been exclusively dedicated to Yahwistic worship.

### *Persian Loyalists*

In my outline of the Judeo-Egyptian identity presented in the RLR, I highlighted Yedaniah and his colleagues’ claim to their community’s continued loyalty to Persia. While this diacritic was less explicit in the RLR than it was in a few other documents related to the events of 410 BCE, it is nonetheless an important feature of their appeal to provincial representatives of the Persian

---

176. Eg. Deut 12.5: *כי אם אל המקום אשר בחר יהוה אלהיכם מכל שבטיכם לשים את שמו שם*. Note the use of the perfect form *בחר* rather than the MT’s imperfect *יבחר*.

177. Hensel, “On the Relationship of Judah and Samaria in Post-exilic Times: A Farewell to the Conflict Paradigm,” 7–10. However, see the Leith’s argument concerning the potential identification of a female image on a 4<sup>th</sup> century coin from Samaria with Asherah as a representation of what she suggests might have been “normative” Samarian Yahwism (cf. the Iron Age inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud). Leith, “Religious Continuity,” 284–292. For the coin, see Ya‘akov Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins From the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba* (Nyack, NY: Amphora, 2001), no. 45.

Empire. As I will demonstrate in chs. 4–5, loyalty to Persia was also a key feature of Judean identity in Babylonia and in Judea, especially among return migrants who undertook return migration from Babylonia and their descendants. Does the evidence from Samaria evince a similar allegiance?

While we lack literary and epistolary material written from a Samaritan perspective that might shed light on this issue, we do possess a significant cache of evidence in the form of Samaritan seals and coins from the late Persian period. Due to the ideological nature of this material, it has the potential to provide insight into the values of those Samaritans who produced and used it. In his evaluation of Samaritan seals and bullae, Christoph Uehlinger has highlighted the presence of a small number of cylinder seals bearing what he calls ‘powerful Persianisms,’ “clear iconographical references to Persia and the Achaemenid empire.”<sup>178</sup> These seals, whose symbolic value likely outweighed their practical function,<sup>179</sup> were probably imported from imperial workshops in the eastern empire and given as gifts to local elites to engender loyalty. As such, they likely served as markers of status that bound lower level provincial authorities to the throne.<sup>180</sup>

These ‘powerfully Persian’ cylinder seals make up a very small proportion of those seals known from Samaria during the Persian period; excluding the seals of these elites, those bearing

---

178. Christoph Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Palestine,” in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (eds. Bob. Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel; Oudtestamentische Studiën 42; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 137.

179. Uehlinger notes that while cylinder seals are quite practical in the context of sealing clay tablets, they are far less functional in an environment where papyrus is the primary medium. In these cases, scarab or ring seals make far more sense. Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 153.

180. Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 174.

a range of other iconography featuring Egyptian, Greek, and Levantine motifs and elements were significantly more common. However, when we turn to the numismatic evidence, the rate of Persian iconography increases significantly. According to Uehlinger, “Samaritan coinage is literally full of ‘Persianisms’, surpassing by far any other mint in the region in this respect.”<sup>181</sup> In evaluating the motivations for the iconography featured on coins, we are once again dealing with the elite class of Samaritans responsible for their production and thus these images may not reflect the values of the broader population.<sup>182</sup> However, just as Yedaniah and his colleagues were intentional about their self-presentation in their letter to Bagowahiya, so too would these elites have been intentional in their choice of numismatic imagery. And the message of that choice is clear. According to Uehlinger, “the coins of Samaria emphatically claim strong allegiance of the province to the Great King and his representatives.”<sup>183</sup>

This show of loyalty did not, of course, preclude the use of Levantine iconography in the minting process, and Persianisms could stand beside (or on the reverse side of) symbols of local importance.<sup>184</sup> As such, the employment of these Persianisms reflect a complex process of Samaritan self-definition that, as we saw in the case of the Judeo-Egyptians, embraced and

---

181. Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 177–178.

182. Uehlinger, for example, suggests that the choice to so fully embrace these Persianisms was actually meant to *engender* loyalty among a(n unruly?) population rather than reflect its values. Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 177–178.

183. Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 179; cf. Leith, “Religious Continuity?” 268–272.

184. According to Leith, “What many of the Samaritan coin images bring to the case for Israelite-Samaria continuity is the likelihood that they constitute Samaritan statements of self-definition within the Persian Empire. At times, the Samaritan self-definition involved not only an explicit declaration of fealty to Persian satrap and king, but also — occasionally on the same coin — capitalizing on its ancient Israelite heritage.” Leith, “Religious Continuity?” 274.

amplified loyalty to Persia as one of its defining diacritics. This loyalty would therefore have been another shared ethnic activity between the two communities.

*The Appeal to Samaria in the RLR*

Returning now to Yedaniah's appeal to the Persian officials in Samaria, it would seem that he and his colleagues may have recognized any number of shared traits between the two communities that would have indicated a shared collective identity. Of course in the absence of a draft of that letter, we are forced to speculate; it seems reasonable, however, to assume that it was similar to the one addressed to Bagowahiya and would therefore have appealed to a similar set of traits to establish a sense of shared translocal identity (loyalty to Persia, worship of Yahu/Yahweh, language), traits for which — as just demonstrated — there is evidence of significant overlap between the two communities.

Even in the light of the preceding analysis, it still remains to be explained why Yedaniah and his colleagues only appealed to Samaria after three years of silence from the Jerusalemite priesthood. Jeffery Stackert, in his review of Gary Knoppers' *Jews and Samaritans*, has tentatively suggested that the absence of an earlier appeal to Samaria points to a perceived hierarchy among cult sites dedicated to Yahu/Yahweh, at least as recognized by the Judeo-Egyptians. This might indicate the community's claim to Judean rather than Samaritan origins or reflect a stronger sense of cultural overlap between the two groups. The preference is all the more striking when one considers the "superior economic and political authority of Samaria over

Yehud in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>185</sup> The Samaritans quite possibly would have had a better chance of convincing Aršama to act on the Judeo-Egyptian community’s behalf.<sup>186</sup>

I can think of two possible answers to this question. First, it is possible that the Judeo-Egyptians *did*, in fact, appeal to the priests of the Gerizim temple but simply did not mention the earlier correspondence in the RLR. Because the Gerizim priesthood’s activity would have been beyond Bagowahiya’s jurisdiction, the information may not have been relevant for their request. This solution becomes more plausible if one assumes the Judean governor would have consulted with the Jerusalem priesthood prior to consenting to the requests of the Judeo-Egyptians. According to this argument from silence, the distinction between Judean and Samaritan in the eyes of the Judeo-Egyptians might have been more political than cultural, with the Yeb community feeling close translocal ties with both groups based on the criteria outlined above while also recognizing the distinct, imperially-imposed jurisdictions of the officials to whom they ultimately appealed.

If, however, there was not an initial letter sent to members of the Gerizim priesthood, then the appeal to the Samaritan officials in 407 may suggest a shift in the Judeo-Egyptian community’s communal boundaries. In this case, the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb would not have perceived or asserted a translocal identity with the priests of Samaria in the immediate aftermath of their temple’s destruction. However, during the three year interim between the letters to

---

185. Jeffrey Stackert, “Review of Gary Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 35 (2015a): 185.

186. In his response to Stackert’s question, Knoppers agreed with the possibility of the suggestion, adding that it was only when an appeal to Samaria was made that the matter was resolved. Gary N Knoppers, “How It Began and Did Not End: The History of Samari(t)an and Judean Relations in Antiquity,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 35 (2015): 201–202.

Jerusalem, shifting historical circumstances caused or allowed Yedaniah and his colleagues to recalibrate their own conception of Judeanness, shifting/broadening/(re)emphasizing particular traits (eg. Yahwistic worship) so as to include Samaritans within the group's boundaries. As argued by Boyarin, "A diaspora can be produced out of already existing communities by the production of new cultural ties and connections. It is precisely those common cultural practices that constitute the multiple collectives as a diaspora."<sup>187</sup> The nature of those changes is beyond historical reconstruction from the available evidence — perhaps it was a growing desperation for reinstated cultic worship that further aligned the collective identities of the Judeo-Egyptians and the Samaritans — but Delaiah's affirmative response strongly suggests that the Samaritans (or at least some members of the Samaritan elite class) were receptive to these boundaries of the reconstructed translocal collective that included both groups. If this is the case, then the shift in communal boundaries for the Judeo-Egyptian community of Yeb between 410 and 407 BCE demonstrates the historical and dynamic nature of Judeanness during the Persian period.

## Constructing and Reproducing Judeanness in Egypt

### *Introduction*

The self-presentation of the authors of the RLR indicates that there was a distinct sense of Judeanness among the members of the Yeb garrison, particularly among those who hoped to rebuild their local temple to Yahu. According to the brief *mythomoteur* preserved in their letter to

---

187. Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland*, 25.

Bagowahiya, the diacritica that defined that identity included deep, pre-Persian roots in Egypt, unwavering loyalty to the Persians, and continued ties to Judea and to the god Yahu. The date of this letter, more than a century after the community claimed to have been settled and at least 80 years after its earliest attestation in the written record, speaks to its ability to remain a distinct and identifiable social group (both internally and externally) for multiple generations after their original settlement. In this section, I want to examine some of the processes and institutions that likely contributed to the reproduction of a distinct Judean identity over such an extended period.

In her thorough and persuasive study, “Preserving the Cult of Yhwh in Judean Garrisons: Continuity from Pharaonic to Ptolemaic Times,” Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley sets out to address this very phenomenon. She argues that the preservation of a distinct social identity among foreign soldiers settled in Egypt under the Saites and the Persians (and even the Ptolemies) was the result of an imperial system that intentionally reinforced boundaries between them and the subjected Egyptian population. As a result, the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and other communities of foreign soldiers who had settled in Egypt were able to preserve a distinct social identity as well as the veneration of traditional deities. In the main, I find Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s argument quite persuasive. There are, however, some minor but important changes that I would submit based on the theoretical approach I outlined in chapter 2. Before offering those proposals, it will be productive to work through Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s reconstruction.

*Foreign Soldiers in Egypt*

As was customary in the conquest of new territories throughout the expanding Persian empire, Cambyses and his successors seem to have essentially accepted the previous administrative system of rule.<sup>188</sup> There were, of course, interventions: a satrap was installed in place of a native pharaoh, the capital was moved from Sais to Memphis, and Persians alone dominated the highest rungs of the administrative hierarchy. The new regime was even known to intervene at the local or temple level.<sup>189</sup> On the whole, however, it would seem that the Persian rulers of Egypt sought to maintain the status quo. According to Fitzpatrick-McKinley, this also included how they

---

188. For discussions concerning the continuity of rule between the Saites and their Persian successors, see Schütz, “Local Administration in Persian Period Egypt,” and Damien Agut-Labordère, “Administering Egypt Under the First Persian Period: The Empire as Visible in the Demotic Sources,” in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen” aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire* (Classica et Orientalia 17; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017); Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire, 525–332 BC* (OUP USA, 2012), 20; Sullivan, “Paying Archaic Greek Mercenaries: Views from Egypt and the Near East.”

189. Lisabeth Fried has argued for the ubiquity of Persian micro-managing. As an example, she points to pair of Demotic letters (P. Berlin 13539 and 13572 ) that record an exchange between the priests of Khnum and the satrap Pherendates. The letters, dated to the 29th and 30th year of Darius I (493), address the appointment of a new *lesonis* priest — an administrator responsible for managing the temple’s finances — over the temple to Khnum on Elephantine. In response to the first letter, in which the priests of Khnum nominate a certain Eskhumpemet son of Horkheb to fill the vacant position, Darius — through his satrap, Pherendates — demands that the nominee be approved, in person, by his satrap. That Eskhumpemet came to hold the position is confirmed by a letter written roughly a month after the Persian response to the appointment in which he is addressed by his title. While the short timeline suggests to Fried that the king’s demand to confirm Eskhumpemet had been ignored, she believes that the reality of the exchange suggests Persian intervention in these kinds of matters was the rule, and the Khnum temple’s disobedience, the exception. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King*, 81–84. As noted by Fried, however, the *lesonis* priest of the Khnum temple oversaw significant resources, and it is easy to see why the Persian authorities would have been interested in the appointee to a such a powerful position.

treated the colonies of foreign soldiers who had been settled in highly valued and contested areas under the Saites.

The presence of foreign soldiers in Egypt during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE is well attested in the classical sources as well as in the epigraphic and material records.<sup>190</sup> Carians, Ionians, Phoenicians, and soldiers from the Levant all served in pharaoh's army prior to the Persian conquest.<sup>191</sup> These soldiers, who were often encouraged to settle in Egypt by the pharaoh who employed them, were compensated with silver and provisions, but also through real estate, either in the countryside or in urban settings, and were to some degree set off from the subjugated population. When the Persians took over, they appear to have incorporated this

---

190. On the presence of Greek and Anatolian soldiers in Egypt, see Philip Kaplan, "Cross-cultural Contacts among Mercenary Communities in Saite and Persian Egypt," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18 (2003): 1–31.; Sullivan, "Paying Archaic Greek Mercenaries," 31–61; Denise Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean: The Archaic and Classical Greek Multiethnic Emporia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105–152; John D Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," *CANE* 2 (1995): 1185–1194.

191. For example, graffiti from Abu Simbel attests to the participation of Carians, Ionians, and Phoenicians in Psammetichus II's campaign against Kush in 593 BCE. Philip C. Schmitz, "The Phoenician Contingent in the Campaign of Psammetichus II Against Kush," *Journal of Egyptian History* 3 (2010): 321–337; Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," 1190. Regarding the presence of Levantine soldiers, a partially published papyrus (P. Berlin P 13615, VI 18–VII 11) contains "fourteen individuals and their fathers with partly Semitic, partly Egyptian names who are labeled by the term *Išwr*." According to Vittman, *Išwr* could, and perhaps *should*, be understood as a reference to Syria rather than Assur, and it is likely that these individuals should be identified as Arameans, although he withholds final judgment until the full publication of the document. Günter Vittmann, "Arameans in Egypt," in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* (eds. Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir et al.; Leipziger altorientalistische Studien 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag), 234–235; (cf. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Preserving the Cult," 400). In this regard he agrees with the much earlier assessment of the term (*Išwr*) by Porten (*Archives from Elephantine*, 15). Porten further suggests that 60 men identified as *rmt n Hr* in the papyrus, which he translates as "Palestinian," should be identified as ethnic Judeans, or "Jews" in his construction.

practice (and the soldiers who were a part of it) into their own standardized system of foreign garrisons in conquered territories, a system that prioritized the ability to move soldiers efficiently throughout the empire.<sup>192</sup>

According to Fitzpatrick-McKinley, this approach reinforced boundaries between the foreign soldiers in service of the king and the local population. First of all, the Saites and the Persians offered these non-Egyptian soldiers land grants that physically and materially distinguished them from their Egyptian neighbors. Concentrating Ionians or Phoenicians together in a single rural or urban setting prevented a kind of diffusion. They could exist in enclaves with only limited exposure to their Egyptian neighbors. The extreme example of this separation is the famous trading colony of Naukratis, which Greeks first inhabited in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The city and its environs were most likely offered as payment to foreign soldiers for their service as soldiers in the Egyptian army.<sup>193</sup> As the city grew, it took on the status of a Greek *polis*; it was the hub of Greek trade in Egypt with its own distinct material culture, internal system of

---

192. For a discussion of the Persian approach to troop movement in Anatolia, see Elspeth R. M. Dussinberre, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 83–107. For evidence from the Greek sources: Christopher Tuplin, “Xenophon and the Garrisons of the Achaemenid Empire,” *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (1987): 167–245; Babylonian: Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Carians of Borsippa,” *Iraq* 68 (2006): 1–22.

193. According to Herodotus, Psammetichus I granted his Ionian and Carian soldiers military settlements (*στρατάπεδα*) in the Nile Delta as payment for their role in his successful effort to unite Egypt (2.152–154). The Greek historian also claims that Amasis granted Greek soldiers the city of Naukratis in the western Delta after his successful coup (2.112). Recent excavations at this site have demonstrated that despite Herodotus’s comment and the city’s reputation as a distinctly Greek trading hub in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, its first Greek inhabitants likely arrived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and were granted the opportunity to settle there in exchange for military service. Alan Johnston, “The Naukratis Project: Petrie, Greeks and Egyptians,” *Archaeology International* 17 (2014): 70.

government, and civic identity.<sup>194</sup> According to Denise Demetriou, “The Egyptian state did exercise its authority over the Greek settlement,”<sup>195</sup> but Naukratis still managed to exist as a distinct (and distinctly Greek) political entity within greater Egypt.

Beyond the physical borders that these practices created, they also generated social and economic boundaries between the foreign troops and native Egyptians. As Fitzpatrick-McKinley argues, the silver, provisions, and land that the crown used to compensate these soldiers were produced by the local population. Foreign soldiers also held a privileged position in the royal army. This exploitation and preferential treatment likely bred resentment against the foreign soldiers among native Egyptians, as evidenced by the vandalism of Carian graves near Memphis,<sup>196</sup> the negative view of Greek soldiers taken in the Amasis stele,<sup>197</sup> and perhaps even in the destruction of the temple of Yahu by the priests of Khnum at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>198</sup> These policies were in place to maintain clear boundaries between these communities of soldiers and the indigenous population despite decades, if not centuries, of living side by side.

The success of this approach is best attested through Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s analysis of the Carians, an ethnic minority from southwest Anatolia whose presence in Egypt is attested during at least the 7<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE.<sup>199</sup> Carians feature prominently in Herodotus’ accounts of

---

194. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 128ff.

195. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 121.

196. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 400–402.

197. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 400–402.

198. As I argued above, the destruction of the temple complex’s northeast temenos wall seems to have been administratively sanctioned and a matter of city-planning, although it is entirely possible that the decision to raze the actual temple building was motivated by this resentment.

199. Carians are actually better attested in the Egyptian record than they are in Anatolia. Ray, “Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia,” 1192–1194.

Saite military and defense strategy.<sup>200</sup> In addition to the Carian graffiti at Abu Simbel, a number of Carian funerary steles and graves have been discovered in Saqqara.<sup>201</sup> Carians from Egypt also appear in more than a dozen 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE records from Borsippa in the Babylonian heartland in their role as representatives of the Persian military.<sup>202</sup> Finally, a reference to a Carian temple in the environs of Memphis in a Greek papyrus from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE demonstrates that these soldiers survived not only the transition to Persian power, but also continued to serve after Egypt fell to Alexander's Ptolemaic successors.<sup>203</sup>

Beyond identifying the socio-economic or socio-political factors that reinforced a distinct social identity among communities of ethnic minorities in Saite and Persian Egypt, Fitzpatrick-McKinley's article is particularly interested in how traditionalist religious practice and ideas — like the Judean worship of Yahu — were preserved by these external or imperial institutions. Although the point is not stated explicitly, it seems that she argues that the native cults of ethnic Judeans, Carians, and Arameans were *allowed* to survive as a function of the imperial policies toward foreign soldiers just outlined. The religious expression that supported these cults was part of the symbolic resources under the broader umbrella of Judean or Carian identity. For example, as she transitions her focus from Carian to Judean troops, she asks

whether or not the wider political and social circumstances found in military communities of foreign origin in Egypt, which ensured that the Carian military communities remained somewhat distinct from the indigenous population, *incidentally* affording the Carians the opportunity

---

200. E.g. *Histories* 2.152, 154, 163; 3.11.

201. Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," 1192–1194.

202. Waerzeggers, "The Carians of Borsippa," 1–22; Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Preserving the Cult," 388–401.; for more on these Carians and how we know they came to Borsippa from Egypt, see below.

203. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Preserving the Cult," 386.

to retain aspects of their cultural identity, *including of course adherence to their native gods*, was also afforded to communities of soldiers in Egypt who worshipped YHW.<sup>204</sup>

According to this construction, the Carians are granted very little agency in the preservation of their native cult. McKinley-Fitzpatrick does reference the efforts of Carians to demonstrate their foreignness through their unconventional participation in the traditional Egyptian festival of Bubastis,<sup>205</sup> and the closing line of the article refers to the (primary?) importance of the commitment diaspora communities maintained for their native gods.<sup>206</sup> It is through this conclusion that, in an otherwise extremely productive article, Fitzpatrick-McKinley under-theorizes and under-appreciates the agentive role of religion and religious institutions in the construction of these Carian and Judean identities in 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century Egypt. It is to this issue that we now turn.

#### A Temple to Yahu: Institutional Production of Judean Identity

אגורא זי יהו

---

204. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 392–393, *emphasis mine*.

205. According to Herodotus, the Carians “cut their foreheads with knives, and thereby it is clear that they are foreigners and not Egyptians.” 2.61, translation from David Greene. Cf. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 408.

206. “The retention of identity by soldiers of non-Egyptian origin and their allegiance to their gods could partly be explained by all of these largely socio-economic factors. The explanation for the continuation of their ancestral worship may also partly lie in native Egyptian suspicion and resentment of their loyalty to Persia, evident in their readiness to simply transfer paymasters, something that did not go unnoted by the Egyptian scribe of the Stela of Amasis. But, of course, the explanation must also, and perhaps primarily, lie in their commitment to their gods.” Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 408.

The imperially imposed socio-economic and socio-political factors that McKinley-Fitzpatrick identifies to explain the continued presence of identifiable Judeans in Upper Egypt at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE are only a part of a broader process of ethnicity construction and reproduction. In this section I will argue for the equally important role of the community's religious identity in that process. Rather than a passive byproduct of external factors, recent studies on modern diaspora communities have shown that religion often plays a crucial role in the reproduction of ethnicity, and that religion and ethnic identity often have a reciprocal, or mutually reinforcing effect on one another.<sup>207</sup>

This phenomenon is particularly clear in the role that religious institutions play in diaspora communities.<sup>208</sup> Studies on New Immigrants in the post-1965 United States have focused on the importance of congregationalism for the construction and preservation of ethnic identity.<sup>209</sup> Congregationalism, broadly defined, refers to members of immigrant communities uniting to create a sacred space in their host country and the subsequent communal efforts to

---

207. See ch. 2 and the following discussion in this section.

208. Abdulkader Tayob offers the following definition of religious institutions: "Religious institutions are the visible and organized manifestations of practices and beliefs in particular social and historical contexts. Like human emotions and attitudes, religious beliefs and practices project outward onto the social and historical plane. They create identities and representations, and determine attitudes, emotions, and behavior. These manifestations and outward projections originate from beliefs and practices, but they are also limited by historical contexts. Geographical, social, and political considerations modify attitudes and practices. Religious institutions, then, take shape in relation to both religious impulses and contextual configurations." Abdulkader Tayob, "Religious Institutions," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* ii (2004): 584.

209. The title "New Immigrants" refers to the wave of non-white, non-Western European immigrants who entered the United States following the passing of the Hart-Celler act of 1965, an immigration reform bill that dramatically loosened immigration restrictions on individuals coming from non-Western European states. For its relevance concerning the construction of ethnic and diaspora identity, see my discussion of Milton Gordon's melting pot theory in ch. 2.

maintain it. This typically results in strong associations between members of the congregation and the institution they support, including the increased importance of religion to ethnic identity and its reproduction. According to Rose Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz, the religious institution provides a physical space for the “informal reproduction of ethnicity,”<sup>210</sup> thereby strengthening or reinforcing the importance of religion in the composition of ethnic identity.

It is not only scholars who recognize the mutually reinforcing nature of ethnic identity and religion; in many cases, those who build these institutions in diaspora communities recognize this relationship and explicitly cite it in their motivations for institution-building. For example, in the late 1970s, a community of first generation Indian immigrants in California formed a coalition with the intent of building an “authentic” Hindu temple on American soil. In their own publications, the Hindu Temple Society of Southern California (HTSSC) explained their motivations for undertaking this time, cost, and labor intensive project:

In April 1977, a group of dedicated men and women of the Indian [Hindu] community in Los Angeles convened a meeting to discuss one subject: that of building a temple and cultural center to fulfill the *spiritual* and *cultural* needs of the community. They realized that those who made this country their new home, could easily lose their socio-cultural identity in the course of time, [and] thus [be] rendered *rootless* and insecure. Such a state may not spread itself in the life of the first generation, but is bound to expand in the lives of the second and succeeding generations, if a sense of direction is not made available at the right time.<sup>211</sup>

In laying out its reasoning for constructing a temple in such clear terms, the HTSSC made explicit what scholars of migration, diaspora, and religion have argued concerning the role of

---

210. Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, “Structural Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations,” *Sociology of Religion* 61 (2000): 149.

211. HTSSC Publication, 1984; cited in Shampa Mazumdar and Sanjoy Mazumdar, “Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion,” *JRitSt* 20 (2006): 44., *emphasis* mine.

religious institutions in diaspora: a temple, shrine, or church can (and often does) function as a locus of identity-preservation and construction for the community it serves.

In their important study of post-1965 immigrant religious movements in America, Helen Ebaugh and Chafetz highlight the various means by which this process plays out. The study highlights the importance of language, particularly its role in passing on ethnic identity to the second and third generations.<sup>212</sup> Their work also recognizes the often overlooked role of women who are responsible for “doing ethnicity” by performing “traditional” gender roles, including the preparation of meals and acting as formal and informal teachers.<sup>213</sup> For our discussion of religious institutions in the ancient world, I am particularly interested in two other vehicles (or strategies) of ethnicity reproduction recognized in their work: architecture (and material culture more broadly) and ritual.

### *Building a Temple to Yahu*

One of the key diacritica of Judeanness that we gleaned from the RLR and its embedded *mythomoteur* was the community’s dedication to the worship of Yahu and the necessity of its temple to that worship. Yedaniah and his colleagues’ claims to the deep, pre-Persian roots of the temple spoke to the institution’s role as a communal node. While the veracity of that claim remains an open question, we can be sure of two things regarding the temple’s construction.

---

212. Ebaugh and Chafetz, “Structural Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations,” 409–430. Cf. Naukratis and the overwhelming majority of Greek language among the 1500+ inscriptions discovered at the site. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 116–117.

213. Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Cogregations* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 385–409.

First, the temple to Yahu in Yeb did not appear *ex nihilo*. Rather, some group of Judeans took it upon themselves to build (or repurpose) the structure, to prepare it for use, and to undertake its maintenance.<sup>214</sup> Second, by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the temple had become the center of daily life for an identifiable community of Judeo-Egyptians of the Yeb garrison, and according to the claims of its leaders, its destruction created a serious crisis for that community.<sup>215</sup>

In constructing a temple to Yahu, a deity closely — if not exclusively — associated with Judea and Samaria, the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb joined a number of other minority communities who undertook the construction of temples dedicated to the deities of their ancestral homelands while residing in Egypt during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. A letter among the Xenon Papyri makes reference to a Carian temple in Memphis,<sup>216</sup> and the diverse Greek-speaking community of Naukratis built a number of temples to honor the deities of those city states represented in its

---

214. There is, as noted above, no direct account concerning the details of the temple's construction. The Elephantine papyri attest to the presence of at least a small group of priests (*khn*) who served there (TAD A4 7:1, 18; 8:1, 17; C3A 28:85, 113) as well the presence of a *lhn* (and *lhnh*), "steward" (*lhn*: B3 2:2; 3:2; 4:3, 25; 5:2, 23; 7:2; 10:2, 23, 27; 11:1, 9, 17; 12:1, 10, 33; C3A 11:5; 13:45, 48; D21 2:1; *lhnh*: B3 12:2). In the Neo-Assyrian period, the (*a*)*lahhinu* (the Aramaic term appears to be a loan from Assyrian) was an administrator associated with temples and responsible for tasks like upkeep and the receiving of goods. It is probable that Anani, the Judean who held the position for the Yahu temple, served a similar role (and so did his wife, according to B3.12:2, an Egyptian woman named Tapmet). *CAD a/1 s.v. alahhinu* (d), 295–296. Cf. "*lhn*," CAL (accessed on 6/8/2020).

215. At least according to the narrative offered by the community's leaders in the RLR: TAD A4.7:15.

216. The letter is from the Hellenistic period, but the temple's location in the Memphis area may suggest that it was built at an earlier date when Carians first came to settle there under the Saites. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Preserving the Cult," 385–386.; cf. Gil H Renberg and William S Bubelis, "The Epistolary Rhetoric of Zoilos of Aspendos and the Early Cult of Sarapis: Re-reading P. Cair. Zen. I 59034," *ZPE* (2011).

population, including a proto-Hellenistic temple to Aphrodite.<sup>217</sup> The Hermopolis papyri point to similar undertakings by the Arameans of Syene, who seem to have built temples to a number of West Semitic deities, including Bañīt, the Queen of Heaven, Bethel, and Nabu.<sup>218</sup> It appears that even Egyptians took this approach: as part of a massive Persian building project at the Kharga Oasis in the western desert, a community of Egyptians who had been resettled to work at the oasis built (at least) three temples, including a major complex dedicated to Osiris.<sup>219</sup>

But why did members of these immigrant communities undertake these significant — both in terms of cost and labor — building projects in their new settlements? One might assume that this was standard practice among displaced communities of ethnic minorities during the period in questions; however, as we will see in our discussion of the Judeo-Babylonians of ancient Nippur that this assertion is at best problematic. No temple charters or inscriptions typically associated with royal temple building have survived from the period explaining the community’s motivations,<sup>220</sup> nor do we have the kind of theological or ideological reflections

---

217. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 137–145.

218. For references to the temple of Bānīt/the Queen of heaven, see TAD A2.3; for Bethel, see TAD A2.1; and for Nabu, see A2.3.

219. Smaller religious institutions preceded the construction of these temples, but the Persians appear to have expanded them significantly to better handle extended settlement in the area rather than temporary visits. Henry P. Colburn, “Pioneers of the Western Desert: The Kharga Oasis in the Achaemenid Empire,” in *The Archaeology of Imperial Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Empires in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (eds. Bleda S. During and Tesse Dieder Stek; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 94–102.

220. With the exception of the temples of the Kharga Oasis, and the Hibis temple, in particular. Here we can see the active role that Darius I played in at least one phase of the construction process through the inscriptional evidence. Also, the sheer size of the project would likely have required support from the throne. Colburn, “Pioneers of the Western Desert,” 99–102.

attached to their construction like we have preserved in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>221</sup>

Rather, we turn to temple- and institution-building explanations among modern immigrant communities to help fill in some of the gaps in the epigraphic and material records in order to understand why the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and contemporary communities of ethnic minorities settled throughout Egypt in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries undertook these projects.

According to Ebaugh and Chafetz, “[p]hysical structures are one type of material artifact that remind immigrants of their heritage and function to maintain and recreate ethnic identity. Church architecture, interior furnishings, and other visual representations are part of the ‘localization of immigrant cultures’ that reinforce immigrant identity.”<sup>222</sup> A religious institution can accomplish this by mimicking or reproducing architectural forms from the ancestral homeland. The Hindu Temple Community of Southern California, for example, followed a traditional blueprint in the construction of its Malibu temple, importing religious professionals from India for consultation.<sup>223</sup> Often times, however, the ties are less explicit or observable. The Catholic shrine to Our Lady of Charity in Miami, the accepted patroness of the city’s large Cuban population, is not a reproduction of the shrine to the saint in Cuba; rather, it is built in a modern American style that nonetheless incorporates traditional Cuban elements through its

---

221. On biblical accounts of temple projects in their broader ancient Near Eastern setting, see Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and North-West semitic writings* (JSOTSup 115; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 311; Victor Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105 (1985): 21–30.

222. Ebaugh and Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants*, 386. Cf. Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (1991): 5–20.

223. Mazumdar and Mazumdar, “Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion,” 44–46.

shape and materials.<sup>224</sup> Exposure to these more and less explicitly traditional architectural forms, even infrequently,<sup>225</sup> can have significant positive effects in the reproduction of ethnic identity in first generation immigrants and their descendants.

In the specific case of the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, it is clear that establishing such an institution was a priority for the early community. Cornelius von Pilgrim's reconstruction of the city layout based on his recent excavations suggests the existence of a small, unwalled structure on the site that would hold the Yahu temple already during the Saite period.<sup>226</sup> Whether this building was constructed by members of Yeb's Judean garrison or later repurposed for the worship of Yahu is unclear. The earliest explicit reference to the physical structure in the papyri is dated to 436,<sup>227</sup> although an oath was sworn ביהו אלהא ביב בירתא in 464,<sup>228</sup> strongly suggesting the presence of a temple to Yahu prior to that point. The archaeological remains do indicate that a temenos wall was added during the Persian period in order to demarcate the territory of the pre-existing cultic structure, separating it from the residential quarter to the northwest and the Khnum temple complex to the northeast. The wall created a courtyard that surrounded either a

---

224. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 100–115.

225. Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 111–128.

226. Von Pilgrim, "Textzeugnis und archäologischer Befund," 491–492; cf. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 180–184.

227. TAD B2.7:14 אגורא זי יהה אלהא.

228. B2.2; It is illuminating that this oath was not sworn by a Judean, but rather by a certain Dargamanā son Xvaršaina who was identified as חרזמי, that is, a man from Khwarezmia. This is a satrapy that was located in what is now modern Afghanistan. According to Becking, his willingness to swear by a foreign god (i.e. non-Khwarezmian) speaks to the presence of a shared or overlapping religion among the inhabitants of Yeb. Bob Becking, "Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance? Two Examples of Lending Deities Among Ethnic Groups in Elephantine," in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World* (Boston: Brill, 2017), 39–42. On the Judean contribution to the local culture, see my discussion below.

single-roomed cella or a shrine with back-to-back chambers.<sup>229</sup> Based on the RLR's description of what was looted, the temple structure likely had a cedar-planked roof, a number of pillars, and five stone gates (TAD A4.7:8–13). Erosion and subsequent layers of construction (including from the community's own rebuilt temple sometime after 407) have left barely any trace of the original structure to compare with Yedaniah's description of the complex. However, there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest that the basic architectural layout and specific features (i.e. the presence pillars, cedar beams, and gates) were not at least approximately as the community described.

Despite the difficulty that the state of the material evidence poses for reconstructing the temple complex, one thing is clear: the Yahu temple of Yeb was not based on the royal Jerusalem temple of the late Iron Age as it is described in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>230</sup> That structure, according to

---

229. A two-chamber cella was certainly in place in the second temple that was constructed after the events of 410, and the back chamber most likely served as a storehouse for offerings. The deteriorated state of the site's remains make it impossible to determine if this structure followed the model of the first temple. The exchanges in TAD 4.7–10 and the order to rebuild the temple "exactly as it was before" suggest the two-chambered structure was in the original design, but a number of differences—including a new temenos wall to the northwest of the cella and a new border wall along the southeastern edge of the courtyard—suggest that the order was not followed. Von Pilgrim, "Textzeugnis und archäologischer Befund," 485–497; Von Pilgrim, "Tempel des Jahu," 303–317.

230. The description of Solomon's temple in 1 Kgs 6–7 has been a frequent target for archaeological minimalists looking to discredit the historical reality of a united monarchy or even a significant political entity prior to the Persian or Hellenistic period. Van Seters, for example, argues that the narrative was composed by the Deuteronomistic Historian after 586 BCE and deals more in nostalgia for a lost structure than the reality of the building. John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 309–310. However, scholars who are more optimistic concerning how the literature of the Hebrew Bible can—when used judiciously—inform historical reconstructions, point to the parallels between the description in 1 Kgs 6–7 and Levantine temples from the 12<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Dever, perhaps most optimistically, argues that

the description provided in 1 Kgs 6–7, was a built on a long-room plan (1200 square meters) with two chambers and a porch. The building was oriented along an east-west axis, with its doors opening to the east.<sup>231</sup> The temple at Yeb, on the other hand, was a significantly smaller building, approximately five meters by twenty meters.<sup>232</sup> It seems to have had a single long room dedicated to worship that was surrounded by a courtyard.<sup>233</sup> The temple was constructed along a bent axis plan, extending from the southwest to the northeast. Porten’s original, strictly text-based

reconstruction of the temple suggested that the floor plan, including the complex’s doors and many of the features of Solomon’s temple are *only* found in temples from this period, and concludes that “the *only* life-setting for ‘Solomon’s temple,’ whether there was a biblical Solomon or not, is to be found in the Iron Age, and in the 10<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries at *latest*.” William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know, and When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001), 144–157, here 157; cf. Mark S. Smith, “In Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6–7): Between Text and Archaeology,” in *Confronting the Past : Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (eds. William G. Dever, Seymour Gitin et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 275–282. The recent discovery of a 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE temple in nearby Motza that shares significant architectural features with the description of Solomon’s temple (forecourt, two columns, center room, inner room, side chamber) provides another example of the Canaanite-Phoenician temple model in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. Yosef Garfinkel and Madeleine Mumcuoglu, “The Temple of Solomon in Iron Age Context,” *Religions* 10 (2019): 6–8.

231. For the orientation of the temple, see the arrangement of the two bronze columns Boaz and Jachin to the north and south of its entrance, respectively (7.21), and the location of the bronze basin to the southeast corner of the courtyard. Cf. the east-west orientation of the Priestly tabernacle (Exod 26.22; Num 3.23).

232. Although the majority of the long side of the structure has been lost to the sea, Rosenberg estimates a length of 20 meters. The excavations of von Pilgrim measured the short side at approximately five meters, giving a rough estimate of 100 square meters for the entire building.

233. The structure’s second chamber, which certainly existed for the rebuilt post-407 version of the temple and perhaps also for the earlier structure (depending on how literally we are to take the request/instruction to rebuild “just as it was before” in the RLR and the response from the Judean and Samaritan governors), was likely a storage room. This is suggested by the lack of a passage between the two chambers (unlike the Jerusalem temple floor plan) and the discovery of burnt grains in the second room during von Pilgrim’s excavations.

gates, was oriented and opened in the direction of the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>234</sup> However, the German excavations led by von Pilgrim have show that there were no doorways along the complex's northeastern wall,<sup>235</sup> indicating that the temple and its courtyard likely opened to southwest and thus did not face towards Jerusalem.

The Yeb temple's blueprint does not perfectly correspond to any known temple from the kingdoms of Israel or Judah.<sup>236</sup> For example, the city of Arad — a royal military outpost in the Negev that protected the kingdom of Judah's southern border until its fall to the Babylonians — featured a two-room temple on an east-west axis.<sup>237</sup> This structure, whose dating remains controversial, was built sometime in the late 9<sup>th</sup>/early 8<sup>th</sup> century and seems to have been in use until at least the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, if not until the Babylonian conquest.<sup>238</sup> Built on a broad-

---

234. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 110–112..

235. Stephen G Rosenberg, “The Jewish Temple at Elephantine,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2004): 12.

236. Rosenberg, however, has suggested that it fits, along with a number of other sites, the blueprint of the Priestly tabernacle. In what is essentially an argument for the historicity of the Priestly tabernacle, he compares the basic footprint of the tent shrine to a number of Yahwistic temples that have been discovered within the environs ancient Israel and Judah. Rosenberg, “The Jewish Temple at Elephantine,” 10–12.

237. Regarding the east-west orientation, “One should also acknowledge the east-west orientation of the central axis in the Arad temple and the ritual progression from east to west toward the most sacred room. These are standard features of all the biblical shrines that have detailed descriptions in the Bible; they and numerous other factors assure the Israelite nature of the temple at Arad, and confirm it as a temple, not just a ‘highplace.’” Ze’ev Herzog, Miriam Aharoni et al., “The Israelite Fortress at Arad,” *BASOR* 254 (1984): 8.

238. The site has served as kind of a flash point in how scholars approach “biblical” archeology. Aharoni led the excavations, but died suddenly before publishing his final report. His preliminary findings, published in 1968, are strongly colored by the biblical narrative. For example, he argues for a two-stage dismantling of the temple in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE and 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE in order to accommodate the story in the book of Kings of two separate religious revolutions sparked by Hezekiah and Josiah. He also advocated for the value of fully excavating the site so as to get a full sense of it. Following his death, a follow-up article by a number of

rather than long-room plan, the temple was surrounded on three sides by a courtyard.

Approaching from the east, would-be worshippers first entered the main hall before approaching a smaller, elevated cella.<sup>239</sup> Like the Yeb temple, the temple at Arad served a members of a military contingent enlisted to guard a royal border.<sup>240</sup>

Another temple, the so-called solar shrine discovered at Lachish, bears a strikingly similar architectural footprint to the Arad temple. According to Yohanan Aharoni who led excavations at both sites, the temple at Arad and Lachish solar shrine feature similar layouts (broad rather than long-room with adyton in the western wall), cultic features (e.g. incense

---

scholars affiliated with Aharoni and the dig by-and-large upheld the original findings, with limited adjustments, but seconding the value of Aharoni's full excavation approach. Subsequent scholarship criticized these finding on a number of fronts. David Ussishkin, for example, criticized Aharoni's heavy use of the bible, arguing that it caused him to interject the biblical narrative into his interpretation of the site. He also critiqued the full excavation of the site, arguing that the approach left no room for subsequent digs to check the work of the original team. Ze'ev Herzog, who was listed first on the 1984 follow-up article, has taken these criticisms seriously and reformed his original views. In a number of articles he has acknowledged the deficiencies in Aharoni's original approach to excavating the site and reconsidered the dating of most of the strata. He has maintained, however, that the temple was disassembled in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, and that this is best understood as a consequence of Hezekiah's reforms in the lead-up to Sennacherib's invasion. Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 31 (1968): 3–22; Herzog, Aharoni et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," 1–34; Ze'ev Herzog, "Perspectives on Southern Israel's Cult Centralization: Arad and Beer-sheba," in *One God–One Cult–One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (eds. Reinhard Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 405; Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 169–199; David Ussishkin, "The Date of the Judaeon Shrine at Arad," *IEJ* 38 (1988): 142–157.

239. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," 18–21; Herzog, Aharoni et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," 7–8.

240. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," 9–17.; Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple at Elephantine," 11.

altars), and even dimensions.<sup>241</sup> As with Arad, the dating for the Lachish structure is controversial, with scholarly opinion ranging from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the early Hellenistic period.<sup>242</sup>

Despite sharing a handful of important features, there are a number of important differences between two-room temple of Yeb the those of Arad and Lachish. Rather than a main room and an adyton, the Yeb temple had a single room dedicated to worship and second room for storage.<sup>243</sup> There is no doorway between the two chambers to suggest the smaller room functioned as an adyton, nor is there evidence of a staircase to indicate that its floor was elevated like the holy-of-holies in Arad and Lachish.

---

241. Yohanan Aharoni, "Trial Excavation in the 'Solar Shrine' at Lachish: Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 18 (1968): 161.

242. The main difficulty revolves around the dating of pottery found filling in the temple's walls. See the discussion and bibliography in Melody D. Knowles, *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora During The Persian Period* (ABS 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 46–47. Rosenberg identifies both of these structures as part of a broader "persistence of the Wilderness Tabernacle model" among Yahwistic cult sites, correlating all three with the temple in Yeb. This quote comes from Rosenberg's discussion of Gerizim and Dan and the persistence of this blueprint in the northern kingdom (12). It does, however, suit his discussion of Yahwistic temples outside Jerusalem more broadly. In fact, while dedicated to describing the Yahu temple of Yeb, Rosenberg's article seems to expend a significant amount of energy defending the historicity of the tabernacle. Although he does not say so explicitly, it seems to me that an important reason for comparing it to the Yeb temple is to prove (or at least argue) that the tabernacle was a historical structure because its architectural influence is demonstrable in later temple architecture. It seems to me just as possible that the influence could go the other way: historical architecture influenced P's description of the tabernacle (he cites Cross's 1961 article, "The Priestly Tabernacle" as an example of this approach), but Rosenberg would prefer to see it as a historical reality. Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple at Elephantine," 10–12. For counterargument to the historical reality of the Priestly tabernacle, see Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 189–204.

243. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 171–172, 179.

One possible explanation for the difference between these temples in Judea and the one constructed on Yeb is that the Judeans responsible built a small and relatively generic structure in which to worship the deity or even repurposed a structure that was already standing. In so doing, their actions would parallel those of many modern immigrant communities who build temporary structures when first establishing their religious institutions. According to Thomas Tweed, “first generation migrants, whether they see themselves as exiles or not, rarely build large expensive religious structures.”<sup>244</sup> Modern examples demonstrate that a generic (or even foreign) building can serve to reinforce ethnic identity if its space is filled with paraphernalia that reflect religious traditions of the homeland.<sup>245</sup> If, in fact, the Yeb temple was of the generic variety, then we should expect the presence of other Judean artifacts that would have had symbolically linked those who worshipped at the temple to both the deity and their homeland.

Beyond the architectural features of the temple, evidence from modern immigrant communities suggests that the building would have been adorned with traditional religious symbols. For example, the primary symbol of religious identity at the Cuban-American shrine to Our Lady of Charity in Miami is a white marble statue dedicated to the community’s patroness. The image, which is a reproduction of a Spanish original with its own impressive shrine in Cuba, has a long and ever-developing story of origins that exemplifies the Miami community’s

---

244. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 112.

245. For Hindu temples in America, see Mazumdar and Mazumdar, “Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion,” 51–53; Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 129–156; Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 111–128.

complex and multiple ethno-cultural identity.<sup>246</sup> Some practitioners even hold that the statue in Miami *is* the original, having crossed the fifty miles of ocean between the US and their Cuba along with myriad other Cubans.<sup>247</sup> Through the presence of the statue and its veneration in the Miami shrine, Cuban practitioners maintain and (re)construct ties to Cuba and participate in “*el nacion*,” a translocal social identity that is understood to transcend the geographical distance that separates Cuban communities.

This example from Miami and the congregational model more broadly suggest that we might expect to find similar religious symbols dedicated to the deities worshipped in the Yeb temple of Yahu, although the historical and cultural distance between Persian period Egypt and contemporary American immigrant communities is significant. To assert the presence of such an object or objects for the Yeb temple, however, is controversial. The controversy is based on two primary issues. First, there is no clear, unambiguous reference to such an object in any of the papyri from Elephantine. In fact, where we might most expect to find such a reference — the RLR’s list of items from the temple elements that were looted or destroyed — does not mention a statue. Nor is there any evidence of such a physical symbol in the sparse and partially

---

246. According to the community’s tradition that Tweed was able to reconstruct, the statue was built in Spain and made its way to Cuba with early European explorers in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. While Tweed’s retelling is worthy of a full read, perhaps most important for our discussion is his recognition of the malleable nature of the tale. For example, later retellings of the initial discovery of the statue in Cuba (it was thought to be lost in a Spanish shipwreck) shift the ethno-racial makeup of the men who would rescue it to better represent the diversity of the later nation. This expanding inclusiveness is also observable in the ethno-racial identity Virgin. “Mirroring the diversity of the population, the Virgin herself often has been understood as Creole, as ethnically and culturally mixed — Spanish, African, and Indian. In turn, the account of her discovery changed over time as devotees projected their hopes about social harmony onto the sacred narrative.” Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 64–69.

247. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 15–42.

excavated ruins of the Yeb temple. This has led scholars like Granerød to suggest that the Judeo-Egyptians must have practiced an aniconic cult: “Therefore, in the end it appears that the cult of YHW in Elephantine was aniconic because the description of its destruction does not mention any sacred focal point such as a (anthropomorphic or theriomorphic) cult statue or any other cult image or symbol.”<sup>248</sup>

The other issue concerns the nature of the Jerusalemite cult under the kings of Judah and during the Persian period. According to the Decalogue, the worship of Yahweh was to be aniconic, if not always, certainly by the time of Josiah’s reforms.<sup>249</sup> By extension, this aniconic or anti-iconic position should apply to the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb. There are a number of explanations for this presupposition with regards to the history of religion in Judea. First, as Herbert Niehr notes, “Most scholars have failed to see that the critique and the prohibition of cult statues and divine images, presupposes their existence.”<sup>250</sup> Second, the definition of what constitutes an image or icon remains disputed and controversial in biblical scholarship. Does an unhewn vertical standing stone count as an “image”? what about an empty cherub throne meant

---

248. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 109–112.

249. For a recent treatment of the development of aniconic rhetoric in Judea, see ch. 3 in Jessie DeGrado, *Authoring Empire: Intellectual Engagement With the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the Bible* (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2018),

250. Herbert Niehr, “In Search of YHWH’s Cult Statue in the First Temple,” in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Karel van der Toorn; Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 21; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), 73.

to represent a deity's presence?<sup>251</sup> A recent paper by Simeon Chavel has tried to clarify both issues by first clearly laying out a rubric of what counts as iconism and then applying insights from that rubric to the seemingly (but not actually) anti-icon rhetoric of two Pentateuchal sources.<sup>252</sup> Using Chavel's article as a starting point, I will argue that despite the objections listed above, the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb almost certainly represented Yahu's presence in their temple by means of an icon.

An icon, according to Chavel, is "a physical image in the round or on a surface that represents an entity and a measure of its presence."<sup>253</sup> This definition allows for a wide variety of objects to signify that presence, ranging from direct and explicitly representational (a detailed anthropomorphic statue carved in the round) to indirect, abstract, and implicit (an unhewn standing stone). Chavel's argument is helpful for our discussion in that it offers a productive way to think about the possibilities of divine representation as we deal with a rather limited material record for the Yeb temple. As I mentioned, no direct evidence for such an object has survived in

---

251. The scholarship on this subject is vast, though most recent studies cite Tryggve Mettinger's 1995 study as a starting point. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image?: Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Coniectanea biblica Old Testament series 42; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995).

252. Chavel concludes that neither source actually condemns the use of icons in worship. Rather, "it is imprecise to claim the histories are aniconic or anti-anthropomorphic *per se*. In [the Elohist History] a minimalistic indirect iconism serves a broader argument about politics. The [Priestly History] features a rich indirect iconism, perhaps to advance the cause of a temple or even several, and it might not even negate direct representation." Simeon Chavel, "Divine Presence and Its Representation in the Elohist and Priestly Histories" (paper presented at SBL, Boston, 2017).

253. For this definition and a detail rubric for identifying the nature of the "iconism" in a given cult, see Chavel, "Divine Presence and Its Representation in the Elohist and Priestly Histories."

either the material or written record, but there are a number of clues that direct us towards an answer in the affirmative.

First of all, there is the language used to describe Yahu and his relation to the temple. That the deity is said to “be in” (ב) and “dwell in” (שכן) the temple strongly suggests the presence of an icon representing Yahu’s presence in the temple.<sup>254</sup> So, too, does one’s ability to swear by the deity, an action that typically takes place in the presence of a deity’s statue. An oath sworn by יהו אלהא, “Yahu, the god,” is recorded in B2.2 and perhaps also in B7.2–3.<sup>255</sup> There are also the details of the so-called Donations List (TAD C3.15).<sup>256</sup> This document, an extended ledger consisting of eight columns, lists Judeans (identified as יהודיא) with predominantly Yahwistic names who, according to document’s opening line, “gave silver to the god Yahu; each person two shekels.”<sup>257</sup> After listing some 117 individuals, the ledger concludes by stating that

---

254. TAD A 4.7:6; [4.8:7]; B 2.2: 4; 3.3:2; 3.5:2; 3.10:2; 3.11:2. Herbert Niehr, “Religion,” in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (ed. Herbert Niehr; HOS 106; Boston: Brill, 2014), 176; Niehr, *Baalsamem*, 194.

255. For a discussion of B2.2, see n. 228 above; TAD B7.2 records a dispute between the Judean Malkaiah son of Yašubaiah (interestingly identified by the gentilic *'rmy* in l. 2) and the Persian ʔtafrāda son of Ar(u)vasta-(h)māra. Malkaiah swears by *ħrmbyt 'l 'lh'* that he did not break into ʔtafrāda’s house, injure his wife, and steal his property. In B7.3, the Judean Menahem son of Šallum descendant of Hošaiah swears an oath *בַּח[רַם אֱלֹהֵא] בַּמְסַגְדָּא וּבַעֲנַתִּיהוּ*, “by ʔ[rem the g]od, by the *msgd*, and by Anat-Bethel, to another Judean, Mešullam son of Nathan, concerning rights to a donkey sold to the Egyptian Pamise. Cornell, following Rohrmoser, understands the *ħrmbyt 'l* to be a dedicated cult object in B7.2 and all three entities to refer to a(nother?) cult statue, as well. Collin Cornell, “Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 47 (2016): 16–18.

256. Rohrmoser argues that if the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb were trying to hide the iconic nature of their worship practices in the RLR, this list makes the nature of their practice clear. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 198.

257. [2] *זְנָה שְׂמַהַת חִילָא יְהוּדִיא זִי יֵהָב כֶּסֶף לִיהוּ אֱלֹהֵא לְגַבְרָא לְגַבְרָא כֶּסֶף ש* “These are the names of [those from] the Judean garrison who gave silver to the god Yahu; each person two shekels.”

Yedaniah, the primary protagonist of the RLR, had collected 31 karsh and 8 shekels of silver in total.<sup>258</sup> He then divided that sum between three entities: Yahu (יהו), Ešembethel (אשמביתאל), and Anatbethel (ענתביתאל).<sup>259</sup>

The ledger is dated in its first line to the “fifth year” with the king’s name elided. A. E. Cowley was no doubt correct in arguing that the informality of the document precluded specifying the king; as it recorded an internal communal collection, specifically identifying the king would have been unnecessary.<sup>260</sup> Because it was Yedaniah who ultimately received and distributed the donations, we can narrow the possibilities for which king is meant based on the Judean leader’s activity:<sup>261</sup> Darius II (year 5 = 419 BCE) or the Egyptian king Amyrtaeus (year 5 = 401 BCE).<sup>262</sup> Cowley excluded the possibility of Amyrtaeus, arguing that the antagonism between the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and the Priests of Khnum that produced the events of 410 precluded Judean alignment with the new pharaoh against the Persians. He preferred to see the donations collected as support for temple refurbishment in connection with the mission of the Judean ambassador Hananiah in 419.<sup>263</sup> Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s observations concerning the negative

---

258. The math does not quite add up, however. Based on a 1 karsh per 10 shekel system, the final account of 318 shekels leaves the count still in need of 42 donors to get to the final tally. Furthermore, the allocation of these funds to the entities in the next line, 31 karsh and 6 shekels, leaves 2 shekels unaccounted for. Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 76.

259. Ll. 125–128.

260. Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 66.

261. Yedaniah held a position of authority within the community from at least 419 BCE, according to his prominent role in the so-called Passover Letter (TAD A4.1). He appears in a similarly prominent role in the community’s final appeal to a Persian official in 407 (TAD 4.10).

262. Cornell, “Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb,” 1.

263. For the details Hananiah’s mission, see the discussion of the so-called “Passover Letter” below; Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 65–66.

sentiments expressed towards Carian soldiers in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, including the defacing of a number of tombs, supports this conclusion.<sup>264</sup> In this case, the ledger would record the congregation's collection of funds in support of general refurbishments for the community-sponsored religious institution.<sup>265</sup>

Collin Cornell, however, has recently argued that Amyrtaeus is the more likely candidate for the unknown king in question. According to his reconstruction, which supplements the work of Rohrmoser and Earnst Axel Knauf, the money was collected in 400 in order (re)produce cult statues for installment in the rebuilt Yahu temple.<sup>266</sup> Based on the evidence collected by Rohhmoser, Knauf and Cornell's own interpretation of two court documents he understands to refer to cult statues,<sup>267</sup> he argues that the accumulation of evidence "lend[s] indirect but suggestive support to the thesis that Judeans at Yeb may have worshipped Yhwh by a statue."<sup>268</sup> The monies recorded on the Donation List would therefore have been collected to (re)build the cult statuary that was lost when the community's first temple was sacked in 410 BCE.<sup>269</sup>

---

264. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Preserving the Cult," 401–402.

265. The lay care and support of religious institutions is at the heart of the immigrant Congregational model described above. The community's support of the institution leads to a close identification between the two. Ebaugh and Chafetz, "Structural Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations," 135–153, esp. 140–145.

266. Cornell, "Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb," 14–18; cf. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 167; Knauf, "Elephantine," 183–185.

267. Cf. n. 255 above.

268. Cornell, "Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb," 18.

269. In support of dating the the Collections List to the reign of Amyrtaeus, one can point to the identification of Anani son of Azaryahu and his wife Tapmet as "stewards" steward to the temple of Yahu" in TAD B 3.12:1–2, a real estate sale document dated to 402 BCE. The document also uses the temple as a reference point for the boundaries of the property sold. This document led Porten to conclude that "both the Presence and Temple of YHW are stated to be again in the fortress of Elephantine. It may be argued that these passages [ls. 18ff] are not conclusive

Rohrmoser also points to what she sees as an intentional effort by Yedaniah and his colleagues to mislead the Jerusalemite officials by obfuscating their possession of a cult image. She understands the vagueness of the repeated expression “anything else” (מנדעם) in the RLR (TAD A4 7:14) as an effort by the community to cover up the presence of a cult statue of Yahu in the community’s appeal to Jerusalem so as not to offend priests of Yahweh’s and their aniconic cult.<sup>270</sup> She also notes that aside from this apparent obfuscation, the community does not otherwise demonstrate any ill will towards the iconism of their neighbors or promulgate anti-icon sentiments.<sup>271</sup> Rohrmoser’s view carries weight due to the evidence that might have led us to posit an aniconic cult in the first place: the supposedly an- or anti-iconic literature of the Hebrew Bible. Otherwise, as Niehr argues, we are better off assuming the rule of an iconic Near Eastern cult rather than its exception,<sup>272</sup> a point to which Rohrmoser’s observations speak.

Based on the evidence just surveyed and our models from modern diaspora communities, it is reasonable to conclude that Yahu’s presence within his temple was almost certainly represented directly. Whether that representation was a large wooden statue ornately overlaid

---

evidence for the full reconstruction of the Temple as it had previously existed. Still, they indicate that eight and a half years after its destruction, the site was still reserved for YHW the God. It had not been take over by Khnum nor devoted to any other purpose. It is possible therefore, that some structure was re-erected on the spot and a reduced sacrificial service reinstated.” Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 295.

270. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 186–198.

271. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 198.

272. Niehr, “In Search,” 74.

with a precious metal or a simple unworked standing stone (a מצבה or a βαιτιλος),<sup>273</sup> some physical image existed within the temple that was meant to represent Yahu and a measure of his presence. Through this icon, the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb (re)constructed their Judean identity in the diasporic context, reifying ties to their (and Yahu's) ancestral homeland while simultaneously affirming the legitimacy of their home in Egypt.

Through its physical structure and the artifacts it housed, the Yahu temple in Yeb provided a physical space and a set of shared symbols through which its congregants experienced a sense of social unity. This community would have included those Yahu worshippers who made offerings at the temple, but also those who worshipped in similarly-styled temples and with similar representations of the deity in Judea and elsewhere in the Persian empire. These local and translocal ties were constructed and reinforced through action, through the praxis that the temple housed and the rituals of which the divine representations were a part. It is to the role of ritual in the construction of Judeo-Egyptian identity that we now turn.

### *Praxis: Rituals and Festivals*

---

273. Porten, for example, believed that the adytum of the Yeb temple would have featured a “sacred pillar” based on the parallels between it and the temple of the military outpost of Arad. Porten’s argument, relies, at least in part, on a particular view of the trajectory of ancient Israelite religion that I will problematize in the next section. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 119. Based on the amounts collected in C 3.15, Knauf argues for statues without further specification (Knauf, 15). Rohrmoser notes that the price is too high for unhewn stones and suggests that the amount could pay for small solid statues or larger wooden ones with silver overlay. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 187–188. Cf Cornell, “Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb,” 14–15.

A primary complaint within the RLR is the community's inability to make offerings to Yahu because of the state of the temple. In ll. 21–22, Yedaniah and his colleagues claim that in the more than three years since their temple was destroyed, they had not been able to make grain offerings (מנחה), incense offerings (לבונה), or the whole burnt offering (עלונה)<sup>274</sup> to Yahu “in that temple.” The complaint speaks to the importance of ritual — and the offering of sacrifices in particular — for the community. Underscoring this point, Yedaniah claims that the community undertook mourning rites — wearing sackcloth, fasting, going without anointing, and abstaining from alcohol and marital relations (ll. 20–21) — in the absence of the apparatus necessary for sacrifice.<sup>275</sup>

Studies on congregationalism have emphasized the importance of ritual to the reproduction of community and ethnic identity. According Pyong Gap Min, “when members of an immigrant/ethnic group practice their native religion, they are better able to preserve their ethnicity through religion because their religious rituals are tied to their ethnic culture.”<sup>276</sup>

Religious institutions in diaspora communities like the Yahu temple provide a physical space in

---

274. The spelling עלונה for “burnt offering” (BH עלונה) is used consistently throughout the RLR. It is possible that the spelling refers to a backformation from the plural עלונות. For a discussion of a similar phenomenon in the spelling of BH פחה against Aramaic פחוא, see Oded. Lipschits and David S. Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 77–80.

275. On the function of mourning among ancient Judeans, see David A. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical: Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13–20. Cf. my discussion of the mourning rites narrated in Ezra-Nehemiah in ch. 5.

276. Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 3.

which this process can occur.<sup>277</sup> Occasional or infrequent religious practice in that space provided by a religious institution or in less formal settings can still have significant and positive effects on the construction and transmission of ethnic identity.<sup>278</sup>

Our evidence for ritual practice at the Yeb temple is scarce, but there are a few points to note. First, it is clear from the complaint outlined above that the community and its priests offered animal sacrifices to Yahu in their temple prior to its destruction in 410. Beyond bemoaning the cessation of the *מנחה*, the *לבונה*, and the *עלוי* following their shrine's destruction, Yedaniah and his colleagues promise to make those offerings on Bagowahiya's behalf should he aid them in their efforts in rebuilding.<sup>279</sup> This particular list of sacrifices is familiar from the literature of the Hebrew Bible and it is possible that it represents the daily offering meant to maintain the deity's presence in the temple.<sup>280</sup> The Yahu cult of Yeb certainly included animal

---

277. Ebaugh and Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants*, 388.

278. Min argues based on his comparison of Korean Protestant and Indian Hindu communities in America, and the roles the congregational participation in the reproduction of ethnicity. He argues that in the case of the Indian Hindus he studied, ethnic identity was closely tied to religious belief, and so even occasional participation at the temple served to reinforce this relationship even as it was primarily forged in the home. The situation for the Korean Protestants is somewhat more complicated. First of all, Christianity — a relatively new religion Korea — was not so interwoven with their ethnic identity there, making it difficult to integrate into ethnic norms and creating a kind of tension. However, in America, their Christianity brought them into the majority and into contact with various other Christian communities. With this community, as their participation and affiliation with their church rose, association with their ethnic identity tended to decline. Min, 2010, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 111–126, 133–140, 198–209.

279. TAD A4.7:21 reads *וּמַחֲתָא וּלְבוֹנָתָא וְעֻלֹתָא יִקְרְבוּן עַל מְדַבְחָא זִי יְהוּ אֱלֹהָא בְּשִׁמְךָ*, “They will offer the grain offering, the incense offering, and the burnt (animal) offering on Yahu's altar on your behalf.”

280. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 111–114.

offerings prior to its destruction in 410 and in this way functioned similarly to contemporary temples to Yahu/Yahweh in Jerusalem and Gerizim.<sup>281</sup>

One text has survived that contains what appear to be prescriptions for observing a festival; the so-called Passover Letter (TAD A4.1). This letter was sent to Yedaniah and the priests of Yeb by a certain Ḥannaniah on the authority of Darius II. While the letter is badly damaged — it seems that less than half of the text has been preserved and what has survived has been badly smeared<sup>282</sup> — it does contain instructions on how to celebrate what appears to be a festival, the name of which has been lost. However, the poor state of the document has not stopped scholars from associating it with the combined feasts of Pesah and Maṣṣot. This is due in part to the letter's prohibition of eating leavened foods ([תאכלו] אל חמיר זי מנדעם זי חמיר אל)<sup>283</sup> and a reference to the 21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan as the last day of observance (ll. 6–7).<sup>284</sup> Based on these clues and an analysis of how many letters might fit in the text's many lacunae, the current standard edition of the letter in the TAD interpolates a full set of instructions for how to observe these festivals,

---

281. Notably, the response from Judea and Samaria to the RLR (A4.9) excludes burnt offerings from its list for the rebuilt temple (ומנחתא ולבונתא יקרבוז על מדבחא) ll. 9–10). Further, the appeal of a number of Judeans, including Yedaniah, to their lord (מראן) to support their rebuilding project (A4.10), explicitly notes that they will *not* be offering animals on their new altar. In this case, the word for burnt offering is Akkadian מקלו rather than עלוה, suggesting the letter was addressed to an official who would be more familiar with the eastern Semitic term. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel, und Kult*, 208. On the exclusion of animal sacrifice from the cult, see below.

282. Porten believes that the letter may have been written on a palimpsest. Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 125.

283. The word used for leaven, חמיר, is the same term that Targum Onqelos uses to translate Hebrew שאר in its translation of the instructions for the feast of Maṣṣot in Exod 12.19. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 171.

284. Cf. Exod 12.18–20.

including the titles of both feasts reconstructed from the biblical prescriptions of their celebration in Exod 12 (or at least the Targumic translations thereof).

Although the letter has the potential to serve as important evidence for the development of both feasts (the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and their association with one another,<sup>285</sup> the reconstruction of the feasts in the TAD as well as in Cowley's edition from 1925 (no. 21) rely heavily on well-educated conjecture. First of all, the Aramaic term for "flat bread" that is reconstructed twice (!) in l. 5, פטיריא, is otherwise unattested in the corpus of papyri from Elephantine and in Official Aramaic more broadly.<sup>286</sup> This does not preclude the possibility of its presence in the lacunae, but reconstructing what would be a *hapax* is problematic.

The term for the Passover, פסחא, which is reconstructed in l. 4, is slightly more common; it is attested twice more in the corpus of papyri from Elephantine. The first, TAD D7.24, is an informal letter that appears to correlate the Pesah (פסחא) with an unspecified date (l. 5). The second occurrence (D7.6) is also a letter and sheds more light on the context of פסחא for the

---

285. Scholars interested in the development of the religion of ancient Judah and Israel typically see the two festivals as originally distinct from each other. See, for example, Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: Volume I, From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy* (The Old Testament Library; Translated by Bowden, John. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 34–37, 206–216. For a detailed analysis of how the two feasts came to be linked within the literary sources of the Pentateuch, see Shimon Gesundheit, *Three Times a Year: Studies on Festival Legislation in the Pentateuch* (FAT 82; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 44–166, esp. 76–94, 138–150. Following his detailed literary critical analysis, Gesundheit argues that the Pesah and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are only organically linked in later texts like Chronicles and the Book of Ezekiel (146). I would also add that these works show clear dependence on literature that has been preserved in the Hebrew Bible, including the Pentateuchal sources containing festival legislation that are the subjects of Gesundheit's analysis.

286. פטיר translates מצות in Exod 12.8 of Tg. Onqelos.

community. Addressed to a certain Hošaiāh, the letter first inquires after the wellbeing of children in his care with instructions to provide for them. Then, in ll. 8–10, the letter-writer instructs Hošaiāh,

Let me know when you all are doing the Pesah      שלח לי אמת תעבדון פסחא

Granerød argues that these two letters, and D7.6 in particular, demonstrate three things about the Pesah for the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb. First, the term is familiar to both sender and receiver and does not require explanation. Second, it does not appear that there is a fixed or communally accepted date for its celebration; scheduling is an open question. Finally, its celebration seems informal. The letter suggests to Granerød that the date of the rite's celebration was up to Hošaiāh, perhaps indicating a domestically-celebrated holiday.<sup>287</sup> If the Pesah was celebrated in the home with family and friends, it still might have reproduced a sense of Judean identity among practitioners, as recent research has shown that domestic forms of religious expression often have similarly positive effects on the reproduction of ethnic identity in diaspora. These few references indicate that something commonly known as the Pesah was known or observed in Yeb and Syene, but the relationship between the פסח ritual(s) described in biblical literature and the one prescribed in the Passover Letter related remains unclear.<sup>288</sup>

---

287. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 164–168.

288. As argued recently by Simeon Chavel and Mira Balberg, there is no clear narrative origin for the Pesah in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, nor a single prescription for how it should be observed. Instead, the Hebrew Bible preserves a number of interpretative efforts to define the nature of the ritual, its role in Israel and Judah's history, and how it should be observed: "The crucial component; the purpose and the mood; the site; the uniqueness or replicability of the first instance; the categorization, namely the degree of assimilation to other operative phenomena and concepts; and the deeper significance — all these aspects of the *pesah* and more are considered [in this literature] and realized in alternate, mutually exclusive ways." Balberg and Chavel also

In the end, a definitive reconstruction of the Passover Letter's contents (particularly with regard to the inclusion/exclusion of the Pesah) is likely beyond our grasp.<sup>289</sup> However, the letter still offers valuable information for reconstructing Judeo-Egyptian identity and its relation to the cult of Yahu. First of all, if the letter is providing instructions for the celebration of a Maṣṣot-like festival, then Hananiah offers Yedaniah and the temple officials a prescription for how (or perhaps better, when) to celebrate a distinctly Judean feast.<sup>290</sup> Evidence for how this feast was celebrated prior to the fall of the kingdom of Judah (which comes primarily from the literature of the Hebrew Bible) indicates that the week-long holiday might have been a state-wide pilgrimage festival that included a trip to the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>291</sup> Religious pilgrimage can play an

---

(and constructively) point out through their analysis of the “polymorphous *pesah*” that there remains a gap between ancient rituals and their representation in literature; the two are not equal. This means that even if a single consistent account of how and why the *pesah* was celebrated existed, that account may not necessarily adhere to its practice on the ground. Mira Balberg and Simeon Chavel, “The Polymorphous Pesah: Ritual Between Origins and Reenactment,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 8 (2017): 295–320, 342–343, here 343.

289. In the end, I find Granerød's more conservative approach somewhat more persuasive, particularly his limited use of biblical and later Jewish material. In the absence of a reference to the Pesah in the surviving text and a date that only correlates with the feast of Maṣṣot (21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan), he concludes that Hananiah's missive was most likely meant to set the dates for the celebration of the festival of Unleavened Bread in Yeb. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 172–175.

290. On the exclusivity of the festival during the monarchic period, see Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Translated by John McHugh. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 482–493, esp. 490–493.

291. 2 Kgs 23.21–23 narrates Josiah's unprecedented celebration of the Pesah in Jerusalem without mention of the feast of Unleavened Bread. However, the Chronicler's version of these events in 2 Chr 35 does connect the two holidays (v. 17). The Chronicler also includes an account of Hezekiah's celebration of the Pesah in 2 Chr 30, and there too the holiday is associated with the feast of Unleavened Bread (v. 13). It is also a pilgrimage festival that unites Israelians from the north and Judeans together in Jerusalem. As argued by Chavel and Balberg, the focus of this narrative is on establishing “national unity” through the celebration of the feasts. Balberg and Chavel, “The Polymorphous Pesah: Ritual Between Origins and Reenactment,”

important role in the construction of a strong religio-political identity,<sup>292</sup> and biblical representations of its celebration (in combination with the Pesah) under good kings and pious nobles emphasize the social unity of those who would gather to celebrate.<sup>293</sup> The celebration of the feast(s) at the temple to Yahu at Yeb almost certainly served a similarly unifying function even without pilgrimage, reinforcing ethno-religious bonds between participating members of the community.

Beyond reinscribing this identity among the inhabitants of Yeb and Syene, the celebration of the holiday prescribed in the letter would also have served to strengthen bonds with Judeans elsewhere in the Persian empire. Another letter from the Yedaniah archive (TAD A4.3) shows that Hananiah was not a member of the Yeb community. In describing his recent incarceration in Abydos, a Judean named Mauzaiah — the author of this letter — asks rhetorically:

לא יהשכחון לכם ידיע זי חנום הו עלין מן זי חנניה במצרין עד כען

Do you not know that Khnum has been against us from the time Hananiah was in Egypt until now? (l. 7)

Beyond a foreshadowing of the events of 410, the letter demonstrates that Hananiah — and his royal authorization — traveled to Egypt from elsewhere in the empire. The most likely candidate

---

316–320.

292. See, for example, van der Veer’s discussion of the role of pilgrimage in the construction of religious nationalism in India in the 1980s and 90s Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 119–128.

293. Balberg and Chavel, “The Polymorphous Pesah: Ritual Between Origins and Reenactment,” 316–320.

for his point of origin is Jerusalem, although his ability to give orders on the authority of the king may suggest Babylonia or Persia.<sup>294</sup>

The tone and contents of the of the letter indicate that the Yahu-/Yahweh-worshipping Hananiah was recognized by both the Judeo-Egyptian community of Yeb (or at least the addressees of the letter) and the Persian crown as an authority with regard to the celebration of (at least) one religious festival. Despite this privileged position, he still addresses Yedaniah and his colleagues as his “brothers.”<sup>295</sup> This shows that he perceived an equal status between the two parties; perhaps because he recognizes a shared translocal kinship.<sup>296</sup> It is probable that the prescriptions included in the letter between Hananiah and Yedaniah — and perhaps more importantly, the execution of those prescriptions — reinforced and (re)constructed translocal ethno-religious continuity between the two parties.

### *Religion and Judeo-Egyptian Identity at Yeb*

---

294. Reinhard Kratz, “Judean Ambassadors and the Making of Jewish Identity,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achemind Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 424–426.

295. Hananiah refers to himself as אַחֵיכֶם, “your (pl.) brother,” and to Yedaniah and his colleagues as אַחֵי, “my brothers,” in the letter’s opening line. Porten and Yardeni, the editors of TAD have also (almost certainly correctly) added another אַחֵי in the lacuna that begins the letter. According to Kratz, “This form of address is common in private letters but very rare in official correspondences. It emphasizes the solidarity of the colony of Yeb with Judeans outside of Egypt.” Kratz, “Judean Ambassadors.” 425. cf. Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 33. See also *DNWS* I, 31 s.v. *’h*; on the use of familial language among members of a collective, see p. 140 above.

296. In his analysis of the festivals held for Our Lady of Charity among Cubans living in Miami, Tweed concluded, “As at other diasporic rituals, at these festival celebrations devotees ritually negotiated collective identity. They continually recreate an imagined Cuban nation by ritually positioning themselves in time and space.” Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 131.

Throughout this section I have attempted to illustrate the active role that religion played in the reproduction of a distinct Judean identity for the Yahu-worshipping members of the Yeb garrison. By applying insights gained from the study of religious expression in modern diaspora communities, I have argued that rather than the byproduct or result of pressure from outside forces, the religion of the Judeo-Egyptians played an active role in the construction of Judean identity, particularly as it is observable to modern researchers. This does not by any means invalidate Fitzpatrick-McKinley's conclusions regarding the important role that the systemic policies of the Persians and the Saites played in a broader process of social formation; rather, it is a combination of these internal and external forces (among many others) that permitted and produced the Judeo-Egyptians we have identified in the written and material record.

### Multiethnic Society and Hybrid Identity

#### *Living Fossil or A New Species with Shared Ancestry?*

In somewhat indirect fashion, scholars have actually been arguing for the conservative and reproductive capabilities of the Yahu temple as a religious institution since the discovery of the Yeb community. In 1921 Julius Wellhausen argued that the texts from Elephantine attested a pre-Judaized form of Israelite religion that had its roots in the pre-Priestly monarchic period. He described the community's practices as "a strange vestige of pre-legal Hebraism" and as a "fossil

remnant of a not yet reformed Judaism.”<sup>297</sup> In 1923, A. E. Cowley stated that “the colonists in the fifth century BC remained at the same stage of religious development (if that is what we ought to call it) as their fathers in Judeaea in the seventh century.”<sup>298</sup> Bezalel Porten, whose 1968 study of the community remains foundational,<sup>299</sup> argued that the Jews of Elephantine were conservative (despite the presence of Aramaean influence) and carried out what was by and large a continuation of monarchic-era religious expression.<sup>300</sup> For these scholars, the lack of clear Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic influence in the community’s practice — most notably its seeming divergence from D’s cult centralization law — indicated that the Yahwists of Yeb practiced a pre-Josianic reform version of Israelite religion.

In his recent study on the Yeb community, Granerød has critiqued “fossil models” of Israelite religion like those offered by Wellhausen, Cowley, and Porten. He argues, first of all, that they rely too heavily on the highly ideological Deuteronomistic History’s model of religious history for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. “A religio-historical approach to Yahwism in the Persian period should not allow itself to be ‘brainwashed by the Deuteronomists,’ to put it

---

297. Julius Wellhausen, *Israelitische und judische Geschichte* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1914), 176–178. Citations and translations from Weitzman, *The Origin of the Jews*, 126.

298. Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, ii.

299. On the religious practices of the community, Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 105–150.

300. Bezalel Porten, “The Jews in Egypt,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 1, Introduction: The Persian Period* (ed. Louis Finkelstein; 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 372–400.

somewhat coarsely.”<sup>301</sup> Secondly, he notes that these models treat the religion of Yeb as if it were “a kind of cabinet of curiosities or a living museum.”<sup>302</sup> As Granerød rightly recognizes, religious expression is not a static or transcendent phenomenon; rather, as a socio-cultural system, it is subject to historical factors and influences. To put it differently, to argue that the temple of Yeb served a conservative function in the (re)construction of Judeanness is not the same as suggesting that said religious expression was static or immutable.

In this section I will outline some of the adaptations to Judean religion that are observable in the community’s records. My approach does not presume a static or monolithic “orthodoxy” from which these Judeans diverged; rather, I want to emphasize the fluid nature of the community’s religious identity and the role that diasporic setting had on the expression of Yahwism. Religious identity was an avenue of integration — the process of cultural negotiation between ethnic minority and majority cultures — through which the Judeo-Egyptians adjusted to their diasporic context and the cultural milieu of Upper Egypt under Persian rule.<sup>303</sup> These adjustments occurred on a number of levels of interaction, some of which are observable in the textual and material remains, although many have almost certainly escaped the modern historian.

---

301. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 21. I might also highlight the ideological underpinnings of each scholar’s evaluation. For Wellhausen, whose devolutionary view of Israel’s religious history was outlined in ch. 1, the Elephantine material stood as an outlier to his model. For the model to hold — along with the views that were baked into it — the Yeb temple, while roughly contemporary with the Priestly History and the Judaization of Israelite religion, needed to be *old*. For Porten, the existence of another temple outside of Jerusalem contradicted the historical reality of Josiah’s reforms.

302. Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period*, 21.

303. The most common (and most successful) outcomes of Berry’s matrix of acculturation between communities in contact (eg. among immigrant or minority populations and the host or majority cultures in particular) involves some adjustment or change on behalf of both parties, but especially for the minority group. See the discussion of Berry’s model in ch. 2.

In observing these accommodations, I hope to better define the religious components of the Judean/Judeo-Egyptian identity that I argued was (re)produced in the previous section.

### *Caro-Egyptians in Borsippa*

As I mentioned above, a number of Carian soldiers from Egypt have been recognized in Late Babylonian administrative tablets from Borsippa. Caroline Waerzeggers has demonstrated that the Babylonian scribes who documented their presence used a different ethnonym to describe them. According to Waerzeggers, the oldest and most frequent title given to Carians from Anatolia was *Bannēšāya*. The Carians in question, however, were described interchangeably as *Karsāya* and *Miṣrāya*. The former, she notes, was a Babylonianization of the ethnonym attested in the Aramaic documents from Egypt (*krky*).<sup>304</sup> According to her analysis, “Historically, the mixing up of these ethnic names makes sense only if we are dealing with members of the Carian minority of Egypt.”<sup>305</sup>

Waerzegger’s argument is persuasive, and the work of Fitzpatrick-McKinley and Elspeth Dusinberre provides a plausible scenario for a Carian presence in Babylonia as representatives of the Persian military.<sup>306</sup> However, what remains to be seen is what diacritica these Carians exhibited that signaled their Egyptian roots to the Babylonians scribes. It could simply have been the case that the documentation they carried to sanction their travel on the royal roads made note

---

304. TAD A6.2:3, 8.

305. Waerzeggers, “The Carians of Borsippa,” 3–7.

306. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 391–395; Dusinberre, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy*, ch. 3.

of their point of origin.<sup>307</sup> If that was not the case — or perhaps in addition — then the Carians of Egyptian origin likely exhibited particular traits that marked a boundary between them and the Carians of Anatolia.

Before the transition to Persian power, many Carians gave their children Egyptian names that honored their Saite royal sponsors.<sup>308</sup> Personal names are notoriously difficult indicators of integration and cultural influence, but the decision of many Carians to take the names of their royal employers suggests an openness to Egyptian culture and ideology in their diaspora context. More germane to the current discussion, however, is the influence of Egyptian religion on that of the Carians. On the one hand, the continued existence of a temple to Carian Zeus into the Ptolemaic period shows that a distinct religious identity remained part of a broader sense of Carian identity under the Saites, Persians, and Ptolemies.<sup>309</sup> However, it is also clear that at least some Carians embraced or incorporated<sup>310</sup> elements Egyptian religion. John D. Ray notes the presence of Carian graffiti at the temple of Sety I to Osiris at Abydos.<sup>311</sup> The distance between Abydos and Memphis, the most likely location of a permanent Carian settlement,<sup>312</sup> suggests the

---

307. See the discussion on so-called “travel vouchers,” also known as *halmi* in the Persepolis documents in Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 364–377.

308. Ray, “Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia,” 1190–1191.; Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 388.

309. See my discussion of Fitzpatrick-McKinley’s article, above.

310. The question of agency with regard to the “acceptance” of “foreign” elements remains an open one. Continued exposure has the potential to soften border between native/foreign cultural elements.

311. The graffiti occurs alongside other non-Egyptian inscriptions, including writing in Phoenician, Cypriot, and Aramaic. Ray, “Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia,” 1190.

312. See designation of a section of the city as *Karomemphitai* in a 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE document cited below.

trip to the temple was intentional rather than opportunistic; a pilgrimage rather than a detour.<sup>313</sup> A number of devotional bronzes have also been discovered throughout Egypt that bear conventional hieroglyphic inscriptions alongside Carian ones.<sup>314</sup> Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, a number of funerary stelae have survived that bear Carian inscriptions, but are otherwise epigraphically, theologically, and iconographically Egyptian. According to Ray, Among the *objets pharaoniques* are several funerary stelae, inscribed in Carian but otherwise entirely Egyptian in character, with conventional gods, standard hieroglyphic formulas, and much of the traditional iconography. It would even be possible to say that the owners of these stelae were Egyptians who happened to have Carian names, but who chose like all their countrymen to be buried in the confidence that Osiris would recognize them and claim them as his own.<sup>315</sup>

Along with a number of Aramaic-speaking ethnic minorities,<sup>316</sup> these Carian communities appear to have adopted the funerary rites and symbols that were popular in their diasporic context.

The accommodation of these religious symbols is almost certainly indicative of a broader pattern of hybrid identity among the Carian populations of Egypt during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. It is clear that members of this community cultivated particular aspects of the Carian

---

313. Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," 1191.

314. Philip Kaplan, "Cross-Cultural Contacts Among Mercenary Communities in Saite and Persian Egypt," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18 (2003): 6–7; Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," 1192–1194.

315. Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia," 1191.

316. According to Alejandro Botta, "Funerary inscriptions attest to the high level of acculturation of Aramaeans in Egypt." He cites as an example TAD D20.3, which features an Aramaic inscription alongside a standard hieroglyphic text and traditional Egyptian iconography. Both inscriptions recognize Osiris, with the hieroglyphic version specifying Osiris Khentamenthes, who was the lord of Westerners according to the editors of TAD. Alejandro Botta, "Egypt," in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (ed. Herbert Niehr; HOS 106; 2014), 374–375.

identity — language,<sup>317</sup> deity — while also accommodating aspects of their Egyptian diasporic context. If in fact this was the case, then the evidence from Borsippa suggests that outsiders could have recognized the distinctiveness of these diasporic Carians, or better “Caro-Memphites.” Fitzpatrick-McKinley notes that “[t]he fourth-century writer Aristagoras of Miletus reports that one of the quarters of Memphis was called *Karomemphitai*,” likely after Carian diaspora population who settled there.<sup>318</sup>

### *Integration and Hybrid Religious Identity*

According to Levitt and Jaworsky, “When new cultures meet new categories are created and old ones break down, such that identifying a single culture is difficult.”<sup>319</sup> For members of a diaspora community, this means accommodating the needs and expectations of the majority culture to some degree. But it also means that the host culture makes space for and is amenable to the system(s) of the new arrivals and their descendants. According to Berry, successful integration — and this broader phenomenon of hybridization that I am describing — relies “on willingness of the dominant society to allow it, and the wish of coethnics to pursue it.”<sup>320</sup>

---

317. Herodotus (*Histories* 2.154) notes that Psammetichus I charged the Carian and Ionian soldiers whom he settled in Memphis with the task of teaching his children Greek. Herodotus’ Greek-speaking Egyptian informants were their descendants. Cf. Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 105; Schmitz, “The Phoenician Contingent in the Campaign of Psammetichus II Against Kush,” 325.

318. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Preserving the Cult,” 392 n. 79.

319. Levitt and Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” 139.

320. Berry, “Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation,” 27

An active and intentional form of this process in a modern American context is observable in the case of evangelical congregations which actively attempt to recruit new members who are not part of their ethnic group by “Americanizing” their services.<sup>321</sup> As a result of their mission, these institutions intentionally try to cater to those outside of the diasporic communities who founded them, with varying degrees of success. But American (and especially Protestant) influences also make their way into those institutions whose explicit mission is to retain traditionalist religious and cultural expressions.<sup>322</sup> For example, Hindu temples in the United States like the one the HTSSC established in Malibu exhibit a number of Protestant influences. These temples have moved to congregationalize traditionally individual or family rituals, adjusting religious calendars so that such festivals occur on the weekends in order to accommodate greater participation. The Malibu temple has also created a non-sacred space in order to perform death rituals that would have been conducted in the home in India, sometimes

---

321. By “Americanizing” I mean stripping away those elements of service which might seem “foreign” or “ethnic” to someone who is not from the ethnic community but interested in joining the congregation. This means offering services in English rather than the language of the community’s origin, keeping ethnic architectural and material details to a minimum, and staying away from secular or political holidays that might be observed in the homeland. See, for example, the discussion of a Chinese Christian congregation in Houston in Fenggang Yang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, “Religion and Ethnicity Among New Immigrants: The Impact of Majority/Minority Status in Home and Host Countries,” *JSSR* 40 (2001): 367–378. and of Korean Protestants in Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 111–128, 202ff.

322. For example, to build an “authentic” temple on American ground, the HTSSC brought in religious specialists and architects from the homeland, but still had to comply with American building codes and standards. Mazumdar and Mazumdar, “Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion,” 46–48.

going so far as to conduct Judeo-Christian style memorial services in the institution's auditorium.<sup>323</sup>

The result of these and similar changes is a form of religious expression that is unlike any one might find in the homelands of these communities, despite their claims to tradition or orthodoxy. Instead, what we observe is a contextualized version of social identity that is able to identify with two cultural (or religious) spaces: that of their previous homeland (or the homeland of the parents/grandparents) and that of their current homeland. These changes, accommodations, and adaptations highlight the hybridized nature of these diasporic religious identities and the permeability of the ethnic or cultural boundaries for which they come to play a prominent or emphasized role.

#### *Judean Religious Expression in a Diasporic Egyptian Context*

When we turn to the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, we can observe similar adaptations and accommodations to their diasporic context in the evidence of their religious expressions. Perhaps the most conscious example of this kind of accommodation for the Judeo-Egyptian community was the willingness of Yedaniah and his colleagues to give up animal sacrifice in exchange for permission to rebuild their temple, a decision likely undertaken on the advice of authorities in Judea and Samaria.<sup>324</sup> I argued above that the *מנחה*, *לבונה*, and the *עלזה* were part of a broader system of religious praxis that served to reproduce and reinforce Judean identity for the the Yahu

---

323. Mazumdar and Mazumdar, "Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion," 49–50.

324. See the discussion in n. [281 above](#).

worshippers of Yeb and Syene. However, when Yedaniah and his four colleagues made their final appeal to the Persian official ultimately responsible for approving the project (A4.10), they sacrificed the עלוה (given the Akkadianized title of מקלו in the letter) in exchange for permission to rebuild their temple; they were even willing to pay for the privilege to do so. While it is probable that this was a difficult decision and may not have been unanimous among members of the community, their spokesmen ultimately deemed animal sacrifice a non-essential element of their religious praxis in their diaspora context; their appeals to Bagowahiya and Sîn-uballit's sons made the case that the community *needed* a temple to be Judean. However, the historical circumstances they faced dictated that the עלוה, while preferred, was not required. In this case, we can see an active and conscious process by which at least some members of the community prioritized one facet of religious expression (a functioning temple to Yahu) over another (offering animal sacrifice at that temple).

But we can also observe the influence of the community's diasporic context on its religious expression in less overt or intentional ways. For example, while Yahu is the primary deity recognized in the community's onomasticon and in its temple, a variety of other deities are acknowledged in papyri related to the community. The matter is not as simple as determining any deities outside of Yahu to be "foreign" to Judean practice. First of all, this approach would run the risk of taking the Deuteronomistic History's ideologically motivated view of the kingdom of Judah's religious history at face value. Secondly, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the categorization of the non-Yahu deities who appear in these documents (e.g. Bethel, Anat, and Ašim) as native or foreign to Judean religion prior to settlement of Yeb remains a

controversial topic in scholarship. This means that determining whether or not their invocation in oaths (B7.2–3), in personal names (B6.4),<sup>325</sup> and even in the Yahu temple (C3.15) should be considered a diasporic accommodation — particularly with regard to the Judeo-Egyptian community’s contact with their Levantine neighbors in Egypt and fellow soldiers — is largely dependent on one’s view of the history of Judean religion. There are, however, a number of less ambiguous examples of Judeans recognizing non-Judean (and non-Levantine) gods in the papyri.

A Judean woman named Mibtaḥiah (or Miptaḥiah), a land holder on Yeb, appears to have maintained one of the archives that was discovered on Elephantine.<sup>326</sup> Spanning some three generations and more than 60 years,<sup>327</sup> the archive includes a number of documents pertaining to marriage (Mibtaḥiah was married three times), land ownership, and inheritance divisions. In one document from the archive (B2.8), a quitclaim involving an Egyptian member of her second husband’s family,<sup>328</sup> Mibtaḥiah is recorded to have sworn an oath by the goddess Sati that she did not lie about property in her marriage document (אנתו). Sati, also known as Seti or Satet, was a traditional goddess of Upper Egypt and part of a triad of deities worshipped on Elephantine,

---

325. This marriage contract between Hošaiah and ʿSalluah daughter of ʿYahuḥan, includes in its list of witnesses a certain Bethel-natan son of Yehonatan.

326. Ilan argues that female-held archives, like that of Mibtaḥiah, point to the need of women to prove and defend their rights to property in the face of competing claims from would-be male heirs. This explains the more personal nature of woman-held archives when compared to the public nature of archives held by men. Tal Ilan, “Women’s Archives from Elephantine and the Judean Desert: Law Codes and Archaeological Finds,” in *Structures of Power: Law and Gender Across the Ancient Near East and Beyond* (eds. Ilan Peled, Brian Paul Muhs et al.; OIS 12; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017), 171–180.

327. Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, 79–80.

328. For a detailed discussion of the mechanics working behind the scenes of this exchange, see Azzoni, *Private Lives*, 111ff.

which also included Khnum and Anuket.<sup>329</sup> Sati was an important traditional Egyptian deity with a large temple complex and a long history on the island. The goddess was, in these ways, native to Yeb. Annalisa Azzoni notes that B2.8 is the only attested oath sworn by Sati in the Aramaic or Demotic record. She argues that the goddess reflects an individual choice by the female agents in the document. Mibtaḥiah is the only Judean woman who has been documented swearing an oath on her own in Elephantine papyri, and so she must have felt a special connection with Sati.<sup>330</sup>

Judeo-Egyptians also invoked gods besides Yahu in less formal settings. This recognition could be more generic or inclusive, as it was when individuals with Yahwistic names would bless each other by “all the gods.”<sup>331</sup> It could also be specific. In D7.21, a certain Gaddul addresses his superior, Micaiah, with blessings by Yahu and Khnum.<sup>332</sup> The pairing might seem counterintuitive based on the events of 410, but Khnum and his temple had been a mainstay on Elephantine long before the arrival of Judeans, and the destruction of the Yahu temple was predated by over a century of coexistence between the two communities.<sup>333</sup> As another

---

329. Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 164–166.

330. Azzoni, *Private Lives*, 110–121. I wonder, too, if the lack of documentation for women swearing oaths independently may be tied to the absence of Sati as guarantor of oaths. Perhaps she was a common choice of women who swore oaths in less official (or at least less well documented) contexts.

331. A3.7; 4.2. Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 33–34.

332. *šlm whyn šlht lk brktk lyhh wlhnmw*; “I send good will and life to you and I bless you by Yahu and Khnum.” (ll. 2–3).

333. I admit, this is primarily an argument from silence. The most that can be said is that there is no evidence of animosity between the two temples. There is, however, some anecdotal evidence for the peaceful coexistence of the two communities. For example, an Egyptian temple official (דך לדרגא דך), “and the house of Ḥor son of Peṭesi, the gardener of the god Khnum adjoins [this house] along that stairway) owned a house that adjoins to the house of Judeo-Egyptian steward (לחן) of the Yahu temple (TAD B3.10). Notably, that

component of the Upper Egyptian triad of Sati and Anuket, Khnum was native to the first cataract.<sup>334</sup> Non-Egyptian deities also make an appearance in the papyrological record. In D7.30, a fragmentary letter between a pair of individuals who were possibly (if not probably) Judean,<sup>335</sup> Yarḥu wished his brother Ḥaggai the goodwill of “Bēl and Nabû, Šamaš and Nergal.” This group of traditionally Babylonian deities was not native to Egypt, but may have been introduced as a cultural component of the broader Persian imperial apparatus.<sup>336</sup>

In trying to account for this phenomenon, Bob Becking has argued that the diversity of divine recognition evidenced in the papyri — for Judeans and non-Judeans alike — is representative of a kind of shared civil religion among the inhabitants of Upper Egypt that used multiple names to recognize a commonly acknowledged divine realm.<sup>337</sup> Rather than a one-way transfer of culture from one group to another, this diversity bespeaks a more complicated social process. According to Becking, “each group was aware of its own myth of common ancestry and shared historical memories and the specifics of its own religion. These specifics, however, were not seen as immutable or sacrosanct. They only partially defined the identities of the different groups.”<sup>338</sup>

---

steward, Anani, was married to an Egyptian woman, Tapmet, who served as a stewardess (לחונה) of the Yahu temple (B3.12). It may also have been the case that the Judeo-Egyptians did not record abuse (on behalf of either side) in the documents that have survived.

334. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 194–195.

335. For a discussion of the Judean origins of these W. Semitic names, see Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 31–33.

336. Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 38.

337. Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 39.

338. Becking, “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?” 42.

In her study of the Greek trading colony of Naukratis in the Nile Delta, Denise Demetriou has made a case for interpreting the πόλις in similar terms to those proposed by Becking. In her analysis of the significant amount of material and inscriptional evidence that has been discovered in city's ancient ruins, Demetriou detects the presence of a distinct expression of Greek culture. The culture is "distinct" in two ways. On the one hand, it is distinct from its contemporary Egyptian culture. Although the Egyptians maintained an administrative interest in the colony, there is little other evidence of local influence in the colony's material record. Of the more than 1500 inscriptions discovered at the site, only two were composed in (pre-Hellenistic) Egyptian; the rest were composed in Greek. Demetriou also points to a rather disproportionate ratio with regard to preserved Greek and Egyptian artifacts.<sup>339</sup> The clear boundary between Egyptian and Greek culture that these remains suggest is in large part a product of the colony's status as a semi-autonomous political entity within Egypt's borders. While settlements like it and the στρατόπεδα (encampments) granted to Carian and Ionian soldiers under Psameticus I were still ultimately subject to the pharaohs and to later Persian kings,<sup>340</sup> they were otherwise able to exercise the political independence of a full Greek πόλις (city).

The Greek culture of Naukratis is also distinct in that it is unlike any particular expression of cultural identity from the Greek-speaking world of the 6<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.

---

339. The ratio of non-linguistic evidence is not quite as dramatic as the linguistic material, although Demetriou hypothesizes that the Egyptian objects that have been discovered were in fact prestige or heirloom items, rather than reflections of direct Egyptian influence. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 116–117.

340. "These settlements were enclaves within Egyptian territory that never became fully independent. Amasis moved the inhabitants of the Stratopeda to Memphis, in order to have a guard closer to him." Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 148.

According to Herodotus, Greeks from nine different city states populated the colony, and material evidence uncovered at the site corresponds with this variety. This includes, notably, Carian pottery, which was not part of Aegean trade and is otherwise only known from Caria in southern Anatolia.<sup>341</sup> This suggests that within this greater Greek milieu, distinct or semi-distinct identities from Halikarnassus, Teos, and Rhodes (among many others) continued to exist. However, there are also clear signs of convergence that point to a civic, shared identity in the colony centuries before Alexander and the rise of classical Hellenism.

Demetriou points to the importance of religious expression as the primary vehicle of this emergent collective identity, the settlement's shared koine. She states that "The flexibility of Greek religion, especially as it was articulated in emporia abroad, was important in the recognition of religion as a characteristic common to all Greeks. As such, religion in emporia was formative in the coalescence of new collective identities, whether civic, religious, or even Hellenic[.]"<sup>342</sup> Naukratis was home to a variety of temples that seem to have (re)produced a variety of distinct ethnic or social identities that correlated with the city-states from which much of the population originated. The colony also featured a Hellenion, a unique temple in the Greek-speaking world that was dedicated to Aphrodite as a pan-Greek (or πανδέμος, as she was frequently referred to by worshippers) node of a developing collective identity. The worship of Aphrodite at the Hellenion functioned as a centripetal cultural force that simultaneously reflected a leveling of the variety of ethnicities represented in the colony, from the outsider perspective of the Egyptian authorities alongside a growing in-group recognition of continuity along religious,

---

341. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 150.

342. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 142.

linguistic, and customary lines within the Naukratis community.<sup>343</sup> Unlike any particular form of religious expression one might have encountered elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world, the Hellenion and the particular form of Aphrodite-devotion it housed were the product of the colony's diasporic context and a kind of cultural koine shared among the colonists.

The Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and Syene were not set up with the same kind of political independence as the Greeks of Naukratis, and reconstructed plans of Yeb's settlement layout put them in close proximity to neighbors with various ethnic identities. However, as we saw above, it is clear that both the Saites and the Persians sought to reinforce a boundary between royal or imperial soldiers in their employ and subject or subjugated Egyptians. In this regard, they mirror the first kind of distinction I observed in the evidence from Naukratis: Egyptians and Greeks.<sup>344</sup> However, the example of the Caro-Memphites demonstrates that extended contact between a diaspora community and its neighbors, even as political institutions attempt to maintain boundaries, can nonetheless result in significant shifts in the constituent elements of communal identity. For the Caro-Memphites, that shift was significant enough that Babylonian scribes treated them as an entity distinct from the Carians of Anatolia. Meanwhile, they reproduced a number of diacritica that demonstrate continuity with the Anatolia Carians, including language and the worship of Carian Zeus.

---

343. Demetriou, *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 143–152.

344. The preliminary finds from Alan Johnston's reconsideration of Petrie's analysis of the material evidence from Naukratis suggest that the trading colony also had more permeable cultural boundaries with the local Egyptian population than has been traditionally argued. "We should see [Naukratis] rather as a town in which non-Egyptian traders were given an enclave and prospered, at least in part living a 'Greek' way of life, but also engaging closely with their Egyptian neighbors." Johnston, "The Naukratis Project: Petrie, Greeks and Egyptians," 70.

There is less evidence from the Judeo-Egyptian community concerning this kind of cultural adaptation to their Egyptian context. No bilingual tombstones inscribed in Hebrew and Egyptian have been discovered, nor can we see the kinds of onomastic shifts attested among the Carians that attended shifts in political power. However, we did see Judeo-Egyptians employ local idiom in letters, both administrative and personal, and recognizing the agency of local deities, even in legal contexts. They intermarried with Egyptians and other minority groups and submitted to the authority of the Egyptian satrap, even as they reached out for support in Judea and Samaria. These accommodations are part of a broader process of the Judeo-Egyptian community's adaptation to its local context and the production of a hybrid Judeo-Egyptian identity.

In Becking's suggestion of a kind of civil religion among the ethnic minority communities of Upper Egypt, we might observe evidence of Demetriou's second kind of distinction, the creation of a shared cultural koine among the ethnic minorities that was new, even if it maintained traditionalist elements. In this way the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb and contemporary communities in their Upper Egyptian context were not simply recipients of culture as immigrant or diaspora populations in Egypt. Rather, they were contributors in defining what it meant to live in the Egypt's Southern District (Tišretes), actively taking part in the development of a cultural koine as part of their diaspora context.

Nowhere is this process better encapsulated than in P. Amh. 63. Although the document is unprovenanced, it does show some signs that it was written in the Yeb-Syene area.<sup>345</sup> As I noted above, it was written in Demotic — the standard Egyptian script in use during the Persian period — but its language is Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the western Persian empire and the primary language of many of the diaspora communities in Egypt. If the document was, in fact composed, copied, or edited in Syene, then it might parallel the coalescing function of the Hellenion, serving as a kind of snapshot of the local culture in which the Judeo-Egyptians might have participated as both recipients and contributors.

I mentioned in my introduction to P. Amh. 63 that the document has drawn the attention of biblical scholars for its inclusion of an Aramaic psalm that is strikingly similar to Psalm 20.<sup>346</sup>

---

345. Steiner suggested an Aswan origin in his translation for *COS* (v. I, 310) based on the document's contents. Holm, who states that there is nothing particular to the document's script to link it to Aswan, does note that a single occurrence of Yeb with an *aleph* (*ybʿ*) is an "unusual spelling apparently found only in a few Demotic texts from Aswan." Holm, "Nanay and Her Lover," 3.

346. Nims and Steiner originally thought the text was dedicated to Horus based on the appearance of the demotic *HR* sign in place of the divine name when compared with Psalm 20. Nims and Steiner, 1983, #71156@261–274. Zauzich, two years later, argued that the demotic *HR* sign could represent vocal *h* at the end of the Persian period. So, too, had the Egyptian aleph sign (*ʿ*) come to frequently reflect Semitic *yod* and so demotic *ʿ-hr-w*, which occurs within this text and elsewhere within P. Amh. 63, should be rendered into Aramaic as *y-h-w*, "Yahu." Karl T. Zauzich, "Der Gott des aramäisch-demotischen Papyrus Amherst 63. (Le dieu du papyrus araméo-démotique Amherst 63)," *Göttinger Miszellen Göttingen* 85 (1985): 89–90. Nims and Steiner later revised their reading to argue that Yahu was in fact the deity addressed in the text, albeit with a very different reading than Zauzich. Rather than the middle radical in a phonetic spelling *y-h-w*, they argued that the Horus sign was a heterogram, a non-phonetic symbol for the Tetragrammaton, with the *aleph* phonetic complement actually indicating a reading of *'dny*. The spelling would therefore reflect an early example of the avoidance of pronouncing the divine name in the diaspora. Richard C. Steiner and Nims, Charles, "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: Text, Translation, and Notes," (2017): [cited [https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The\\_Aramaic\\_Text\\_in\\_Demotic\\_Script\\_Text\\_Translation\\_and\\_Notes](https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The_Aramaic_Text_in_Demotic_Script_Text_Translation_and_Notes)]. 42–43.

The relationship between the two texts remains the topic of significant debate with implications for the compositional history of the book of Psalms (and of the canon more broadly).<sup>347</sup> For our purposes, it is enough to note that this hymn dedicated to Yahu and two others (cols. xvi–xvii), have been included in this composite document that also preserves theological material from a number of other ethnic minorities we know to have been present in Upper Egypt during the Persian period.<sup>348</sup> These distinct traditions of the Judeans contributed to and were a part of the cultural and religious koine that the document may reflect. Like the literature devoted to Bethel, Nabu, Nannay, and Mar also included in P. Amh. 63, these hymns to Yahu were part of a new and broader shared diasporic culture.

While we can still observe a distinct Judean religious identity represented by the grouping of these Yahu psalms together, the deity and his worship were also incorporated into the mainstream of the document. As I argued above, col. xvii features a narrative in which an unnamed pharaoh welcomed displaced Judeans and Samaritans to take part in a feast and to seek refuge in his kingdom. In this way they were narratively and symbolically made part of the culture of the land in which they would make their home.

---

347. See, recently, Raik Heckl, “Inside the Canon and Out: The Relationship Between Psalm 20 and Papyrus Amherst 63,” *Semitica* 56 (2014): 359–379; Karel van der Toorn, “Celebrating the New Year with the Israelites: Three Extrabiblical Psalms from Papyrus Amherst 63,” *JBL* 136 (2017): 533–649; Karel van der Toorn, “Psalm 20 and Amherst Papyrus 63, XII, 11–19: A Case Study of a Text in Transit,” (eds. Frederick E. Greenspahn and Gary Rendsburg; Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 246–261; Zevit, “The Common Origin of the Aramaicized Prayer to Horus and of Psalm 20,” 213–228; Vleeming and Wesselijs, “An Aramaic Hymn from the Fourth Century B.C.,” 501–509.

348. Janet H Johnson, “Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt,” in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (eds. Emily Teeter and John A. Larson; Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 58; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1999), 211–222.

## Conclusion

I began this chapter with a brief summary of a drafted letter between the Judeo-Egyptian leaders of the Yeb garrison and a representative of the Persian government in Judea. As an introduction to this diasporic community, the letter highlights a number of important facets of Judeo-Egyptian identity. First of all, the community, or at least its representatives, understood themselves to belong in their Egyptian context by the time we first encounter them in the written record. They owned property, had a temple dedicated to their deity, and took part in the day-to-day life on the island. There is no hint in their records that the Judeans felt out of place, nor is there any evidence of a driving urge to return to Judea, the homeland of their ancestors. Rather, they adapted their definition of Judeanness to the circumstances of their life in Yeb and Syene.

Based on the *mythomoteur* that has been preserved in the RLR, Judeo-Egyptian identity included deep roots on the island of Yeb, cooperation with the Persian empire, dedication to the deity Yahu, and ties to the community in Judea. In order to understand how such an identity remained observable over the course of multiple decades (if not a century or more) of settlement on the island, I explored the roles of both internal and external factors in the (re)production of Judeanness. Following the work of Fitzpatrick-McKinley, I demonstrated that the systematic efforts of the Persian government to maintain boundaries between foreign soldiers in their employ and the indigenous Egyptian population facilitated the reproduction of a distinct social identity for those communities of soldiers. This, however, was only one side of the coin. I also argued for the agentive role that religious identity played in this process. Using a congregational

model borrowed from the social-scientific study of immigrant and diasporic religious practice, I showed how religious identity could reinforce ethnic identity and vice versa.

Finally, I showed the dynamic nature of Judeo-Egyptian religious identity and the ways in which it was adapted to the community's diasporic context. Furthermore, that adaptation was not one-sided; rather, as members of the community and their religious expression became more "Egyptian," so, too, did the Egyptian culture in which they found themselves become more "Judean." The mainstream culture, too, changed to accommodate the cultural contributions of the many different groups of non-Egyptian soldiers and their families who established homes in Yeb, Syene, and beyond to become a kind of koine in which individuals from a variety of backgrounds could be fluent, in which they could participate and contribute.

## Chapter 4

### Judeo-Babylonians

#### Introduction

##### *Two Texts from 6<sup>th</sup> Century Babylonia*

In Ezekiel 36.16–32, an oracle traditionally dated to the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE,<sup>1</sup> Yahweh bemoans the damage to his reputation that his people’s displacement from Judea has caused him.<sup>2</sup> “They profaned my holy name when [the nations] said of them ‘*these* are the people of Yahweh? It was *his* land that they left?’” (v. 20). And so, despite Israel’s unworthiness, the deity determines to restore them to their ancestral homeland, the land he promised to their

---

1. According to the narrative framework of The Book of Ezekiel, the entirety of which is recorded — theophanies, oracles, sign acts, divine transportation, and visions of the future — takes place between 593, the fifth year of Jehoiachin’s exile (1.2), and 571 (29.17). The content of work, however, was only delivered sometime afterwards, once the deity had permitted the protagonist to speak.

2. On the Book of Ezekiel’s use of “Israel” (בית ישראל) as the ethnonym for the prophet’s audience, see below.

ancestors. Through their (forced) repatriation, Yahweh would restore his reputation and re-sanctify his name.

Meanwhile, a Late Babylonian administrative tablet (no. 18) dated to 511 BCE records the following transaction:<sup>3</sup> a certain Aḥīqam son of Rapā-Yāma, a farmer and the descendent of Judean deportees, agrees to repay a debt of four minas of silver (roughly 2 kgs) with the equivalent in barley (160 kor) to Iddinâ son of Šinqā on behalf of his fellow Judean (<sup>lu</sup>*ia-ḥa-da-* ' *šušānus* (dependent workers). Iddinâ, the deputy of the *rāb urāti* (chief of the mares), would then give that silver to Nargia, a representative of Mudammiq-Nabû. In issuing the initial credit, Mudammiq-Nabû was acting under the authority of Uštanu, the Persian governor of the district of Across-the-River, which, during the reign of Darius I, included Babylon and the region west of the Euphrates.

These two sources offer insight into the experiences of Judeans in the Babylonian diaspora — Judeo-Babylonians — during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. However, they differ in a number of important ways, including the language, genre, and function of the texts (theologically-driven Hebrew literature vs. Late Babylonian administrative document), the position of each text's author *vis-à-vis* the Judean community (i.e. insider vs. outsider), and the imperial context in which they were (purportedly) composed (Babylonian vs. Persian). Perhaps most importantly,

---

3. Tablet 18 from the recently published *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer* (CUSAS 28). Within this chapter, texts from this volume will be identified by the abbreviation “no.” as the collection will form the main collection of primary source material. In moments of potential ambiguity of sources, I will also use the series abbreviation “CUSAS 28” + tablet number. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*.

the two texts also offer significantly different constructions of Judeanness in the Babylonian diaspora.

In this chapter I will analyze the perspectives that these texts and others like them provide for the Judeo-Babylonian diasporic experience of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. I will argue that the different kinds of evidence available for reconstructing social identity during this period highlight distinct aspects of Judean identity in a Babylonian context that reflect a variety of evidentiary variables, including genre, function, and author. Beyond these differences, I will attempt to identify the ways in which Judean identity was constructed that cannot be directly attributed to the the evidence itself, but is rather the product of other cultural and historical factors that contributed to whether and how to be Judean in a given context. By rethinking Judeanness in these ways, I aim to paint a more complex picture of the experience of Judean deportees and their descendants in Babylonia.

The chapter begins with a reflection on the significance of the discovery and publication of new cuneiform evidence directly related to the experience of Judeans living in the Babylonian countryside. These Late Babylonian administrative documents include promissory notes, receipts, court documents, and marriage contracts. In these tablets, written exclusively by Babylonian scribes in the employ of the central government, we are able to identify the salient features of Judeanness from the imperial perspective. With varying degrees of confidence, we will be able to identify Judeans primarily through onomastics (Hebrew and/or Yahwistic names), associations, and by place of settlement (Āl-Yāhūdu). We will also analyze the value of the category of *Yāhūdāya* for the Babylonian and Persian administrations and the effects it might

have had on those to whom it was applied. As we will see, this material is indicative of a diasporic community adapting to its new geographic, political, and cultural context over the course of a few generations, with varying degrees of financial and social success.

From these administrative records, I will move on to an analysis of the Book of Ezekiel — one of our only extended insider reflections on the early experience of Judeans in Babylonia.<sup>4</sup> I will argue that the work represents a highly theologized and ideologized narrative of that experience from the viewpoint of a member of that community. Through a series of narrated visions, divine encounters, and interactions between the prophet and the members of his community, the Book of Ezekiel expresses a view of Judeanness that is incompatible with life in the diaspora. The work is careful to construct boundaries (religious, social, economic) in order to maintain a distinct Judean community that Yahweh would, in time, restore — according to the perspective of the narrative — to their ancestral homeland of Judea.

In the chapter's penultimate section, I explore the relationship between particular constructions of social identity and the decision of Judeo-Babylonians and members of contemporary diasporic communities to undertake return migration in the first decades of Persian rule. As a result of their associations with religious institutions and commitment to what I call a theology-of-place, they privileged residence in the ancestral homeland over the hybrid experience of life in the diaspora. Finally, by bringing this evidence of the experience of Judeo-Babylonians to bear on a close reading of Isa 40–48, I argue that the rhetoric employed by the

---

4. On the value of this work for insights into the lives of Judeo-Babylonians during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, see my introduction to the work below. For a more general discussion of the potential role of the literature preserved in the Hebrew Bible in historical reconstruction, see Frederick William Dobbs-Allsopp, "Rethinking Historical Criticism," *BibInt* 3 (1999): 235–271.

work's author is response to that particular expression of Judean identity. The author responsible for that text argues, instead, that return migration was the divine will and incumbent on the audience as Judeans, and that they were, in fact, to play a definitive role in announcing that plan.

## Identifying Judeans in Rural Areas in the Babylonian Sources

### *Judeans in the Babylonian Countryside*

The great majority of the available evidence for Judean life in Babylonia comes from rural settings. As subjects of the central imperial authority, resettled deportees lived in ethnically-defined villages and made their livings as farmers, businesspeople, and minor administrative officials. Judeans are also attested in urban setting. For example, Jehoichin's presence in the Babylonian court is attested in the Weidner tablets,<sup>5</sup> and there also exists a small dossier of texts

---

5. This does not necessarily mean that his presence was unimportant to either the Judeo-Babylonians of the countryside or how the central administration viewed them. First of all, although Jehoiachin and his dependents appear to have been treated well while in the care of the Babylonian king, a primary function of captive royalty was to ensure loyalty among those the monarch formerly ruled. Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia." 61–63. While this approach was not ultimately successful with Zedekiah and the population of Judea, it may still have served its purpose for the Judeans of Babylonia, particularly the first wave of deportees. For example, the Book of Ezekiel establishes its dating system *לגלות המלך יויכין*, "according to the exile of the king, Jehoiachin" (1.2), and the king features prominently in a number of oracles within the work (eg. chs. 17 and 19). For a discussion of the book's view on the exiled king for Ezekiel's community's future, see Daniel I. Block, "The Tender Cedar Sprig : Ezekiel on Jehoiachin," *HBAI* 1 (2012): 173–201. Jehoiachin does not, however, feature in the rural administrative record surveyed below.

for the Ariḫ family of Sippar.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, our discussion will focus on the evidence available for the lives of individuals in rural communities and interrogate the operative factors in the construction of Judeanness in that setting.

### *The Murašû Archive*

The first Mesopotamian evidence for rural Judean life in Babylonia became available with the discovery and publication of the Murašû archive.<sup>7</sup> The private business archive of the Murašû banking family, this collection of administrative tablets from the environs of ancient Nippur attests to Judeans as one of a number ethnic minority groups integrated into the imperial administrative system of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>8</sup> Judeans make up a small minority of the individuals recorded in the archive — only about 80 or so names out of the 2,200, or roughly

---

6. For recent treatments of Judeans in urban settings, see Chapter 3 of Tero Astola's 2017 dissertation, entitled "Judean Merchants in Babylonia and their Participation in Long-Distance Trade," a republication of the author's 2017 article of the same name for *Die Welt des Orients*. Bloch compiled an Ariḫ family dossier, including four economic tablets (Bloch nos. 3–6) and two wedding documents (Bloch nos. 1–2). Yigal Bloch, "Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile: Assimilation and Perseverance under Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Rule," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 1 (2014): 142–161. Cf. Kathleen Abraham, "Negotiating Marriage in Multicultural Babylonia," in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (eds. Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 37–58.

7. The standard treatment of the Murašû archive remains Matthew W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašû Archive, the Murasašû Firm, and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul = Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique nederlandsais de Stamboul 54; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985).

More recently, Alstola's 2017 dissertation dedicates a thorough and insightful chapter on Judeans in the archive: Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia." 147–196.

8. Matthew W. Stolper, Murashû, Archive of, *ABD* 4: 928.

3%.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that there are more individuals who might have identified and/or been identified as Judean who bore Aramaic and Babylonian names, but in the absence of ethnic identifiers they are subsumed under the majority. The earliest known tablet dates to to year 12 of Artaxerxes I (454 BCE) and the latest to first regnal year of Artaxerxes II (404 BCE). However, the bulk of the archive is concentrated in a 25 year period from 440/439–417/416 BCE.<sup>10</sup> For those Judeans attested, the archive therefore reflects the economic circumstances of individuals and a community long-settled in the Babylonian countryside.

### *Āl-Yāhūdu*

Despite the value of the Murašû archival material for our understanding of the experience of Judeans in Babylonia more than century after the fall of the kingdom of Judah, there remained a significant gap in the evidentiary record for the experiences of those Judeans who were deported and resettled under Nebuchadnezzar and their descendants. This situation has changed dramatically with the publication of roughly 150 tablets that document transactions of Judeans living in rural Babylonia between 572 and 477 BCE.<sup>11</sup> They focus on the day-to-day happenings in

---

9. Matthew W. Stolper, “Murashû, Archive of,” *ABD* 4: 928.

10. Matthew W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 23.

11. Some 103 tablets were published in CUSAS 28 and Cornelia Wunsch’s forthcoming BaAr 6 is expected to contain at least 50 more that pertain to the experience of these Judeans. In addition to these volumes, tablets related to the communities in question have also been published in the following places: Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, “Contrats babyloniens d’époque achéménide du Bît-Abî Râm avec une épigraphe araméenne,” *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 90 (1996): 41–60; Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, “Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique (collection Sh. Moussaïeff)(Pls. I-II),” *Transeu* 17 (1999): 17–34; Kathleen Abraham, “West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from Sixth Century BCE: New Evidence from a Marriage Contract from Āl-Yahudu,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 51 (2005/2006): 198–219; Kathleen Abraham, “An Inheritance Division among

the lives of residents of three villages in rural Babylonia (Āl-Yāḥūdu, Bīt-Našar, and Bīt-Abī-rām) and record interactions between groups of different ethnic backgrounds. The first of these towns, “Āl-Yāḥūdu,” is perhaps the most notable for a reconstruction of Judean identity in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This rural town, whose Akkadian title can be roughly translated as “town of the Judeans” or more colloquially in some scholarship as “Judahtown,” is explicitly associated with Judea through the use of a full ethnonym (URU šá<sup>16</sup> *Ia-a-ḥu-du-a-a* = *Āl-Yāḥūdāya*) in at least two of the tablets.<sup>12</sup> It is an example of what Muhammad Dandamayev has called a “twin town,” a town named after the ethnic minority population who had been resettled there by the Babylonian administration.<sup>13</sup>

Because the tablets were not excavated *in situ*,<sup>14</sup> but rather gathered from a series of private collections, there has been some disagreement concerning the location of the towns

---

Judeans in Babylonia from the Early Persian Period,” in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean, and Cuneiform* (ed. M. Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2007), 206–211.

12. The editors of CUSAS 28 prefer “Judahtown,” although the (longer) name “Town of the Judeans” may better catch the essence of the toponym. *Āl-Yāḥūdu* appears to be a shortened form of *Āl-Yāḥūdāya*, which appears in two of the earliest documents to mention the town (CUSAS 28:1 and BaAr 6:1). The explicit use of the gentilic points to its association with the Judean ethnic group, at least at the time of its founding. Cornelia Wunsch, “Glimpses of Lives of Deportees in Rural Babylonia,” in *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.* (eds. Angelika Berlejung and Michael P. Streck; Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 251.

13. Muhammad Dandamayev, “Twin Towns and Ethnic Minorities in First-Millennium Babylonia,” in *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium of the Assyrian And Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project, Held In Innsbruck, Austria, October 3rd - 8th 2002* (eds. Robert. Rollinger, Christoph Ulf et al.; OeO 6; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), 137–151.

14. See the extremely thoughtful discussion of the ethics and repercussions of publishing and analyzing tablets obtained from illicit sources in Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 45–48.

featured in them.<sup>15</sup> However, Cornelia Wunsch and Laurie Pearce, the editors of the majority of the tablets, have made a strong case for locating the village in the rural environs of Nippur, roughly the same area in which we find Judeans in the Murašû archive during the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Wunsch and Pearce posit three archival groups which are “loosely connected through a few faint links,”<sup>17</sup> including active agents and toponyms. They argue that the three groups of tablets “therefore stem from the same region.”<sup>18</sup>

In her review of the editors’ first volume, Caroline Waerzeggars has criticized this grouping for its inability to account for all the texts presented, particularly in cases in which the “protagonists” whom Pearce and Wunsch identified (Aḥīqam, Aḥīqar, and Zababa-šar-ušur) play no clear role.<sup>19</sup> Instead, based on the similarities between the relationship of Judeans to the state in these texts and those that feature Aḥīqam or Aḥīqar, she suggests that the primary organizing principle around these texts is not private archive holders, but the state. According to Waerzeggars, “In other words, the state (in its local manifestation of Iddinā’s office) should be

---

15. Scholars have also located the town near Borsippa, based on its proximity to Bīt-Našar, which was originally believed to have been in the Borsippa region. See Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia*, 31; Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes,” 24. Even Laurie Pearce, one of the editors of CUSAS 28, very tentatively located the town in the rural environs of Babylon or Borsippa in a preliminary publication. Laurie Pearce, “New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 402–403.

16. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 6–7.

17. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 9.

18. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 9.

19. Caroline Waerzeggars, review of *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology* (CUSAS 28), by Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, *STRATA* 33 (2015): 179–194.

identified as the archive-producing institution behind at least some layers of the corpus.”<sup>20</sup> The through-line in cases like these was not a Judean protagonist, but rather a Babylonian scribe representing the imperial government like Arad-Gula son of Nabu-šum-ukin descendent of Amēl-Ea who composed 44 of the tablets in the assembled collection.<sup>21</sup> The dearth of evidence for the administration of the countryside during the sixth and fifth centuries limits what Waerzeggers can definitively say about the role of the state in preserving this archival material,<sup>22</sup> but her model nonetheless creates a more coherent set of connections between texts that do not fit into Wunsch and Pearce’s tripartite schema.

Waerzegger’s critique points to a broader issue about this corpus of documents pertaining to Judeans in rural Babylonia: our information for the community as attested in the cuneiform record is filtered entirely through representatives of the imperial (Babylonian or Persian) state. Unlike the situation we encountered with the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, not a single letter has survived from Āl-Yāhūdu that might have directly recorded a community member’s perspective. Furthermore, despite the comparatively high degree of scribal mistakes attested in these

---

20. Iddinā is a local, low-level representative of the governor of the Beyond-the-River, where Āl-Yāhūdu was located. For a discussion of Iddinā, see below. Waerzeggers, “Review of CUSAS 28.” 186.

21. His role as part of the Persian bureaucratic apparatus is clear from his brief hiatus that coincides with the rule of Nebuchadnezzar IV. Once Darius regained power, Arad-Gula took back his post. Waerzeggers, “Review of CUSAS 28,” 187.

22. Prior to publication of CUSAS 28, almost all Late Babylonian archival material came from urban settings with the exception of the Murašû archive, which post dates the earliest evidence from Āl-Yāhūdu by more than a century. Johannes Hackl, “Babylonian Scribal Practices in Rural Contexts: A Linguistic Survey of the Documents of Judean Exile and West Semites in Babylonia (CUSAS 28 and BaAr 6),” in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* (eds. Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir et al.; Leipziger altorientalistische Studien 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 125–126.

documents, there is no evidence to suggest that any non-Babylonians served as cuneiform scribes for these communities.<sup>23</sup> This means that when individuals or the community are identified by the ethnonym *Yāhūdī*, it was done so in service of the aims of the state. We should thus pay special attention to the value or utility of the category for the imperial scribes who apply the term, as well as the interests of those higher ranking officials who employed them. We should also keep in mind the effects of that classification for those individuals and communities to whom it is applied. This process of categorization, as Richard Jenkins argues, is the prerogative of those in power.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, even if the constructions of *Yāhūdī* by insiders (those labeled) and outsiders (those doing the labeling) might have been largely overlapping, the act of categorization is, according to Jenkins, “necessarily an intervention in the [in-] group’s world that will, to an extent and in ways that are a function of the specifics of the situation, alter that world and experience of living in it.”<sup>25</sup> With that in mind, we turn to an analysis of the cuneiform evidence.

#### *Yāhūdāya* in the Babylonian Administrative Record

---

23. Waerzeggers, “Review of CUSAS 28.” 186. Johanness Hackl’s recent treatment of the archive confirms Waerzegger’s conclusions. He argues that these mistakes are not reflections of linguistic contact between Babylonian scribes and speakers of West Semitic languages or of such speakers attaining the position of scribe. Rather, based on prosopography, it is more likely that we are just dealing with subpar scribes whose work shows the influence of spoken vernacular Babylonian creeping into frozen legal formulae. According to Hackl, it was their lack of skill or precision that likely got them sent to the countryside. He argues that a similar situation also appears to have held at nearby Āl-Nērib (see below). Hackl, “Babylonian Scribal Practices,” 125–140.

24. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 54–76.

25. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 75.

*Aḥīqam son of Rāpa-Yāma*

This chapter opened with two vignettes, including a summary of an administrative tablet dated to 512 BCE. In this document, a certain Aḥīqam son of Rāpa-Yāma, representing his fellow Judean *šušānus*, agreed to repay a significant debt to a local low-level Babylonian administrator who himself was answerable (through a number of hierarchical intermediaries) to Uštānu, the highest ranking non-royal official in Babylonia and the Levant. Although Aḥīqam’s name is not explicitly Yahwistic or Hebrew, we can be confident from his patronym (Rāpa-Yāma) and the names of his five sons (Nīr-Yāma, Ḥaggâ, Yāḥû-izri, Yāḥû-azza, and Yāḥûšu) that he was from a Judean family.<sup>26</sup> This conclusion is corroborated by the concentration of his activity around Āl-Yāḥūdū.<sup>27</sup> Aḥīqam’s role in this transaction tells us two important things about Judean life in Babylonia as observable in the imperial administrative record:

1. The original debt and its repayment indicate the agricultural and administrative system into which the Judeans were incorporated under the Babylonians and which continued under Persians.
2. Aḥīqam’s representative role in the transaction indicates that there was an administratively-recognized social or economic unit of Judeans that he could represent.

---

26. Although Ḥaggâ is not unambiguously Hebrew (גג) (the noun *hg*, “festival” is common in West Semitic languages and could be Aramaic), the spelling of the *-izri* strongly suggests Hebrew rather than Aramaic as the source language. The verbal element, always spelled with a *z* rather than a *d*, indicates the Hebrew root ‘-z-r rather than the Aramaic equivalent ‘-d-r. For the latter, see the discussion of the name Yāḥû-e-DIR (no. 12.6) in CUSAS 28, 89.

27. This last point is only, at best, circumstantial evidence. Not all people who did business in Āl-Yāḥūdū were necessarily Judean, as demonstrated by the archive’s earliest tablet (CUSAS 28:1) in which the primary agents have Babylonian names, with Judeans only featured as witnesses.

It is to these two issues that we now turn our attention.

### *Land-for-Service*

The Neo-Babylonian empire was primarily a tax-driven state, a government which acquired the considerable resources it consumed through the taxation of its territories rather than through state-owned means of production.<sup>28</sup> As was characteristic of production in ancient Mesopotamia, the most important and scarcest of these resources was a workforce. The government procured this resource through three primary approaches. First of all, it put pressure on long-standing institutions like traditional Babylonian households (*bītu*) and temples to supply workers from their pool of dependents or to draw on their financial resources to hire workers for state projects. Secondly, the central government taxed land-owning elites in urban settings. Finally, on the outskirts of cities and in rural areas, the Babylonians and their Persian successors employed the traditional Mesopotamian land-for-service system.<sup>29</sup> In exchange for an allotted period of military or civic service per annum, those incorporated into this system were assigned to crown lands on which to work and live. Under the Babylonian regime, these allotments were typically located on the fringes of established farmland or as part of a reclamation project in areas that had

---

28. Michael Jursa, "The State and Its Subjects under the Neo-Babylonian Empire," in *Private and State in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 58th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Leiden: 16–20 July 2012* (eds. R. de Boer and J. G. Dercksen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 49ff.

29. The land-for-service model had a long history in Mesopotamia prior to its implementation under the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires. Van Driel's 2002 treatment of the system remains the standard. G. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver: In Search of a Role for a Market in an Agrarian Environment; Aspects Of Mesopotamia's Society* (Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 94; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2002).

been decimated during the war with the Assyrians in the late seventh century.<sup>30</sup> As we will see, Aḥīqam's role as a representative of Judean *šušānus* indicates that upon their arrival in Babylonia, Judeans were incorporated into this administrative system.

As one element of growing economic efficiency and success during the long sixth century, the land-for-service model addressed three major issues for the crown. First of all, the transformation of this under-utilized territory into crown land meant that more and more land — along with the resources that could be grown upon it — came under direct royal administration, a net positive for the central government. Second, it served to extend the ideological reach of the crown to those at the farthest remove from the government's administrative centers.<sup>31</sup> Attempts were made to incorporate the Chaldean, Aramaean, and Arab tribal elements of the southern

---

30. "Although the historical sources for the Chaldaean empire are scanty, we know of Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns against Tyre, Ashkelon, Judah, the district of Hamath and the Arab Qedarites; campaigns in Chicia of Neriglissar and later of Nabonidus who also campaigned in northern Syria. This suggests that the peoples from whose names the above-mentioned toponyms derived came to the Nippur region during the period of the Chaldaean empire, and were settled there to rehabilitate the rural region which had suffered severely during the Assyro-Babylonian wars in the seventh century B. C." Israel Eph'al, "On the Political and Social Organization of the Jews in Babylonian Exile," *ZDMG* 5 (1983): 108.

31. Michael Jursa, Johannes Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC : Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1 Jahrtausend v Chr 377; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 199; Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 312.

alluvium — the greatest local political threats to the central government — through the land-for-service system, with varying degrees of success.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, and most relevant to our discussion, the land-for-service model created an expanding roster of dependents upon whom the crown could rely in support of military campaigns and state-sponsored building projects. Babylonian kings famously undertook a number of such projects during their short period of rule,<sup>33</sup> and the land-for-service system provided them with a portion of the workforce required to accomplish them. This included the groups of displaced ethnic minorities re-settled in Babylonia following Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns to the west. According to Van Driel, their integration into the system “provided a means for regulating and canalising the integration of fresh elements into the population. Such elements could be of nomadic, deportee or mercenary stock.”<sup>34</sup> As we will see, this is the role it served for the Judeans of Āl-Yāhūdu and Bīt-Našar.<sup>35</sup> Thanks to the new data from these

---

32. “The crown pushed for centralisation and bureaucratic control, while the local powers, and in particular the tribes, tried to resist these attempts. The tribal leaders could not be integrated easily into the palace-based royal administration. Their positions of power in their territories were not, or not entirely, counterbalanced by the royal establishment: unlike in Assyria, high-ranking palace dignitaries of (presumably) indubitable loyalty had apparently no provinces of their own to govern in the name of the king and were thus not independently powerful.” Jursa, “The State and Its Subjects,” 48.

33. On Nebuchadnezzar's building projects and attendant imperial ideology, see David S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM 59; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999), 33–51, esp. 45–49.

34. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 227.

35. The name of Ezekiel's settlement in Akkadian, *til-abūbi* (mound of the flood) suggests that it had been destroyed at some point prior to its settlement by Judeans, most likely during the Babylonian campaign against the Assyrian empire in the last decade of the seventh century, BCE. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel, 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 22; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 71. The expression calls to mind a natural disaster, but it could also be used in the inscriptions of Mesopotamian kings to describes

communities, it is possible to reconstruct how this process of integration and subjectification may have played out within these communities.

During the reign of Darius I, *šušānus* — like those represented by Aḥīqam in no. 18 — were a class of state-dependent worker within the land-for-service system.<sup>36</sup> Iranian in origin, the title *šušānû* originally referred to equine care and maintained this meaning in its early Akkadian usage.<sup>37</sup> However, by the time of Persian period, the semantics of the term had shifted to serve as a title for both high ranking government officials as well as an identifier for individuals of a

---

the total destruction wrought on a rebellious city. It occurs with this meaning in the Codex Hammurabi (rev. 27:79–80) and frequently in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings from the imperial period. For references, see *CAD A/1*, s.v. *abūbu* 1b, 78a. Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (NICOT 1; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 135–136. It is also noteworthy that Nippur, the region in which the Book of Ezekiel is likely to have been set (see below), maintained a pro-Assyrian stance during the war between the Assyrians and Babylonians at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE and was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s armies (see below). The Babylonian king does not appear to have made any effort to rebuild the city itself, and so the description of the region as “mound destroyed by the flood” is fitting. For the fate of Nippur during the rise of the Babylonian empire, see Laurie E. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality in Sources Relating to the Judean Exile,” *HBAI* 3 (2014): 173; Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 10, 405–415.

36. Yigal Bloch, “From Horse Trainers to Dependent Workers: The *Šušānu* Class in the Late Babylonian Period, with a Special Focus on Āl-Yāḥūdu Tablets,” *KASAL: Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico* 14 (2017): 91–93.

37. *CAD Š/3*, s.v. *šušānu*, 379b–380a. Yigal Bloch argues that the shift happened in phases. At first, *šušānus* were oblates in temple complexes like that of Ebabbar and were responsible for raising and maintaining horses for ceremonial and royal use (military campaigns and building projects). Then, the central Babylonian government began conscripting temple oblates into royal military service. Early in the Persian period, the term still signaled horse maintenance, but applied to a much larger population of individuals dependent on the state who were given land to work in exchange for raising horses (among other services owed to the central government). The latest evidence for this usage comes at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. By the time of the Murašû archive, the term had lost all equine associations and represented a class of worker rather than a particular profession. Yigal Bloch, “From Horse Trainers to Dependent Workers: The *Šušānu* Class in the Late Babylonian Period, with a Special Focus on Āl-Yāḥūdu Tablets,” *KASAL: Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico* 14 (2017): 91–118.

dependent status. The latter usage was the standard in the Murašû archive, when the title is best attested within the land-for-service system. By this point the semantics of term had drifted to refer to a broad social class of dependent worker and lost its original associations with horse care. During the Murašû period (second half of the 5th century BCE), *šušānûs* held an intermediate status between freedom and slavery: they had fewer rights than totally free citizens, but were granted more protections than chattel slaves. They were able to hold income-producing bow lands (see below) but, according to Stolper, they were also beholden to “the masters of the superordinate organizations to which they were attached,” namely private manors and major government institutions.<sup>38</sup> For Ahīqam and those he represented, who were active during the reign of Darius I (522–486 BCE), Judean *šušānus* were under the mandate of the governor of Beyond-the-River and interacted directly with subordinate local officials.<sup>39</sup> They paid an assessed

---

38. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 79–82, here 82; Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 210–221.

39. CUSAS 28.18:7–8 indicates that the Judean fields were under the mandate (*ina šU<sup>II</sup>*) of Uštanu (of) Beyond-the-River (<sup>[m]</sup>*uš-tu-nu-’e-bir* ID). The editors of CUSAS 28 have identified this figure with the governor (*bēl piḥāti*) of Beyond-the-River, known from two earlier texts from the reign of Darius (for the references and discussion, see the entry on “Uštanu” in Muhammad A. Dandamayev, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia* [Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 6; Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1992], 139–142). Aside from the elision of the position (<sup>[u]</sup>NAM) from, no. 18, Uštanu’s title is also missing “Babylon” (E<sup>ki</sup>) found in the earlier documents. These differences could simply reflect subpar scribal work in the agricultural regions of Sippar, or could reflect a major administrative shifts early in Darius I’s reign. For the latter possibility, see the discussion in Pearce, “Identifying Judeans,” 17; for the history of the position of “governor of Beyond-the-River” according to Mesopotamian and Greek sources, see Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 283–305.

*immitu* rent as a condition of their status (no. 19), and most likely also owed the state labor (*ilku*) in terms of military service or corvée work as a condition of their land tenure.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to their roles as *šušānus*, we also know from the archival record that a number of resettled Judeans were granted *bīt qašti* land, “bow lands,”<sup>41</sup> by the Babylonian central government. These lands, which were granted to individuals in exchange for military service and manual labor,<sup>42</sup> are the most commonly attested kind of plot in the land-for-service system, although *bīt narkabti* (chariot lands) and *bīt sisê* (horse or calvary lands) are also found. While the latter seem to have been reserved for those in the higher rungs of Babylonian society,<sup>43</sup> bow lands were granted to members of its lower levels, including newly resettled ethnic minorities like the Judeans of Āl-Yāhūdū.<sup>44</sup> One of the earliest tablets to mention Āl-Yāhūdū links a certain

---

40. Bloch associates this service with horse-raising and training for Persian garrisons stationed Beyond-the-River. He also argues that the Judean *šušānus* may have been conscripted as soldiers to fight in the region. Bloch, “From Horse Trainers to Dependent Workers,” 102–111. However, as we encountered in our discussion of the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, this argument runs contrary to Persian policy in Egypt where intentional steps were taken to create social, political, and economic distance between garrisons, which were populated by non-Egyptians, and the subjugated population. This policy, however, may have been unique to Egypt as a function of the inherited Saite treatment of foreign soldiers.

41. CUSAS 28:14; 27; 39; 47; 49; 51.

42. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 227ff; Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 198–203.

43. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 235.

44. The Arameans of Āl-Nērib, discussed below, also appear to have been settled on bow lands. While their archival materials never actually mention *bīt qašti* land (or *bīt narkabti* and *bīt sisê* land, for that matter), Tolini highlights the presence of the expression *palaḥ šarri*, “royal labor,” in texts 8–9, which is commonly used with regard to the service rendered for bow lands in the Murašû archive from Nippur. This suggests to Tolini that the Neirabians were also settled on crown land, and perhaps *bīt qašti* land in particular. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back.” 86–87. For a discussion of the *palaḥ šarri* in the context of the Murašû archive, see Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 61–62.

Šidqī-Yāma to quiver land (*bīt azanni*)<sup>45</sup> in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II.<sup>46</sup> Further more, two texts from early in the reign of Darius I (517 BCE) record yields from subdivided bow lands. The division of full lands into halves and quarters, as recorded in these documents, points to two important features of the bow land: 1.) these plots (and their obligations) could be inherited, and 2.) they were part of Judeo-Babylonian life at an early point in the community's settlement outside Nippur.<sup>47</sup>

#### *A Judean Ḥaṭru (?)*

Returning now to the transaction recorded in CUSAS 28.18, Aḥīqam takes on a significant debt on behalf of his fellow *šušānūs* who are explicitly identified by their ethnonym.<sup>48</sup> The amount of

---

45. No. 2.6; ca. 587 BCE. *Bīt azanni* is a far less common title, but the editors of CUSAS 28 believe this to be a variation on the *bīt qašti*. See their discussion in the notes for the text. Van Driel makes a similar claim and suggests that the *bīt azanni* land nomenclature is specific to the Nippur region, supporting the identification of Āl-Yāḥūdū and Bīt-Našar with that region. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 289.

46. The scribe of CUSAS 28.2 forgot to add the regnal year in the promissory note's closing formula, but the editors of the volume argue that it should be dated to early in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II based on prosopography and the document's pledge clause. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 100–102.

47. CUSAS 28.14–15 (517 BCE) detail estimated *imittu* rent from a number of Judean *šušānūs*. The listed individuals are responsible for quarters and halves of lands, indicating that they were not the original recipients of the lands and attendant obligations. Rather, it was their parents or grandparents who had first been issued the land. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 120–121. By the time of the Murašûs, however, it seems that the central government had incorporated more land into the land-for-service system so that the area of a bow land in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE was roughly equal to one held in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. See the discussion in Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia." 163–164.

48. The typical debt taken on by farmers in texts associated with the corpus is less than 10 kor of barley or dates, and the majority of promissory notes are for less than 5 kor. After the 160 kor debt taken on by Aḥīqam, the second largest amount attested for Āl-Yāḥūdū is 25 kor of dates (no. 20).

this transaction (160 kor, the equivalent of 4 minas of silver) is noteworthy, as it “by far exceeds the agricultural output of a small settlement.”<sup>49</sup> The details of the transaction suggest two important historical realities. First of all, the *šušānûs* represented by Aḥīqam were a recognized administrative or social group responsible for paying taxes to local Persian officials. Second, this group appears to have been ethnically-defined.<sup>50</sup>

As a cornerstone of their approach to imperial rule, the Babylonians practiced one-way forced migration, transferring populations from the empire’s periphery to its center.<sup>51</sup> Toponyms like Āl-Yāhūdāya and Āl-Nērabāya from the Nippur region — what Dandamayev calls “twin towns” — suggest that the Babylonians resettled these groups of deportees in ethnically-distinct communities.<sup>52</sup> In addition to the primary goals of deportation — the stamping out rebellion by dissolving local (disloyal) power structures and transporting a much needed workforce into the

---

49. This quote is actually in reference to no. 17, a receipt written three days prior to no. 18 that records the repayment of a promissory note of equivalent value to that of no. 18. As argued by the editors, the two texts are almost certainly related. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 7.

50. While not identified as Judean in no. 17, the group of *šušānûs* is qualified by the gentilic in no. 18.7: *šá* <sup>lú</sup>*šu-šá*-[*na-ni*]-*e*<sup>mes</sup> *ia-ḥa*<sup>1</sup>-*da*-’.

51. This is in distinction to the policy of the Assyrians who practiced two-way deportation, replacing one population with another from elsewhere in their expanding empire. The goal of these deportations seems to have been to drastically reduce the possibility of further rebellion while simultaneously extending direct and indirect Assyrian influence in the targeted regions. This approach sometimes resulted in what Oded describes as “a blending of ethnic and national groups in various parts of the empire.” Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979), 41–74, esp. 44–46, here 44. Comparing the Assyrian and Babylonian approaches, Vanderhooft concluded: “Ultimately, however, such a policy [by the Babylonians] may have created a centripetal force that was difficult to arrest, and which contrasts with the centrifugal force that seems to have played a role in pulling apart the Assyrian empire.” Vanderhooft, *Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 112.

52. Israel Eph’al, “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th-5th Centuries B.C.: Maintenance and Cohesion,” *Or* 47 (1978): 80–83. Cf. Dandamayev, “Twin Towns,” 146–147.

heartland of the empire — this policy allowed the government to take advantage of pre-existing native or internal organizations in the land-for-service system. One example of such an administrative unit that was particularly popular under the Persians was the *ḥaṭru* (or *ḥadru*).<sup>53</sup> The *ḥaṭru* was a small scale administrative unit that is well attested in the Murašû archive and appears to have flourished in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. As a primary administrative unit of the Persian land-for-service system,<sup>54</sup> the *ḥaṭru* was composed of individual plots — often bow lands — that *šušānus* and other dependent workers were granted in exchange for yearly *ilku* service, that is military or infrastructural labor.<sup>55</sup> This class of small-scale fiscal districts was responsible for producing or extracting taxes for the central government and ensuring and extending agricultural production. According to Stolper, “not least, it was a means of supporting a standing military reserve, a local garrison, and cadres of state-controlled workers.”<sup>56</sup>

The *ḥaṭru*, which represented an exploitable workforce, could be identified with a profession (<sup>lù</sup>*aspastūa*, “horse-feeders”; <sup>lù</sup>*malāḥānu* “boatmen”; <sup>lù</sup>*rē’û*, “shepherds”) or through relation to the estate of a particular official (*bīt* <sup>lù</sup>*simmagir*, “estate of the *simmagir*-official”;

---

53. Also spelled *ḥadru*, the term appears to be loan-word into Akkadian. It is unclear whether it comes from Aramaic or Persian. If it is the latter, the structure that it represents was most likely introduced by the Persians. However, if it is from Aramaic, it is possible that it was in place already in the period of Babylonian rule, although its use is not attested prior to the rise of Cyrus. For a discussion of the term’s etymology, see Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 71–72.

54. “As a means of control and extraction, the *ḥaṭru* was a characteristic formation of the Achaemenid Empire.” Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 72.

55. In text no. 12, Aḥīqam pays 6 shekels to a Judean *dekû*, Yāḥû-e-DIR son of Ṭāb-šalam, to cover the cost of a replacement worker for another Judean’s *ilku* service. For a discussion of the *dekû*’s name, which may be linguistically Aramaic or Akkadian and coupled with a Yahwistic theophoric element, see the editors’ comments on p. 114.

56. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 70. Cf. the similar comment by Van Driel: “the *ḥadru* constituted the basic structure, based on the assignment of land, in which the ordinary footsoldier in the countryside found his peacetime place.” Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 310.

<sup>lú</sup>šušānū ša bīt <sup>lú</sup>šaknūtu, “šušānūs of the estate of foremen”), but it was often marked by the ethnicity of its members, including <sup>lú</sup>Urašṭaya u Miliduaya, “Uartians and Melitenians,” and <sup>lú</sup>Šūrāya, “Tyrians.”<sup>57</sup>

This final category, *ḥaṭrus* defined by an ethnonym, is particularly relevant to our discussion of the category of “Judean” in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. Although it is not the most common type of *ḥaṭru* attested in the Murašû archive, it does account for a sizable percentage. Of the 67 *ḥaṭrus* Stolper identifies, at least eleven refer to an ethnic group or geographic location.<sup>58</sup> Alstola argues persuasively that “the most logical reason behind these names is the assignment of deportees to *ḥaṭrus* according to their place of origins.”<sup>59</sup>

There is no reference to a *ḥaṭru* in the material from Āl-Yāḥūdu and the institution’s earliest attestations come from the Murašû archive.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, Laurie Pearce<sup>61</sup> and Bob

---

57. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 72–79.

58. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 72–79. Zadok put the number at 15 out of 60+, with between 5–6 clearly identifiable as West Semitic. Ran Zadok, “West Semitic Groups in the Nippur Region Between c. 750 and 330 B.C.E.,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (eds. Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 103–104.

59. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia,” 167; Eph’al, “The Western Minorities,” 80–83; Michael Jursa, “Taxation and Service Obligations in Babylonia from Nebuchadnezzar to Darius and the Evidence for Darius’ Tax Reform,” *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich = Herodotus and the Persian Empire : Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen,” Innsbruck, 24.-28. November 2008* (eds. Robert Rollinger, Truschnegg Brigitte et al.; Classica et Orientalia 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 435.

60. According to Stolper, the term is only attested four times outside of the archive and in texts that are contemporary. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 71 n. 5.

61. Pearce, “Identifying Judeans,” 16–17.

Becking<sup>62</sup> have both argued for the existence of a Judean *ḥaṭru* during the period of activity recorded in the corpus. According to Pearce, “Although no explicit mention of a Judean *ḥaṭrû* yet exists, the CUSAS / BaAr corpus records the Judeans’ dependent economic status and their interactions with the administrative structures in the long sixth century in ways that suggest the potential for the existence of a Judean *ḥaṭrû* in the Nippur region.”<sup>63</sup> Their case is compelling. First, it is clear from a number of records in the corpus that the inhabitants of Āl-Yāhūdu and Bīt-Našar were organized into an administrative unit responsible for paying taxes to the central government.<sup>64</sup> Second, *šušānûs* featured prominently in the titles of *ḥaṭrus* in the Murašû materials, and as we saw above, *šušānû* was a common designation of Judeans under Darius I.<sup>65</sup>

A number of Judeans are also known to have held low-level administrative positions closely associated with the Persian *ḥaṭru*. A Judean named Ṭūb-Yāma son of Mukkêa, a man of significant standing, is the namesake of a village in tablet dated to 551.<sup>66</sup> This suggests to the editors of CUSAS 28 that Ṭūb-Yāma was the *šaknu* there, a position closely associated with the

---

62. Bob Becking, “In Babylon: The Exile in Historical (Re)construction,” in *From Babylon to Eternity: The Exile Remembered and Constructed in Text and Tradition* (eds. Bob Becking, Alex Cannegieter et al.; Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2009), 20–21.

63. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality,” 177.

64. For example, three tablets (nos. 14–15, and BaAr 6 no. 12 ) list the estimated *imittu* rent for bow lands attached to individuals with Judean names. Secondly, there is Aḥīqam’s role as representative of a group of Judean *šušānûs*.

65. Stolper lists 10 distinct *ḥaṭrus* that include “*šušānû*” in their designations. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 76–78. Both Becking and Pearce note the correlation between *šušānûs* and *ḥaṭrus*. Becking, “In Babylon,” 20–21; Pearce, “Identifying Judeans,” 16–17.

66. No. 8.16 URU šá<sup>m</sup> ṭu-ub-ia-ma.

*ḥaṭru* under the Persians.<sup>67</sup> Three other Judeans held the title of *dēkû* (“summoner”) in the tablets from Āl-Yāḥūdū and Bīt-Našar early in the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses.<sup>68</sup> Under the Persians, the *dēkû* was responsible for collecting taxes for land holders associated with the *ḥaṭru* and served under the *šaknu*.<sup>69</sup>

As I noted above, the *ḥaṭru* is unattested under the Babylonians (or even early in the Persian period) which complicates positing the existence of a Judean example prior to the Murašû archives. It is nonetheless likely, however, that the institution — or one like it — predates the earliest occurrences of the term. As Michael Jursa has demonstrated, there was a remarkable amount of administrative continuity between the Babylonian and Persian regimes.<sup>70</sup> Taxation systems were essentially undisturbed in the transition from one imperial power to the next, particularly in rural areas.<sup>71</sup> This includes continuity in low-level administrative positions like that of the *dēkû*, which Pearce has shown to have predated Cyrus’ conquest.<sup>72</sup> Further, no. 83

---

67. Pearce and Wunsch give Tūb-Yāma the title “foreman,” although they do not indicate the Akkadian title behind it (110). For a discussion of “foremen” on bow lands during the Persian period, see Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 82–97.

68. CUSAS 28.12 (553 BCE) Yāḥû-e-DIR son of Tāb-šalam; no. 83 (538 BCE) Yāma-iztī; Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes,” no. 2 (532 BCE) Abdī-Yāḥû son of Barak-Yāma.

69. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 83.

70. Michael Jursa, “The Transition of Babylonia from the Neo-Babylonian Empire to Achaemenid Rule,” in *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt: From Sargon of Agade to Saddam Hussein* (ed. Harriet Crawford; New York: The British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2007), 73–94. cf. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality,” 165–179.

71. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality,” 77–80, 86–89.

72. Pearce cites earlier attestations of the position in tablets from 561 and 550 BCE. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality,” 176 n. 51.

shows that a Judean named Yāma-izrī, *dēkū* of Āl-Yāhūdu, already held the position in Cyrus' first regnal year (538 BCE).<sup>73</sup>

Assuming continuity in systems, if not nomenclature, Govert Van Driel has argued that the *kišru*, a well-attested administrative unit in the 7th and 6th centuries, was a forerunner of the Persian *ḥaṭru*.<sup>74</sup> Under the Assyrians, the *kišru* was a group of standing troops, often housed on a large estate, who were available for the king's use. These soldiers may have been of foreign origin, and they seem to have been able to provide for themselves by working the land of the estates on which they were settled.<sup>75</sup> A tablet from the reign of Darius I mentions three *kišrus*, each attached to an individual with a Babylonian name, in the environs of Āl-Yāhūdu.<sup>76</sup>

---

73. Yāma-izrī is given the title of <sup>10</sup>*di-ku-ú šá URU ia-a-ḥu-di*. Notably, this tablet, which was written in Našar, creates an important link between the two settlements of Našar and Āl-Yāhūdu: “The appearance of the *dēkū* of Judahtown in a document written at Bīt Našar attests to the proximity of the two locations. Were it otherwise, it would be difficult to implement tasks associated with this administrative position.” Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 229.

74. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 309–310 n. 62. Cf. Jursa, “Taxation and Service Obligations,” 436, and the editorial note on line 8 of text 23 in CUSAS 28, both in agreement with Van Driel, but without further argumentation.

75. Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 309. Cf. *CAD K s.v. kišru 2*, 437–438 and also *rab kišri*, 442–443.

76. Text no. 28 refers to the borders of the *kišrus* of Zammaku, Bēl-na'id, and Riḥētu in establishing the boundaries of a joint farming endeavor undertaken by Aḥīqam and five other Judeans. This suggests that the Judeans had pooled their land together to increase the efficiency and output of their efforts.

It is also likely that at least some *kišrus* were organized according to the ethnic composition of its members.<sup>77</sup> Camb. 85, a tablet from Babylon from early in the reign of Cambyses, is concerned with the sale of *bīt qašti* land related to the [ki]-*šir šá<sup>lu</sup>mi-šir-a-a*, the Egyptian *kišru*.<sup>78</sup> The presence of an Egyptian *kišru* so early in the reign of Cambyses strongly suggests that it predated the Persian conquest.<sup>79</sup> As Israel Eph'al argues, the Egyptians in question were likely the descendants of 7<sup>th</sup>- and 6<sup>th</sup>-century BCE deportees,<sup>80</sup> and it is probable that the institution was preserved through the transition to Persian rule.

A Judean *ḥaṭru* (or *kišru*) would also have made practical sense as an administrative unit for the central Babylonian government. In a number of modern imperial or colonial situations, a state that exercises authority over an indigenous people imposes its system on native structures that were already in place. Rather than building from the ground up, the imperial power takes

---

77. There is a reference in l. 2 to the ʾgbr<sup>1</sup>n zy kšr mlk' in an Aramaic tablet from Syria, dated to the seventh century BCE. The soldiers, all with West Semitic names, are identified as *bny zmn* in l. 3, "Zamanites." The editor of the text notes that the "genetically-oriented" expression is strange for the period, but it may be that the ethnic identity (as expressed through shared descent) of these individuals was an important identifier for their *kšr mlk'* or *kišir šarri*. For a discussion of the tablet's dating, see Frederick Mario Fales, Luc Bachelot et al., "An Aramaic Tablet from Tell Shioukh Fawqani, Syria," *Sem* 46 (1996): 108–109.

78. L. 1. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities," 76. restores \**mi-* in the break, following the edition by Dandamayev, suggesting a translation of "border," from *mišru*. (cf. *CAD M/2 s.v. mišru* A 1, 5' p. 114); . Van Driel, however, restores \**ki-* without comment: Van Driel, *Elusive Silver*, 309. Dandamayev's original edition is in Russian, and so I have been unable to see if he provides an explanation for his reconstruction. In Stolper's collation of the tablet, he is unable to plausibly reconstruct any sign in the break (personal communication).

79. See below on the longevity of this Egyptian community.

80. Because this Egyptian community existed prior to Cambyses' conquest of Egypt in 525 (the tablet is dated to 529), Eph'al conjectures that its members are likely the descendants of deportees from the reigns of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II and their campaigns to the West. He further notes the existence of Egyptians in Babylonia prior to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities," 77–78.

advantage of preexisting power structures that the community already recognizes as legitimate in order to control a large population with a small number of colonial representative.<sup>81</sup> For the Babylonians and the Persians, the decision to resettle deported communities according to their place of origin seems to share a fundamental principle with this approach; it allowed them to exploit pre-existing relationships and political structures in order to streamline interactions between the central government and the influx of state-dependent workers. From the perspective of ethnic minorities, this approach had the effect of reinforcing traditional hierarchies and the systems that supported them. If we can assume what Smith-Christopher calls a “take me to your leader phenomenon”<sup>82</sup> of indirect rule was also operative in the Babylonian approach to resettlement, then there were also significant opportunities for gain for those who represented the community in dealing with imperial representatives. There is no direct evidence for such a

---

81. Indirect rule, as this approach is commonly known, is well attested in European (and especially British) approaches to colonial rule in Africa as well as in south Asia. The comparison between European colonialism and Babylonian resettlement policies is by no means one to one. Most importantly, the Babylonians were not trying to rule territory outside its geographical borders through the land-for-service system, but rather control new populations recently resettled in Babylonia. Nonetheless, there are productive areas of overlap conceptually and strategically between these approaches. Most notably, indirect rule by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century European powers was particularly well-suited to governing large territories that included multiple small-scale political units. The colonial power would support local rulers (and shape the “traditions” by which they governed), thereby aligning the interests of local leadership who oversaw significant populations with the goals of the colonial power (primarily resource extraction). Furthermore, they could do so with a limited number of colonial representatives. Although primarily a coercive approach, indirect rule could provide considerable benefits and opportunities for local rulers who were willing to collaborate. For this model in Africa, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton Studies in Culture / Power / History; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 35–137, esp. 72–90. For a comparison of British approaches in India, see Lakshmi Iyer, “Direct Versus Indirect Colonial Rule in India: Long-Term Consequences,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92 (2010): 693–713.

82. See the discussion in Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 97.

structure in the Āl-Yāhūdu corpus, but both the cuneiform material and the literature of the Hebrew Bible make reference to such an institution: communal eldership.

### *Judeans Elders in Babylonia*

According to Camb. 85, the land sale it documents took place *ina puḫur* <sup>lú</sup>šībūtu ša <sup>lú</sup>Mi-šir-a-a, “in the assembly of the Egyptian elders.”<sup>83</sup> The assembly of Egyptians was thus empowered to oversee land sales within the community. Broadly speaking, elders in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods were a local body of citizens (*mār banē*) with judicial standing. In earlier phases of Mesopotamian history assemblies of elders held significant authority in the urban settings in which they were typically located. However, by the Neo-Babylonian period, they existed alongside judges and lower level administrative representatives of the central government and their authority had been severely circumscribed.<sup>84</sup> In the case of the *puḫur* <sup>lú</sup>šībūtu of the

---

83. Dandamayev’s reading of *šībūtu* appears to be a modern effort to correct an ancient error. Strassmaier’s original handcopy clearly reads *ina puḫur* <sup>lú</sup>ši-tu-tu. JN Strassmaier and BTA Evretts, *Babylonische Texte: Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.)* (1890), 49–50. The CAD’s entry on *puḫru*, however, reads *pi-tu-tu* based on Stolper’s collation, while noting the difficulty of the line. *CAD P s.v. puḫru* A 1b, 490a. Stolper’s notes from the collation confirm the reading of the second sign as TU and allow for a reading of either PI or ŠI for the first sign. He also points out the similarity of ŠI/PI to the MI of *mi-šir-a-a* at the end of the line. (Personal Communication).

84. Muhammad A. Dandamayev, “The Neo-Babylonian Elders,” in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of I M Diakonoff* (eds. Nicholas Postgate and Muhammad A. Dandamayev; Westminster: Arts and Phillips LTD, 1982); Muhammad A. Dandamayev, “The Neo-Babylonian Popular Assembly,” in *Šulmu: Papers on the Ancient Near East Presented at International Conference of Socialist Countries (Prague, Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 1986)*. Edited by P. Vavroušek et al. Prague: Charles University (eds. Petr Vavroušek and Vladimír Souček; Prague: Charles University, 1988), 63–71; cf. Bruce Wells, “Competing or Complementary? Judges and Elders in Biblical and Neo-Babylonian Law,” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 16 (2010): 81–85.

Egyptian *kišru*, Eph'al argues that "this assembly had a jurisdictional standing recognized by the Achaemenid authorities."<sup>85</sup> If Eph'al is correct, then the "assembly of Egyptian elders" was a native Egyptian (or at least administered by native Egyptians) body that existed contemporaneously with the the imperially-imposed tax unit; the Egyptian *kišru*.<sup>86</sup> It was an organizational body that the Babylonians might have exploited to streamline the extraction of taxes and labor.

The corpus from Āl-Yāhūdu does not refer to a *puhur* <sup>lu</sup>*šībūtu ša* <sup>lu</sup>*Yāhūdāya*, but literature set in a contemporary context and preserved in the Hebrew Bible does refer to a body of זקנים, the Hebrew equivalent of *šībūtu*, during the early phases of the Judean diaspora in Babylonia. Elders are depicted as a body to whom the prophet Jeremiah could address a letter (זקני הגולה in Jer 29.1) and who had the authority to approach the prophet Ezekiel on behalf of the Judeo-Babylonian community of Tel Aviv (8.1; 14.1; 20.1, 3).<sup>87</sup> In biblical texts that address the monarchic and pre-monarchic periods, elders served as representatives of the משפחה, a kin-based and territorial unit, and acted as the primary unit of local governance, often outside the direct control of the king. They are presented as an authoritative group in towns and cities,

---

85. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities," 76.

86. Dandamayev has argued that in rural settings like what we have in Āl-Yāhūdu the assembly of elders did not necessarily refer to a body of free citizens; rather, it was a system of self government for the "alien" communities settled in rural Babylonia. Dandamayev, 41.

87. The elders are identified as the זקני יהודה in 9.1, and as the זקני ישראל in 14.1; 20.1–2. On the role of native institutions like eldership in a comparative diaspora perspective, see discussion in Smith (-Christopher), *The Religion of the Landless*, 94–99.

typically at a distance from the central government.<sup>88</sup> They are closely associated with city gates and the business that was conducted there (e.g. swearing oaths, ratifying or witnessing contracts, adjudicating legal disputes),<sup>89</sup> and could serve as representatives of their town or city in

---

88. Russell argues that towns in the Iron Age Levant served independent political units, with groups of elders serving in roles of authority. Within the narrative of the Deuteronomistic History, kings (and would-be kings) sought to gain influence in towns in support of their efforts to centralize authority. Stephen C. Russell, *The King and the Land: A Geography of Royal Power in the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 68–83.

89. Eg. Deut 21.19ff; Ruth 4; Amos 5.10. The importance of city gates for the administration of towns and cities in the Iron Age Levant is attested in the archaeological record through the presence of benches in roughly twenty sites from the period as well as contemporary sites in Transjordan. They also appear to have been a site of interaction between central and local authority through the frequent presence of royal monuments there. See the discussion in Stephen C. Russell, *The King and the Land*, 77–80.

Concerning the role of elders in adjudicating legal disputes, their presence alongside a separate class of judges (שפטים, appointed in Deut 16.18) in the D source has led scholars to wonder about the specifics of the elders' role within the thought-world of D. Were they conceived of as playing the role of judge, or were they only to serve as witnesses to communal proceedings, as a notarial forum? On this question, see, for example, Wells, "Competing or Complementary," 77–104, and his discussion of the approaches of Otto and van der Toorn, 85–89; Jeffrey H. Tigay, "The Role of the Elders in the Laws of Deuteronomy," in *A Common Cultural Heritage: Studies on Mesopotamia and the Biblical World in Honor of Barry L. Eichler* (eds. Grant. Frame and Barry L. Eichler; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2011), 89–96; Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 98–143, esp. 123–127.

interactions with outsiders.<sup>90</sup> While elders are not directly attested in the material record of Iron Age Israel and Judah, the kinship-based system of which they were a part is well represented.<sup>91</sup>

As a form of governance at the local and kinship-based level, Judean eldership as represented in the literature of the Hebrew Bible would have been a productive institution on which the Babylonians could have imposed a tax unit like the *kišru*. As argued by Alstola, “It was practical to retain the basic communal structures which allowed the local officials to deal with the representatives of the community, not directly with each family unit.”<sup>92</sup> The leadership role of the “assembly of Egyptian elders” within the Egyptian *kišru* in Camb. 85 attests to the association of the imperial system with that of the resettled minority. The literary evidence for the זקנים as an a representative body within the diaspora from the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel adds further support for the possibility of Judean elders. It may therefore have been the case that

---

90. Among his examples of elders representing the population of a town, Russell points to the role their role as intercessors in cases of accidental manslaughter (Deut 9.1–13, Num 35.9–29, and Josh 20.1–9), the elders of Jabesh-Gilead negotiating with Nahash the Ammonite in 1 Sam 11, and the elders of Bethlehem approaching Samuel in 1 Sam 16. Russell, *The King and the Land*, 70–72.

Dandamayev notes that among the roles that the assembly of elders played in the Neo-Babylonian period, “Sometimes important instructions of the high state officials were announced in the presence of the Elders (*sic*). Finally, Elders acted before the king as representatives of their cities.” Dandamayev, “The Neo-Babylonian Elders,” 40. With regard to Judean eldership as presented in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Eph’al concludes that “It is noteworthy that all references to the Elders (*sic*) of the Jews deal with internal affairs with no indication of the status of the Elders vis-a-vis the Babylonian authorities.” Eph’al, “The Western Minorities,” 79. Cf. the similar conclusion in Smith (-Christopher), *The Religion of the Landless*, 96.

91. For the connection between the literary representation of this system and the material evidence, see Vanderhooff’s discussion of the Priestly History’s representation of the משפחה. Vanderhooff, “The Israelite *mišpāḥâ*,” 485–496. Cf. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*, 135–182, esp. 147–165.

92. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 179.

in their dealings with Iddinā, a local representative of the central government, Aḥīqam son of Rapā-Yāma, Qīl-Yāma son of Šikin-Yāma, Šalāmān son of Rapā-Yāma,<sup>93</sup> and any other individuals who stood in for the Judean *šušānūs* served as elders who represented the diasporic Judean community.

### *Imperial Categorization and the Reproduction of Judeanness*

In the preceding discussion, I have tried to show the ways in which *Yāhūdāya* became a salient category for the Babylonians and their Persian successors. First, in their approach to the resettlement of deportees in Mesopotamia, the Babylonians appear to have intentionally maintained geographically/ethnically-defined units. Israel Eph'al argued this point strongly in a pair of essays forty years ago,<sup>94</sup> and the new evidence from the Āl-Yāhūdu corpus strongly supports his conclusions. Secondly, in the years and decades after resettlement, *Yāhūdāy* remained a relevant category for the Babylonians and their Persian successors as part of a broader imperial system of administration and production. Through their incorporation into the land-for-service system and their organization into small scale and discrete administrative units like the *ḥaṭru* or *kišru*, the Judeans could more easily and more efficiently be exploited as a workforce for tax collection. Finally, I argued that it is likely that in creating these ethnically-defined administrative units, the Babylonians and Persians imposed their own systems on top of preexisting or native social structures, coopting those structures for their own needs within the

---

93. The latter two individuals serve a similar role to that of Aḥīqam as representatives of Judean *šušānūs* in no. 20.

94. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities"; Eph'al, "On the Political and Social Organization of the Jews in Babylonian Exile."

land-for-service system. It is possible that this process resulted in new standing, roles, and opportunities for members of these groups. For the Judeo-Babylonians of Āl-Yāhūdu, I made the case for Judean elders serving in the role of representatives of their collective.

Through this approach to incorporating displaced ethnic minorities into the central government's tax system, the Babylonians and the Persians played a significant role in the subsequent construction of Judean diaspora identity. Although the categorization of *Yāhūdāya* served a primarily pragmatic function for these vast Mesopotamian empire, the decision to settle individuals from the former kingdom of Judah together and treat them as a distinct taxable unit created an environment in which a Judean identity could be reproduced, transformed, and reified. This is not to say that such an identity was the inevitable product of this kind of grouping; rather, the imperial category of *Yāhūdāya* acted as a form of pressure on the would-be social group applied from without. Just as important, however, were the dynamics that produced an insider perspective of what defined Judeanness.

The imperial decision to embrace native or traditional institutions played a particularly significant role. In so doing, they allowed these systems to adaptively perpetuate themselves in their new social and geographical contexts. As I argued in ch. 2, institutions play a pivotal role in identity-construction among immigrants. When institutions are in place to foster ethnic or national identity, individuals from the in-group are more likely to identify with diacritics like language, dress, and religion than they would be in their absence. The institutions provide positive reinforcement and the opportunity for individuals to develop cultural capital within the community by learning and exhibiting those elements that can become constitutive of ethnic

identity in the diaspora. Furthermore, it is the nature of systems of power (like Judean eldership and the Babylonian and Persian administrations into which it was integrated) to reinforce the structures that undergird and perpetuate those systems.<sup>95</sup>

The effects of this process are particularly acute in a diaspora setting like the one the in which the inhabitants of Āl-Yāhūdu found themselves in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. The cultural capital attached to positions of authority like eldership is maintained through the establishment and reproduction of cultural “orthodoxy.”<sup>96</sup> Unlike other forms, the capital produced by cultural orthodoxy is mobile,<sup>97</sup> and can thus be preserved even in the wake of a catastrophe.<sup>98</sup> This is especially so when there are systems in place for its maintenance and the resulting context allows for it,<sup>99</sup> as was the case for ethnic minorities resettled in distinct communities under the Babylonians. The likelihood of preservation of such systems is increased if individuals with internally-recognized authority serve as spokespeople for the community with the new imperial body. Aḥīqam’s role as a representative of members of his Judean community

---

95. This is not to suggest that the elders actively attempted to undergird their cultural capital and social positions. Rather, it is the nature of capital that those who have it perpetuate the systems that allow them to maintain and grow it. This process, which Bourdieu calls *habitus*, is not necessarily the product of conscious efforts, but rather a kind of misrecognized cultural momentum that is difficult to stop. Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 72–197.

96. Orthodoxy in this case, what Bourdieu calls the *doxa*, represents the unquestioned universe produced and reproduced through *habitus*. It is the socially-constructed “natural” that governs and mediates the community’s interactions. Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 167–169.

97. Elke Greenen, “Gesellschaftliche Verfügung über Kapitalien und Vulnerabilität in knoceptioneller Perspektive,” in *Disaster and Relief Management = Katastrophen und ihre Bewältigung* (ed. Angelika Berlejung; FAT 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 49.

98. Elke Greenen, “Gesellschaftliche Verfügung,” 47–50.

99. Angelika Berlejung, “New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile: The Loss and Rise of Capitals of the Judeans in Babylonia,” in *Alphabets, Texts and Artifacts in the Ancient Near East: Studies Presented to Benjamin Sass* (eds. Israel Finkelstein, Christian Robin et al.; Paris: Van Dieren, 2016), 26.

in his interactions with Iddinā suggests that this was the situation in Āl-Yāhūdu. Furthermore, this situation would be consistent with the organization of resettled groups elsewhere in Babylonia. According to Eph'al, "self-organization and national identity were features common to various ethnic minorities during the 6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C."<sup>100</sup>

The next question that these conclusions naturally prompt concerns the facets of Judeanness that would have been reinforced through institutions like the זקני יהודה. What were the relevant diacritica of Judean identity that those whose social capital had been reinforced by the imperial authorities sought to perpetuate, either intentionally as an effort at what they would have considered to be preservation or as part of the inertia of an ongoing cultural process? It is to this issue that we now turn.

### Judeanness in a Babylonian Setting

#### *Markers of Judeanness*

In the preceding section I discussed the use and value of the category of *Yāhūdāya* (Judeans) for the Babylonian and Persian administrations and the local officials who employed it. In this next section I will focus on how Judeans interacted with each other, with their non-Judean neighbors, and with those local officials who represented the central administration. By analyzing those interactions, recorded in roughly a century's worth of documentation, I will examine the construction and observable diacritics of Judeanness in the Babylonian diaspora.

---

100. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities," 87.

### *The Perseverance of Hebrew*

Due to the nature of the cuneiform evidence, we are limited in what markers of Judeanness were germane to the Babylonian scribes and therefore preserved by them. However, there is strong evidence in the tablets that points to a frequent diacritic of in-group associations: the continued use of a shared traditional language — Hebrew. The landscape of the Nippur countryside, both physical and cultural, lent itself to the adoption of Aramaic as the primary spoken language among ethnic minorities during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. The area's flat terrain and relatively easy means of communication aided the spread of Babylonian culture, but also Aramaic — the lingua franca of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods — throughout the area.<sup>101</sup> This makes the continued use of Hebrew by Judeans at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century significant.

There is strong evidence that Hebrew remained an important traditional marker of Judeanness among at least some displaced Judeans. First of all, Hebrew is the predominant language of names that bear Yahwistic theophoric elements during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Of the more than 70 Yahwistic names attested in CUSAS 28 and BaAr 6, more than 70% have been identified by the editors as bearing Hebrew elements. Another 20% are West Semitic (and

---

101. “We should assume that after one or two generations Judean exiles in Babylon adopted Aramaic as their vernacular and even cultural language. In the end, Babylonians, exiled Judeans and the other Western Semites of Babylonia came to share a common language and culture, but one in which Babylonian elements still remained very influential.” Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names,” 252. Cf. Zadok, “West Semitic Groups in the Nippur Region,” 107.

possibly Hebrew), while only 4% are likely Akkadian.<sup>102</sup> Second, it was common for tablets written in Late Babylonian to bear Aramaic epigraphs on their edges for the purpose of identification. At least seven tablets from the CUSAS 28 collection include such epigraphs,<sup>103</sup> either incised or written in ink.<sup>104</sup> No. 10, a promissory note for barley dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus (550), bears the inscription, *šlmyh*, שלמיה, or “Šalām-Yāma” when written in cuneiform.<sup>105</sup> The editors of the volume have identified the script of the epigraph as paleo-Hebrew.<sup>106</sup> An unpublished tablet from the Schøyen collection, dated to 568 BCE, also bears a paleo-Hebrew epigraph along its edge: *lšdqyh*, “belonging to Šidqiyahu.”<sup>107</sup> The preservation of the old Hebrew script for at least a generation in such a heavily Aramaicized context, both

---

102. According to my count of the Yahwistic names (names with *-Yāhû-* or *-Yāma-* elements) in CUSAS 28’s Analysis of Personal Names, 53 are identified by the editors as Hebrew, 15 as West Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic), 3 as Akkadian, and 1, Pigla-Yāma, is unclear. There are a few ambiguous examples in this list, including Dagal-Yāma (no. 96:1, 9), which has an Akkadian root (*dagālu*) but a West Semitic third person perfect form. The editors propose that it was a hypercorrection of the Hebrew name Gadai-Yāma to an Akkadian form by the scribe (49). The name Išši-Yāma (nos. 4:14; 29:17) reflects a third person preterite of Akkadian *našû*, but may be an effort to render the Hebrew imperfect form *yš’yh* (60).

103. Nos. 10, 40–42, 53, and 103. Two other tablets, nos. 1, 37, and 52 have scratches along an edge that may indicate alphabetic inscriptions.

104. No. 71b has an ink inscription labeling the document as the *štr* of PN.

105. The root *š-l-m* is not uncommon in personal names associated with the monarchic period (eg. אבשלום, שלמה, and שלום). However, it begins to appear with the Yahwistic element *-yh/w* in the biblical literature from the Neo-Babylonian period onwards: Jer 37:3, 13; Ezra 10:39; Neh 3:30; 13:13. Cf. the full spelling, שלמיהו: Jer 36:14, 26; 38:1; Ezra 10:41; 1 Chr 26:14.

106. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 112. However, Alstola disputes the identification. “Some of the letter forms in this inscription are indisputably old, but a certain qualification of the script as Paleo-Hebrew is not sustainable on the basis of palaeographic features, clues from the cuneiform text, and conventions regarding the writing of alphabetic epigraphs in Babylonia.” Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 238.

107. Lemaire, *Levantine Epigraphy*, 43–45. For photos of the tablet, see CDLI no. P251621.

linguistically and orthographically,<sup>108</sup> suggests its ongoing relevance for members of the community.<sup>109</sup> Finally, the existence of diasporic literature that was composed in Hebrew like the Book of Ezekiel and Isa 40–48 (discussed below) provide further evidence for the continued importance of the language for the community. When the Author responsible for Isa 40–48 urged members of his Judeo-Babylonian community to return migrate to Judea, he did not address them in Aramaic, but in Hebrew.<sup>110</sup>

### *Adaptation to Life in Babylonia*

Despite the continued use of Hebrew, many Judeans in the community, and particularly those of higher social rank who dealt with imperial administrators, likely spoke Aramaic as well.<sup>111</sup> This bilingualism was part of a broader process of adaptation and integration undertaken by members the Judean community that we can observe in the cuneiform record. One of the most important

---

108. The rest of the epigraphs in the collection are written in Aramaic script and this is by and large the standard for tablets from the period in question.

109. On the importance of the textual representation of Hebrew language and especially its writing system for the development of a sense of corporate identity during the Iron Age, see the discussion in ch. 4 of Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*. For Sanders, texts — through their language and scripts — united communities over a large territory over against political neighbors (e.g. Moab and the Phoenician states). For the Judeo-Babylonians of Āl-Yāhūdu, the continued use of Hebrew script may have served to reproduce a sense of shared identity in a new geographical setting and to distinguish the community from its new neighbors.

110. For the argument that inspiring return migration is the goal of the Author of Isa 40–48, see the final section of this chapter and Marshall A. Cunningham, “Isaiah 40:1–2: Reading Royal Commission as a Call for Return Migration in the Early Persian Period.,” *JHebS* 19 (2019): 1–33.

111. See n. 101 above and also Polak’s insights concerning the influence of administrative and commercial language from Aramaic on Late Biblical Hebrew. Frank H. Polak, “The Judean Speech Community in the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 591–606.

facets of this process would have concerned the integration of Judean deportees and their descendants into Babylonia's land-for-service system.

In the earliest phases of this process, newly resettled Judeans would have been forced to quickly adapt to their new agricultural circumstances in order to both meet the demands of the rent imposed upon their land and to provide for their families and community. In her study of the data from Āl-Yāhūdū and Bīt-Našar, Angelika Berlejung has suggested a three-phase agricultural learning curve for the Judeans resettled on this land.<sup>112</sup> In the first phase, the state would likely have settled new deportees on crown lands already prepared for farming. Recently resettled minorities (Judeans, Egyptians, Aramaeans, etc.) would have served as sharecroppers and learned the complicated ins-and-outs of farming in Mesopotamia. After a short period, these communities would have been granted their own bow lands, thereby gradually expanding the productive capabilities of the empire.

During this second phase, the residents of bow lands would have produced cereals, and especially barley. Barley was a staple of Mesopotamian farming practices. Because it could be harvested in the first season following its planting, barley production would have allowed recently resettled Judeans to (quickly) gain the means to pay for the taxes and the the *ilku* service attached to their lands.<sup>113</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that, with a few notable exceptions,<sup>114</sup> the

---

112. Berlejung, "New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile." 12–45.

113. CUSAS 28.12 and Joannès and Lemaire, "Trois tablettes," @no. 2 record silver payments to the local official (named *dēkū*) in lieu of carrying out the service in person. On the development of taxation under the Babylonians and Persian, particularly an argument *against* monetization, see Jursa, "Taxation and Service Obligations." 431–448.

114. Berlejung, "New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile." 29ff.

earliest tablets from Āl-Yāḥūdū and Bīt-Našar deal primarily with barley production.<sup>115</sup> Judeans took on small debts, recorded in promissory notes (*u'iltu*) and receipts, in preparation for the upcoming barley harvest. These debts would then be repaid either in silver or in kind following the harvest.<sup>116</sup> Barley production appears to have been a staple of agricultural life for the early years of the resettled Judeo-Babylonian community.<sup>117</sup> While the quick turnaround of a barley crop would have allowed resettled Judeans to begin the process of getting back on their feet, on the whole, cereals were a relatively inefficient crop. In order to be productive, barley required a great deal of space — one resource the Babylonian central government had in abundance — along with expensive tools like ploughs, the oxen to pull them, and the men to drive those oxen. They also needed water from the royally-owned canals and the infrastructure to get that water to

---

115. The first reference to Judeans producing anything but barley (dates) is from the reign of Nabonidus (no. 8, 551 BCE). It is the only tablet from the Babylonian period that indicates they had begun to invest in longer-term farming practices. For the importance of this shift, see below.

116. The *u'iltu* was the most common type of debt-record during the Neo-Babylonian period. And while this type of record type was applicable to a wide variety of debts, “[t]he most common were the loans issued to small farmers, mainly consumption loans in the wake of crop failures and with regard to agricultural advances of seed grain and draft animals that had to be repaid in kind.” This is the case with the evidence from Āl-Yāḥūdū and Bīt-Našar. For a helpful discussion of debt in the long sixth century, see Cornelia Wunsch, “Debt, Interest, Pledge and Forfeiture in the Neo-Babylonian and Early Achaemenid Period: The Evidence from Private Archives,” in *Debt and Economic Renewal in the Ancient Near East* (eds. Michael Hudson and Marc van de Mieroop; International Scholars Conference on Ancient Near Eastern Economics III; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2002), 221–255.

117. The archival material from CUSAS 28 is distinct from its urban contemporaries in this regard, as noted by Wunsch. While the latter primarily focuses on date production and tenant farming, the emphasis on cereal production in the CUSAS 28 material is closer to what we find in large-scale temple archives of the period. This speaks to the broad availability of cultivatable land in the territory in which Āl-Yāḥūdū was located and to the efforts of the central government to bring more of that territory under its control. Wunsch, “Glimpses of Lives of Deportees in Rural Babylonia.” 254.

the crops. It is for these reasons that much of Babylonia, particularly around urban centers, shifted to date-production during the long sixth century.<sup>118</sup>

Even though date gardening was more labor-intensive than growing cereals, requiring roughly twice as much labor per harvested crop,<sup>119</sup> it had the benefit of needing significantly less space to produce a far greater yield. Jursa estimates that a single day's work in cereal farming produced between 23.04 and 28.8 liters of barley. For dates, on the other hand, a single day's work would produce 30.8 liters in a place like Sippar with a relatively low number of trees per hectare. In Borsippa, with the potential for a greater density of trees, that same day's work would produce a yield of between 40.08 and 53.33 liters of dates.<sup>120</sup> The difference in output is remarkable: "[T]hese figures show that the labour productivity of date gardening exceeded that of arable farming by a margin of at least ten and potentially more than one hundred percent, depending on which set of parameters is used."<sup>121</sup> And this difference does not even take into account a farmer's use of the space in between the palms to plant vegetables for private use, thereby increasing the productivity of their land further.<sup>122</sup>

Thus a transition to date gardening had much to recommend itself for Judeans who had been incorporated into the land-for-service system, and the evidence from Āl-Yāhūdū and Bīt-

---

118. Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 51–52.. Jursa has argued that the shift to date production was likely slower in the Nippur region than elsewhere in Babylonia, a result of the region's geographic and economic isolation after the fall of Assyria (405–419).

119. According to the calculations in Jursa et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, a cereal harvest required 60–75 workdays per hectare, while dates required 130 workdays for an established garden, and 160 for a new one (49–51).

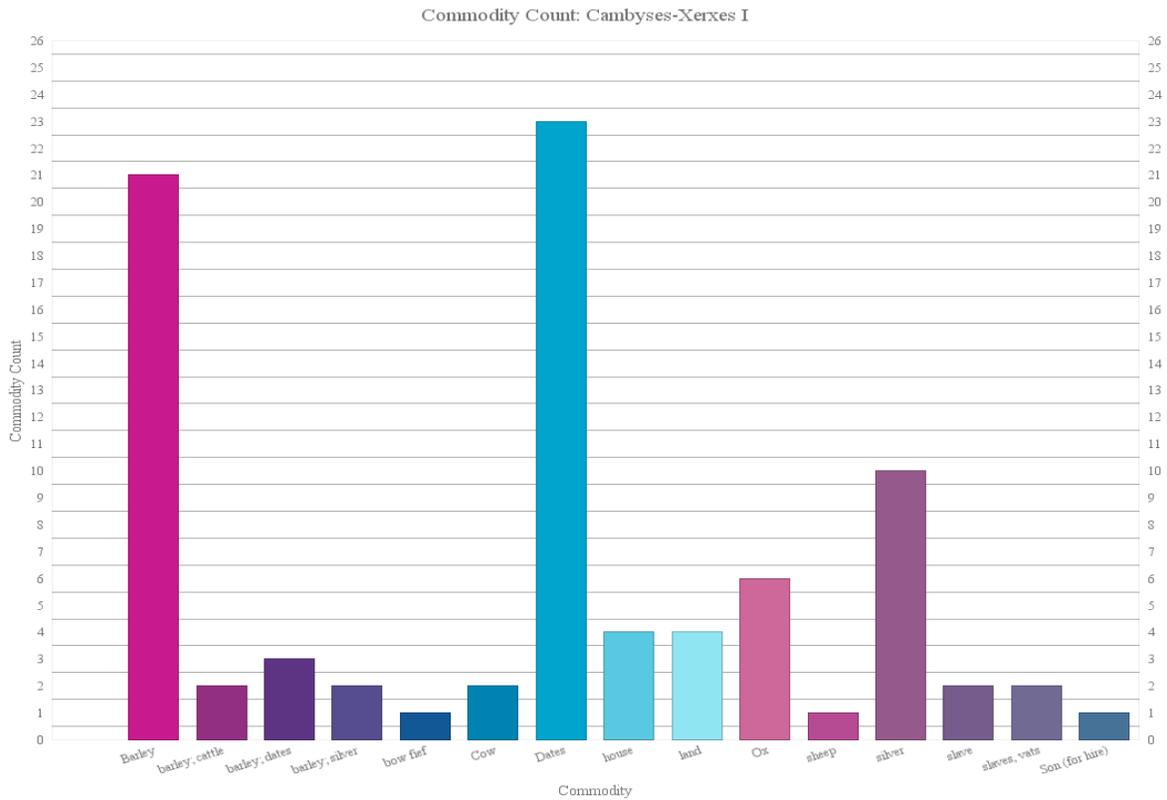
120. Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 51–52.

121. Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 52.

122. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 155.

Našar indicates that a number of Judeans embraced the practice. The first evidence of date production in these communities is from the fifth year of Nabonidus. In no. 8, Aḫīqam’s farther, Rapā-Yāma, agrees to pay another Judean, Ṭūb-Yāma, 6 kor of dates and 5 kor of barley following the date harvest. By the reign of Cambyses, roughly fifty years after the corpus’s earliest dated document, tablets concerning date production are just as common as those for barley in the published evidence, a trend that continues through the reigns of Bardiya and Darius I.

Table 2: Commodity Count from the Reign of Cambyses – Xerxes I



There was, however, one significant drawback in shifting one's resources into date gardening: it takes five to six years from the time of planting before a date palm begins to bear fruit, and between 15 and 20 years for that tree to reach its full maturity.<sup>123</sup> This means that when Rapā-Yāma made the decision to dedicate portions of his bow land to date production, he was committing significant resources to an endeavor that would only pay dividends in the long run. In so doing, he was also prepared to commit to an extended stay on his Babylonian farmland. Some 40 years later, in a tablet dated to 507, we can see that his son, Aḥīqam, and his grandson, Nīr-Yāma, were still engaged in date cultivation on a relatively large scale.<sup>124</sup>

In sum, these records depict Judeans gradually adapting to their new agricultural setting over the course of three to four generations of life in Babylonia. We can observe a shift to date production that began at the end of the Neo-Babylonian period and was as common as barley production by the reign of Cambyses in the early Persian period. We can even see some Judeans thriving in their new environment, reaching the third phase of Berlejung's adaptive model. Aḥīqam, who seems to have profited greatly from his father's transition to date production, can be observed converting the surplus capital of his barley and date farming operations into

---

123. Berlejung, "New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile." 28.

124. No. 25 is a promissory note between Nīr-Yāma and Aḥīqam in which the former takes on debt of 8.2.3 kor of dates as the assessed *imittu* rent on fields under the care of *ia-ḥu-da-an-na šušānūs*. Aḥīqam functions as a kind of middleman between his son and Kanzarā, a local Persian official under whose supervision the fields fell. For a reading of *ia-ḥu-da-an-na* as a nominalization of the gentilic *Yāḥūdī*, see the editors' comments in n. 4, 139–140.

investment opportunities with both Judean and non-Judean partners.<sup>125</sup> That success was then passed down to Aḥīqam’s own son, Nīr-Yāma, who is recorded as the debtor in an early 5th century promissory note concerning a full mina (60 shekels) of silver, the largest individual debt recorded for the Āl-Yāhūdu community.<sup>126</sup> That success put Aḥīqam and Nīr-Yāma into frequent contact with non-Judeans through administrative, social, and economic interactions and initiated Berlejung’s third phase of integration. It is to these relationships and the broader multi-cultural context in which the Judeans of rural Nippur found themselves that we now turn.

### *Cultural Encounters in Nippur According to the Administrative Record*

In text no. 17, Aḥīqam makes his payment to Iddinā son of Šinqā, a local official of Babylonian origin who, through a number of administrative rungs, ultimately answered to Uštanu, the Persian governor of Across-the-River.<sup>127</sup> The interaction of these figures (a Judeo-Babylonian, an

---

125. On Aḥīqam’s “social climbing,” see the discussion below, and especially Angelika Berlejung, “Social Climbing in the Babylonian Exile,” in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria : Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* (eds. Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir et al.; Leipziger altorientalistische Studien 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 101–124.

126. The tablet in question is not actually included in CUSAS 28, but rather in the forthcoming BaAr 6. Berlejung cites it as “Bīt-Abī-rām 88.” For the reference, see Berlejung, “New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile;” 36– 37.

127. Both his name and his position suggest that he was like ethnically Persian (or Iranian) because Persian kings, as a rule, installed Persians in the highest administrative rungs of the empire. For more on Uštanu, see Matthew W. Stolper, “The Governor of Babylon and Across-the-River in 486 B. C.,” *JNES* 48 (1989): 283–385. Notably, according to BM 74554, he seems to have employed a Judean, Gadāl-Yāma (*ga-da-la-a-ma*), as a subordinate (but still high-ranking) official, what Stolper calls the “chancellor-scribe” (*sepīru bēl tēmi*). This position seems to have been responsible for maintaining bonds between provinces and recruiting local officials on behalf of the satrap. Compare, for example, the titles given to Reḥum (בעל טעם) and Shimshai (ספרא) in Ezra 4.8, 17. For the Judean identity of Gadāl-Yāma, see David S Vanderhooff, “New Evidence Pertaining to the Transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Administration in

individual with a Babylonian name and patronymic,<sup>128</sup> and a high-ranking Persian official) also illustrates the multi-cultural and ethnically diverse setting in which the villagers of Āl-Yāhūdu would have found themselves during the reign of Darius I. The Babylonians (and the Persians who inherited their administrative system) did not make a concerted effort to eliminate ethnic distinctions among resettled communities. In fact, as I argued above, both empires co-opted and reified the ethnic boundaries and institutions of resettled communities in order to streamline systems of tax and workforce exploitation. This approach created an external framework for the reproduction of distinct ethnic identities among resettled groups. However, it did not prevent individuals from different groups from interacting with each other, a reality that plays out in the textual record.

The earliest record from Āl-Yāhūdu does not actually record a transaction involving identifiable Judeans, but rather individuals with Babylonian names and patronymics.<sup>129</sup> A number of Judeans were present as witnesses, but the tablet suggests that the village — identified

---

Palestine,” in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (eds. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; Studies in Theology and Religion. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 226–227.

128. Iddinâ’s name and patronymics are Babylonian-Akkadian and give no indication of non-Babylonian influence. However, the category of “Babylonian” is itself quite complicated during this period of history. Chaldean and Aramean tribes had long since integrated into both the urban and rural populations of Babylonia. The issue is further muddied by the influx of communities resettled following deportation during under Babylonian and Persian kings, members of which also took on Akkadian names. For an introduction to the ethnic composition of Babylonia during the Assyrian and Imperial periods, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC - AD 75* (John Wiley & Sons, 2018–02–05), 223–225.

129. In CUSAS 28.1, the transaction is between a certain Mu[...] son of Giddâ and Nergal-iddin and Nabû-zēr-iddin.

explicitly in this text with the geographic origins of its inhabitants (*ālu ša<sup>lu</sup> Yaḥūdāya*)<sup>130</sup> — was a site of cultural contact even its earliest phases. Berlejung has stressed the crucial role that the local population of Nippur and perhaps representatives of the central administration would have played in the initial phase of Judean resettlement: “The Judean vulnerability and dependency on the good-will of the Babylonians was enormous.”<sup>131</sup> Moving from the rocky and hilly terrain of the southern Levant to the irrigated fields of Nippur required a completely new approach to farming for which the Judean community would have been poorly equipped. This is especially the case for date production, which required a particularly high level of technical skill and patience. The social and economic relationships that must have been created through this training are borne out in the documentary evidence. Judeans appealed to their non-Judean neighbors for small loans,<sup>132</sup> and occasionally appear in the archive as creditors themselves.<sup>133</sup> Judeans also bought and sold with non-Judeans<sup>134</sup> and rented property.<sup>135</sup>

As some members of the community began to surpass simple subsistence farming in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, they likely would have invested profits from the surplus into entrepreneurial endeavors. As we will see, this included developing business relationships with

---

130. L.16: URU ša<sup>lu</sup> Ya-a-ḥu-du-a-a

131. Berlejung, “New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile.” 38.

132. CUSAS 28.6–7, 9–10, 13, 21, 44, 84, 101.

133. There is only one unambiguous example of a Judean offering a loan to a non-Judean. The first is no. 43, in which Aḥīqam offers a short-term no-interest loan to a certain Bēl-zēr-ibni son of Bēl-aḥḥē-erība. It is possible, if not likely, that this was a far more frequent occurrence, as debtors typically held on to old closed promissory notes, while creditors only maintained documentation for open debts. For a discussion of this archival procedure, see Wunsch, “Debt, Interest, Pledge and Forfeiture,” 222.

134. CUSAS 28.77–80; Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes,” no. 1.

135. CUSAS 28.26, 46, 67, 69, 98–100

individuals who are not identifiably Judean by onomastic or relationship means. For example, the data from Āl-Yāhūdu and its surroundings includes a number of tablets that record *ḥarrānu* ventures between Judeans and non-Judeans. The *ḥarrānu*, a common type of joint business venture in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods,<sup>136</sup> typically featured a senior partner responsible for providing the capital (normally silver) and a junior partner who would actually run the business. The *ḥarrānu* was a true partnership rather than a simple loan because the senior partner typically risked losing his investment. The two parties would evenly split profits, unless otherwise noted in the business contract. According to Jursa, these partnerships tended to be long-term, “to be dissolved only after the death of one of the original investors or even to be continued by the heirs of the original investors.”<sup>137</sup>

The evidence from Āl-Yāhūdu directly or indirectly attests to a number of such ventures undertaken between Judeans and non-Judeans. A promissory note from Cyrus’ third year (no. 61) records that Yāhû-šūrī son of Nubâ was the primary investor in a *ḥarrānu* venture with Aḥ-immê son of Rīmût, a man with a West Semitic name and Akkadian patronym. Roughly twenty years later (11.x.3 Darius, no. 97), Aḥīqar son of Rīmût agreed to be the silent partner in a *ḥarrānu* venture with two individuals with Babylonian names and patronyms, Ninurta-aḥ-iddin son of Tatannu and ʾNanâ-šarratī daughter of Nabû-zāqip. Although his name is Aramaic, Aḥīqar’s Judean identity is established through his son’s name, Nīr-Yāma, which appears in an as yet

---

136. The following briefly summarizes the treatment of the *ḥarrānu* in Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 206–214.

137. Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 208.

unpublished text from BaAr 6.<sup>138</sup> According to the agreement, Aḥīqar is to be repaid his full investment (a significant sum of 32 shekels of silver) and receive half of the profits. A record from Darius' tenth year indicates that Aḥīqam's son Nīr-Yāma had entered into a *ḥarrānu* with a certain Ninurta-ēṭir son of Kinā.<sup>139</sup> The agreement concerned investment in livestock as the tablet notes that eight sheep were still owed to Nīr-Yāma, the primary investor in the venture.

Aḥīqam also entered into contracts with non-Judeans. Berlejung has made a strong case for identifying Aḥīqam's long distance investment in a brewing partnership in the city of Babylon.<sup>140</sup> A promissory note from Āl-Yāḥūdu, dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Darius I (507), records Aḥīqam's debt of 66 kor of barley to the Babylonian Bulluṭā son of Mušēzib-Nabū, "the price

---

138. BaAr 6.27; Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 8–9 n. 24; Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia." 49. Aḥīqar's wife is mentioned in a tablet dated to 533 BCE (Joannès and Lemaire, "Trois tablettes," no. 2.) and bears a Babylonian name, Bunnannītu. The gendered naming practices attested in this relationship strongly suggest that (at least) Aḥīqar would have identified as Judean. A study by Sue and Telles of the naming practices Hispanic immigrants in America has shown that parents are more likely to be culturally conservative in the naming of male children (eg. the Yahwistic and Hebrew name Nīr-Yāma) than they are with female children, even as they grow more comfortable in their diaspora setting. Christina A. Sue and Edward E. Telles, "Assimilation and Gender in Naming," *American Journal of Sociology* 5 (2007): 1410. This evidence also increases the probability that Bunnannītu, too, would have identified as Judean because, as demonstrated in a study of Turkish immigrants in Germany, children of inter-ethnic marriages are far more likely to receive names common in the onomasticon of the host culture (eg. Babylonian). Birgit Becker, "Immigrants' Emotional Identification with the Host Society: The Example of Turkish Parents' Naming Practices in Germany," *Ethnicities* 9 (2009): 215. Bunnannītu's parents, who would have been born in Judea or among the first generation of Judeans born in Babylonia, may have seen it as proper or productive to give her name that fit in better in their Babylonian context. For further discussion of the motivations behind naming practices among immigrant and diaspora communities, see my discussion of onomastics in ch. 2.

139. No. 32

140. Berlejung, "Social Climbing," 117–119.

(equivalent to) fifteen full vats of good beer (being delivered) in Babylon.”<sup>141</sup> The day before, Aḥīqam’s son Nīr-Yāma leased a date orchard on quiver land that belonged to a man with a Babylonian name, Kidinnu son of Aplā.<sup>142</sup> It is likely that the dates from that agreement were to be shipped to Babylon to brew date beer in the soon-to-be purchased vats.<sup>143</sup> Berlejung has highlighted the remarkably long lease length — sixteen years!<sup>144</sup> — in discussing the family’s embeddedness in its Babylonian context: “Nīr-Yāma’s contract over 16 years implies that he planned his life in Babylonia with long perspectives. No return to Judah was in his mind.”<sup>145</sup> Aḥīqam, however, did not live long enough to reap the full rewards of his investment. An inheritance division written a year and a half later in Babylon (7.vii.16 Darius I) divides ownership of slaves and beer vats among Aḥīqam’s five sons.<sup>146</sup> Pearce and Wunsch note the “meager” amount of goods to be divided, and suggest that the document represents only the division of Aḥīqam’s brewery arrangement, rather than his entire net worth at the time of his death.<sup>147</sup>

Aḥīqam and his family were also engaged with non-Judeans in local ventures. In 508, Aḥīqam undertook an agricultural arrangement with a man with a Babylonian name, Erībâ son of Šillâ. Erībâ was to provide the oxen and half of the plough team while Aḥīqam would provide the

---

141. No. 44.9–10; translation by the editors.

142. BaAr 6.8, cited in Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 116–117.

143. Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 116.

144. According to Berlejung, following Jursa, the standard orchard lease lasted 5–6 years, and rarely exceeded 10. Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 118; Jursa, Hackl et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 182–184.

145. Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 118.

146. There are two copies of this tablet. The first was published by Abraham, “An Inheritance Division,” 206–211. The second appears as no. 45 in CUSAS 28.

147. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 173.

other half of the team plus the field.<sup>148</sup> Such arrangements made barley production far more efficient and profitable, particularly when the fields to be farmed were contiguous.<sup>149</sup> Two years later, two of Aḥīqam’s sons — Ḥaggâ and Yāḥû-azar<sup>150</sup> — leased a cow from a man with a Babylonian name and Aramaic or Edomite patronym, Bulluṭa son of Qūs-raḥā.<sup>151</sup>

Finally, in Darius I’s fifth year (517), Aḥīqam invested 12 kor of barley with a certain Iššûa son of Nabû-eṭir as part of a *ḥarrānu*.<sup>152</sup> As the senior partner in the agreement, Aḥīqam, provided Iššûa with 12 kor of dates expecting a return of half of a mina in silver. Any profit beyond that silver the two would split evenly. On the whole, the agreement is standard for the period, with the senior partner providing the capital or product and the junior partner actually running the business.<sup>153</sup> The only oddity in the agreement is the junior partner’s name. Iššûa is otherwise unattested in the Neo-Babylonian corpus, but the patronym suggests Babylonian heritage.<sup>154</sup> However, the volume’s editors have proposed a derivation from the Hebrew root *y-š-’*,<sup>155</sup> which would likely indicate Judean identity.<sup>156</sup> In support of this conclusion, the editors

---

148. No. 29.

149. Wunsch, “Glimpses of Lives of Deportees in Rural Babylonia.”, 254–255.

150. If the latter is distinct from Yāḥû-izrī of the inheritance document just discussed, he would be Aḥīqam’s sixth son with a Judean name.

151. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 77.

152. No. 40.

153. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 162–163.

154. Spelled <sup>m</sup>*iš-’šū<sup>1</sup>-ú-a*. The second sign is partially illegible in both occurrences (LI, 4, 6). The editors suggest an alternative reading of <sup>m</sup>*mil-ku-ú-a*, but this name is also problematic as it, too, is otherwise unattested in the Neo-Babylonian corpus.

155. A number of Hebrew names are built on this root, including יהושע, הושע, and ישו. The root actually occurs the name of at least one individual attested in the Āl-Yāḥūdu corpus (no. 36 and BaAr6. 3) in the name Amuš-Yāma and in a number of texts related to Amušē son Ariḥ, a Judeo-Babylonians from Sippar. This seemingly strange Babylonian rendering of the Hebrew preserves the diphthong *-aw-*, with *-m-* representing intervocalic *-w-* in LB spelling. For a

point to the shared semantic field of the West Semitic root *y-š-‘* and the verbal element in his father’s Babylonian name, *eṭēru*, thereby suggesting a kind of continuity in naming practices (Yahweh/Nabû saves). If their conclusion is correct, then this tablet demonstrates cooperation between two Judeans, albeit with one bearing a Babylonian patronym.

### *Judeo-Babylonians*

It is clear from the frequency and range of these transactions that Aḥīqam and his sons felt comfortable traveling in non-Judean social circles. An as yet unpublished promissory note further speaks to their integration into their Babylonian context.<sup>157</sup> The note, dated to 510, records a debt of 21 shekels of silver owed to a man with a Babylonian name, Enlil-iqīša son of Libluṭ, for which Aḥīqam pledges a slave woman with an Aramaic name, ʾIlā-bî. In addition to the significant amount of silver owed, the tablet is remarkable for the seal it features on its lower edge which bears Aḥīqam’s name. The evidence from Murašû shows that it was not uncommon for Judeo-Babylonians to have their own seals in the late Persian period.<sup>158</sup> However, Aḥīqam’s seal is unique in the Āl-Yāḥūdu corpus. Furthermore, the seal he employed is notable, according

---

discussion of Amušê and his family, see Bloch, “Judeans in Sippar and Susa,” 119–172, and for the spelling in particular 145–146. Cf. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia,” 69–88.

156. Compare the representation of Joash (*Jū’āsu*) in the Adad-Nirari stele. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 61, 163. Cf. Abraham Malamat, “On the Akkadian Transcription of the Name of King Joash,” *BASOR* 204 (1971): 37–39.

157. The text is BaAr 6.9. Berlejung has published a translation in Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 113–115.

158. Alstola identifies fourteen different Judeo-Babylonians who used nineteen seals in texts from the Murašû archive. According to his analysis, these Judeo-Babylonians did not avoid religious imagery, but were, in general, drawn to imagery from the Eastern Mediterranean that was new to the region. This is opposed to the traditional Babylonian imagery preferred by the upper class. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia,” 152–153, 188–191.

to Berlejung, because of its explicitly Babylonian iconography: “[I]t is a typical cultic scene, showing a male person in a gesture of veneration in front of divine symbols. Visible is the star with 8 beams on top, the spade of Marduk and perhaps traces of the stylus of Nabu fixed on a postament.”<sup>159</sup> If not for the presence of the name inscribed on the seal and in the tablet (“Aḥīqam son of Rapā-Yāma”), there would be no reason to think that the seal came from anyone but a Babylonian. The choice of iconography is particularly interesting because each Aḥīqam’s five sons received a Judean name, and all but one (Ḥaggâ) featuring a Yahwistic theophoric element.<sup>160</sup>

In her evaluation of the seal and its iconography, Berlejung makes the following suggestion: “Maybe two faces of Aḥīqam become visible: For his external business, politics and enterprises, he used Babylonian/Persian practices and loyalties (including king and gods), while for his inside and personal life he stayed linked to the traditional god of his fathers.”<sup>161</sup> Although her analysis may suggest too high a degree of agency on Aḥīqam’s part — that he was able to intentionally embrace one facet of his identity over the other in a given set of circumstances<sup>162</sup> —

---

159. Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 115.

160. According to Pearce, the transmission of Judean names over multiple generations in Aḥīqam’s family “established mechanisms for preserving strong Judean identification within this family.” Pearce, “Identifying Judeans,” 28–29.

161. Berlejung, “Social Climbing,” 115.

162. Aḥīqam’s use of Babylonian symbols in the context of his business associations might be best understood as an example of code-switching, that is shifting one’s (symbolic) language to fit the expected decorum of a given social situation. Code-switching and the adherence to social standards are often undertaken unconsciously and without explicit recognition by the actors involved. The term typically applies to a linguistic phenomenon in bi- or multilingual settings, but the term is helpful for understanding Aḥīqam choice of symbols for his seal. For a discussion of intraethnic code-switching and the sense of ethnic identity it can produce, see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, NJ:

Berlejung's conclusion is nonetheless consistent with the hybrid and fluid nature of diasporic identity. As Avtar Brah has argued:

Processes of diasporic identity formation are exemplars par excellence of the claim that identity is always plural, and in process. The relationship between the two is subject to the politics in play under given sets of circumstances. In other words, the concept of diaspora refers to *multi-locality* within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries.<sup>163</sup>

This means that a seal bearing divine Babylonian iconography would not have conflicted with Aḥīqam's Judeanness, but reflects a comfort and fluency in the social idiom of mercantile networks in which he did business.<sup>164</sup> This analysis slightly modifies Berlejung's binary of public / private faces, pointing rather to the dynamic and interactional nature of Aḥīqam's diasporic identity. His expression of his Judeanness was fluid and contextual.

The case of another individual may present a second example of the complex social identity that Aḥīqam and his seal exhibits. This individual, attested in three tablets from the Neo-Babylonian period,<sup>165</sup> serves as the creditor to a single Judean, Šidqi-Yāma son of Šillimu. The

---

Princeton University Press, 2006), 239–264; cf. Eidheim, “When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma,” 39–57.

163. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, 194; *emphasis* original.

164. In his study of ethnic identity in rural Norway, Harald Eidheim made a similar argument with regard to the Lapps of the district of Finmark. In the public sphere, “Norwegianism” was the accepted linguistic and symbolic idiom, and so Lapps adhered to that standard in that space despite retaining distinct elements of Lappish culture (language, in particular) when in the private sphere. “People in the Lappish fjord community, with their aspirations directed toward participation in the public network as it is defined by the Norwegians, do what they can to present themselves as full-fledged participants.” Harald Eidheim, “When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* (ed. Fredrik Barth; London: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin, 1969), 39–57, here 55.

165. Nos. 2–4.

tablets range in date from the end of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign to the sixth year of Nabonidus.<sup>166</sup> In two tablets, nos. 2–3, he is identified by the Babylonian name, Bēl-šar-ušur (<sup>md+</sup>EN–LUGAL–URÙ) son of Nubâ, “Bēl protect the king!” However, in no. 4 (550 BCE), the sign for the deity Bēl (<sup>d+</sup>EN) is replaced with a phonetic spelling of the divine name Yahweh (<sup>md</sup>ia-*hu-ú*–LUGAL–URÙ), giving the reading Yāḥû-šar-ušur son of Nubâ, “Yahweh protect the king!” There is nothing about context, at least as available in the textual record, that can easily explain why he should have picked one name over the other in any given circumstance.<sup>167</sup> All three tablets were written in Āl-Yāḥūdu, and in each case more Judeans appear in the witness list than non-Judeans.

---

166. No. 3 is dated to 552 BCE while no. 4 is dated to 550 BCE. The regnal year is omitted in no. 2, but the king is clearly identified as Nebuchadnezzar. For a discussion of the internal evidence for a date late in Nebuchadnezzar II's reign rather than Nebuchadnezzar IV, see the comments of the editors, 101–102.

167. Pearce suggests that the change is the result of Belshazzar's co-regency with Nabonidus and a tendency to disambiguate from the king at lower levels of the Babylonian administration. According to Pearce's reconstruction, Yāḥû/Bēl-šar-ušur accepted the Babylonian name upon his ascent to an administrative role, but switched to the Judeanized version when Belshazzar came to the throne. Pearce, “Identifying Judeans.” 25–27. A similar phenomenon occurs with the scribe Nabû-nā'id son of Nabû-zēr-iqīša in the CUSAS 28 material. He occurs in no. 1 with this name, dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. However, in all subsequent attestations (nos. 3, 4, 10), all dated to the reign of Nabonidus, he goes by Nabû-nāšir. With Nabonidus' ascent, the name appears to have quickly gone out of fashion, and so the editors suggest the scribe in question may have followed trend and changed his name. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 99 n. 15.

Pearce's suggestion is intriguing and would speak to Yāḥû/Bēl-šar-ušur's deep integration into the Babylonian administrative apparatus and his familiarity with Babylonian cultural norms. For example, he may have recognized that sharing a name with the king or his co-regent was considered gauche within the administrative and cultural circles in which he traveled. Because, as Pearce argues, *Beamtennamen* are closely associated with non-Babylonians seeking administrative positions, the choice to embrace a Yahwistic (and non-Babylonian) theophoric element may not have further marked him as “other” in those same circles. Another Yāḥû-šar-ušur (son of Šamaš-iddin) is attested as a witness to silver loan in a tablet from Susa dated to year 28 of Darius I (494 BCE). Notably, he is the only individual with a non-Mesopotamian theophoric element among the witnesses. For the text of the tablet (OECT 10 152 [Ash. 1878.005]) and commentary, see Bloch, “Judeans in Sippar and Susa,” 161–164, text no. 8.

In text no. 3, where he is recorded as Bēl-šar-ušur, the witness list is exclusively composed of individuals with Judean names.<sup>168</sup> The only person with a Babylonian name to have been present was the scribe, Nabû-zēr-iqīša.

The name and its pattern — DN-šar-ušur<sup>169</sup> — are typical of an onomastic genre known as *Beamtennamen*, or “official’s name.” This formulation is particularly common for non-Babylonian individuals who sought or achieved a position in the Babylonian and Persian governments.<sup>170</sup> Whether the name was given at birth or chosen by the individual, the use of *Beamtennamen* suggests a high degree of political fluency on behalf of Bēl/Yāhû-šar-ušur or his parents. As we saw above, a number of Judeans were able to enter the lower rungs of the Babylonian and Persian administrations,<sup>171</sup> but the early date of this Bēl/Yāhû-šar-ušur suggests that there were opportunities almost immediately for Judeans to advance in their Babylonian context. Furthermore, these opportunities did not necessarily have to come at the expense of one’s dedication to Yahweh or identification as Judean. One could maintain business and social

---

168. The only two witnesses to the promissory have Judean names: Ḥašbi-Yāma son of Palaṭ-Yāma and Šalam-Yāma son of Ṭāb-šalam. Note the also the Aramaic spelling of the substantive *ṭb* with *ā* for Hebrew *ō*. The Hebrew pronunciation is also attested in the town name Ṭūb-Yama from a contemporary tablet (551 BCE, no. 8).

169. The more abstract patten is DN-noun-verb. In this construction, the nominal element in the second position is most frequently *šarru* or occasionally *bēlu*, while the third is most commonly built from the verb *našāru*, although *balātu* and the like are also found. See, for example, Nergal-šar-ušur, the rab-mag in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 39.3, 13; and cf. Bethel-šar-ušur [בית אל שר אצר] in Zech 7.2). As the name given to this patten suggests, it is common among administrative and temple officials in the Babylonian and Persian period. See, for example, the density of DN-šar-ušur and DN-šar-bullit names among officials from the Ebabbar temple in Sippar during the Neo-Babylonian period. Michael P Streck, “Das Onomastiken der Beamten am neubabylonischen Ebabbar-Tempel in Sippar,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 91 (2001): 112–113.

170. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 28–29.

171. For Judean *dekūs* and a potential *šaknu*, see p. 243 above.

relationships with other Judeans and recognize Yahweh while also embracing a Babylonian name that appeared, at least to outsiders,<sup>172</sup> to recognize the efficacy of the head of the Babylonian pantheon.<sup>173</sup>

### *Identifying and Understanding Judeanness in the Babylonian Record*

In the preceding survey I have tried to highlight a number of points about the Judean experience in Babylonia as attested in the cuneiform record. First of all, Judeans are first and foremost identifiable through onomastics. Names bearing Yahwistic and Hebrew elements served as our key observable diacritic of Judeanness. In light of the popularity of spoken Aramaic in rural

---

172. At a review panel for CUSAS 28 at the 2014 SBL National Conference in San Diego, the question was raised as to whether Bēl/Yāḥû-šar-ušur may have associated the two deities (Yahweh and Bēl/Marduk) due to the long standing identification of Yahweh with cognate Ba‘al in the Levant. Pearce and Wunsch admitted the possibility, but it would have required the Judean (and not the Babylonian scribe) to make the association. They discounted the theory that 𐎗𐎍𐎎𐎓 could have functioned as a logogram for “Yahweh,” and so the Judean would have had to choose to state his name with the Ba‘al/Bēlu element in some scenarios, and the Yahweh element in others. This does not, however, discount the possibility Bēl/Yāḥû-šar-ušur understood the same deity to be represented by the different names in his own mind.

173. Banā-Yāma son of Nubāya, a.k.a Bania may provide another example of this phenomenon. “Bania” is a common Babylonian name, and it may be that the individual used this name in contexts wherein he was interacting with primarily non-Judeans. He appears with his Judean name in no. 84 and with the Babylonian spelling (<sup>m</sup>ba-ni-a [a-šú šá<sup>l</sup>]nu-ba-a) in Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes,” 27–28, no. 2. ll. 8–9. According to Pearce, who connected the two figures: “But it is in the context of the demographics of the population involved in each transaction that he may choose the form of his name by which he will be known. Thus, in Našar, where he serves the Babylonian administration, he uses a form of his name that could appear to be Babylonian; in Judahtown, he opts for the Judean name Bana-Yāma.” Pearce, “Identifying Judeans,” 22–24, here 23. However, the situation is not quite this clear. In no. 84, which was written in Našar, he is to receive repayment of silver in Āl-Yāḥūdu, but all individuals (excluding him) in the interaction have non-Judean names. Meanwhile, in Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes,” no. 2, he serves as a witness (among other with non-Judean names) to a transaction between those with Judean names. This situation is therefore quite complicated.

Nippur,<sup>174</sup> the continued use of identifiably Judean names with Hebrew elements into the 5<sup>th</sup> century is striking. Furthermore, tablets from the end of archive demonstrate the continued connection between Judeo-Babylonians and Āl-Yāḥūdu.<sup>175</sup> Even as the Babylonian and Persian regimes cultivated ethnic distinctions through their settlement policies and administrative practices, Āl-Yāḥūdu was the site of frequent encounters between Judeo-Babylonians and their non-Judean neighbors. These encounters were often administrative and thus hierarchical, as we saw in the case of Aḥīqam and Iddinā, but they were also economic and social. Would-be entrepreneurs like Aḥīqam and Aḥīqar developed relationships with non-Judeans within the sphere of Āl-Yāḥūdu and beyond. We can thus see the permeability or flexibility of social boundaries — at least to the degree that it facilitated these relationships.

The cuneiform evidence also tells the story of a community adapting to a new economic, political, and cultural context. These documents illustrate the process by which early members of the Judean community and their descendants gradually transitioned from subsistence farming to producing enough surplus that it could be turned into economic capital. In turn, this capital was used in *ḥarrānu* business partnerships with Judean and non-Judean Babylonians alike. This success was at least in part the result of the decision to transition to date farming. The practice that yielded far greater production for the effort invested, but in turn required a long-term commitment to farming the land.

---

174. Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names.” 249–254. Cf. Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Language,” 192–206, esp. 197–198.

175. For example, the most recent tablet in the Āl-Yāḥūdu material, CUSAS 28.53, was written in 477 BCE and records a transition between a man with a Judean name (Matan-Yāma son of Palaṭ-Yāma) and a number of individuals with non-Judean names.

We can also see Judeans adjusting to the idiom of public life in rural Babylonia. Aḥīqam, who gave all five of his children identifiably Judean names, also possessed and used a Babylonian-style seal bearing traditional Mesopotamian religious iconography. In his role as an entrepreneur, Aḥīqam encountered many non-Judeans and his seal reflects fluency in the standard cultural idiom of these interactions. So, too, did Yāḥû/Bēl-šar-ušur, and at an even earlier point in the history of Āl-Yāḥūdu. Whether he chose the name himself or it was given to him by his parents at birth, his court name reflects an awareness of the cultural standards of those involved in administrative practice under the Babylonians and an effort to adhere to them.<sup>176</sup>

In these moments of observable cultural fluency, as well as in the broader patterns of interactions between Judeans and non-Judeans outlined above, the Babylonian administrative record evinces the signaling of a diasporic hybrid identity. On the one hand, there are traditional markers of Judeanness like Yahwistic names and associations with the towns in which Judeans were initially settled following their deportation from their ancestral homeland. We also noted the continued use of the Hebrew language — identifiable in naming practices — and perhaps also the Paleo-Hebrew script. On the other hand, we can also see the clear adaptation of Judeans to their Babylonian context. Pearce has emphasized this integration at the administrative level, but the preceding analysis has also suggested that many Judeans had settled into their diasporic

---

176. Laurie Pearce argues, and definitively I believe, that Yāḥû-šar-ušur's *Beamtennamen* and the three Judeans mentioned above who also held positions in the land-for-service system indicate that Judeans and other ethnic minorities were not banned from holding positions in the imperial administration. Pearce, "Continuity and Normality," 174–176. Cf. n. 127 above. For the view that they had been banned, based primarily on the evidence from Murašû, see Eph'al, "The Western Minorities," 75; Eph'al, "On the Political and Social Organization of the Jews in Babylonian Exile," 109–110.

context. We can observe these processes by which Judeo-Babylonians made themselves at home in their social and economic relationships, in their long-term planning for life in Nippur, and in the cultural fluency that they were able to demonstrate in a given interaction.

The outsider and imperial lens through which we can observe Judeanness in the administrative record only offers one angle on the social identity of members of this community; namely, what was relevant or observable to the non-Judean scribe composing the document. In this regard, the nature of the cuneiform evidence severely restricts what we might say about how Judeos-Babylonians perceived or understood themselves in their diasporic environment. Literary sources, however, can complement and enrich the picture we are able to draw from the administrative evidence. A close and careful reading of the Book of Ezekiel that focuses on questions of Judeanness and the perceived pressures it faced in Babylonia can provide the kinds of insights that the administrative record, as a result of its genre, perspective, and function, is unable to capture.

### Insider Reflections on Life in Diaspora: The Book of Ezekiel

#### *The Book of Ezekiel*

In the first vignette that opened the chapter, a passage from Ezek 36, we observed a notably different view of the Judean diasporic experience than the one that is visible in the cuneiform record. Rather than making themselves at home in Babylonia, Yahweh argued that his people — identified as *בית ישראל* — needed to be returned or restored to their native homeland of Judea,

the territory that he had promised to their ancestors. He gave no prescriptions concerning the lives they were to live in diaspora until he effected their repatriation, but nonetheless made it clear that they did not belong among the nations (בגוים). In many ways, this position reflective of the book's overall view of an early Babylonian diaspora community, presented through a lens of exile, and its claims about the constituent elements of Judean identity in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

The protagonist of the Book of Ezekiel is a member of the first wave of Judean deportees deported from Jerusalem in 597 BCE. According to the narrative framing of the composition, he and his community were resettled beside the River Chebar, נהר כבר, in a village called Tel Abib, תל אביב, in the land of the Chaldeans, ארץ הכשדים.<sup>177</sup> The River Chebar, or Nār Kabari as it is known in Akkadian, is a well attested landmark in the Murašû archive.<sup>178</sup> A canal rather than a river, the Nār Kabari began north of Babylon and ran SE through Nippur before rejoining the Euphrates near Uruk.<sup>179</sup> The identification of the נהר כבר with the Nār Kabari is particularly important because of the latter's apparent proximity to Bīt-Abī-rām,<sup>180</sup> one of the trio of towns (along with Āl-Yāhūdu and Bīt-Našar) that features in the newly published cuneiform evidence discussed above. This identification strongly suggests that the literary setting for the Book of

---

177. Ezek 1.1–3; 3.15–16.

178. Ran Zadok, "The Nippur region during the Late Assyrian, Chaldean and Achaemenian periods, chiefly according to written sources," *Israel Oriental Studies* (1978): 287.

179. D. N. Freedman, G. A. Herion et al. eds. *Chebar*. I (1992): 893.

180. The canal is mentioned in Joannès and Lemaire, "Contrats babyloniens d'époque achéménide," no. 7.5, a text associated with Zababa-šar-ušur. This figure, who was *rab bīti*, overseer of the estate for the crown prince Xerxes early in the fifth century, is the primary agent in the third group of texts in CUSAS 28 and BaAr 6, which is centered in Bīt-Abī-rām. Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 9; Pearce, "Continuity and Normality," 171–172.

Ezekiel was the same Nippurian countryside in which the inhabitants of Āl-Yāhūdu and its neighboring found themselves.

Through its first-person literary account of the protagonist's experience of the diaspora,<sup>181</sup> the Book of Ezekiel places its main character in rural Nippur in the decades following the first Judean deportation.<sup>182</sup> The chronological parameters of the book, July of 593 to April of 571,<sup>183</sup> are established by an internal dating system keyed to the deportation of Jehoiachin. As Moshe Greenberg argued, the concerns of the book's perspective seem to be contained within that period.<sup>184</sup> Through an editorial comment in the book's introduction, the reader is told that Ezekiel

---

181. "Ezekiel is a character within the prophetic narrative, through whom the reader experiences the exile." Corrine Patton, "Priest Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 73.

182. In recent decades biblical scholarship has come to focus on the literary nature of the book. See, for example, the important works by Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (JSOT Supplement Series 78; Sheffield, England: Almond, 1989); Thomas. Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 76; Boston: Brill, 1999); Martti Nissinen, "(How) Does the Book of Ezekiel Reveal Its Babylonian Context," *WO* 45 (2015): 85–98.

183. Ezekiel's first vision of the divine mobile throne is introduced in 1.1–3 in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's exile. The last dated event, the oracle against Tyre in 29.17, is issued in the 27th year. For a helpful table of datable events, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 8. Cf. Simeon Chavel: Ezekiel Ben Buzi, the Raggedy-Ann Prophet (paper presented at SBL-EABS Conference in Helsinki, Finland, July 30-August 3, 2018), 1–3.

184. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 14–27. The question of intended audience is a bit different, however. Renz, for example, argues that while the work is *set* during the span in question, it was actually addressed to the following generation, or the first generation born and living Babylonia prior to an ethnic migration under the Persians. Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 1–26, 132–141. In either case, the fundamental changes that one would expect if significant portions of the work reflected a much later situation (return to Jerusalem, restoration of the temple, etc.) are not present.

is a priest (כהן),<sup>185</sup> and the views presented within share a style and set of concerns with Pentateuchal Priestly History.<sup>186</sup> Based on these details, I understand the book to provide a literary reflection on the experience of displaced Judeans in the decades following the first and second deportations, with a particular concern for issues relevant to the Priestly History.

### *Boundary Maintenance in the Book of Ezekiel*

On the one hand, scholars have long recognized the influence of Babylonian culture on the Book of Ezekiel's language and imagery.<sup>187</sup> As David Vanderhooft has demonstrated, the book's

---

185. If one takes the editorial comment as secondary or late (Cf. Baruch J. Schwartz, "A Priest Out of Place: Reconsidering Ezekiel's Role in the History of the Israelite Priesthood," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* [eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004], 61 n. 1 for scholarship that takes this position) then it is not clear from the work whether Ezekiel is himself understood to be a priest. In fact, as argued in a paper presented to the University of Chicago Hebrew Bible Workshop on 2/12/18, Aslan Cohen has demonstrated that Ezekiel — the protagonist of the book — is utterly *without identity* beyond his role and conduit for the divine. The themes of the book are certainly in line with those of the Priestly History, but they do not find their source in the prophet, but rather with the deity. *Yahweh* talks like a priest and seems to share the concerns of the monarchic period Priestly Pentateuchal source, but Ezekiel the character's role is simply to report them. The same is true for the Priestly History in which *Yahweh* is the primary speaker who sets the tone for the work. As Patton has noted, "These parallels [between the Book of Ezekiel and P/H] seem to attach more to the author and the ideology of the book as a whole than they do to Ezekiel; in fact, you could say that God sounds more like P than Ezekiel does." Patton, 84.

186. The relationship between the two texts has been a point of focus in critical scholarship since at least Wellhausen. The scholarship on the subject is vast. On the shared language (and idiom, in particular) between the two texts, see Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOT Supplement Series 358; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 30–85. For a recent discussion of the genealogical relationship, particularly between Ezekiel and the Holiness stratum of the Priestly History, see Michael Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 507; New York: T & T Clark, 2009).

187. See most recently, David S. Vanderhooft, "Ezekiel In and On Babylon," *Transeu* 46 (2014): 99–119; Nissinen, "(How) Does the Book of Ezekiel Reveal Its Babylonian Context," 93–97.

author<sup>188</sup> employs the “raw materials” learned from interactions with the surrounding Babylonian culture in order to critique the Judeans who remained in Judea following the Jehoiachin deportation (and, to a lesser degree, the diaspora), all the while demonstrating little animus for the Babylonians.<sup>189</sup> In this way, the book’s author reflects a similar kind of hybrid identity that we witnessed in Judeans like Aḥīqam and Yāḥû-šar-ušur. His work demonstrates a certain kind of fluency and familiarity with the culture of his Babylonian setting (language, architecture, ritual)<sup>190</sup> and the author is able to employ them through a textualized form of Judean prophecy. Composed as a coherent piece of literature rather than a collection of oracles,<sup>191</sup> the Book of Ezekiel imagines an audience with a similar fluency to its author.

On the other hand, the book demonstrates a far stronger and more salient concern with boundary maintenance for the prophet’s diasporic community. Within its literary world, the deity creates rhetorical and ideological distance between the community in Judah, who is doomed to immanent (and eventually achieved) destruction, and Ezekiel’s community in Babylonia, who

---

188. The distinction between the author/prophet and character/prophet is not always clear in Vanderhooft’s analysis. While it is possible that the two were one and the same, it is not required. Maintaining the distance is therefore preferable. Vanderhooft, “Ezekiel In and On Babylon,” 99–119.

189. Vanderhooft, “Ezekiel In and On Babylon,” 101–105.

190. The incorporation of new symbolic, linguistic, and cultural forms into a traditional medium like prophecy is a key element of Boyarin’s understanding of diaspora. He argues that the hybrid identity of individuals and communities living outside the borders of the ancestral homeland offers the opportunity for “empowering creativity.” The Book of Ezekiel and its use and reformulation of Babylonian raw materials seems to be an excellent example of this phenomenon. Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland*, 54–97.

191. That the Book of Ezekiel was a written composition from the start rather than a series of oracles, visions, and sign-acts that were later collected and collated was the primary argument of Ellen Davis’ groundbreaking work, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy* (JSOT Supplement Series 78. Sheffield, England: Almond, 1989).

were to be re-formed in Yahweh's restoration of Israel. He even employs a seemingly traditional but in reality innovative term — בית ישראל — to root this new community deep in the history of Yahweh's covenant relationship with his people.<sup>192</sup> This border between the old and the (restored) new is the primary division the work attempts to establish.<sup>193</sup> However, the deity also expresses serious anxieties concerning the deleterious effects of porous ethnic borders while the diaspora community waits things out in Babylonia. By means of ritual prescription (Ezek 40–48), ideological re-castings of a shared history (Ezek 20),<sup>194</sup> and detailed metaphor (Ezek 27), the deity, through his prophet, warns his audience to be dutiful in maintaining the boundaries of the community who would become his restored Israel.

*A Physical Boundary: Insiders and Outsiders in the Reconstructed Temple*

---

192. This is the primary argument of a recent article by Delorme. He claims that through the use of this expression, rather than the more traditional terms for the kingdom of Judah (יהודה) or the people as a whole prior to the division of the monarchy (בני ישראל), Ezekiel (whom he treats as the author of the work) attempts to establish a new kin-based identity. According to Delorme, the name “entitled the exilic community to the heritage of Israel” and emphasized the value of kinship over political unity. Jean-Philippe Delorme, “*Byt Ysr 'l* in Ezekiel: Identity Construction and the Exilic Period,” *JBL* 138 (2019): esp. 124–128, here 137. On the rhetorical force and function of addressing the prophet's audience with the epithet “Israel” or “house of Israel,” see Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 218–222.

193. Dalit Rom-Shiloni, “Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology,” *HUCA* 76 (2005): 41; Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 92–93.

194. The re-writing or reconstruction of history, as in the case of Ezek 20's version of Israel's history from the Wandering period to the monarchy, can be an especially powerful tool in the construction of diasporic identity. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 83–85.

Yahweh's anxieties over Judean boundary maintenance are perhaps most clearly and concretely expressed in his 3-D life-sized model of the future Jerusalem temple (Ezek 40–48).<sup>195</sup> A paradigm of graded holiness, the temple contains a series of walls and courtyards, physical examples of the rhetorical and ideological boundaries that define and regulate both access to the deity and the planned hierarchical relations between Israel's social groups.<sup>196</sup> As argued by J. Z. Smith, this plan serves as a metonymy for Yahweh's vision of the restored "house of Israel."<sup>197</sup> While the social, political, and sacral distinctions within the vision have often been the focus of scholarly attention,<sup>198</sup> it is the outermost ring, the largest and thickest of the massive complex, that

---

195. Ganzel and Holtz have discussed the influence of Babylonian religious architecture on the text of Ezekiel's vision. Particularly helpful for the current discussion is the strong influence of the outer courtyard wall (*kisû*), an architectural element that is emphasized in Babylonian temple construction and descriptions there of, but do not feature in the literary descriptions of the tabernacle from the Priestly History and Solomon's temple as detailed in 1 Kgs 6–7. Tova Ganzel and Shalom E. Holtz, "Ezekiel's Temple in Babylonian Context," *VT* 64 (2014/04): 211–226, esp. 217–222. Cf. *CAD* K, s.v. *kisû* 429b-430a.

196. Ganzel and Holtz highlight the shared conception between the vision of the temple in the Book of Ezekiel and its Babylonian counterparts. "In other words, the specific structural parallels we have observed between the temples — the walls, the gates, the courtyards — are significant because, in both cultures, these structures meaningfully contribute to the general organization of the temple precincts. All of them define and delimit increasing zones of sanctity." Tova Ganzel and Shalom E. Holtz, "Ezekiel's Temple in Babylonian Context," *VT* 64 (2014): 222. The Priestly History, composed in monarchic period Judah, maintains a similar view of access to the Holy of Holies, so the influence need not be external. It may, instead, have been the case that exposure to Babylonian architecture and temple theology provided new language and models through which to express concepts that already existed concerning the sanctity of the Jerusalem temple. On graded holiness in the Priestly History's vision of the tabernacle complex, see Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 149–188.

197. Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 47–73, esp. 70.

198. The historical referent behind the demotion of the Levites and the ascendance of the Zadokites has been a point of scholarly focus since Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*. For a summary of the issue at stake, see Stephen L. Cook, "Innerbiblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44 and the History of Israel's Priesthood," *JBL* 114 (1995): 193–197.

establishes the most fundamental binary of the entire schema: להבדיל בין הקדש לחל (Ezek 42.20)<sup>199</sup> Within this courtyard exists all of Israel at various levels of holiness: priest, prophet, layperson, prince. Beyond this wall exists everyone else, the profane (חל) foreigners who are excluded from the temple complex and thus the community of restored Israel.

Within this literary vision, Yahweh’s emphasis on maintaining this boundary is made clear in the prescriptions that begin following the narration of Yahweh’s inhabitation of the temple in 44.4. The very first commandment that Yahweh delivers to the prophet in this moment explicitly excludes foreigners (בן נכר) from the temple complex/Israel (v. 9):<sup>200</sup>

No foreigner, uncircumcised of heart	כל בן נכר ערל לב וערל בשר
and uncircumcised of flesh shall enter my	לא יבוא אל מקדשי לכל בן נכר
temple complex, no foreigner among the Israelites.	אשר בתוך בני ישראל

According to vss. 6–8, Israel had allowed foreigners to enter the Jerusalem temple in the past with disastrous results. While it is tempting to seek out a particular historical referent for the deity’s accusations,<sup>201</sup> the rhetorical function of the condemnation and subsequent prohibition is

---

199. “The explicit purpose of the perimeter wall is ‘to separate the consecrated from the unconsecrated.’” Ganzel and Holtz, “Ezekiel’s Temple in Babylonian Context,” 225.

200. For a productive intertextual reading of this passage that traces different operative legal traditions (P, H, and D), see Mark A. Awabdy, “YHWH Exegetes Torah: How Ezekiel 44:7–9 Bars Foreigners from the Sanctuary,” *JBL* 131 (2012): 685–705. For the exegetical origins of “double circumcision,” see 697–698.

201. The standard range of possibilities includes the following candidates: the Gibeonites, the people of Baal of Peor, the Nethinim, and the Carians. Daniel Isaac Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel; Chapters 25–48* (NICOT 2; Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 622–623.

clear from context: foreigners contaminate the temple precinct and their presence threatens Israel's relationship with its deity.<sup>202</sup>

### *Israel's History of Foreign Influence*

While the narration of this visionary experience of the future temple prescribes a “real” or material boundary between Israel and the foreigner in the future, the Book of Ezekiel is not without comment for the prophet's diaspora community. For example, in ch. 20 — one of the few oracles that is directed to Ezekiel's Babylonian audience within the framework of the book — the deity is particularly concerned with the diaspora community's proximity to a foreign population. Yahweh is incensed by a group of elders who have approached the prophet with a question. Rather than addressing the question directly, Yahweh directs his prophet in v. 4 to arraign the elders (הַתְּשִׁיב אֶת־הַתְּשׁוּבָה בְּנֵי אָדָם) and to recall for them the abominations of their ancestors (אֵת תּוֹעֲבֹת אֲבוֹתֵיךָ הַיְהוּדִים). After a telescoped and unflattering history lesson on Israel's rebellious past, the deity berates the elders for wishing to continue in the תּוֹעֲבוֹת of their forefathers; that is, Yahweh chastises them for their desire to be like nations around them (vv. 4, 30–32).

---

202. Block mistakenly suggests that Lev 22.25 (H) provides an explanation for the exclusion of foreigners from the sanctuary. In fact, the passage does not take issue with the foreigner, but rather with accepting from him/her the kind of blemished sacrificial gift prohibited in the preceding verses. Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel; Chapters 25–48* (NICOT 2; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 622. The same critique is made in Awabdy, “YHWH Exegetes Torah,” 693. Awabdy also correctly recognizes that a second divine abandonment is at stake through this prohibition (701–702).

This passage, which juxtaposes Israel’s sinful past with a vision of the paradoxical restoration of a new Israel,<sup>203</sup> is teeming with concerns for boundary maintenance. C. L. Crouch argued that the noun תועבה and its denominative verbal root, *t-‘-b*, indicate something foreign to the identity of the subject in question.<sup>204</sup> To identify an object, practice, idea, or person as תועבה is therefore to recognize a boundary, either traditional or recently constructed.<sup>205</sup> For Yahweh in Ezek 20, the תועבות of Israel’s ancestors consisted of the worship of Egyptian idols (גלולי מצרים), vv. 7–8) in the desert, the profanation of Yahweh’s sabbaths (vv. 16, 21), and the offering of sacrifices on every high hill and under every green tree (vv. 27–29). According to the theology of the D source, with which the author of Ezekiel was familiar,<sup>206</sup> prolonged contact with the Canaanites and their institutions threatened to effect a kind of acculturation by osmosis (cf. Deut 12.30).<sup>207</sup> As a result, the deity demands the destruction of Canaanite religious paraphernalia in addition to the annihilation of the land’s population (Deut 7). In Ezek 20’s retelling of the

---

203. On the Book of Ezekiel’s deterministic view of history, see Baruch J. Schwartz, “Repentance and Determinism in Ezekiel,” *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 11 (1993): 126–129.

204. Crouch, “What Makes a Thing Abominable?,” 516–541.

205. Crouch, “What Makes a Thing Abominable?,” 530.

206. On the author of the Book of Ezekiel’s knowledge of D and D’s theology, see Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 86–95, esp. 93–95.

207. The language of “acculturation by osmosis” is Jeffrey Stackert’s [personal communication]. In Deut 12.30, the threat of assimilation is from any surviving religious accoutrements. In D’s view of the conquest, the population is to have already been wiped out by the time the prescription of the central sanctuary is to be enacted. Baruch J. Schwartz, “Reexamining the Fate of the ‘Canaanites’ in the Torah Traditions,” in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* (eds. Moshe. Weinfeld, Chaim Cohen et al.; 2004), 156.

conquest of Canaan, D's fears are realized,<sup>208</sup> and the allure of "foreign" worship practices captured the community's ancestors and doomed their descendants.

This point is emphasized through Ezek 20's contrast between the תעבנות of Israel's neighbors and proper worship for the community; the practice that Yahweh will reinstate on his holy mountain (הר קדש) once he has decided to restore his people to the land he promised them (Ezek 20.39ff). As long as Ezekiel's audience is to remain "Israel," to remain Yahweh's chosen people (ביום בחרי בישראל v. 5), then they shall not worship like their neighbors. The deity makes a strong contrast between their 'foreign' practices, belittled as serving "wood and stone," and the traditional and native worship he expects upon return to Jerusalem. Nathaniel Levtow has demonstrated the socially constructive role of what he calls "icon parodies" in Judean prophetic literature, particularly that of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. In the cases of Jeremiah and Isa 40–48, the icon parodies have a discursive power in the service of social formation. By describing a ritual innovation (aniconism as Israel's *sole* cultic option) so that it "appears normative and natural,"<sup>209</sup> the authors of these prophetic texts created a strong sense of what defined their community through ritual polemic. In Ezek 20.30–32, the deity achieves a similar goal by setting up a binary opposition between Israel, Ezekiel's audience within the book, and the "nations, the clans of the world" who "serve wood and stone."<sup>210</sup> To be a part of Israel, then, was to remain distinct from

---

208. For a productive demonstration of the interweaving of Deuteronomistic and Priestly language, concepts, and theology in ch. 20, see Baruch J. Schwartz, "Reexamining the Fate of the 'Canaanites'," 98–103.

209. Nathaniel B. Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 34.

210. On the Deuteronomistic roots of this expression, see Levtow, *Images of Others*, 92.

the correlative practices of those nations and clans. Within the rhetoric of the book, religious practice is the ultimate marker of in- and out-group dynamics.

*Lessons Learned from a Sinking Ship: Ezekiel 27 and the Oracle Against Tyre*

In the preceding examples, the deity maintains the borders of the prophet's diaspora community by means of ritual prescription and through allusion to an inherited history of foreign religious influence. In a third rhetorical expression of concern for boundary maintenance, ch. 27's dirge over Tyre, Yahweh employs a detailed metaphor that warns against the dangers of porous social and economic borders. The dirge is part of a larger complex of oracles against the nations (chs. 25–32) that separates Yahweh's announcement that a survivor will come to Ezekiel to announce the fall of Jerusalem (24.25–27) and that survivor's actual arrival (33.21ff.).<sup>211</sup> Within this unit,<sup>212</sup> the dirge over Tyre stands out, first of all, for its style, and second, for its seemingly favorable stance towards the Phoenician city.<sup>213</sup>

---

211. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48* (Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible; Translated by Ronald E. Clements. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 3–4.

212. It is clear that the chapters within this unit have been arranged thematically (according to nation) rather than chronologically (the oracle against Tyre in 29.17–21 is dated *later* than the oracle against Egypt in ch. 31), and therefore reflect organizational intent. The oracles also seem to have been grouped and shaped with a strong concern for the number seven (cf. Amos 1–2). Finally, as in the cases of Isaiah (chs. 13–23) and Jeremiah (46–51, L), the collection is inserted to mark the transition from prophecies of doom (chs. 1–24) to those of hope (chs. 33–48). Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3–5; Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (Forms of the Old Testament Literature 19; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 179–180; Block, *Ezekiel v. 2*, 3–12.

213. See, for example, the comments by Greenberg: “But in fact it is the distinctive feature of this oracle that no ground for Tyre's destruction is contained in it. The focus is entirely on the contrast between the past (in reality present) glory of Tyre and its lamented (in reality future) downfall. True, the sinking of the ships (vs. 26) is ominously juxtaposed (vs. 25) to its being weighted down with merchandise. But as opposed to the preceding and following oracles, no

Rather than an oracle condemning the city or its ruler (cf. chs. 26 and 28), Yahweh offers an extended metaphor that likens the city to an exquisitely crafted seafaring vessel that eventually comes to sink under the weight of its own valuable and exotic cargo. The oracle is constructed using mixed modes of discourse, including a poetic dirge describing the ship's materials (vv. 3–9a; 25b–36) and an extended prosaic list of the city's trading goods and partners (vv. 9b–25a). A frequent source of consternation for commentators,<sup>214</sup> Jaqueline Vayntrub has convincingly explained the poetics of the metaphor as an example of what she calls systematic description, the thorough description of an entity as a means of expressing its perfection or wholeness.<sup>215</sup> Rather than a neutral or even sympathetic rehearsal of the fall of Tyre, as often argued in scholarship,<sup>216</sup> the oracle's systematic description actually offers a two-fold argument for the ship's sinking. First, the demise of this richly-laden ship proves that economic success need not indicate divine favor. Second, the diverse geographic origins of the ship's building materials and cargo are the ultimate sources of its destruction. That is, in expanding economic relationships so far beyond its own borders, Tyre has weakened its own internal structures to the point of failure.

---

explicit justification of Tyre's fate is given here; the dirge is non-judgmental, virtually sympathetic." Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. (Anchor Bible 22a; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 571. Cf. Hals, *Ezekiel*, 194.

214. The inclusion of this list has proven problematic for commentators, with regard to both its original setting, its function within the dirge, and its diachronic and editorial relationship to the material surrounding it. See Jaqueline Vayntrub, "Tyre's Glory and Demise: The Poetic of Description in Ezekiel 27," *CBQ* (FORTHCOMING).

215. Jaqueline Vayntrub, "Tyre's Glory and Demise: The Poetic of Description in Ezekiel 27."

216. See n. 213 above.

In his analysis of the rhetorical function of the oracles against the nations within the Book of Ezekiel, Gary Renz offers the following suggestion: “[T]he oracles might also contribute to preventing a close identification or intermingling of the Judahite community with surrounding expatriate communities.”<sup>217</sup> Although his suggestion is notably provisional, Renz’s analysis gains support from Vayntrub’s observations. She argues that “the focus on Tyre [in Ezek 27] may be a justification of a particular ideology that understands a culture like Tyre, with open borders, to be a case study in cultural endangerment.”<sup>218</sup> Economic success at the cost of boundary maintenance led to the dissolution of the great port city and its population. While the point is perhaps subtle, the dirge serves as a critique of the pursuit of economic success at the cost of maintaining social boundaries. The evidence from Āl-Yāhūdu observed above demonstrates that at least some Judeans were taking advantage of the opportunities provided by “transgressing” the boundaries of their ethnic communities to establish economic and social relationships with their non-Judean neighbors.

*The Incommensurability of Judeanness with Life in Babylonia in the Book of Ezekiel*

Despite the author’s acquaintance with and use of Babylonian language and literature, architecture, and iconography in the work’s divine speeches, the main character (Yahweh) nonetheless demonstrates a notable concern for boundary maintenance and the creation of a purified בית ישראל. In so doing, the book defined Judean identity in primarily negative terms: do

---

217. Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 101.

218. Vayntrub, “Tyre’s Glory and Demise.”

not allow your non-Judean neighbors to culturally/religiously/economically/physically transgress the borders of your community.

It is clear from this perspective that the author of the book felt some discomfort with the kind of adaptation to life in Babylonia that we witnessed in our analysis of the cuneiform material. Instead, the work is primarily concerned with a return or repatriation of those who were exiled in 597 to the land that Yahweh promised to their forefathers. Rather than advocating for adjustment to diasporic life in rural Nippur, the Book of Ezekiel is laser focused on maintaining the boundaries of a distinct and identifiable Judean community — בית ישראל — that could, through divine intervention, repopulate their ancestral homeland. But why should the author’s approach to Judean identity in the Babylonian diaspora have been so different from what we observed in the cuneiform evidence? Why did the work promote such strong ties to the ancestral homeland while other Judeo-Babylonians made themselves “at home” in their diaspora context?

### Homeland and Return Migration

*Given Who I Am, Where Do I Belong?*

In her 2017 study, *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement*, Sarah Yael Hirschhorn set out to understand what she describes in her introduction as “the clash between Jewish-American settlers’ liberal personas and their illiberal project” of settlement.<sup>219</sup> In order to

---

219. Sara Yael Hirschhorn, *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 20.

analyze the motivations of would-be settlers, Hirschhorn borrows an orienting question from historian Matthew Frye Jacobson: given who I am, where do I belong?<sup>220</sup> Through this question Hirschhorn sought to identify the particular elements of an individual American Jew's identity that might have motivated him or her to not only make Aliyah, but to settle in the territory at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This question, "given who I am, where do I belong," is equally productive for our understanding of 6<sup>th</sup> century Judeo-Babylonians. To restate it in contextually specific terms, an individual might have asked, "given how I understand my own Judeanness, where should I live?" The two pools of evidence that we have analyzed so far — the cuneiform material from the Āl-Yāhūdu corpus and the biblical Book of Ezekiel — seem to approach this question from dramatically different starting points. From the perspective of the Book of Ezekiel, it is clear that life in Babylonia is incommensurate with Judean (and Israelite) identity and that repatriation is both ideal and a divine inevitability. To be Judean is to live in Judea. In this regard, the work seems to present a paradigmatic example of (at least) one of William Safran's six defining features of diaspora, treating "[the] ancestral homeland as [the] true, ideal home and as the place to which [members of the community] or their descendants would (or should) eventually return — when conditions are appropriate."<sup>221</sup> When we look at the evidence from Āl-Yāhūdu, however, we encounter individual Judeans — if not the broader community — who have committed to a long-term stay in Babylonia, making themselves at home in the diaspora through

---

220. Hirschhorn, *City on a Hilltop*, 25; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 222–223.

221. Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83–84.

their economic, political, and social networks. Their Judeanness is not incompatible with life in Babylonia; rather, it is in many ways defined by it.

In this section I am particularly interested in the “given who I am” portion of Hirschhorn’s orienting question. I want to examine the factors — social, religious, economic, etc. — that seem to have led to these significantly different constructions of Judeanness in the Babylonian diaspora. I will argue that institutional context played an important, if not decisive role in how individual Judeans and their communities came to understand “who they were” and how that their relationship to a homeland played out through that identity.

In order to test this theory, I will analyze the phenomenon of return migration (see below) as the expression of a social identity that is rooted in an ancestral homeland that is understood to be different from one’s current country of residence. To do so, I will focus on the return migration of a specific class of people — religious professionals — from three ancient diasporic communities: Neirabians, Assyrians, and Judeans. These communities had each been displaced and resettled in Babylonia during the late 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Members from each also undertook return migration in the first decades of Persian rule.

The religious professionals in these case studies serve as a particularly illuminating example of the seemingly illogical nature of such a move because of the status and wealth they stood to lose by leaving their diasporic communities. Beginning with a brief reflection on the broader phenomenon of return migration, I will use data from these three communities to show how the social identities of these cultic professionals were informed by their institutional

affiliations and how, in turn, those identities motivated their decisions undertake return migration.

### *Return Migration*

Return migration among the children and grandchildren of immigrants — also known as roots migration,<sup>222</sup> ethnic migration,<sup>223</sup> or counter-diasporic migration<sup>224</sup> — describes the ‘return’ of the children and grandchildren of immigrants to the homeland of their ancestors. The term ‘return’ is to some degree misleading; how does one *return* to a place to which one has never been?

However, there is a long tradition of those who undertake such journeys using this language of “return”<sup>225</sup> and the expression provides valuable information concerning the mindsets of those

---

222. Katherine Southwood borrows the terminology from Paul Basu’s concept of ‘roots-tourism’ among later generations returning to the Scottish homeland of their ancestors. Katherine E. Southwood, “The Impact of Second and Third Generation Returnees as a Model for Understanding the Post-Exilic Context,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (eds. Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 330 n. 23.

223. Takeyuki Tsuda, “Introduction,” (ed. Takeyuki Tsuda; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1.

224. Russell King and Anastasia Christou, “Cultural Geographies of Counter-Diasporic Migration: Perspectives from the Study of Second-Generation ‘Returnees’ to Greece,” *Population Space and Place* 16 (2010): 105–106.

225. Compare Gen 24.5–8 as an example of this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible. Here, using the root *š-w-b*, Abraham’s servant asks if he should “return” Isaac to Abraham’s homeland should he have difficulty procuring a wife with the groom sight unseen (הַשֵּׁב אֶשְׁיֵב אֶת בְּנֵךְ אֵל, v. 5). Abraham, however, prohibits Isaac’s “return,” telling his servant “you shall not return him there” (רַק אֶת בְּנֵי לֵא תֵשֵׁב שָׁמָּה, v. 8). (Baruch J. Schwartz, personal communication).

who participate.<sup>226</sup> I will therefore continue to describe this phenomenon as a “return,” even if, in reality, those who undertook these journeys had no first-hand experience of the places to which they would move.

There has been a shift in recent scholarship concerning the motivations of those who undertake migration. Rather than groups of poor people simply moving from place to place in search of resources, as scholars once understood this process,<sup>227</sup> recent research on modern examples of migration points to a complex and contextual matrix of factors that can lead to population movement, including social as well as economic capital, and available relationship networks in which that capital might function at points of departure and arrival. This is especially the case for return migration, which is limited to the ancestral homeland and does not, therefore, demonstrate a broader concern for available resources.

While scholars have long recognized the significance of economic factors in motivating modern examples of return migration,<sup>228</sup> it is important to note that affective and ideological

---

226. In her study of return migration among Indian-Americans, Jain has argued that language of ‘return’ still has hermeneutical value for understanding the mindsets of those who undertake such such journeys, despite its seeming imprecision. Sonali Jain, “For Love and Money: Second-Generation Indian-Americans ‘Return’ to India,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (2013): 896–897, 911 n. 1–2.

227. “These studies indicate that migration is not a haphazard movement of poor people. Instead, it is a calculated movement, designed to relieve economic pressures at various stages of the life cycle.” Monica Boyd, “Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas,” *The International Migration Review* 3 (1989): 642.

228. The work of Takeyuki Tsuda, for example, focuses on Brazilian-born ethnically Japanese workers who have return migrated to fill a niche in Japan’s expanding production industry, but who have had a great deal of trouble fitting in to their ancestral homeland. Takeyuki Tsuda, “Transnational Migration and the Nationalization of Ethnic Identity among Japanese Brazilian Return Migrants,” *Ethos* 2 (1999); Takeyuki Tsuda, “Acting Brazilian in Japan: Ethnic Resistance among Return Migrants,” *Ethnology* 1 (2000); *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

factors can also play important roles.<sup>229</sup> These factors include returnees' desire to resolve identity questions caused by the hybrid nature of diaspora identity, the pull of strong kinship and cultural ties, a sense of nostalgia for the idealized homeland as described by their parents and grandparents, and the significance of geographically determined religious ideology.<sup>230</sup> A growing body of scholarship has come to recognize that neither set of factors — economic or ideological — can provide sufficient explanation for return independent of the other, but rather it is typically the interplay between the two that catalyzes movement for would-be returnees.<sup>231</sup>

### *Āl-Nērib*

The Judeans of Āl-Yāhūdu were part of a much larger constellation of ethnic minorities resettled in the un- and undeveloped Nippurian countryside. There is almost no direct evidence for the experiences of the Tyrians, Ashkelonites, or Arabs with whom the inhabitants of Āl-Yāhūdu interacted. There is, however, one major exception. At a time when Judeo-Babylonians like Aḥīqam and his descendants were committing their full attention and resources to ensure economic success in a Babylonian context, another group of resettled West Semitic deportees in the Nippur region decided to undertake return migration to the northern Levant. The Neo-Babylonian archive from Āl-Nērib provides an excellent test case for understanding the

---

229. According to Russell King, non-economic/affective motivations are stronger in terms of pull factors than strictly economic opportunities, particularly in comparison to the economic factors that might have pushed a population out in the first place. Russell King, "Generalizations From the History of Return Migration," (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2000), 15–16.

230. Hirschhorn, *City on a Hilltop*, 36ff.

231. Jain, "For Love and Money: Second-Generation Indian-Americans 'Return' to India," 410.

particular elements of identity that may be operative in a displaced community's resettlement plans following the rise of the Persian dynasty.

The archive in question was discovered in the early twentieth century in northern Syria, some twenty kilometers outside of Aleppo. The archive, which consists of 27 Late Babylonian tablets, details the economic dealings of a certain Nusku-gabbe and his descendants during the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>232</sup> Most of the activity documented in the tablets took place in a town called Āl-Nērib, or, alternatively, “town of the Neirabians.”<sup>233</sup> Originally thought to have referred to the city of Neirab in northern Syria known from the Neo-Assyrian period, more recent treatments of the archive have argued that the *ālu ša Nērabāya* in the tablets was actually a twin town of the Syrian original located in the Nippur region of Babylonia.<sup>234</sup> Like the *alū ša Yāhūdāya*, the *ālu ša Nērabāya* was likely founded following one of Nebuchadnezzar's Western campaigns and populated with deportees from the conquered Levantine city of Neirab.

In many respects the small archive is quite similar to the roughly contemporary material from Āl-Yāhūdu and Bīt-Našar. It consists primarily of promissory notes for small loans,<sup>235</sup> but also includes notices concerning other business transactions<sup>236</sup> and a damaged marriage agreement.<sup>237</sup>

The contents of the archive's earlier tablets suggest that the residents of Āl-Nērib were integrated

---

232. Editions and handcopies/photos of the tablets are published in P. Dhorme, “Les tablettes babyloniennes de Neirab,” *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 25 (1928): 53–82.

233. Dhorme no. 17. 5' *ālu ša* <sup>lū</sup> *Nēribāya*.

234. Tolini has written a masterful treatment on the archive, including a brief history of scholarship. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back.” 94–156. For a the history of views on the location of the town, see his discussion on pgs. 61–63.

235. Dhorme nos. 1, 3–6, 10–21, 25, and 27.

236. Dhorme nos. 8–9 are copies of a contract to carry out corvéé labor (*palaḥ šarri*). No. 22 records the sale of a slave, and no. 2 is also a sales receipt, but the object is unclear.

237. Dhorme no. 23.

into the Babylonian land-for-service system, including references to the *palah šarri*, “royal service,” a phrase frequently connected with the land-for-service sector in the Murašû archives.<sup>238</sup> The inhabitants were also in frequent contact with low-level representatives of the imperial government.<sup>239</sup> Later texts in the archive suggest a small amount of financial success for Nusku-gabbe’s descendants. It appears that like Aḫīqam and Aḫīqar, the Nusku-gabbe family was able to profit financially from its role as community representative.<sup>240</sup>

However, there is one major difference in the archival record that distinguishes the evidence from Āl-Nērib from that of Āl-Yāḫūdu. As noted above, the evidence from Āl-Yāḫūdu continues into the early 5th century BCE, the final tablets detailing the business activities of Aḫīqam’s son Nīr-Yāma. The archive from Āl-Nērib, however, breaks off some thirty years earlier during the first years of Darius I.<sup>241</sup> It seems that it was at this point that the archive’s final holder, Nusku-gabbe’s grandson, Nusku-iddinâ,<sup>242</sup> decided to undertake return migration to his family’s ancestral homeland in Syria. This decision is all the more striking considering the relative financial success of the Neirabians.

---

238. Dhorme nos. 8–9. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back,” 86–87; Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia,” 214; Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 61–62.

239. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia,” 214.

240. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back,” 87–89.

241. Although the regnal year is broken, the last tablet in the archive (no. 27) dates to the reign of Darius I. Eph’al argued that it likely came from *early* in that reign on prosopographical grounds (Eph’al, “The Western Minorities,” 87 n. 39.), a point on which Tolini agrees. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back,” 63–66.

242. There is no hard evidence that it was actually Nusku-iddinâ who catalyzed the return migration. He was, however, the latest active protagonist record in the archive, and so he seems as the most likely candidate to have initiated the move.

After a gap in the record coinciding with the reign of Cyrus, the Āl-Nērib archive resumes under Cambyses with an observable shift in focus. Barley production, a major feature of tablets from the period of Babylonian rule,<sup>243</sup> is no longer attested. Instead, the documents from the Persian period record silver loans, both large and small,<sup>244</sup> as well as a few significant purchases.<sup>245</sup> The archive's geographic horizon also expanded under the Persians. Whereas early documents record events clustered in the Nippur region, two tablets from the Persian period have Nuske-gabbē's descendants active outside the environs of Nippur, including transactions in Babylon and Ḫīt.<sup>246</sup> Caution once again must be taken due to the small sample size, but if these tablets are evidence of a greater trend, then the broadened scope of economic activity has suggested to Gauthier Tolini, the current expert on the archive, that Nusku-gabbē's descendants may have experienced greater freedom of movement under the new Persian regime,<sup>247</sup> and with it, a shift away from farming and towards a way of life less intimately tied to land.<sup>248</sup> It is

---

243. Dhorme no. 3 (Neriglissar), Dhorme nos. 4–6, 10, 15, 17–18 (Nabonidus) are all promissory notes for barley. Dhorme no. 18 also appears to deal with dates.

244. Dhorme nos. 19–21 (Cambyses), 1 (Nebuchadnezzar IV), and 27 (Darius I).

245. Dhorme no. 2, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar IV, records the sale of an unknown object (the tablet is damaged) for the price of 1 mina and 10 shekels of silver, while Dhorme no. 20 documents the sale of a slave, the price of which has not been preserved.

246. The activity recorded in the archive's earlier tablets is clustered in four major towns in the Nippur region: Bīt-dayyān-Adad, Ammat, Ālu-ša-ktimmī, and Āl-Nērib (Āl-Nērabāya). While these towns continue to feature under the Persians, Tolini points out that Nusku-gabbē's family is also recorded doing business in Babylon (Dhorme no. 1) and Ḫīt (Dhorme no. 19), a bitumen hub on the northern Euphrates. Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back," 88–89.

247. Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back," 90.

248. Tolini suggests that the transition marks a shift towards offering small loans to other Neirabians. Alstola wonders whether or not the loans are part a small business venture. Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back," 82–86; Alstola, "Judeans in Babylonia," 217–219.

particularly notable that these shifts coincide with the execution of long-term agricultural and economic plans among some residents of Āl-Yāḥūdu and Našar.

While these trends do suggest a loose connection with physical space of Āl-Nērib, the motivation for migration to the ancestral homeland remains to be explained. This issue is not a major point of focus for Tolini's project, but he does offer the following in the conclusion to his synthesis: "Nevertheless, the return to Neirab of at least some of their descendants reveals that in spite of their eventual integration [into the Babylonian environment], some deportees always felt the desire to end their exile, and go back to their hometown."<sup>249</sup> Implicit in Tolini's explanation is a traditional view of the diaspora experience, one that emphasizes the displaced community's will to "return."<sup>250</sup> Having accrued enough economic capital to afford the journey, Nusku-iddinâ and those who traveled with him seized the opportunity presented under Darius I to settle in the land of their forefathers.

Economic prosperity can be a primary motivator in modern examples of return migrations.<sup>251</sup> The combination of economic hardship in the diasporic community's country of residence and new opportunities in its ancestral homeland can prove particularly conducive to this kind of movement. However, the apparent economic success demonstrated in the Neirab archive suggests that this was not Nusku-iddinâ's primary motivation. Rather, as Tolini has argued, it is possible that he made the trip because his family had been financially successful enough for him to do so. However, as I suggested above, it is not typically a single factor (like

---

249. Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back." 93, emphasis added.

250. As discussed in ch. 2, this is a consistent element of early systematic definitions of diaspora. See especially my discussions of Safran and Cohen.

251. Tsuda, "Introduction," 1.

economic viability) that catalyzes return migration, but rather a combination that includes financial considerations as well as affective and ideological motivators. In the case of Nusku-iddinâ and the Neirabians, the archive offers another possible suggestion.

According to Tolini's reconstruction of the events that led to the arrival (and later discovery) of this material in Syria, Nusku-gabbe's grandson most likely brought the archive with him when he return migrated in order to demonstrate his family's role as a leader of the Diaspora community.<sup>252</sup> Holding little economic or material value in their new setting, the tablets may still have served as a source of social capital among the Neirabians of Syria. According to the archival record, the Neirbians of Nippur formed a relatively isolated community. More than 60% of the roughly 150 individuals recorded in the archive should be identified as being of West Semitic (and most likely Neirabian) descent.<sup>253</sup> When non-Neirabians do appear, they are typically in the background of the action, serving as witnesses. The one major exception to this rule was the scribe, who is Babylonian in every case.<sup>254</sup> This suggests that despite the ethnically

---

252. Tolini, "From Syria to Babylon and Back." 91–93.

253. According to Tolini's analysis, the primary indicators of West Semitic descent are Aramaic names, Babylonian names which feature adaptations from Aramaic (eg. Aramaic pronunciations of deities), and an emphasis on the lunar cult and its deities (Nusku, Nuḥsāya, and Sîn). For a full discussion of his method, see pgs. 70–74.

254. See the discussion of this phenomenon of Babylonian scribes working in Nippurian settlements in Waerzeggers, "Review of CUSAS 28," 186–187; Hackl, "Babylonian Scribal Practices," 125–140.

diverse environment in which Āl-Nērib was situated, its residents may have been hesitant to interact economically with individuals from outside their community.<sup>255</sup>

This apparent economic isolation may be a symptom of a kind of enclave mentality among the Neirabians, an effort to create strict social borders in their new environment.<sup>256</sup> It may also be a function of the social class of some members of this community prior to their deportation. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Nusku-gabbē family was one of religious professionals. First of all, the archive was discovered in a graveyard that also contained headstones for two Neirabian priests of Sîn.<sup>257</sup> The grave in which the tablets were found was less ornate than those of the priests, but its inclusion in the cemetery suggests that Nusku-iddinâ held high status in the community, status worthy of his inclusion among the religious professionals Sîn-zēr-ibni and Sî-gabbari.<sup>258</sup>

Secondly, the relative uniformity of the Neirabian onomasticon may reflect a close relationship with a religious institution. In his study of Judean naming practices, Paul-Alain Beaulieu observed a high density of “Yahweh” theophoric elements among Judeans closely related to the state in the late monarchic period and among the clergy who are included in the lists in Ezra 2/Neh 7 that are framed as registers of returnees within the larger narrative of Ezra-

---

255. Dhorme no. 23, a broken marriage contract from the reign of Nabonidus (the date is broken) may prove an exception to the rule. The contract records the marriage of <sup>f</sup>Bar-aḥḥâ daughter of Kukiizza, who bears an identifiably West Semitic name, to Nabû-eṭir son of Ea-zēr-iddin, who has a Babylonian name and patronym. Unfortunately the tablet is too broken for further analysis.

256. See chapter 2 on the variety of social responses to forced migration.

257. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 209–212.

258. For a summary of the finds from the necropolis, see Astrid Nunn, “Nekropolen und Gräber in Phönizien, Syrien und Jordanien zur Achämenidenzeit,” *UF* 32 (2001): 436–439.

Nehemiah. According to Beaulieu, a case can be made for seeing institutional pressure (or influence) as a force behind these trends. In the first case, the high density of Yahweh names occurs among Judah's elite class (military, civil administration, cultic professionals), reflecting a state-sponsored theological program (Yahweh-alone). In the second case, it was the reinstatement of the temple community that applied similar pressure to naming practices. According to Beaulieu, "The Judean onomasticon is linguistically and theologically homogeneous, with exclusive dominance of Yahweh in theophoric names only in contexts in which everyone is integrated within a structure that dictates a strict theological plan."<sup>259</sup>

In support of his analysis, Beaulieu argues for a similar phenomenon among the Eanna temple community and the rise of Anu names between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE. According to Beaulieu, there was resurgence in Anu-worship during the Persian period due to the deity's association with Ahura Mazda, the Persian god of the heavens. Roughly 85% of individuals identified with the cult of Anu in Uruk bore his name as a theophoric element. The otherwise increasing diversity of language, culture, and religion in Uruk during the centuries in question suggests to Beaulieu that these traditionalist naming patterns reflect the habits of an isolationist temple community, one that intentionally shielded itself from outside influence.<sup>260</sup> The density of "Sîn," "Nuḥsāya," and "Nusku" names among the inhabitants of Āl-Nērib may be a symptom of a similar isolationist mentality.

Finally, a broken tablet in the archive may speak to continued cultic practice among the inhabitants of Āl-Nērib. Dhorme no. 26 refers three times to <sup>d</sup>30 šá <sup>ur</sup>ni-ri-bi, the "Sîn of

---

259. Beaulieu, "Yahwistic Names." 245–266, here 256. *Emphasis* added.

260. Beaulieu, "Yahwistic Names." 257–258.

Nērab.”<sup>261</sup> The state of the tablet makes analysis difficult, but the title appears to refer to a divine statue and perhaps even its sanctuary (*atmanu*).<sup>262</sup> The funerary stelae inscriptions of two priests from the Neo-Assyrian period attest to the presence of a temple to the West Semitic moon god in Neirab during the late Iron Age.<sup>263</sup> The self-identification of one of those priests, Sī’-gabbar, as the *šangu* of Neirab and a servant of the king in a letter to Sargon II points to the temple’s importance in the region.<sup>264</sup> Alstola has tentatively suggested that Dhorme no. 26 indicates the continuation of traditional religious practice among the Neirabians in their new Babylonian context.<sup>265</sup> While the direct evidence for the presence of a temple to Sîn in Āl-Nērib is primarily circumstantial or incomplete, Alstola’s suggestion becomes more probable through analogy to other ancient and modern diaspora communities.

First of all, I argued in the previous chapter that contemporary immigrant and diaspora communities often build religious buildings dedicated to the religious practices of their ancestral homelands as a means to construct and reproduce ethnic identity. In so doing, the religious

---

261. Obv. 3, 6; Rev. 2.

262. Dhorme reconstructs *atmanu* in lines 3, 6, and 2’. Dhorme, “Les tablettes babyloniennes de Neirab,” 67. Tolini, however, notes the literary register of *atmanu* and questions its presence in such a pedestrian document. Tolini, “From Syria to Babylon and Back,” 70 n. 49. Hackl’s observations concerning the skill level of rural scribes may further support Tolini’s reservations. Hackl, “Babylonian Scribal Practices,” 125–140.

263. The funerary stelae of both priests-Sī’-gabbār and Sîn-zēr-ibni-indicate that they served as a “priest of Šahr in Neirab” (*kmr šhr bnr̄b*, (KAI 225 ln. 1–2; 226 ln. 1). Niehr argues for the similarity between these expression and language indicating the presence of a temple to Yahu in Yeb in the Elephantine material: *yhw ’lh’ byb* (TAD A 4.7: 6; 4.8: 7 [incompl.]; B 2.2: 4; 3.3: 2; 3.5: 2; 3.10: 2; 3.11: 2). The similarity suggests to Niehr there was a temple to lunar deity in Neirab and that it was distinct from his temple in Haran. Herbert Niehr, “Religion,” 176.

264. <sup>lú\*</sup> SANGA ʾšá\* <sup>uru</sup>né-ri-bi <sup>lú</sup>ARAD ʾšá\*<sup>1</sup> LUGAL. SAA 1, 189.8–9. On the identification of two priests, see Dagmar Kühn, “Society, Institutions, Law, and Economy,” in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (ed. Herbert Niehr; HOS 106; 2014), 56.

265. Alstola, “Judeans in Babylonia.” 233.

aspects of that ethnic identity are reinforced and grow in importance. I then showed how the construction of a temple to Yahu in Yeb played a significant and reflexive role in the construction of ethnic identity among the Judeo-Egyptian community on the island and for comparable approaches to diasporic life among other ethnic minority communities elsewhere in Egypt, including the Carians of Memphis and the diverse Greek population of Naukratis. A temple dedicated to Sîn of Neirab in Āl-Nērib would thus be a comparable example of this phenomenon in the imperial heartland.

Secondly, the Neirbians of Āl-Nērib would not have been alone in establishing a temple in a Nippurian twin town. The town of the Arabians (*ālu ša<sup>lu</sup> Arbāya*), a settlement in the region of Nippur attested in a number of tablets from the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods,<sup>266</sup> appears to have had its own temple to dedicated Sîn, a deity traditionally associated with the ancient Arabians.<sup>267</sup> A promissory note for barley dated to 547 BCE (BE 8/1 50) was drafted in “the temple of Sîn in the town of the Arabians,”<sup>268</sup> and two other tablets may also make reference

---

266. The toponym “Town of the Arabians” appears clearly in BE 8/1 26, where it is spelled URU šá<sup>lu</sup> *Ar-ba-a-a* (563 BCE), and in BE 8/1 50, where it is spelled URU šá<sup>lu</sup> *Ár-ba-a-a* (547 BCE). As argued by Eph’al, the variation in spelling makes the reading certain. He notes, however, that there may be other attestations. TMH 3/2 90 147 refers to the URU *Ar-ba-a-a* (518 BCE). In this case, the diachronic shift from spelling the full ethnonym to a shorthand form (Āl-Arbāya) would mirror similar developments to what we have observed in the spelling of Āl-Yāhūdu and Āl-Nērib.

Eph’al also comments on the issue of the toponym URU šá<sup>mAD-d</sup> A.A, which he renders *ālu šá Abi-ila-a-a*. This spelling occurs in four documents (BE 8/1 51:4; 68:5, 12; 72:12; TMH 3/2 90:13) ranging from 545 to 529 BCE. This spelling also occurs in BE 8/1 50:5, which also refers to URU šá<sup>lu</sup> *Ár-ba-a-a* in l.15. He suggests that both names refer to the same town and alternate renderings of that town’s name. Israel Eph’al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th–5th Century B.C.* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1982), 189–190. Cf. Dandamayev, “Twin Towns,” 145.

267. Dandamayev, “Twin Towns,” 145.

268. L. 15: É<sup>d30</sup> URU šá<sup>lu</sup> *Ár-ba-a-a*

to this structure.<sup>269</sup> In all three of these tablets, the temple is referred to with the expected form *bītu* (spelled logographically) rather than with the more exotic *atmanu*, as in Dhorme no. 26.<sup>270</sup> Nonetheless, the existence of such a structure dedicated to Sîn in another Nippurian twin town stands as corroborative evidence to the presence of a temple in Āl-Nērib.

The examples of diaspora temples from Saite and Persian period Egypt and the temple to Sîn in the Nippurian town of the Arabians speak to the probability of a temple dedicated to the lunar deity in Āl-Nērib. However, in neither case are there clear signs of return migration among those communities, or even a desire to do so. For that evidence we must turn to another diasporic religious institution, the Neo-Babylonian Aššur temple of Uruk.

#### *Assyrians and the Aššur Temple of Uruk*

Eight tablets from the Eanna archive make reference to a temple to Aššur (É AN.ŠÁR) in the Babylonian city of Uruk during the 6th century BCE.<sup>271</sup> Although it is possible that the temple was already in place in the late Neo-Assyrian period,<sup>272</sup> Karen Radner has argued that it was most

---

269. If Eph'al is correct concerning the identification of the towns of the Arabāya and that of the Abilāya (see n. 266 above), then BE 8/1 51 (l.14) and TMH III/II 90 (l.13) each make references to the temple of Sîn there. Both were drafted in close proximity to É d30 URU šá mAD-dA.A, "the temple of Sîn in the town of the Abilāya."

270. See n. 262 above. This difference may be a function of the wide range of scribal abilities attested in documentation from rural Nippur. See my summary of Hackl's recent work on this topic in n. 23 above.

271. Five of the tablets are datable by internal references to the period between the reigns of Nabonidus and Cambyses. Dates from the other three cannot be stated with certainty, although they seem to be of a piece with the other five. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "The Cult of AN.ŠÁR/AŠŠUR in Babylonia after the Fall of the Assyrian Empire," *SAAB* 11 (1997): 56–58.

272. Beaulieu, based primarily on the reference of an Urukian *qēpu* named Aššur-bēl-ušur in the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century, argues that the temple existed prior to the rise of the Neo-Babylonian empire. Beaulieu, "The Cult of AN.ŠÁR/AŠŠUR," 56–58.

likely established by refugees or deportees following the fall of Nineveh at the end of the 7th century.<sup>273</sup> According to Beaulieu:

When the Assyrian empire collapsed at the end of the seventh century, the city of Assur suffered extensive devastation, and the Temple of Aššur was destroyed and subsequently abandoned for a long period, just like the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. The Temple of Aššur at Uruk may have become a place of refuge for clerics of the god fleeing their homeland, reinforcing the Assyrian presence in the city.<sup>274</sup>

Within eighty years of the fall of the temple in Assur, the tablets record basic administrative functions for Uruk temple to Aššur, including offering allotments, commodity deliveries, and a record of a criminal investigation.<sup>275</sup>

One of these texts, UCP 9/2, 57, is particularly intriguing for the evidence it provides for the role of the cult community in the cultivation and reproduction of Assyrian identity.<sup>276</sup> First of all, the tablet lists a number of cult professionals, including brewers and butchers, suggesting a fully functioning (although perhaps reduced) cult. Secondly, it is clear from the tablet's last legible line — LÚ.ŠÀ-*bi* URU.†KI†.MEŠ,<sup>277</sup> “inhabitants of Assyria,” — that the shrine served a community of displaced Assyrians and was not simply a native Babylonian shrine to the deity.

---

273. More recently, however, Radner has argued that the presence of an Assyrian-appointed *qēpu* does not necessarily indicate the presence of a temple. Rather, based on the dating of the tablets and the historical circumstances surrounding the fall of Aššur, it is far more likely that the cult was set up by Assyrian refugees or deportees during the Neo-Babylonian period. Karen Radner, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’: The Restoration of the Cult of Aššur, C. 538 BCE,” in *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit* (eds. Christoph Levin and Reinhard Müller; *Orientalische Religionen in der Antike* 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 83–84.

274. Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names.” 254.

275. Beaulieu, “The Cult of AN.ŠÁR/AŠŠUR,” 57–58.

276. Beaulieu reproduces a transliteration and translation of Laurie Pearce’s collation in his article, Beaulieu, “The Cult of AN.ŠÁR/AŠŠUR,” 9–60.

277. L. 16. “‘Men from *Libbi-Ali*,’ using the colloquial name of the city of Assur.” Radner, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’.” 84 n. 52.

Finally, among the overwhelming preponderance of Aššur-names among those associated with the shrine,<sup>278</sup> two preserve Assyrian verbal forms (Pāni-Aššur-lamur and Pāni-Bēl-lamur). This suggests that the community continued to speak (or at least compose) in their native dialect of Akkadian,<sup>279</sup> a point supported by the continued practice of copying Assyrian language texts at Uruk well into the Persian period and beyond.<sup>280</sup>

In addition to establishing their native cult on Babylonian soil, the Assyrian community from Uruk may share another trait with the inhabitants of Āl-Nērib: return migration. In her efforts to trace the preservation of Aššur worship into the 1st century CE, Karen Radner has made a strong case for what she calls a “second temple to Aššur” built early during the period of Persian hegemony on the ruins of the first temple. She cites both the Assyrian archaeological record<sup>281</sup> and Cyrus’ claim to have returned Aššur’s cult statue to his traditional home as part of

---

278. One of these displaced Assyrians, Mannu-akî-bēt-Aššur, bore a name recognizing the majesty of the original temple in Assur. L. 7, Radner, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’,” 83–84. On the naming practices of temple communities, see discussion above.

279. “That some of the Urukean members of the Aššur congregation bore names in the Assyrian variety of Akkadian, as we have seen above, demonstrates that they continued to use their distinctive language to some extent in exile.” Radner, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’.” 89. At least as a *literary* language. Standard Babylonian was the primary language of the court and Aramaic had become the primary spoken language of most Assyrians by the end of the Assyrian empire. Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages,” 187–192.

280. Beaulieu notes the presence of a tablet from a canonical hepatoscopic series, bearing an official colophon of the library of Assurbanipal, copied in Uruk in the Hellenistic period. This indicates to Beaulieu that such texts could at least be understood well-enough to copy a few centuries later. Beaulieu, “The Cult of AN.ŠĀR/AŠŠUR,” 66.

281. She associates this temple with the building known as “temple A,” a (comparatively) small shrine with Neo-Babylonian architectural elements built on the ruins of the Iron Age temple at Assur. For her evaluation of the evidence, see Radner, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’,” 85–88.

the Persian king's ascent to the Babylonian throne.<sup>282</sup> The new, (comparatively) modest shrine in the Assyrian homeland would have been a congregation-sponsored project that was allowed (rather than patronized) by the new Persian regime.<sup>283</sup>

Radner's article seeks to explain the apparent continuity of Iron Age Aššur cult with Hatrian worship of the deity Assur in the early centuries of the Common Era. The second temple to Aššur proves a critical link between the two religious communities, particularly through its role in preserving ancient Assyrian texts.<sup>284</sup> However, Radner's reconstruction leaves a major gap between the fall of the first temple and the establishment of the second. Positing continuity through the diasporic Urukian temple would go a long way toward closing that gap.<sup>285</sup> A community of religious specialists, Assyrian Urukians who worshipped Aššur, would have been

---

282. "From [Šuanna (= Babylon)] I sent back to their places, to the sanctuaries across the river Tigris whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein: to Assur, Susa, Akkad, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turan, Der, as far as the border of Gutium (i.e., the Zagros mountain range). I made permanent sanctuaries for them. I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements." Radner, "Aššur's 'Second Temple Period'," 85.

283. "I propose that 'Temple A' was the shrine resulting from Cyrus' permission for the exiles and gods to return from Babylonia and to re-establish the local cults in northeastern Mesopotamia. This date and the historical context can be easily reconciled with the distinct Babylonian influences in the shrine's architecture while its comparative modesty illustrates the fact that Cyrus' permission to re-establish the cult did not mean that the Persian ruler assumed patronage and sponsorship for the temple in the way the Assyrian king had. The members of the congregation would have had to sponsor the temple themselves. The resultant shrine is Aššur's Second Temple." Radner, "Aššur's 'Second Temple Period'," 87.

284. Radner notes the presence of Assyrian texts (including 82 stone tablets and 24 clay prisms) dating from the second millennium to the end of the imperial period in the foundations new temple complex. Radner, "Aššur's 'Second Temple Period'." 88–89. See also Beaulieu's analysis of the continuity of Assyrian scribal practices in Hellenistic Uruk. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "The Afterlife of Assyrian Scholarship in Hellenistic Babylonian," in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch* (eds. J. Stackert, B. N. Porter et al.; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010), 1–18.

285. While Radner does discuss this community, she makes no explicit connection between it and the re-established cult at Assur.

prime candidates to reproduce the ritual practices — if the not texts — that are attested on either side of the inter-temple gap.<sup>286</sup> Furthermore, the timeline for the return migration of this community would be consistent with Judean and (potentially) Neirabian temple restoration projects during the last third of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, with the last tablet to mention the Urukian temple dated to the reign of Cambyses.

But why the gap between Cyrus' edict and the actual return migration of the Urukian temple community to Assur?<sup>287</sup> Radner's observation that the restoration project would have been

---

286. Or the "Templeless Age," to borrow Jill Middlemas' terminology. Although like the Judean evidence she examines, the Assyrians, too, set up a temple outside the borders of the ancestral homeland.

287. In addition to Radner's case for the return of the Aššur statue to Assur and the rebuilding of its temple, van der Spek has argued that a return of captured statues to their home temples in politically-expedient locations (eg. the Mesopotamian and transtigradian cities listed in the Cyrus Cylinder) was consistent with the policy of Cyrus's Babylonian and especially Assyrian predecessors. He highlights Esarhaddon, in particular, who claimed to have restored the temples his father, Sennacherib, had destroyed in Babylon, to return captured statues to those temples, and to allow the Babylonians who had been dispersed during his father's sack of the city to return. According to the Babylonian Chronicle (no. 2, ll. 15–17), Nabopolassar restored the gods of Susa that had been captured by the Assyrians. Robartus J Van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods. A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations," in *Extraction & Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (eds. Michael Kozuh, Wouter F.M. Henkelman et al.; Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 257–258. For a treatment of the phenomenon of appealing to local gods for support and the mechanics of "godnapping" under the Assyrian empire, see ch. 3 in DeGrado, "Authoring Empire: Intellectual Engagement With the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the Bible." This includes Esarhaddon who presented himself (with varying degrees of agency) as a king responsible for restoring deities to their homelands. DeGrado also notes that the hope for a statue's return could be leveraged by Assyrian kings for cooperation with conquered peoples in the form of (renewed) submission and (increased) tribute.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that rather than an iconoclast or a reformer, Cyrus' approach to rule in Mesopotamia was very much in line with his predecessors, both in terms of its literary presentation and in political and military tactics. For example, Schaudig has argued for the text of the Cyrus Cylinder's dependence on Babylonian texts well-known in scribal circles of the period like the *Enûma Eliš* and the *Esaġil Chronicle*. Hanspeter Schaudig, "The

congregation-funded is crucial. In his evaluation of the Neirab material, Tolini suggested that Nusku-iddinâ decided to return migrate to Syrian Neirab because he could afford to do so. On its face, this seems to be counter to the common sense push/pull dynamics of economic motivation for return migration. However, the desire (and permission) to reestablish his native cult in his ancestral homeland, a project that would have required considerable resources, may have provided Nusku-iddinâ with the additional ideological motivation he needed. It may also explain the shift in the community's economic activity under the Persians and the gap between Cyrus' edict — or whatever policy allowed for the return of ethnic minority communities to restore their deities to their homelands — and its eventual return roughly two decades later. The same scenario could hold for the Assyrians, as well: seeing an opportunity to return migrate following the transition to Persian hegemony, the congregation took the necessary time to acquire the funds necessary for the modest but important rebuilding project that was executed on the remains of their previous temple.

*A Temple to Yahweh in Babylonia?*

---

Magnanimous Heart of Cyrus: The Cyrus Cylinder and Literary Models,” in *Cyrus the Great: Life and Lore* (ed. Rahim M. Shayegan; Ilex Foundation Series 21; Boston: Ilex Foundation, 2018), 65–91. Meanwhile, efforts to reconstruct Cyrus' rise to power from Babylonian evidence (eg. the Babylonian Chronicles) rather than Classical and biblical sources has shown that like his predecessors, Cyrus was pragmatic in his approach to conquest. He was willing to use both force and placation as the situation demanded. For recent examples of this approach, see David Vanderhooft, “Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror? Ancient Historiography Concerning Cyrus in Babylonia,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 351–372; Amélie Kuhrt, “Ancient Near Eastern History: The Case of Cyrus the Great of Persia,” in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (ed. H. G. M. Williamson; Oxford: British Academy, 2007), 107–127.

Although we can observe significant overlap in the observable diacritics of ethnic identity between the Judeans of Nippur and these contemporary communities of Neirabians and Assyrians — traditionalist naming practices, reproduction of native languages, and eventual reinstitution of the temple in the ancestral homeland — there is no direct evidence for a diasporic temple dedicated to Yahweh in Babylonia. A number of passages within the Hebrew Bible have been scrutinized for hints of such an institution, but no clear unambiguous evidence has come to light. Perhaps the most intriguing remark is a reference to the *מקדש מעט* in Ezek 11.16.<sup>288</sup> This enigmatic expression has suggested the presence of some sort of physical (yet diminished) sanctuary to Yahweh among the Babylonian exiles,<sup>289</sup> although the majority of modern commentators dismiss the possibility.<sup>290</sup> The reference to *המקום* — a term that occurs frequently within Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic literature in reference to the temple in Jerusalem<sup>291</sup> —

---

288. “There is no firm evidence for a temple in Babylonia except for perhaps an oblique allusion in Ezek 11.16, where Yahweh says that he will be a sanctuary to his people in exile for a little while, but this need not refer to an actual temple.” Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names,” 254 n.14.

289. The translators of the Targumim already made this interpretation, translating *בתי כנישתא*, “synagogues.”

290. See, for example, the conclusions of Bustenay Oded, ““Yet I have been to them LMQDŠ M‘T in the countries where they have gone” (Ezekiel 11:16),” (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 114. The common interpretation understands the expression metaphorically, as the deity claiming some kind of presence in the diaspora, rather than it being completely cut-off as suggested by the Jerusalemites in v. 15. Cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 190; Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (The Old Testament library; Translated by Coslett Quin. London: Students Christian Movement Press, 1970), 144–146; Block, *Ezekiel v. 1*, 349–350. Allen connects the deity’s “diminished presence with the LXX of Jer 29.12–14, namely that the deity will be available to those who pray to him.” Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel: 1–19* (Word Biblical Commentaries 28; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 164.

291. E.g. Deut 12.5; 1 Kgs 8.29; Jer 7.3, 6–7. D, however, never actually mentions Jerusalem as the chosen location for *המקום*, and neither does P, for that matter. It is only through the narrative in the Deuteronomistic history that the association gets fleshed out (at least in the case of D). Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 166.

in the Levitically-populated Babylonian town of Cassiphia mentioned in Ezra 8.17 has also suggested the presence of either a clerical training center or a full temple to Yahweh in this city.<sup>292</sup> However, neither of these examples is definitive positive evidence for a temple to Yahweh in Babylonia.<sup>293</sup>

Despite the absence of clear evidence for a temple or holy site dedicated to Yahweh in Babylonia in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, the question of how and where to worship the deity in the diaspora is nonetheless raised. In the previous chapter, I discussed the rejection of the veneration the Queen of Heaven by a Judeo-Egyptian community in Jer 44 and the resulting disqualification of that community from the book of Jeremiah's construction of Israel. Chapter

---

292. Runesson, for example, understands this reference as an early attestation of a diasporic synagogue and exactly the kind of institution one would expect to find based on the prevalent view in synagogue studies that synagogues have their origins in exile. Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 37; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 406–408. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 164–167.

The city has been identified with Tel Kašap/Assyrian Kassappi, although Fried notes the significant distance between this town and Babylon, if it is from there that traveling party is understood to have set off. Lisbeth S. Fried, *Ezra: A Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 349–350.

293. In a forthcoming article, Chavel argues that the *מקדש מעט* in Ezek 11.16 can be interpreted syntactically and contextually in one of three ways: 1.) as a bound phrase reflecting the diaspora community's misunderstanding of Yahweh's relationship to those Judeans who remained in Judea (the *few* are the Judeans in Judea); 2.) as a noun + attributive adjective representing a reduced-use holy site used by the Judeo-Babylonian community; or 3.) an otherwise unattested idiom referring to an item like a cult object in the shape of a miniature temple or some other small symbol of divine presence, a "holy trinket." Simeon Chavel, "Yahweh Become a Temple? MT Ezekiel 11:16 *מקדש מעט*," in *Forthcoming* (2020), 1–26, esp. 22–26. Chavel leaves the question open, but I agree with him in his evaluation of option 2 as speculative or strained. This does not rule out the possibility that such a reduced-use or small-scale temple existed within the diaspora community, but the literary world of the Book of Ezekiel does not permit it. For more on the composition's views on Yahwistic worship outside the borders of Judea, see below.

20 of the Book of Ezekiel offers another example of a confrontation between a diasporic community looking to reinstitute worship of Yahweh and a decidedly negative response from the deity.

I discussed Ezek 20 above with regard to its particular view of Judea's past and its concern for maintaining socio-cultic boundaries. This divine diatribe is sparked by an approach by the elders, although the specific reason for their approach is not mentioned. The deity,

however, seems to allude to the elders' original request in a less than generous paraphrase:

What is on your mind shall not be,	והעלה על רוחכם היו לא תהיה
What you are thinking:	אשר אתם אמרים
“Let's be like the nations, like the clans of the world	נהיה כגוים כמשפחות הארצות
by worshipping wood and stone.” (v. 32)	לשרת עץ ואבן

Based on this response, it would seem that the audience is meant to understand that the elders approach with a request or plan to reinstitute worship of Yahweh in the diaspora. The derisive reference to “wood and stone,” a Deuteronomic cliché for the worship of foreign deities,<sup>294</sup> makes it clear that the elders were seeking counsel regarding religious praxis. Whatever kind of religious institution they sought to establish (temple, high place, standing stone and sacred pole,

---

294. Eg. Deut 4.28; 28.36, 64; 29.16; cf. 1 Kgs 19.18. La-Rocca notes that in each of the cases from Deuteronomy, the worship of “wood and stone” is a consequence of dispersion, a reference to “the gods Israel will be forced to serve if they break the covenant and are sent into exile.” Elizabeth C. LaRocca-Pitts, *Of Wood and Stone: The Significance of Israelite Cultic Items in the Bible and its Early Interpreters* (HSM 61; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraun, 2001), 52–53.

etc.),<sup>295</sup> the deity sees their request as aberrant and non-Judean,<sup>296</sup> part of a long history of foreign influence in their religious practice.

Although it has been argued that the heavily rhetorical nature of the deity's critiques in Ezek 20 makes the original motivation for the elders' approach incidental to a proper understanding of the text,<sup>297</sup> ignoring the elders' initial (and unquoted) query as inconsequential goes too far. Again, ch. 20 is one of the few oracles in the Book of Ezekiel that offers a critique of the prophet's Babylonian audience rather than those who remained in Judea. The focus of Yahweh's condemnation is Israel's historic failure to worship in the correct way and in the correct place, despite repeated divine instruction and generational patience. This broader context suggests that within the logic of this passage, the deity was incited by a request from this audience for something consistent with that critique.

We have seen above and in the previous chapter that establishing a religious institution in the diaspora can have a positive and reinforcing effect on the construction of communal identity in those settings. In their role as representatives of their diaspora community, the Judean elders may have seen it as their duty to establish and support institutions like a temple or a cult site that would have functioned to produce and reproduce the ethnic identity of their community. This is

---

295. While we do not know many details about contemporary diasporic religious institutions in Babylonia, Dhorme no. 26 makes explicit reference to a statue of Sîn in the *atmanu* of Āl-Nērib. The tablets that refer to the Aššur temple of Uruk do not mention a statue of the deity, but butchers and brewers are attested among temple personnel, positions that had been associated with preparing meals for the god, represented by his statue, during the Assyrian imperial period. Radner, "Aššur's 'Second Temple Period,'" 79, 84.

296. Cf. Levtow: "The Deuteronomistic cliché is thus employed in this verse as a mark of distinction that defines what Israel is not." Levtow, *Images of Others*, 157 n. 71.

297. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 376–388.

what the historical communities of Āl-Nērib, Āl-Arbāya, and the Assyrians of Uruk did following their resettlement in Babylonia, and what many minority communities did in Egypt under the Saites and Persians. Within the literary world of the Book of Ezekiel, the request of the elders to worship like their contemporary non-Judean communities is thus consistent and shares logic with what we have observed in other diasporic communities of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.

However, the narrative of Ezekiel 20 diverges dramatically from those contemporary historical diaspora communities in its outright *rejection* of the plan to build a new religious institution. In this passage, the Book of Ezekiel is clear in its view of establishing a holy site dedicated to Yahweh outside the traditional borders of Judea. According to 20.40:

But on my holy mountain,	כי בהר קדשי
On the highest mountain in <b>Israel</b>	בהר מרום ישראל
-utterance of Yahweh-	נאם אדני יהוה
<i>There</i> the entire house of Israel shall serve me,	<u>שם</u> יעבדני כל בית ישראל
Everyone throughout the land, <i>there</i> I will receive them.	כלה בארץ <u>שם</u> ארצם

Throughout the Book of Ezekiel Yahweh fervently and repeatedly declares that Jerusalem is the one and only place where Judeans are allowed to worship him. This view is familiar from D and the Deuteronomistic history, as well as from the Priestly History, but its assertion by the deity in the Book of Ezekiel is remarkable for the geographic and temporal circumstances in which it was made — outside Judea and after its fall. Despite the benefits that a temple to Yahweh might have had for diasporic Judeans broadly — an institutional resource for the positive reproduction of Judean identity — and religious specialists specifically — such a temple would have required cultic expertise and employed religious professionals in order to run smoothly and effectively —

a native Judean priest is nonetheless presented delivering oracle after oracle that maintain Jerusalem as the unique site of a Yahwistic cult.

*“A Theology-of-Place” and the Construction of Identity in the Diaspora*

The exchange in Ezek 20 between the deity and the Judean elders is important because it is one of the few passages within the larger work that addresses life in diaspora. Otherwise, the Book of Ezekiel is focused first and foremost on Judea and the divine plan to restore his people and temple there in the coming future. This conviction that there exists a *best, ideal*, or in the case of the Book of Ezekiel, *unique* place to worship a deity like Yahweh is what I call a “theology-of-place.” Theology-of-place is part of the broader religious component of ethnic identity that creates a connection between the practitioner/community and the location that is associated with the deity worshipped. While in the homeland, this view is typically uncontroversial and goes unquestioned, particularly when it is held by the majority of the population. In the diaspora, however, the importance of religion for the construction of ethnic identity often increases as a result of the community’s geographic dislocation.<sup>298</sup>

This connection between deity, geography, and worshipper that the theology-of-place represents exists on a spectrum that ranges from *weak* to *strong*. The Book of Ezekiel exists at the *strong* extreme in its assertion that Jerusalem is the *only* place suitable for the worship of

---

298. For this phenomenon, see, for example, Min, *Preserving Ethnicity*, 3–4, 21–23; Mieke Maliepaard, Marcel Lubbers et al., “Generational differences in Ethnic and Religious Attachment and their Interrelation. A Study Among Muslim Minorities in the Netherlands,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (2010): 451–472; Carl L. Bankston and Min Zhou, “Religious Participation, Ethnic Identification, and Adaptation of Vietnamese Adolescents in an Immigrant Community,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 36 (1995): 523–534.

Yahweh. The Neirabeans and Assyrians, on the other hand, exist closer to the middle of the scale. For them, it seems that it was preferable or even ideal to worship their deities in their respective homelands, but that association did not preclude diasporic institutions. In all of these cases — the author of the Book of Ezekiel,<sup>299</sup> the Neirabeans, and the Assyrians — the importance of theology-of-place was a heightened aspect of ethnic identity due to their roles as religious professionals. The question of where a god could be or should be worshipped had theological as well as social and economic implications.

In the context of return migration, ideology — including theological convictions — can play a definitive role in an individual’s decision to return to the ancestral homeland. In the case of the communities and religious professionals under discussion, the heightened role of theology-of-place in the construction of their social identities played such a role. Even as the Neirabians and Assyrians maintained some kind of religious institution in the diaspora, their decisions to return suggests that they understood the true homes of their respective deities to have been

---

299. Schwartz, who identifies the author of the Book of Ezekiel with the protagonist of that composition, argues that there should be no doubt to his (Ezekiel the author and protagonist) priestly pedigree. “This is so because everything the prophet says is determined by [his priestly pedigree]. He explains what went wrong, depicts the results of what when wrong, and predicts the eventual rectification of everything that went wrong, from a thoroughly priestly standpoint.” Schwartz, “A Priest Out of Place,” 62. In n. 185 above, I cited the work of Corrine Patton, who argues that within the Book of Ezekiel, it is not actually the prophet who speaks like a priest, but the deity who speaks through him and who uses priestly language and shares an outlook with the Priestly History. Both scholars identify the role of the author of the text in imbuing these characters with the language and outlook that give the composition its priestly feel. While it is impossible to determine whether the historical author of the work was a priest him- or herself, the identification of its implied author with the Jerusalem priesthood and scholarly reconstructions of what it meant to be a priest in ancient Judea is consistent with the text’s outlook on the cult of Yahweh.

located in the territory where they resided prior to deportation.<sup>300</sup> Concern for the proper or ideal execution of the cult that was rooted in their theology-of-place would therefore have been a significant motivation in their decisions to undertake return migration.

Return migration, however, is not typically the result of single factor. As I noted above, it is typically a complex and contextual matrix of factors that can lead to population movement. In addition to the ideological motivation, would-be immigrants also consider economic and social capital and the available relationship networks in which that capital might function at points of departure and arrival. We can see these considerations as salient for our religious professionals in Babylonia. The diasporic shrines, altars, or complexes where they likely ministered addressed the

---

300. This is a fundamental element in the outlook of the Book of Ezekiel, and also a tenet of Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic theology (cf. Deut 12 ) and the theology of the Priestly History. The best demonstration of a similar phenomenon in Assyrian ideology is the preservation of Aššur's temple in Assur as kings established new political capitals in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. The city of Assur — Aššur's home — remained the religious center even in the midst of political transition. On the triangulation of people, city, and god of Aššur, see Peter Machinist, "Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C.," in *2 Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike* (eds. Kurt Raaflaub and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner; Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien 24; München: Oldenbourg, 1993), 80–83. On the permanence of Assur as the *religious* center of the Assyrian cosmos see Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Religion and Ideology in Assyria* (Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 6; Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), 17–18; Michael Jursa, "Accounting in Neo-Babylonian Institutional Archives: Structure, Usage, Implications," in *Creating Economic Order: Record-keeping, Standardization, and the Development of Accounting in the Ancient Near East: a Colloquium Held at the British Museum, November 2000* (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2004).

Although there is little evidence concerning Sîn's particular relationship to Neirab beyond that surveyed above, direct support of the deity's cult in Harran by both the Neo-Assyrian crown and by the last Babylonian king Nabonidus, may reflect a similar theological perspective on the proper location of Sîn worship. On Neo-Assyrian support of the temple to Sîn at Harran, see Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur is king! Aššur is king!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (CHANE 10; Boston: Brill, 2002), 419–425. On Nabonidus's veneration and restoration of the cult of Sîn and of the Ehulhul temple, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (YNER 10; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 43–65; Ronald H. Sack, Nabonidus, *ABD* 4: 974–975.

religious and cultural needs of the communities they served, resulting in the accrual or preservation of the cultural capital associated with the positions they held. They did so, however, in a diminished fashion. To be a butcher at the temple to Aššur in Uruk was to hold a respected position within a small diasporic community in an urban Babylonian setting. To hold that same position in Assur would be to serve the Assyrian state, at the head of which sat the deity Aššur.<sup>301</sup> The same situation would hold for a hereditary Judean priest, although his/her diasporic situation would be worse if he found worship away from the Jerusalem temple to be incompatible with his/her theological universe. In each case, the heightened salience of theology-of-place as a cornerstone of ethnic identity could have been the driving force in the decision to emigrate, but not necessarily to the exclusion of concerns for economic and cultural capital.

As we move closer to the *weak* pole of the theology-of-place spectrum, we see a looser connection between deity, land, and worshipper. It is here that most of the inhabitants of Āl-Yāhūdu seem to have existed. We have observed through onomastic patterns that the community continued to recognize Yahweh as a deity associated with Judean identity, but it seems that they were nonetheless comfortable at a distance from Judea. It may have been that they, too, believed Jerusalem to be the ideal setting for worship of Yahweh. However, this facet of their ethnic identities was not salient enough to inspire return migration. To understand the differences in constructions of Judeanness between the Book of Ezekiel and Judeo-Babylonians like Aḥīqam, we should look to their primary institutional (social, economic, political) affiliations. When his contemporaries in Āl-Nērib and Uruk were preparing to return migrate to their ancestral

---

301. On Aššur's role as the head of the Assyrian state, with the king serving as vice regent in Neo-Assyrian ideology, see Machinist, "Assyrians," 83–84.

homelands, Aḥīqam, a second or third generation Judeo-Babylonian, found himself thoroughly embedded in his Babylonian context. He had taken over his father's productive date farming setup and was well on his way to establishing an economic and social legacy for his descendants. He had developed enough economic and social capital to serve as a representative for his ethnic community with local imperial officials and maintained long-term and long-distance business relationships with Judeans and non-Judeans alike. He had developed a supralocal concept of Judeanness with a *weak* theology-of-place that allowed him to identify with his ethnic and religious roots as well as with his geographical and cultural context. And while it is possible that Aḥīqam or other Judeans of his economic and social status supported the ethnic migration of members of their diasporic communities,<sup>302</sup> the choice to stay in Babylonia rather than to travel to Jerusalem (the original *Āl-Yāhūdu*)<sup>303</sup> need not have been inconsistent with his identification as a Judean.

#### Making a Case for Judea: Isaiah 40–48 and a Call for Return Migration<sup>304</sup>

##### *The Babylonian Diaspora and the Rise of the Persians*

---

302. The wealth and influence of those Judeans who remained in Babylonia was a theme in later accounts of this period. In his *Antiquities* 11.8–9, Josephus makes the claim that it was only the wealthiest of the Judeans settled in Babylonia who decided to forgo a return to Judah and Jerusalem; everyone else, including the leaders of Judah and Benjamin, made haste (ἐξώρμησαν) in setting out for the ancestral homeland. Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 88–89.

303. The Babylonian Chronicle (Chronicle 5 rev. l. 15) gives Jerusalem the title <sup>uru</sup>*Ia-hu-du* in its description of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the city in 597.

304. A version of the argument made in this section was previously published as Cunningham, "Isaiah 40:1–2: Reading Royal Commission," 1–33.

For the first fifty or so years of life in the Babylonian diaspora, the distance between the *strong* and *weak* poles of the theology-of-place spectrum may have been a topic of conversation among Judeo-Babylonians, but the circumstances of Babylonian rule seem to have made the discussion moot. There was no opportunity for return migration and Babylonia continued to be the only place in which Judeans in the diaspora could make their homes. This means that while the community's relationship to the homeland may have been a live issue, those who continued to identify and be identified as Judean continued to construct and reconstruct their identities in their diasporic Babylonian context.

However, there seems to have been a shift with Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and the rise of the Persian empire. His ascent brought with it the opportunity for a potential 'return' to Judea, or at least the hope for one.<sup>305</sup> Judeans of the Babylonian diaspora were confronted with the question, "given who I am, where do I belong?" One Judeo-Babylonian, the Author responsible

---

305. An identification of the exact circumstances that permitted the migration of some number of Judeans early in the Persian period, either under Cyrus or somewhat later under Darius I, is unfortunately beyond the scope of this project. However, there are a number of scholars who dispute a setting in the reign of Cyrus for some if not all of Isa 40–48, preferring to date the material to the reign Darius I or one of his successors. These conclusions are based on considerations of supposedly inaccurate prophecy contained within the composition or other perceived editorial factors. See my treatment (and ultimate rejection) of the relevant scholarly opinions in "Isaiah 40:1–2," 8–10 n. 24.

for chs. 40–48 of the book of Isaiah,<sup>306</sup> had a definitive answer to that question: Judeans belong in

---

306. I use the term “Author” here rather than “compiler,” “collector,” or even “prophet/prophetic group” because I understand these chapters to be a single composition and the work of a single individual who was active in Babylonia. In this regard I am persuaded by the work of Menahem Haran, who made a similar case for these chapters based on thematic unity (revolving around the issues of Yahweh’s *הדרשות* and *ראשונות*) (Menahem Haran, “Literary Structure and Chronological Framework of the Prophecies in Is. xl–xlviii,” in *Congress Volume Bonn 1962* [ed. P. A. H. De Boer G. W. Anderson; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum. Boston: Brill, 1963], 127–155) and more recently, Simeon Chavel (Simeon Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination in the Light of Narratology and Disability Studies in Isaiah 40–48,” *JHebS* 14 [2014]: 1–47). The latter has convincingly argued that Isa 40–48, in its entirety, demonstrates “a plan that presupposes the [composition’s] end, encompasses the whole, and requires a holistic view.” (18) Furthermore, regarding the textuality of the composition and its relevance for the title of “Author,” I am influenced by the work of Yehoshua Gitay. According to Gitay, because literature in the ancient world was meant to be experienced by its audience *aurally*, to ask whether this unit was first “orally composed” and later written down or *vice-versa*, is to somewhat miss the point (at least with regard to how its historical audience might have received it). Yehoshua Gitay, “Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written?,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 185–197. I therefore use “Author” in its broader sense of “creator,” the individual responsible for the work of art that is the composition.

In taking this position, I am arguing that Isa 40–48 is distinct from how biblical prophecy is traditionally understood in critical biblical scholarship. For example, in his *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, Karl van der Toorn outlines how he understands the process by which prophetic materials were written, expanded, handed down, and ultimately collected under the name of prophetic figure like Jeremiah. According to his reconstruction, prophetic books are anthologies of collected wisdom rather than the works of single individuals. (Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007], 173–204.) However, even van der Toorn concedes the written (and apparently singular) nature of Deutero-Isaiah’s work: “[Deutero-Isaiah] wrote his message, instead of preaching it in the streets” (203). For further differences between Isa 40–48 (40–55) and the kinds of prophetic collections described by van der Toorn, see the comments of Katie M. Heffelfinger, *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah* (Boston: Brill, 2011), 26–28.

Still, many scholars still prefer to see literary (and diachronic) development in Isa 40–48 (and 40–55). See, for example the argument of Rainer Albertz (and his thorough summary of previous scholarship that takes a redactional approach to the composition ) Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 382–433, esp. 392–399.. For a critique of an overly atomizing analysis of the composition, see Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (Theological inquiries; New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 36; cf. Benjamin Sommer’s approach to prophetic texts as outlined in the introduction to his Benjamin Sommer, D., *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Contraversions; Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press,

Judea.

Rather than attempting to negotiate the complex social identities that Judeans developed in the diaspora, the Author advocates for a full-scale return migration for any and all Yahweh worshippers living in Babylonia, a community who is identified throughout the composition as Jacob-Israel.<sup>307</sup> The position is stated as clearly as possible in the closing lines of the unit (Isa 48.20):

Get out of Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans!	צאו מבבל ברחו מכשדים
With a shout of joy declare it, make this known,	בקול רנה הגידו השמיעו זאת
Spread it to the ends of the earth!	הוציאוה עדקצה הארץ
Say “Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob!”	אמרו גאל יהוה עבדו יעקב

In order to convince members of well-established Judeo-Babylonian communities — some with strong social and economic connections, accrued economic and cultural capital, and only passed-down memories of Judea — that return migration was required,<sup>308</sup> the Author of Isa 40–48 had to reinforce the connection between Judeanness and its asserted territorial and cultural

---

1998), 4–5.

307. Through the employment of this title, the Author indexes a number of elements in his/her audience’s identity. First and foremost is an identification with the namesake of the political entity of Israel and the kinship traditions associated with it. But the title also calls to mind Jacob’s labor in Aram under Laban, his complex relationship with morality, and even his divine election from the womb. Meira Polliack, “Deutero-Isaiah’s Typological Use of Jacob in the Portrayal of Israel’s National Renewal,” in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. H. G. Revetlow and Y. Hoffman; JSOT Supplement Series 319; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 81–99.

308. While the Author never explicitly states (or better, has the deity or his prophetic representative state) this as the composition’s aim, its Jerusalem-ward focus and its clarion call for Jacob–Israel to flee from Babylon in its closing lines (48.20–21) strongly indicate this interpretation. The rhetorical agenda that I outline in this section further supports this conclusion. For a sustained and detailed argument in favor of this interpretation, see Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 9–37. More recently Chavel has argued that the composition is meant to convince the Author’s Judeo-Babylonian audience that Yahweh has determined to repatriate the community through his agent, Cyrus. Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination,” 7–13.

roots. In service of this program, the Author infused his/her oracle with a three-pronged rhetorical approach.<sup>309</sup> First, the Author redefined the nature of the deity, elevating Yahweh from his role as Israel's patron deity to an omnipotent and omnipresent god in control of all of history. Second, the Author recast Babylonia as a place of suffering rather than settling. And finally, the Author commissioned the audience within the text to the role of royal herald and charged them with the task of leading Yahweh's victory march to Jerusalem and announcing the good news of his arrival to the city.

### *Elevating Yahweh*

In the ancient Near East, a deity's efficacy was defined through physical, material means, most notably through the presence of his/her temple and the rule of his/her king as an earthly mediator. During this period when kings honored their patron deities through the construction of elaborate temples,<sup>310</sup> the Judeo-Babylonian community to whom Isa 40–48 was addressed was a world away from Judea, its temple to their patron deity in ruins and native kingship abolished, the

---

309. I understand "rhetoric" to be the use of intentional and persuasive speech in service of a goal or end. As such, it may employ other modes of discourse to that end (eg. poetry) just as it can be utilized by a variety of genres (eg. prophecy). For a discussion of the relationship of rhetoric (or oratory), poetry, and prophecy as they relate to Second Isaiah, see the discussion in Heffelfinger, *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes*, 22–33. While I disagree with Heffelfinger's conclusions concerning the persuasive nature of Isa 40–48 — she argues that it is not meant as a persuasive composition but rather as lyric poetry — her attention to the poetry of the composition is to be commended. On the author's skill as a rhetorician, see the discussion in Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 61–65.

310. On the relationship between deities and the temples constructed to house their presence, see Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine presence in the Ancient Near East* (Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 3; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 3–16, 131–138; Chavel, "Prophetic Imagination," 1–6.

physical signs of their divine election erased.<sup>311</sup> In a time when military victories were decided between deities, Babylon's Marduk had come out the victor over the kingdom of Judah's Yahweh,<sup>312</sup> his authority and might vindicated again through Cyrus's rise to power.<sup>313</sup>

In the absence of the defining institutions of temple and king, those still willing to assert Yahweh's efficacy had to create new language and new imagery to do so.<sup>314</sup> In the Book of Ezekiel, the deity was envisioned on a mobile throne that allowed him to both escape from his capital city — thereby allowing its destruction — and to visit his prophet in Babylonia. The Author of Isa 40–48 chose a different tack. Rather than literally mobilizing the deity, the Author recast Yahweh as a transcendent deity whose efficacy was not manifest in the traditional physical

---

311. “Kingship and temple were gone, too, and while they were never without their critics, they had been signs of election and indicators of God's presence for many.” Ralph Klein, W., “Theology for Exiles: The Kingship of Yahweh,” *Di* 17 (1978): 128.

312. “Many of the survivors of the disaster [of the sack of Jerusalem] must have concluded that the God of Israel had been discredited along with his prophets, and for the deportees the spectacle of ceremonies and processions in honor of Marduk, city god of Babylon, would have been a constant reminder of Yahweh's defeat.” Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel: Revised and Enlarged* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 187.

313. According to Kuhrt, the Cyrus Cylinder's claim that Marduk had *chosen* Cyrus to replace Nabonidus in order to justify the reign of the usurper fits well into a broader Babylonian tradition of dealing with disruption, conquest, and the overthrow of legitimate kings by usurpers. She compares this claim for Cyrus to the literary depictions of Marduk-apla-iddina and Esarhaddon as “chosen” and their roles as restorers of Marduk's cult in Babylon. Kuhrt, 110–112.

314. Dynamic theological responses and reorientations can play a crucial role in maintaining ethnic identity among displaced peoples. According to Smith, “it may be deduced that what matters for ethnic persistence and survival is the ability of any religious tradition to (a) renew itself and adapt to different conditions and (b) to transmit and spread its message of holiness and salvation to the non-elite strata, particularly in the towns, and so to socialize the new generation of adherents.” Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 120. While it is possible that the phenomenon Smith identifies in this quote is a product of the model of diasporic Judaism that I critiqued in ch. 2, the evidence from modern diaspora communities analyzed in the previous chapter still speaks to the importance of religion (and its adaptability to a new context) in the production of ethnic identity, particularly within later generations.

signs of divine might — king, temple, retinue — but rather his ability to control the unfolding of history defines his potency.<sup>315</sup> Humanity makes only a fleeting impact on history; it is solely

Yahweh's activity that has lasting effects:

All flesh is grass,

Its accomplishments like a flower of the field.

The grass fades and the flower wilts

when Yahweh's breath blows. (Isa 40.6–7)

כל הבשר ציץ

וכל חסדו כציץ השדה

יבש חציר נבל ציץ

כי רוח יהוה נשבה

The deity is elevated to the status of the unique creator god. In a series of courtroom scenes Yahweh demonstrates his dominance over other purported deities.<sup>316</sup> Yahweh makes the claim that he was the only deity present at the creation of the universe, and the only one who can predict what will happen next in history. Yahweh further undermines the very existence of other divine beings through biting critiques of idol worship.<sup>317</sup> Yahweh asserts his control over geopolitical events by claiming responsibility for Cyrus's rise to power and the Persian king's (anticipated) conquest of Babylon.<sup>318</sup> Through this characterization Yahweh is elevated above the traditional role of patron deity to a status that rivals omnipotence. He does not battle other gods, but controls and manipulates history. Yahweh is presented as the ultimate warrior king, a monarch without rival in complete control of his kingdom, all of creation.

The presentation of Yahweh as a warrior king is a common element in the discourse of chs. 40–48. The deity is explicitly given royal titles: “king of Jacob” (41.21), “your

---

315. Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination,” 18–25.

316. 41.1–10; 44.6–8; 45.20–21.

317. 40.18–20; 41.21–29; 44.9–20; 46.1–7. These are further examples of Levtow's “Idol Parodies,” a literary phenomenon of the sixth century. For his discussion of Deutero-Isaiah, see Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel*, 57–71.

318. 41.1–2, 25; 43.3–4; 44.28; 45.1–7, 13.

king” (43.15), and the “king of Israel” (44.6). Yahweh’s military might is the subject of the song in 42.10–14. Before the audience is told to forget “the former things” in 43.18, Yahweh — through his prophet — evokes the Song of the Sea (Exod 15) and his victory over the chaos waters in his defeat of the Egyptians.<sup>319</sup>

Thus says Yahweh,	כה אמר יהוה
who made a path through the sea,	הנותן בים דרך
and a highway through the mighty waters	ובמים עזים נתיבה
He who lured out horse and chariot,	המוציא רכב וסוס
troop and soldier.	חיל ועוז
Together they fell, they could not stand!	יחדו ישכבו בל יקומו
Extinguished, smothered like a wick.	דעכו כפשתה כבו

In the absence of the traditional symbols of divine power, Yahweh is elevated to the role of a divine, transcendent warrior king with control over all of creation, including the great conqueror Cyrus, who is relegated to the role of the deity’s עבד (42.1).

### *Coercive Babylon is Not Your Home*

As a second element of Isa 40–48’s rhetorical agenda, Babylon and its environs are thoroughly disparaged. Rather than the birthplace and homeland of generations of Judeo-Babylonians — including those in his audience — Babylon is presented as a prison, a בית כלא (Isa 42.7, 22).

Yahweh demands that Jacob-Israel be released from its bondage, prohibiting the extremities of the empire from withholding (אל תכלאי) its members (43.6), and the Author depicts Babylon’s yoke as oppressively heavy on their neck, indicating that the community was shown no mercy (47.6). The traditional scholarly response to this characterization was to posit that the Judean

<sup>319</sup> On the influence of the Song of the Sea on this passage, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 227–228.

communities in Mesopotamia truly suffered and acted as slaves to some degree.<sup>320</sup> Incorporated into the state's land-for-service system, the Judeans of the Nippurian countryside were not "free," but rather bound to the state and their land holdings through tax and service obligations. But, as is clear from the analysis above, rural Judeo-Babylonians were by no means prisoners in their diasporic context. To make this distinction is not to underestimate the trauma experienced by those who suffered through deportations or the lasting effects that those deportations had on later generations,<sup>321</sup> but rather to emphasize the rhetorical force and implications of the composition's claim. In describing Babylon as a prison and claiming that Israel's residence there is coerced, the Author makes clear that this place — Babylonia — is not their home.

### *The Royal Commission*

Throughout chs. 40–48, Yahweh seeks out a messenger to deliver the news of his status and his determination to return to Jerusalem. The final element of the Author of Isa 40–48's rhetorical program was to commission the text's addressees with this task, to appoint them to the position of royal herald, charged with journeying to Jerusalem at the head of Yahweh's victory procession. This dynamic is established in the opening lines of the composition, 40.1–11, which

---

320. See, for example, the discussion in Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing," 29. However, "The impression conveyed by biblical texts, including Isa 40–55, about the Babylonian diaspora as a place of oppression and deprivation, is not supported by the little we know or can reasonably surmise about the condition of ethnic minorities in Neo-Babylonian Mesopotamia." Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 101.

321. On the role of trauma in the development of Judean identity after deportations and the fall of Jerusalem, see the discussion in ch. 2.

function as an appointment of Jacob-Israel to this role. The commissioning begins with the opening verses of the unit:

“Comfort.	נחמו
Comfort, O my people,”	נחמו עמי
Says your God.	יאמר אלהיכם
“Console Jerusalem	דברו על לב ירושלם
And call to her.” (Isa 40.1–2)	וקראו אליה

The absence of a clearly marked addressee in these lines presents an interpretive crux, namely how the audience should understand the divine message that follows. This point can be demonstrated by the efforts of the passage’s earliest translators to solve the problem through interpolation.<sup>322</sup> However, in the MT and its earliest Hebrew textual witnesses,<sup>323</sup> the lack of clarity remains, leaving the identity of the deity’s herald in doubt.

The interpretation that has found the most traction in modern scholarship has taken the addressees to be members of the divine council. First proposed by Frank Moore Cross, this reading understands the opening verses of ch. 40 to be a variation on the divine council type-scene, paralleling the commissioning of Isaiah son of Amos in Isa 6.<sup>324</sup> They are therefore a re-

---

322. The translators of the L and the Targumin were troubled by this lack of clarity and so interpolated explicit addressees to remedy the problem. The L adds the vocative *ιερεῖς*, “priests” to the beginning of v. 2 and the Targum adds *נבייא* to the beginning of v. 1 as the addressee of the imperative *אתנבו*.

323. The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), like the MT, lacks a named addressee. In the two other Qumran manuscripts that preserve these lines (1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and 4QIsa<sup>a</sup>), the beginning of v. 1 is damaged, although reconstructions follow the MT/1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

324. Frank M. Cross, Frank M. Cross, “The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 276. Taking this interpretation to its extreme conclusion, Seitz argues that all of chs. 40–48 actually take place within the setting of the divine council, and only with 49.1 does the prophet take the stage. Christopher R. Seitz, “The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 229–247. For his summary of the dynamics of 40.1–11, see p. 235.

presentation or a transcription of what has been voiced in the council; Yahweh's commissioning of divine beings to comfort his people and to console Jerusalem. This reading, however, strains the contours of the type-scene and fails to take into account a consistent message of chs. 40–48, one that is fundamentally opposed to the existence of such a council.

In his critique of Cross's proposal, Joseph Blenkinsopp has noted that ch. 40 lacks the deliberative element that defines the type-scene's parade examples: Isa 6.8, 1 Kgs 22:20–22, and Job 1–2. "Wherever such a scenario is clearly presented [a divine council type-scene], Yahweh engages in discussion and solicits opinions but does not give orders."<sup>325</sup> Instead, ch. 40's opening lines are the inverse of the standard council scene: no deliberation takes place, and only orders are given. It should also be noted that in the hallmark examples of the type-scene, the deity's audience — composed of the divine members of the council<sup>326</sup> — is clearly identified and fully personified,<sup>327</sup> an important detail that is noticeably absent from our opening.

Of course, deviation from some of the contours of a type-scene is not reason enough to reject the divine council interpretation out of hand, as variation is often what makes the type-

---

325. Instead, Blenkinsopp posits (following the Targumist) that the first series of imperatives (vv. 1–2) is addressed "to prophets in general, or to a specific prophetic group." It is the duty of this group to function collectively as Yahweh's messenger by informing Jerusalem that the city "has fulfilled its service, its iniquity has been redeemed, and it has received from Yahweh double for its offenses" (40.2). Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 179–180. While I agree that the deity is addressing a group of humans who is supposed to deliver this news, the term "prophet" misrepresents this group and is too tied to the עבדים who show up in later chapters of the book of Isaiah.

326. In Isaiah's throne vision, the prophet describes the *seraphim* who attend to the deity (6.2); Micaiah mentions the heavenly host, and the spirit (רוח) willing to come forward; and finally in Job, the divine beings (בני אלהים) take their places in the presence of Yahweh before he begins his discussion with the adversary, השטן.

327. Chavel, "Prophetic Imagination," 26 n. 64.

scene compelling.<sup>328</sup> If, however, such variation is inconsistent with or even diametrically opposed to the message and rhetoric running through the rest of the composition, then it must be called into question. Throughout the discourse of chs. 40–48, Yahweh emphatically asserts his uniqueness, that he alone is in control of the universe, and, most importantly, that no other god or divine being exists outside of him.<sup>329</sup> The deity’s singularity is a fundamental tenet of the composition. To assert the presence of the divine council in 40.1–2 is therefore to assert the presence of other divine beings, a proposition that would be antithetical to Yahweh’s otherwise consistent message.<sup>330</sup> But if not to these heavenly beings, then to whom are these imperatives directed?

---

328. According to Alter’s analysis of biblical narrative, deviation from convention, from the type-scene, represents a medium by which an author is able to express his/her creativity and artistry. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative: Revised and Updated* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 55–78.

329. Robert Wilson states the point well: “The idea that the group is the divine council, God’s advisory committee made up of lesser deities who do God’s will, is unlikely, since Second Isaiah devotes several oracles to arguing that these other deities are not deities at all and in any case are totally ineffective and unable to do anything in the cosmos.” Robert R. Wilson, “The Community of the Second Isaiah,” (ed. Christopher R. Seitz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 54. Paul, who accepts Cross’ reading, nonetheless emphasizes the singularity of Yahweh in the rhetoric of the composition. Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 20.

330. In their analysis of these verses, Goldingay and Payne approach this conclusion, but stop short, permitting the existence of the council but not their commission. “[Modern interpreters] have been inclined to see the comforters as Yhwh’s supernatural agents but there is no background for that in the book so far, and what follows will tend to emphasize the way Yhwh stands and works alone. While the prophet may well be overhearing events in the heavenly court, this does not carry the implication that Yhwh is acting via its heavenly members.” John Goldingay and David Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55: Volume I* (The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 63.

To answer this question, it will be helpful to analyze the closing verses of the commission in 40.1–11. A new set of imperatives begins in v. 9, this time addressing a female herald. Like the unnamed addressees in vv. 1–2, this herald is to deliver her message to Jerusalem to Judea.

Ascend a tall mountain, herald to Zion, <sup>331</sup>	על הר גבה עלי לך מבשרת ציון
Raise your voice with might, herald to Jerusalem	הרימי בכח קולך מבשרת ירושלים
Cry out, do not fear.	הרימי אל תיראי
Say to the cities of Judah	אמרי לערי יהודה
“Here is your God!” (40.9)	הנה אלהיכם

From the peak of a mountain, the herald is called to announce Yahweh’s triumphal return to Jerusalem and his intent to reign (v. 10). Associating the deity with traditional Near Eastern images of king-as-shepherd,<sup>332</sup> the passage concludes with Yahweh gathering of his ewes and emphasizes his care for his people.

The use of the term “herald” in these verses, a *pi’el* participle of the root *b-š-r*, is an illustrative example of the Author’s appeal to royal imagery even as he/she recast Yahweh as a transcendent being. In prose narrative, the *מבשר* (or fem. *מבשרת*) is strongly associated with kingship in times of war. In three occurrences in the books of Samuel,<sup>333</sup> a *מבשר* is charged with

---

331. The two titles, “herald to Zion/Jerusalem” should be understood as objective genitives. It is possible to read “herald” and “Zion/Jerusalem” in apposition (c.f. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 184 n. a. and GKC §122s), but reading them as objective genitives better fits the context of vv. 1–11. “It makes for a more coherent reading of vv. 1–11 as a whole and makes vv. 9–11 correspond at this point to the ‘twin’ passage 52.7–10. It avoids making Zion-Jerusalem a herald rather than one receiving a message as it is elsewhere: cf 41.27; 52.7 (though in these two passages *m<sup>e</sup>baššēr* is masculine); 61.1–3; 62.11. It also avoids the necessity to envisage Jerusalem being told to climb a mountain.” Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: Vol. I*, 86.

332. See the entry in *CAD R*, s.v. *rē’û* §2, 309b-312a.

333. 1 Sam 4.17; 2 Sam 4.10; 18.26.

running ahead of an army to deliver information — positive<sup>334</sup> or negative<sup>335</sup> — concerning events on the front lines. In each case, the **מבשר** serves as a messenger for a human king.

The first example, from the Book of Nahum, is especially helpful for understanding the scene in Isa 40.9–11.<sup>336</sup> In the first verse of ch. 2, the prophet announces the appearance of a

herald on a high mountain:

Look, on the mountains,	הנה על ההרים
The feet of the herald who declares good will!	רגלי מבשר משמיע שלום
“Celebrate your festivals, oh Judah	חגי יהודה חגיך
Fulfill your vows!	שלמי נדריך
For never again	כי לא יוסיף עוד
Will the villain come against you!	לעבור בך בליעל
[Aššur] is entirely cut-off!” <sup>337</sup>	כלה נכרת

---

334. In 2 Sam 4.10 and 18.26, a **מבשר** returns from the battlefield to deliver to David what is seemingly good news. In the first case, the herald brings a report of Saul’s death, and in the second, the Cushite reports on the decisive defeat of Absalom. Although David is actually distressed by the information provided by his **מבשרים** in these examples, each fulfills his role as **מבשר** by running ahead of the victorious army to deliver news about a battle’s outcome.

335. In 1 Sam 4.17, the **מבשר** also runs ahead of the army to bring news, but instead of victory for the Israelites, he pronounces their defeat and the loss of the ark to the Philistines in the process.

336. The direction of influence between the book of Nahum and Isa 40–66 has been the subject of scholarly debate. In his 1997 commentary on Nahum, Klaus Spronk makes a strong case for the influence of the Nahum on Isa 40–66, particularly through the image of the “sentinel” in Isa 52.7. Klaas Spronk, *Nahum* (HCOT; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997), 80. Cf. Duane L. Christensen, *Nahum: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 24F; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 259–260. For a broader discussion of the use of literature that has been preserved in the Hebrew Bible by the author(s) of Isa 40–66, see Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*. Sommer highlights the relationship between Nah 2 and Isa 49 and 52, but does not discuss our passage (82, 92, and 163).

337. The verb **נכרת** lacks a clear antecedent, but context strongly suggests identifying the one “cut off” with Aššur. See, for example, the reference to Nineveh in v. 9.

As was the case with the מְבַשְׂרִים in the Book of Samuel, the herald (מְבַשֵּׂר) in Nah 2.1 announces to his audience the results of a battle, in this case Yahweh's battle with and victory over Assyria. The book, which should be dated to the events surrounding the fall of Nineveh to the Babylonian/Median coalition in 612 BCE, is a refutation of Yahweh's impotence in the face of Assyrian domination of the Levant during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.<sup>338</sup> Instead, it asserts that Yahweh is ultimately the cause of Nineveh's fall. The book does not conceive of the deity in the same cosmic and omnipotent terms as Isa 40–48,<sup>339</sup> but it does make a similar claim for Yahweh's agency on a less grandiose scale: despite outward appearances, Yahweh is actually in control of historical events, and punishes those who oppress his people. In the context of the book's overall message, the מְבַשֵּׂר announces the end of Nineveh's reign over Judah. From the top of the mountain, he proclaims Yahweh's institution of a new political era, free from foreign domination.

The final attestation of the מְבַשֵּׂר outside of the book of Isaiah occurs in Ps 68.12. Here, as in Isa 40.9, the participle is feminine and also plural, מְבַשְׂרוֹת. In this psalm, Yahweh

---

338. "Nah[um] 1:2–3:19 is formulated as a refutation to those who maintain Yhwh is powerless, and it makes its argument by asserting that Yhwh is responsible for the downfall of Nineveh." Marvin Sweeney, A., *The Twelve Prophets* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry 2; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 425.

339. For a recent treatment of the development of the theme of Yahweh's divine kingship in Israelite thought, see Shawn W. Flynn, *YHWH is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 159; Boston: Brill, 2014). Flynn argues that the prophet behind oracles like Isa 10 and 11 had already begun the process of universalizing Yahweh in response to Assyrian dominance. This new configuration is not quite the same as the transcendent deity in charge of history that Chavel has identified in the imagery of Isa 40–48, but these 8<sup>th</sup> century oracles do envision a deity who is in control of/can manipulate the actions of other nations (like Assyria). This passage from Nahum seems to reflect a similar development, with Yahweh presented as a god who at least has the ability to thwart the efforts of Assyria.

commissions the *מבשרות* to go before his war party in order to announce the outcome of his campaign:

אדני יתן אמר המבשרות צבע רב  
מלכי צבאות ידדון ידדון

My Lord gives the announcement to the heralds of the great army.<sup>340</sup>  
“The kings of the armies flee, they flee!” (12–13a)

Once again these *מבשרות* are meant to go ahead of the war party and announce the results of battle, but in this case the battle has been projected into the realm of the divine. Like Nahum’s *מבשר*, the female heralds of Ps 68 sing of the divine victory and its spoils (13b–16). The song continues with a group of female musicians playing *תופפות*, hand-drums, in v. 26, leading the procession into the sanctuary (*הקדש*). In this case the procession is not described within an explicitly military context, but the preceding strophe (vv. 20–24) does use martial imagery,<sup>341</sup> associating Yahweh’s return to his temple with a victorious march from the battlefield.

---

340. The versification of vv. 12–13a is unclear. The lineation in BHS separates *אמר* from *המבשרות* and treats the latter as a separate line and the first word of a nominal clause. This is the interpretation given by Goldingay, although he recognizes — following later translations (eg. the LXX’s τοῖς εὐαγγελιζομένοις) — that giving the message *to* the female heralds makes good sense (cf. the interpretation of Knohl on this verse: Israel Knohl, “Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography,” *JHebS* 12 [2012]: 7.). This reading would take *אמר המבשרות* as a bound phrase with *מבשרות* functioning as a strange kind of objective genitive. This interpretation is reflected in my translation. However, this reading leaves the relationship between the announcement given to the women and the great army (*צבא רב*) unclear. They cannot be in construct because of the definite article on *המבשרות*. See John Goldingay, “Isaiah 42.18–25,” *JSOT* 67 (1995): 306 n. 15.

341. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 166.

The role of the female heralds and musicians in Psalm 68 is consistent with depictions of women in the context of war found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. In Exod 15.20–21, Miriam leads the women of the Israelite war camp in a song, proclaiming Yahweh’s victory over the Egyptians with dancing and the playing of hand-drums. When David and Saul return from their victory over the Philistines, a group of women greet them with singing, dancing, and drum-playing to announce their victory (1 Sam 18.16–17).<sup>342</sup> Apart from these biblical references to female musicians, small terra-cotta figurines of women playing the hand-drum have been discovered in almost every Iron Age archaeological site in Israel Palestine.<sup>343</sup> This textual evidence, supported by the material record, highlights the salience of women announcing victory (be it human or divine) by singing, dancing, and playing instruments during wartime as a literary motif.<sup>344</sup>

The role of *מבשרת* or *מבשר* in each of these examples illuminates the use of the image in Isa 40.9–11. In these verses, the female herald to Jerusalem/Zion is taking on a traditional role of Israelite women as she delivers her message to the cities of Judea. She declares that their divine king, Yahweh, has returned victoriously from his campaign, spoils in tow, and will once again rule over them. The commission to the *מבשרת* in 40.9–11 should therefore be understood as the final phase of Yahweh’s victory procession and his return to his capital city.

---

342. Cf. Judges 5; 11.34; 18.26; 21.12; 29.5; 2 Sam 1.20; Jer 31.4; Jdt 15.12–13. “Songs, especially victory songs, were a special female province.” William Propp, Henry, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 2a; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 547.

343. Carol L. Meyers, “Of Drums and Damsel : Women’s Performance in Ancient Israel,” *BA* 54 (1991): 19.

344. Carol L. Meyers, “Of Drums and Damsel,” 23.

*The Interpellation of Yahweh's עַם*

Within Isa 40.1–11, the *מבשרת* has the great honor of announcing to Jerusalem that Yahweh has returned to the city to reinstitute his reign from within its walls. Because the *מבשרת* plays a crucial role in the divine program, the identification of this figure within his discourse serves as a crux to interpreting the rest of the composition. And while there is no clear referent for the *מבשרת* within the immediate literary context of the pericope, she is to serve the same role as the addressees in the opening verses of Isa 40: comfort (*נחמו*) Jerusalem.

This group is addressed directly with the vocative, *עמי*, in v. 1. Despite the transitive nature of *נחמו* and the lack of an intervening direct object between the twice-uttered imperative,<sup>345</sup> interpreting *עמי* as a vocative provides the best reading of the verse.<sup>346</sup> In support of this interpretation, it will be helpful to look at Ezekiel 37.9, a productive comparison for understanding the poetics of 40.1–2:

He said to me:

“Prophesy to the *anima*,  
Prophesy, o mortal.  
Say to the *anima*...”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי  
הִנְבֵּא אֶל הַרוּחַ  
הִנְבֵּא בֶן אָדָם  
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל הַרוּחַ

---

345. A traditional reading takes *עמי* as the direct object of the transitive verb *נחמו*. Chavel has helpfully summarized the scholarship that takes this position. See Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination,” 26–7 n. 66.

346. As Chavel argues, “the people are the addressee of the imperative; this vocative replaces the anticipated object of the verb *נחמו*, which appears in the parallel line v. 2a (*ירושלם*); and because the opening verb already occurs in the repeated form *נחמו נחמו* in v. 1a the parallel line opens with a synonymous expression (*דגרו על לב*) in v. 2a.” Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination,” 27.

In this scene, the prophet Ezekiel reports a commission to convey the divine will to a third party. For Ezekiel, that party is the רוח that Yahweh intends to animate the prophecy's dry bones. The deity twice issues the imperative הנבא to Ezekiel, instructing the prophet to address this רוח, to prophesy to it. In the first line Yahweh states the addressee of the prophet's speech act — "Prophesy to the anima" — before addressing Ezekiel in the vocative, "o mortal." Yahweh then continues with another volitive form (וְאָמַרְתָּ),<sup>347</sup> addressed to the same audience as the first imperative, הרוח. Within this formulation, Ezekiel is the addressee of all three volitives, with the first and third lines indicating to the prophet the audience whom he is meant to instruct while the second addresses him directly in the vocative.

This passage from Ezekiel parallels the structure of Isa 40.1–2, with the latter omitting, or gapping, the object of addressees' "comfort" in the first line. This gap is quickly filled by the presence of "Jerusalem" in the third line and the parallel expressions of "comfort": נחמו and דברו על לב.<sup>348</sup> The Author thus employs a poetic technique that mirrors what we see in Ezekiel 37,

---

347. For the use of the *qāṭal* as a jussive of consecution, see GKC §112rγ; Lambdin §107b.

348. In the latter expression, לב is the *functional* direct object of the complex expression אמצא חן בעיניך אדני כי נחמתני: דגרו על וכי דברת על לב שפחתך ואנכי לא אהיה כאחת שפחתך

combining it with the gapping of so-called “staircase parallelism,”<sup>349</sup> creating a rhetorically powerful summons to the addressees of the imperatives, Yahweh’s עם, Jacob-Israel.

The force of these lines serves to interpellate the composition’s audience into the deity’s project,<sup>350</sup> to rhetorically and ideologically hail them as members of Jacob-Israel and the bearers of Yahweh’s message. According to the deity, it is the divine will for Jacob-Israel — his people in Babylonia — to return migrate in order to prepare Jerusalem for his return. As part of this group, the historical audience member is thereby commissioned to make the journey and

---

349. So-called “staircase parallelism,” like that found 40.1–2, allows for the slow construction of a poetic image through repetition and gapping. It features prominently in volitive sequences with identical imperatives followed by a third volitive form derived from a different root (cf. Pss 24.9; 29.1–2; Hos 11.8a). In Ps 24.9, the second instance of נשא takes פתחי עולם as its addressees, gaps the direct object provided in the preceding expression (ראשיכם). In Ps 93.1–2, which actually features three identical imperatives (הבו) before shifting to a root (השתחו), the direct object is gapped in the first instance, fronting the verb’s addressees (בני אלים). The direct object is provided after the second (כבוד ועז) and third (כבוד שמו). The structure in Hos 11.8a is a bit different. Here Yahweh wonders aloud in the subjunctive how he could destroy Ephraim. The thought איך אתנך אפרים of the first colon is only completed in the second with replacement of the addressee Ephraim with the indirect object Adam (כאדם).

On the phenomenon of staircase parallelism, see Edward L Greenstein, “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism in Canaanite Poetry and their Psycholinguistic Background,” *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 6 (1974): 22–39; Edward L Greenstein, “One More Step on the Staircase,” *UF* 9 (1977): 1977; Samuel E Loewenstamm, “The Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse,” *JSS* 14 (1969): 176–196.

350. I mean interpellation in the Althusserian sense of creating subjects, subjects constituted by ideology. The author of our passage attempts to motivate the members of his/her audience to collective action by casting it in terms of the divine plan. Yahweh’s people in Babylonia are to “return home” to prepare for his return. As a member of this group, *you*, the audience member, are hereby commissioned to make the journey and accomplish this task. Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays with a New Introduction by Frederic Jameson* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 115–123.

accomplish this task. The use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural suffix on אלהיכם in v. 1 accentuates the point: Yahweh is *your* god, and *you* are his people.

*The Impaired Messenger / Servant*

The preceding interpretation frames the opening lines of the composition within a broader motif of Yahweh’s desire for a competent messenger that recurs in Isa 40–48. In 42.18–25, Yahweh expresses sincere frustration with the lack of a messenger fit to deliver to Jerusalem the news of his success and his singularity. A series of rhetorical questions highlights one candidate’s perceptual shortcomings:

Who is as blind as my servant,	מי עור כי אם עבדי
As deaf as my messenger	
whom I would send?	וחרש כְּמִלְאָכִי אֲשַׁלַּח
Who is as blind as the	
one (whose message) would be fulfilled, <sup>351</sup>	מי עור כְּמִשְׁלָם
As blind as Yahweh’s servant? (42.19)	ועור כעבד יהוה

Once again, the Author has failed to provide the identity of the primary players in the deity’s message, leaving a clear referent for Yahweh’s would-be-messenger — his עבד — unstated.<sup>352</sup>

---

351. For a helpful summary of scholarly attempts to translate this term, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 218–219. The editor of BHS suggests amending משלם to משלח, a *pu'al* participle with the sense of “my sent one.” However, the MT may be understood as it stands, as a participle with the sense of “the one who(se message) is fulfilled.” See the finite use of שלם in the *hiphil* with the meaning of “fulfilling” applied to Yahweh at Isaiah 44.26, quoted below. “שלם,” *HALOT*, 4:1532. See also the discussion in Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 199–200.

352. Once again, the ancient translators were uncomfortable with the ambiguity, resolving the lack of clarity through addition (eg. Ὁ λαός in 19a of the Old Greek) and circumlocution (eg. וחיביא דנביי שלחית עליהון in the Targum). Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 218; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: Vol. I*, 258.

Despite the absence of a clear or explicit referent for this figure,<sup>353</sup> the use of direct address in vv. 18 and 20a (תשמר)<sup>354</sup> along the deity's frequent application of this title to Jacob-Israel strongly suggests that it is the composition's audience who is being accused of failing to recognize Yahweh's commission.<sup>355</sup> Including these verses, Jacob-Israel is associated with Yahweh's עבד on

---

353. Although a consensus has developed concerning the identification of this עבד with the character of Jacob-Israel in modern scholarship, Chavel has recently suggested a new interpretation of Yahweh's impaired עבד. He has identified this figure with the barely personified prophetic voice that delivers the message throughout the composition whom he calls 'the herald.' According to Chavel, the herald, who is depicted as impaired, stands in contrast to the otherwise able-bodied audience (accused of being blind/deaf in v. 18) who is unwilling/unable to understand Yahweh's intervention in history and his role as the sole mover behind events that occur on earth. He would also stand in a long tradition of impaired prophets (Eg. Moses, Elisha, Ezekiel; cf. Sommer's conclusions concerning the motivation for allusion in Deutero-Isaiah's work [*A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 168ff]). Chavel, "Prophetic Imagination," 36–42. While not impossible, Chavel's reading shines a spotlight on a figure — the herald — who otherwise only exists in the shadows throughout 40–48; the herald is otherwise more conduit than character, as Chavel himself argues.

354. The first half of v. 20 may also address Jacob-Israel directly in the second person, but the MT's ראיִת is ambiguous. The bicolon is better balanced poetically by the *qere*, which offers the infinitive absolute רְאוּת. This reading provides better balance with the verbal sequence of the next line (infinitive absolute/finite verb). The *ketib*, רְאִיִת, however, is supported by 1QIsaa and perhaps also in the versions. In support of both the *ketib* and 1QIsaa, the L (εἶδετε) and the Tg (הִזְיִיתוּן) have rendered a 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine plural perfect (רְאִיִתְם). In either case, Jacob-Israel is directly addressed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular form, תשמר, in the second half of 20a. Goldingay and Payne make the helpful connection between vv. 19 and 20: "The harsh statements of v. 19 relate to the very entity that is being addressed." *Isaiah 40–55: Vol. I*, 261.

355. For a list of medieval commentators with this view, see Chavel, "Prophetic Imagination," 36 n. 89. Some modern commentators with this view include Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (The Old Testament library; Translated by M. G. Stalker. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 109–111; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: Vol. I*, 258ff; Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 198–203. In addition, the verbal links between this figure and the human messengers (prophets) identified in 44.26 — the word pair עבד // מלאך coupled with the root *š-l-m* — strongly suggest that in the case of the latter, the servant whom Yahweh would send should be a human representative of the divine will, a human agent who is addressed directly in v. 20a (as noted in Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 199–200).

twelve occasions in chs. 40–48, either directly by title<sup>356</sup> or indirectly through the use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns and direct address.<sup>357</sup> Within these examples, the term is used to indicate Jacob-Israel’s role as witness to the “new things” Yahweh plans to enact, and as the primary disseminator of that information.<sup>358</sup>

The single exception to Jacob-Israel’s equation with Yahweh’s עבד occurs in 42.1, where it is Cyrus who is given the title of Yahweh’s servant. In this case, the role of the עבד has less to do with bearing witness to Yahweh’s power than being the medium through which the deity exacts order in the world. In this way Cyrus functions much more like the tool, Nebuchadnezzar, Yahweh’s עבד in Jer 27.6, than the witness in our text, Jacob-Israel.<sup>359</sup>

The identification of Jacob-Israel as an impaired messenger in 42.18–25 is part of a broader motif that recurs throughout the composition: the failure of Yahweh’s chosen people to

---

356. In addition to 42.19 (2x) and 44.26, the עבד and Jacob-Israel are explicitly associated in 41.8,9; 43.10; 44.1–2, 21; 45.4; and 48.20.

357. The audience is addressed directly with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural pronoun in 43.10, before continuing on with 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural verb forms: אַתֶּם עַדֵי נְאֻם יְהוָה וְעַבְדֵי אֱשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּי לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ וְתִאֱמַיְנוּ לִי וְתִבְיְנוּ כִּי אֲנִי הוּא לְפָנַי לֹא נֹצֵר אֵל וְאַחֲרַי לֹא יִהְיֶה

358. Isa 43.10; 44.1–2.

359. Isaiah 42.1–9 appears to be Yahweh’s endorsement of Cyrus as presented to Jacob-Israel (cf. אַתְּכֶם in v. 9). Verses 1–3 describe the Persian king’s “peaceful” conquest of the city as recorded in both Persian propaganda (e.g. the Cyrus Cylinder, esp. ll. 10–18, 20–26) and Herodotus (*Histories* 1.189–191). In the following lines, Cyrus’ fitness for the role of conqueror is established as is his part in magnifying Yahweh’s name throughout the world. For the text of the Cyrus Cylinder and commentary, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 70–74.

recognize his divine agency.<sup>360</sup> The use of the motif is particularly dense surrounding the the pericope in 42.18–25.<sup>361</sup> Twice in the first 17 verses of ch. 42 Jacob-Israel is called blind.<sup>362</sup> Yahweh, the victorious warrior of 42.10–13, vows to lead the sightless through uncharted territory and to illuminate their path (42.16). In 42.7, Yahweh commissions Cyrus, the foreign king who is to deliver Jacob-Israel according to 45.4, to “open blind eyes” and “release the

---

360. The expression of this motif through Israel’s blindness/deafness has been a point of focus for scholars interested in the compositional history of the book of Isaiah, and especially the relationship between the prophet(s) responsible for Isa 40ff to the material contained in so-called First Isaiah (Isa 1–39), with particular attention paid to the divine throne scene in Isa 6. Ronald Clements, for example, argued that with regard to the blindness motif in Isa 6.9–10, “Not only do we have here language so strikingly related to the otherwise unanticipated references to blindness and deafness in chs. 42 and 43 that we should not doubt that the later instances are dependent on the earlier, but the central importance of the original occurrence in the call narrative must further confirm this conclusion.” Ronald Clements, E., “Beyond Tradition History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes,” *JSOT* 31 (1985): 101–105, here 103. Williamson agreed in principle with Clements’ conclusions concerning the influence of Isa 6 (and vv. 9–10, in particular) on the blind/deaf motif in Isa 40ff, and especially its combination with failure to perceive/understand. However, he argued for evidence of Isa 6’s influence elsewhere in Isa 1–39 (eg. 32.3 and 1.2–3) and a “broader pattern of reaffirmation or reversal on other parts of the book [of Isaiah] as well.” H. G. M Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah’s Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 46–51, 55; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*. Finally, Sommer does see an allusion to earlier Isaianic material in Isa 42.18–25, but with Isa 30.9–14 rather than Isa 6. He sees the influence of the heavenly throne room scene elsewhere in the Author’s work, but less so in the case of the blind/deaf servant. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 73–107, esp. 97–99.

361. As Stern has argued, the frequency of usage of the root ‘-w-r in chs. 42–43 (of 22 occurrences of the root in nominal/adjectival form in the Hebrew Bible, seven appear between Isa 42.7–43.8) strongly suggests that “the prophet was seeking to express *something*” through the density of blindness language in these chapters. Stern also highlights the image of the blind worm (תולעת) to describe Jacob Israel in 41.14ff. Philip Stern, “The ‘Blind Servant’ Imagery of Deutero-Isaiah and its Implications,” *Bib* 75 (1994): 225–226, here 225, emphasis mine. For Jacob-Israel’s imperceptiveness more broadly, see the community’s quoted speech in 40.27 as well as its characterization in 48.1–11.

362. Goldingay, “Isaiah 42.18–25,” 46.

imprisoned.” Finally, in 43.8, though called in Yahweh’s name (v. 7), Jacob-Israel remains a people “blind though it has eyes, deaf though it has ears.”

### *Rhetorical Blindness and Defining Judeo-Babylonian Identity*

This motif of Jacob-Israel’s perpetual physical and spiritual blindness serves a dual purpose within the rhetoric of the composition. First of all, it magnifies Yahweh's loyalty to his chosen people and his determination to redeem them in the face the latter’s blunted senses.<sup>363</sup> Secondly, it serves as a critique meant to motivate this community. Robert Wilson has characterized the deity’s message throughout the work as one driven by a “rhetoric of persuasion,” suggesting an audience who would have been less than responsive to the deity’s message of return migration.<sup>364</sup> This point should not be underestimated as the Author of chs. 40–48 makes significant demands of his/her audience. On the one hand, as Simeon Chavel has recently demonstrated, the Author of the composition has presented a radical reconceptualization of deity stripped of king, priesthood, and temple — the traditional symbols of divine efficacy.<sup>365</sup> Instead, Yahweh asserts his transcendence of those symbols as a singular deity who alone has been responsible for all of history. This reorientation is dramatic, and befits the strong rhetoric employed to counter an anticipated skepticism.

On the other hand, Jacob-Israel’s “disabilities” may also reflect a different shade of resistance that was perceived by the composition’s Author, one that was grounded in the complex

---

363. Clements, “Beyond Tradition History,” 102.

364. Wilson, “The Community of the Second Isaiah,” 62.

365. Chavel, “Prophetic Imagination,” 19–42.

identity questions faced by Judean communities long-settled in Babylonia. As I argued above, the decision to return migrate in the early decades of Persian rule was not as simple as seizing an opportunity provided by a magnanimous ruler or political turmoil. If this had been the case, then the Author of the composition should have been able to easily persuade his/her audience of the merits of return. Nor was it necessarily the case that, as Rainer Albertz has argued, the distance between Judea and Babylonia — both geographical and cultural — was too much to overcome for most displaced Judeans, “even though they were theoretically in favor of the return.”<sup>366</sup> Rather, the choice between remaining in the diaspora or returning to Judea was likely determined by complex issue of the construction of social identity and whether or not a Judean could be at “home” in Babylonia.

It is clear from the preceding analysis that the Author of Isa 40–48 had to employ an array of rhetorical tools in an effort to persuade his/her fellow Judeo-Babylonians to repatriate and that the decision was by no means a given. Through the composition’s opening commission the Author sought to interpellate the audience into Yahweh’s divine plan, to rhetorically and ideologically hail them as members of the in-group of Jacob-Israel and the bearers of Yahweh’s message. Within the framework of the composition, it was the divine will for Jacob-Israel to run at the head of Yahweh’s victory parade in order to prepare Jerusalem for his return. As a member

---

366. Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: Vol. II From the Exile to the Maccabees* (The Old Testament Library Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 443–446.

of this group, the historical audience member was thereby commissioned to make the journey and execute this task.<sup>367</sup>

For those Judeo-Babylonians to whom this composition was addressed, the summons to fulfill the role of Yahweh's עבד was meant to be inclusive and compelling. The Author employed or exploited the association between his audience and Jacob-Israel as a means to overcome or transcend what he/she perceived to be a prohibitively high degree of cultural and economic embeddedness among many of his/her Judeo-Babylonians compatriots, an embeddedness that fostered a construction of Judean identity with looser ties to geography and a weak theology-of-place. For the Author of Isa 40–48, however, it was a matter of divine will to re-establish Judeans in Judea, and so he/she presented his message as a commission and cast the audience in the role of Jacob-Israel, hailing them as heralds of the good news. Put another way, the opening verses of Isa 40 serve to interpellate the Author's Judeo-Babylonian audience, to re-root Judean identity in the community's ancestral homeland, thereby aligning them with the divine project of return migration and restoration.

#### Conclusions: Constructions of Judeanness in 6<sup>th</sup> Century Babylonia

##### *The Geography of Judeanness*

---

367. In his analysis of the Hellenistic *Letter of Aristeas*, Stewart Moore convincingly argues that the document's author was attempting to convince his fellow Judeo-Egyptians in Alexandria that Jerusalem (and Judea) still played an important role in their identity as Ιουδαίοι despite their embeddedness and comfort in their Hellenistic Egyptian context. The document's long and detailed description of Judea, Jerusalem, and the temple served to root these Judeo-Egyptians in their ancestral homeland. Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 231–235.

I opened this chapter with two vignettes. In the first, a passage from Ezek 36, the deity declared his intentions to restore what was left of his people Israel to the land of their ancestors. This (forced) return migration would occur according to the deity's own needs and his own view of where his people belonged. In the second text, an economic document from the reign of Darius I, we encountered a Judean, Aḥīqam son of Rāpa-Yāma, who appears to be fully integrated into his Babylonian context. Aḥīqam's participation in the recorded transaction post-dates the return migration of contemporary diasporic communities of Assyrians and Neirabians as well as the return migration of Judeo-Babylonians that has been recorded in the literature of the Hebrew Bible.

The juxtaposition of these two texts highlights the range of ways by which one could identify and be identified as "Judean" in the Babylonian diaspora in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. As we have seen, many of the differences that might be observed in these portrayals of Judeanness can be attributed to the nature of the evidence that presents them. From the perspective of the Babylonian administration as represented in the cuneiform record, *Yāhūdi* was primarily a tax and labor unit. It continued as a salient category as long as it served the central government's needs. On the other hand, the Book of Ezekiel presents Judeanness from the perspective of an insider; the work defines the social group (בית ישראל) in terms of ancestral kinship, geography, and relationship to a deity. The varying presentations are dependent on perspective of the author, the genre of the evidence, and the function of ethnicity for the author of the text.

However, the variation in observable Judeanness in these texts was not solely a function of these variables; I have also argued for significant differences in how ethnic identity was

constructed based on the primary social or institutional point of reference for an individual Judean. We saw in Aḥīqam son of Rāpa-Yāma a Judean who had achieved a certain level of economic, political, and social success in his role as a representative of his diasporic community. Even as he maintained markers of his Judeanness — use of Hebrew, veneration of Yahweh, continued ties to his Judeo-Babylonian community — he and his descendants established long-distance and long term-relationships with his co-ethnic and non-Judean neighbors. Through the development of these networks and the kinds of capital associated with them, these Judeans adapted to their diasporic Babylonian context and developed cultural fluency. When considered with the continued presence of identifiable Judeans in the Nippur region for roughly a century after a wave of return migration early in the Persian period, we can see in Aḥīqam and his contemporaries a group of Judeo-Babylonians who were comfortable and fluent in their diasporic setting.

In the material written from a Judean insider's perspective — the Book of Ezekiel and Isa 40–48 — we saw a very different perspective on life in Babylonia. Despite evidence of the clear cultural (linguistic, symbolic, material) influence of their diasporic context, both works condemn adaptation and integration to life outside of Judea. Instead, they look forward to and prescribe return migration and a claim to their ancestral homeland as the uniquely suitable location for Judeans to live. In the case of the Book of Ezekiel, I argued that this drastically different feeling toward life in Babylonia was at least in part a function of the work's association with the Jerusalemite priesthood. The work's projection of Judeanness was rooted in a theological outlook that privileged a best, ideal, or unique place to worship Yahweh, a conviction that I have called

theology-of-place. While primarily ideological in nature, I also argued that the opportunities for cultural and economic capital associated with theology-of-place would have played a significant role in how the Book of Ezekiel constructed Judeanness and its relationship to its audience's asserted homeland of Judea. In support of this argument, I suggested that the return migration of religious professionals in contemporary diasporic communities of Assyrians and Neirabians shared the Book of Ezekiel's theological outlook and abandoned the positions and capital they had developed over generations in Babylonia.

Finally, through a close reading of the introduction to Isa 40–48, I argued that the theology-of-place that drove the Book of Ezekiel's construction of Judeanness was not universal among members of the diaspora. Instead, the Author of Isa 40–48 worked hard through a rhetorically complex and impressive composition to convince those he/she understood to be co-ethnics that a return to Judea was part of a broader divine plan. By hailing its audience as heralds proclaiming Yahweh's triumphant march to Jerusalem, the composition argues that life in the ancestral homeland is incumbent upon those who would be included among the deity's servants. When faced with the question, "given who I am, where do I belong?" the Author of Isa 40–48, following in the footsteps of the author of the Book of Ezekiel, argues strongly and decisively that the answer is clear: Judea.

## Chapter 5

### Judea

#### Introduction

##### *Approaching the 'Homeland'*

My primary focus in the previous two chapters has been to analyze how Judeanness was constructed by minority communities in diaspora in the Babylonian and Persian empires. I analyzed the ways in which those communities constructed boundaries between themselves and their non-Judean neighbors and the permeability of those boundaries in different contexts. I also highlighted the systems — both internal to the group and those imposed by imperial powers — that facilitated the reproduction of Judean identity. In support of these efforts, I drew on a variety of evidence, including letters, archival administrative records, material remains, and biblical literature.

In turning to Judea, the geographical, political, and cultural “center” (and purported ancestral homeland) for those diaspora communities, we are vexed by two primary issues. The

first concerns the minority/majority status of each community. The Judeo-Egyptians of ch. 3 and the Judeo-Babylonians of ch. 4 were part of the Judean diaspora. As such, they were members of minority communities within their broader geographic, political, and cultural settings. We can see this status reflected in the approach that imperial administrations took to settlement patterns and in ongoing efforts to maintain boundaries between diaspora Judeans and other groups, either as an intentional policy (Yeb) or as byproduct of administrative expediency (Āl-Yāhūdu). The communities' minority statuses were also visible in the diasporic literature we examined in ch. 4. The Book of Ezekiel, in particular, makes it clear that despite the current necessity of settlement in Babylonia, rural Nippur would never be a homeland for the Judeans, and the diverse Babylonian population would never be their kin. This status and the efforts made to establish and maintain it allowed us to analyze those elements of Judean identity that were highlighted or preserved when these individuals or groups came into contact with the majority population or other minority collectives. However, when we turn to Judea, that minority status either no longer holds or is transformed. As we will see, this dramatically changes the construction of the proximate other against whom Judeans would define their communal boundaries.

Secondly, whereas we were able to rely heavily on non-biblical evidence for our analysis of the Egyptian and Babylonian communities, we are unable to do so here, as evidence is quite limited for Judea and its role within the Babylonian and Persian empires during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Very little inscriptional evidence concerning the administration of Judea during these periods has survived, the result of the use of perishable materials like papyrus for record keeping in an inhospitable climate. There are significant material remains, but, as we will see,

their interpretation is by no means straightforward and open to scholarly debate. As a result, I will have to rely much more heavily on the literature of the Hebrew Bible for my analysis. As I argued in the Introduction, heavy (and uncritical) use of this evidence in biblical studies and beyond has produced problematic reconstructions of Judean identity during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. In my own approach to this material, I will emphasize its ideological and self-conscious nature in order to understand how the communities who produced them sought to present and define themselves rather than treating them as straightforward historical representations.

This chapter begins with a reexamination of the evidence from Judea in light of Judean identity during the Neo-Babylonian period. Traditionally considered the “dark ages” of Judean history due to the lack of historiographical reflection in the literature of the Hebrew Bible and a material record marked by evidence of significant destruction and discontinuity, I argue for a limited but important element of continuity that links the end of the monarchic period to the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. A particularly Judean administrative phenomenon — the stamping of storage jars with inscriptions, markings, or images — offers a vehicle by which elements of Judean identity could be reproduced in the region following the fall of the kingdom of Judah.

In the second section I turn to the literary accounts of the early Persian period from the Hebrew Bible. I have identified four *mythomoteurs* — the book of Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, Ezra 9, and Nehemiah 9 — that reflect on the contours of Judean identity in Judea during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. These origin stories offer self-conscious narrative accounts of new beginnings

for the Judean community in Judea, as well as implicit and explicit claims about in- and out-group boundaries. These *mythomoteurs* are also important to the broader aims of this study because scholars have relied so heavily on them for reconstructing the history of Judea during this period. They have often served as primary sources for the periods in which their narratives are set and have had significant influence on how scholars have understood the nature of Judeanness during the Persian period.

### Continuity or Chaos?: The Population of Judea During the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE

#### *6<sup>th</sup> Century Judea and the Myth of the 'Myth of the Empty Land'*

The book of Kings, whose narrative ends shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, claims that only the Judean kingdom's poorest inhabitants remained in the land following the second Babylonian siege (2 Kgs 25.11–12), while majority had either been killed or deported. Even more dramatically, the later book of Chronicles narrates a complete and total emptying of the territory. According to the Chronicler, the "entire" population was delivered to Nebuchadnezzar and his soldiers (הכל נתן בידו), while a spared remnant (שאריית מן החרב) survived, only to be deported to Babylonia (2 Chron 36.15–21). To varying degrees, each of these historiographical works provides a picture of Judea devoid of its politically, culturally, and religiously significant population.

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hebrew Bible scholars and Levantine archaeologists had essentially upheld this view of Judea's history, and corroborating evidence was discovered that

seemed to confirm it. Babylonian sources provided independent confirmation of a number of important details from the biblical accounts, including an entry in the Babylonian Chronicle recording Nebuchadnezzar's first siege of Jerusalem and his appointment of Zedekiah in place of his nephew,<sup>1</sup> Jehoiachin.<sup>2</sup> The Weidner tablets — a series of Late Babylonian administrative tablets that record the distribution of resources to Jehoiachin and his sons in Babylon — confirmed the presence of the exiled Judean king and his entourage in the Babylonian royal court.<sup>3</sup>

The material remains of the kingdom of Judah also supported these conclusions. The Lachish Ostraca, a collection of letters, lists, and administrative documents related to the Judean military, were discovered in an early 6<sup>th</sup> century destruction layer (Stratum II) in the city's gate complex.<sup>4</sup> The letters, which give a sense of urgency and cover a relatively short span of time, are traditionally associated with the kingdom's preparations for the impending Babylonian

---

1. Or brother (יְהוֹיָכִן), according to the MT of 2 Chr 36.10. However, the versions of the Chronicles verse agree with the nephew/uncle relationship as established in 2 Kgs 24.17 where Zedekiah is identified as Jehoiachin's יָד. See, for example, the Greek of 2 Chron 36.10: ἐβασίλευσεν Σεδεκιαν **ἀδελφὸν τοῦ πατρὸς** αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰουδαν καὶ Ἱερουσαλημ. Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 312. The NJPS addresses the issue by leaving the relationship between Jehoiachin and Zedekiah ambiguous, rendering יְהוֹיָכִן in the 2 Chronicles passage as “kinsman.”

2. Chronicle 5, rev ll. 12–13: “[Nebuchadnezzar] encamped against the city of Judah (*āl Yāhūdu*) and on the second day of the month of Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king. A king of his own choice he appointed in the city (and) taking the vast tribute he brought it back to Babylon.” Translation from A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 102.

3. For further discussion of these tablets, see ch. 4.

4. The collection consists of roughly 30 documents, including seven letters (Lachish no. 2–8). For an introduction, text, photos, and handcopies, see Shmuel. Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 56–91.

invasion.<sup>5</sup> Like Lachish, many densely populated Judean cities evidence significant destruction that coincide with the Babylonian campaigns, offering signs of significant depopulation throughout Judea in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This is especially the case for Jerusalem. In describing a layer of ash littered with arrowheads at the base of the the city's Iron Age fortifications, Ephraim Stern states,

These unique remains of the Babylonian devastation of Jerusalem in 586 BCE are a clear reflection of the biblical sources (2 Kings 25:8; 2 Chronicles 36:18–19) describing the destruction, burning, and collapse of houses and walls. The archaeological evidence for this phase in Jerusalem's history in the rest of the city's excavated areas, especially in the City of David, can be counted among the most dramatic at any biblical site.<sup>6</sup>

The claim of Jerusalem and Judea's devastation — if not its “emptiness” — was thus supported by the interpretation of the material remains by archaeologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

However, this reconstruction of Judea came under heavy criticism in the 1990s and early 2000s by a group of scholars, including among others — Hans Barstad, Niels Peter Lemche,

---

5. Shmuel. Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 58–59. Lachish no. 3 is particularly noteworthy in that it refers to a Judean envoy to Egypt (ll. 14–16). Egypt's failed support of a second Judean rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar and his burgeoning empire in 587 BCE is well documented in the literature of the Hebrew Bible (eg. 2 Kgs 25; Ezek 17). For the relationship between Zedekiah and the pharaohs Psammetichus II and Hophra, see Dan'el Kahn, “Judean Auxiliaries in Egypt's Wars Against Kush,” *JAOS* 127 (2007): 507–516; Dan'el Kahn, “Some Remarks on the Foreign Policy of Psammetichus II in the Levant (595–589 B.C.),” *Journal of Egyptian History* 1 (2008): 139–157.

6. Stern, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*, 309.

7. See the helpful summary of scholarship on this point in Faust, particularly until the 1990s. Avraham Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation* (SBLABS 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 3–10.

Robert Carroll and, to a lesser degree, Oded Lipschits.<sup>8</sup> These scholars, associated with what Avraham Faust has termed the “continuity school,” called into question the so-called “Myth of the Empty Land.” In a highly influential article by that same title, Robert Carroll argued that the frequent depiction of Judea as emptied or devoid of a population found in the literature of literature of the Hebrew Bible is not a reflection of historical reality. Rather, this characterization serves a clear ideological purpose for the communities responsible for producing it, namely “the returned deportee community in its homeland, occupying the space created by the annihilation or dispersion of the other people.”<sup>9</sup> According to Barstad,<sup>10</sup> the land of Judah had not, in fact, been “emptied,” as the authors of the Hebrew Bible claimed. Rather, a significant population remained in the land following the Babylonian conquest, working the territory for their own sustenance and in support of the new Babylonian imperial power: “*However, with the great majority of the population still intact, life in Judah after 586 in all probability before long went on very much in the same way that it had done before the catastrophe.*”<sup>11</sup> Biblicists and archaeologists who argued for an “empty” Judah were unduly influenced by tendentious biblical narratives, letting a highly ideologized text cloud their common sense and their interpretation of the material evidence. A

---

8. However, see Zorn’s review of *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period* in which he argues that the distance between Lipschits’ and Faust’s views is actually quite small, and that, in general, the scholars are quite in line regarding the population of Judea during this period. Jeffrey Zorn, review of *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation* by Avraham Faust, *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 1 (2013): 185–192.

9. Robert P. Carroll, “The Myth of the Empty Land,” *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79–93, here 83.

10. This is Faust’s title for this group of scholars.

11. Hans M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah During the “Exilic” Period* (Symbolae Osloenses Fasc Supplements 28; Boston: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), 42; *emphasis* original.

*critical* evaluation of that material evidence, freed of eisegetical biblical interpretation strongly suggested continuity of settlement in Judea rather than the total rupture assumed by biblicists.

In his 2012 monograph, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: Archaeology of Desolation*, Faust positioned himself in direct confrontation with the arguments of the continuity school. Affirming the previously held scholarly consensus of widespread devastation in Judah during the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Faust argued “there is no positive evidence for continuity in the imperial administration in the land of Israel or for the existence of Babylonian administration.”<sup>12</sup> He reviewed and reevaluated at length a wealth of archaeological data for the region. Some of his strongest critiques challenge the “common sense” evaluation of evidence espoused by his interlocutors. He notes, for example, that if the Levant had *really* been of significant economic interest to the Babylonian empire, Nebuchadnezzar and his successors would not have utterly destroyed Philistine cities like Ekron, Ashkelon, and Tyre. These sites would have been far more important than Judah for olive oil and wine production, and even more valuable for their ports and access to Mediterranean trade routes (especially Tyre).<sup>13</sup>

A crucial element of Faust’s critique concerns the fundamental premise of the arguments for continuity: that scholars and archaeologists have been too persuaded by the biblical suggestion that the former kingdom of Judah was completely depopulated during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. As Faust notes, however, no such claims are advanced by the biblical authors. The accounts in both Kings and Jeremiah unambiguously acknowledge that a remnant remained in the territory

---

12. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 199.; Cf. Vanderhooft’s argument against the provincialization of Judea under the Neo-Babylonians. Vanderhooft, *Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 61–114.

13. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 190.

following the kingdom's fall, even if that remnant is presented in less than glowing terms. This does not mean, of course, that the authors of the biblical accounts were not ideologically motivated to present the territory in the particular ways that they did; but this is a communal and historiographical issue (see below). Rather, members of the continuity school have projected a particular reading of the biblical texts into the ideological frameworks of the scholars who preceded them, creating a straw man.<sup>14</sup>

Having rebutted this fundamental premise of the continuity school's approach, Faust advocates for a return to the previous scholarly position of rupture and discontinuity in the region during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to what he sees as tell-tale signs of depopulation and site abandonment in the material record of Judea, Faust argues for a significant break in culture between the end of the Iron Age and the Persian period. He sees this break primarily in the disappearance of two mainstays of traditional Judean architecture during the Persian period: the Judahite tomb and the four-room house. Faust argues that “[t]his transition must indicate an extreme social and cultural break. The changes reflect fundamental changes in lifestyle, ethos, and beliefs, and only a significant event could have caused them.”<sup>15</sup> That event, of course, was the Babylonian conquest of the kingdom of Judah, and these changes were part of a broader and

---

14. James Pasto has offered an extremely insightful critique of ideological underpinnings of the continuity school, arguing that they are driven by a model that replicates a view of the modern state of Israel as the product of a colonial force, with *Golah* Judeans (as representatives of the Persian administration) standing in for a “colonizing” European Jewish population, responsible for ruling over or forcing out the territory’s “native” population (the עַם הָאָרֶץ) — a stand-in for 20<sup>th</sup> century Arab Palestinians. In this regard Barstad, et. al, reproduce the ideologically-motivated paradigms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century German scholars outlined in ch. 1. See Pasto, “When the End is the Beginning?” 157–202, esp. 180–185.

15. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 105.

decisive collapse of Judean society that occurred in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. During the subsequent Neo-Babylonian period, Judea should therefore be understood as a post-collapse society.

In making this argument, Faust draws on the work of Joseph Tainter,<sup>16</sup> who has defined societal “collapse” as the “rapid, significant loss of an established level of socio-political complexity.”<sup>17</sup> In the case of Judah, this collapse meant that “not only was there a great demographic decline, but society simply collapsed and [was] crushed.”<sup>18</sup> Faust admits that Tainter’s model of collapse and post-collapse societies does not require complete cultural break, but he nonetheless stresses rupture between the culture of 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century Judah and that of Persian period Yehud. He concludes that “the traditional view [of a significantly depopulated Judah] is very reasonable when examined within a broader anthropological perspective.”<sup>19</sup>

Faust’s suggestion that we should analyze post-monarchic Judea as a post-collapse society is, in the main, persuasive. However, his characterization requires two small but important adjustments. First, the political structures that fail during collapse and the cultural system they support — Tainter calls this cultural system “civilization” — are not equivalent. The former, can, of course, promote the growth and development of the latter, but the latter can exist — perhaps with less complexity of expression — without the support of the former. Furthermore, collapse (as defined by Tainter) does not entail the *complete* dissolution of complex political

---

16. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 168–174.

17. Joseph A Tainter, “Post-collapse societies,” *Companion Encyclopedia of Archaeology* 2 (1999): 711.

18. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 175.

19. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 176.

structures. Rather, it requires some level of continuity so that one can identify a through-line between the pre- and post-collapse societies. That continuity is typically a greatly simplified version of what preceded it, but still recognizable as genealogically related.

Secondly, Faust's assertion of a "complete cultural break" takes a relatively narrow view of what defined Judeanness during the late monarchic period. While the use of four-room houses and burial caves may have been constitutive elements of Judeanness in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>20</sup> they need not have been the *sole* and *defining* features of that identity. As noted by Kirsi Valkama, "[Faust] takes under discussion only one aspect of the culture: the architecture. Other aspects like pottery and literature can indicate continuity of culture and its reformation in a new situation, though the decline of the material culture remains clear."<sup>21</sup> Valkama's critique points us back to the dynamic nature of communal identity and the ability of a collective to (re)define itself in new and changing historical circumstances, reevaluating — both consciously and subconsciously — those diacritics which best or most fundamentally represent the group and its values. The loss or disappearance of physical infrastructure does not necessarily indicate the loss or disappearance of the culture that once claimed them as its own.

These critiques lead us to a very important question concerning Faust's conclusions. If, in line with Faust, we should understand 6<sup>th</sup> century Judea as a post-collapse society while also

---

20. Faust also includes the *בית אב* and *משפחה*, the apparent disappearance of figurines, and a general shift in cosmology, aligning these features with a particular Judean worldview that he believes was lost or fundamentally altered during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 106–115.

21. Kirsi Valkama, "What Do Archaeological Remains Reveal of the Settlements in Judah during the Mid-Sixth Century BCE?," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 58.

allowing for a broader field of cultural traits that could have defined Judeanness in a given moment, then we must ask: is there any evidence that might reflect continuity of Judean identity *in Judea* during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The answer, as I will argue, is affirmative, and is to be found in Judean praxis, in a particularly Judean way of doing things. While the four-room house and Judahite burial chambers seem to have gone out of fashion during the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of stamping storage jars, and the system that supported it, represents a through-line of Judeanness linking the Monarchic period to the Neo-Babylonian and then Persian periods in the territory.

### *The YH(W)D Stamp Impressions*

In the previous chapter I made a substantial argument concerning the lives of Judeo-Babylonians by appealing to a collection of administrative documents and attempting to reconstruct the systems that lay behind them. In Judea, however, such records would have preserved on perishable materials like papyrus or leather, and while it is not impossible for such material to survive in the Levantine climate,<sup>22</sup> no such collections have been discovered for the administration of Judea. I am thus frustrated in my efforts to reconstruct the mechanics of imperial administration in the territory.

However, I am not at a complete loss: a large collection of storage jars — and their impressed handles in particular — can provide some insight about how the territory was administered during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and thus about the lives of Judeans living there.

---

22. A notable exception to this rule would be the Wadi Daliyeh papyri discussed in ch. 3 in the excursus on Samaria.

These jar handles were impressed with what is known as the *Yehud* Stamp Impression (YSI).<sup>23</sup> The YSI, which is attested in nearly 600 exemplars, is broadly defined by its use of a lapidary Aramaic script and reference to the geopolitical territory of *Yehud*, spelled variously YHWD/YH/YHD. Approximately 95% of the YSI corpus was discovered in the small circle of territory between Tel en Naṣbeh (biblical Mizpah)<sup>24</sup> and Ramat Raḥel, with by far the greatest density of finds located at Ramat Raḥel and Jerusalem. There is significant variety among early (6<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century) attestations of the YSI; the editors of *The Yehud Stamp Impressions* have identified 18 different styles of seal,<sup>25</sup> with at least as many different stamps. During the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, there seems to have been major shift towards uniformity; these later seals, which account for approximately half of known YSIs, appear in only 3 styles, with roughly 7 actual stamps behind them.<sup>26</sup>

The precise details of the system reflected in the YSIs and the storage jars on which they were impressed remains somewhat obscure. A strong case can be made for their role in a broader process of local reshipment. According to Oded Lipschitz and David Vanderhooft, the products that would have filled the stamped storage containers — oil and wine — would most likely have been collected from local farms or estates before being shipped to one of the territory’s

---

23. The most up-to-date treatment of the corpus can be found in Lipschitz and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*.

24. On the identification of the modern site with the ancient Judean city, see below.

25. Since the publication of *The Yehud Stamp Impressions* in 2011, which included 17 distinct types, Lipschitz, Vanderhooft, and Madadh Ritchey have published a new form, the YHWD / GDLYH type. For a discussion of its importance to the current project, see below. David S. Vanderhooft, Oded Lipschitz et al., “A New Type of *Yehud* Stamp Impression: *yhw d / gdlyh*,” *IEJ* 69 (2019): 54–59.

26. Lipschitz and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 1–22.

administrative centers. From there, those products would be redistributed to representatives of the central imperial authority or other state dependents, most likely within the immediate territory of Judea.<sup>27</sup>

The stamping of storage jars appears to be a practice unique to Judea during the Persian period that was developed in the region rather than having been introduced by the imperial administration.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the use of sealed storage jars as part of system of taxation and

---

27. However, note the discovery of a single YSI during the German excavations of Babylon. Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*, no. 8–2, לחנונה יהוד; Cf. Joseph Naveh, “Gleanings of Some Pottery Inscriptions,” *IEJ* 46 (1996): 43–46.

28. There is evidence for the stamping of amphorae in the Greek world. A host of stamped amphorae, dated primarily from the 4<sup>th</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE with a small percentage dated earlier, have been discovered. These stamps reflect a much wider variety of inscriptions and iconography than what we see in the YSIs and their predecessors. However, as is the case with the Judean exemplars, the system that underlies the practice remains obscure. What does seem clear, however, is that this system and its stamps were meaningful for those within it (and not, for example, potential customers) and demonstrates a level of administrative control over the means of production, even at the hyperlocal level. Garlan lays out a list of seven defining features among the stamps in the corpus, the most important of which seems to have been the mark of the craftsperson. This suggests to Garlan that the stamps were important at the level of amphorae *production* rather than at the level of usage as storage vessels. They are thus best understood as “bar codes” rather than “labels.” Yvon Garlan, “Les timbres amphoriques en Grèce ancienne. Nouvelles questions. Nouvelles méthodes. Nouveaux résultats,” *Journal des savants* 2 (2013): 203–270, esp. 217–224, 254–266. Pucci suggests three possible explanations for jar stamping that are in line with Garlan’s conclusions: 1.) to guarantee the durability of the amphora, 2.) to guarantee the capacity of the amphora, or 3.) enable fiscal accounting. The first explanation offers the lowest level of complexity — an artisan selling the vessel to a farmer or merchant. Pucci notes that in an undeveloped economy, specialist pot makers can create them more easily and affordably than with options two and three. These two possibilities would require a regulatory infrastructure to evaluate the products as well as specialists on site at farms who could make pots in accordance with those standards. Giuseppe Pucci, “Inscribed *Instrumentum* and the Ancient Economy,” in *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* (ed. John P. Bodel; Approaching the Ancient World. New York: Routledge, 2001), 144–147.

Other regions of the empire, many of which were directly integrated into the administration as provinces, had their own symbolic systems so as to mark where goods were coming from and where they were going. See the excellent treatment of the inscribed green chert mortars and

redistribution predates Persian presence in Judea by more than a century. It is first attested during the late 8<sup>th</sup> century with jars featuring what is known as the *LMLK* seal. These seals are defined by the letters *LMLK* (“[property] of the king”) inscribed in a Paleo-Hebrew script, the presence of a winged disk (with either two or four wings), and one of four toponyms (Hebron, Socoh, Ziph, or *MMŠT*).<sup>29</sup> Associated with the reign of Hezekiah,<sup>30</sup> the jars were produced at a single site outside Jerusalem and were likely used to transport olive oil and wine from regional processing centers to administrative storage/redistribution centers like Jerusalem, Lachish, and Ramat

---

pestles from Arachosia (southern Afghanistan) discovered at Persepolis in Rhyne King, “Taxing Achaemenid Arachosia: Evidence from Persepolis,” *JNES* 78 (2019): 185–199. For the administration of the eastern empire generally, see Wouter F.M. Henkelmann, “Imperial Signature and Imperial Paradigm: Achaemenid Administration Structure and System Across and Beyond the Iranian Plateau,” in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen” aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire* (eds. Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann et al.; *Classica et Orientalia* 17; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 45–256.

29. Joshua Theodore Walton, “The Regional Economy of the Southern Levant in the 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Centuries Bce” (PhD diss., The Department of Near Eastern Language and Civilization, 2015), 118. On *MMŠT* as an abbreviation (or assimilation) of *MMŠLT* meaning “administration, government” and referring to royal estates in the hill country west of Jerusalem, see Israel Finkelstein and Yuval Gadot, “Mozah, Nephtoah and royal estates in the Jerusalem highlands,” *Semitica et Classica* 8 (2015): 231.

30. Lipschits, Sergi, and Koch have argued that while the style of jar that bears the *lmlk* seal dates to the late 9<sup>th</sup>/early 8<sup>th</sup> century, the *lmlk*-stamped jars should be understood as a product of Judah’s vassalage to Assyria and the kingdom’s need to increase and streamline production to meet their tax and tribute needs Oded Lipschits, Omer Sergi et al., “Royal Judahite Jar Handles: Reconsidering the Chronology of the *lmlk* Stamp Impressions,” *TA* 37 (2010): 3–32; for previous reconstructions, see the discussion on pgs. 4–6; cf. Oded Lipschits, Omer Sergi et al., “Judahite Stamped and Incised Jar Handles: A Tool for Studying the History of Late Monarchic Judah,” *TA* 38 (2011): 5–41. More recently, however, Na’aman has questioned the direct role of Assyria in the practice. He argues instead that the practice was implemented upon Hezekiah’s ascent to throne. Nadav Na’aman, “The *lmlk* Seal Impressions Reconsidered,” *TA* 43 (2016): 111–125.

Rahel.<sup>31</sup> From there, it seems that at least some of these goods were then re-distributed to urban centers and military outposts like Arad and Beersheeba where they supported state dependents.

The particular *LMLK*-style seal seems to have gone out of use shortly after the Assyrian invasion of 701, but the practice of impressing jars is well attested through the end of the monarchy.<sup>32</sup> As argued most recently by Nadav Na'aman, the iconography and inscriptions employed in the sealing process should be understood as a symbolic representation of royal ideology, reflecting the king's authority over production within his domain.<sup>33</sup> The use of new designs in the sealing process may, therefore, reflect transitions in power, with new kings instituting new seals as signs of their authority. Ido Koch and Oded Lipschits have argued, for example, that the institution of another style of seal, the rosette, coincides with the Josiah's reign at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> As is the case with the YSIs of the Persian period, the practice of sealing of storage jars was unique to Judah during Iron Age. This means that the practice was not imposed on the region by the Assyrian imperial authorities, as previously suggested. Rather, it was an internal practice developed by the Judean royal administration and functioned as a symbol of monarchic authority. As such, it was a material expression of Judeanness as constructed by the king and his administrators during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, one that would have been recognizable to the other Judeans participating in the cultural institution of which it

---

31. Nadav Na'aman, "The *lmlk* Seal Impressions Reconsidered," *TA* 43 (2016): 116.

32. Developments in marking storage jar include the inscribed concentric circle and the rosette stamp seal. For the relevance of these developments in practice, see below.

33. Na'aman, "The *lmlk* Seal Impressions Reconsidered," 115–117.

34. Ido Koch and Oded Lipschits, "The Rosette Stamped Jar Handle System and the Kingdom Of Judah at the End of the First Temple Period," *ZDPV* 129 (2013): 55–78.

was a part.<sup>35</sup> It was a material symbol of shared Judean identity that placed the authority of the ruler at its center.

Given the exclusiveness of the sealed storage jars during the Iron Age, the seeming re-emergence of this practice in the form of the YSIs raises the matter of administrative continuity in the region during the Neo-Babylonian period. The point is even more acute when one considers the Persians' pragmatic approach to rule. As demonstrated in the previous two chapters, it was the empire's *modus operandi* to integrate local administrative practice into the broader imperial system while leaving the majority of its infrastructure and hierarchy in place. These two points raise an important question concerning the apparent survival of jar stamping: could the institution(s) responsible for producing stamped storage jars and (re)distributing the goods they contained have survived the Neo-Babylonian period in post-collapse Judea?

#### *M(W)SH and the Lion: A Case for (Limited) Continuity?*

Among the various styles of stamp impressions found in the territory of Judea, two are particularly important for a discussion of the territory's administration under the Babylonian empire: the *M(W)SH* stamps and stamps bearing a lion. These two variations, which have been found in far smaller numbers than the YSIs, offer the strongest evidence for administrative continuity during the Neo-Babylonian period.

---

35. This does not necessarily mean that all Judeans would have been able to read these seals or even recognize what they symbolized. However, the symbols would have been meaningful to those within the system. Garlan, "Les timbres amphoriques en Grèce ancienne. Nouvelles questions. Nouvelles méthodes. Nouveaux résultats," 263–266.

Tell en-Naşbeh (biblical Mizpah) is the primary findspot for jars bearing what is known as the *M(W)ṢH* stamp impression.<sup>36</sup> Of the 43 known examples of this impression, 30 were discovered in Tell en-Naşbeh, with the remaining 13 discovered within the same approximate territorial boundaries as the YSIs.<sup>37</sup> While there was initially some debate concerning how to interpret the Aramaic inscription *M(W)ṢH* that defines the group, recent scholarship has agreed that it is best interpreted as the toponym Moṣah, a site just outside Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> Along with Joseph Yellin and John Hayes, Zorn argued that these seal impressions were most likely a product of the Neo-Babylonian administration of Judea following the Babylonian conquest. According to their analysis, there is nothing about their paleography that would preclude such a date; further, their distribution within Benjamin is consistent with depictions of the region in

---

36. Jeffrey Zorn, Joseph Yellin et al., “The *m(w)ṣh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period,” *IEJ* 44 (1994): 166.

37. Zorn demarcates the distribution of the *M(W)ṢH* seals as follows: Mizpah in the north, Ramat Raḥel in the south, Belmont Castle in the west, and Jericho in the east. The vast majority of seals, however, have been discovered at Mizpah. Jeffrey Zorn, Joseph Yellin et al., “The *m(w)ṣh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period,” *IEJ* 44 (1994): 166. With the exception of a few outliers (Eg. Tel Ḥarasim, Gezer), these rough boundaries overlap with the distribution of YSIs. The biggest difference is in the southern extreme. While Ramat Raḥel is the primary findspot of YSIs (especially of the early types) in the south, a significant number have also been discovered at En-Gedi. Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 23–30.

38. For a summary of the alternate readings offered for the inscriptions on these seals (including *mṣp(h)*, *yṣhg*, etc.), see Zorn, Yellin et al., “The *m(w)ṣh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period,” 162–163.

biblical literature during the early Neo-Babylonian period and also with Zorn's own reappraisal of the stratification of Tell en-Naşbeh (see below).<sup>39</sup>

The second seal type, the lion stamp, is best attested at Ramat Raḥel. Of the 110 known exemplars of this style of seal, 77 were discovered at this site.<sup>40</sup> This includes two recently published exemplars that feature, in addition to lion stamped handles, personal stamps applied to the body of the jars.<sup>41</sup> The lion seal features an anepigraphic image of a lion in a variety of positions and was applied to the handle of the storage jar.<sup>42</sup> Rather than an early Persian period date for these seals, Lipschits has argued that they are “the ‘missing link’ in administrative continuity in Judah.” According to Lipschits, “[I]t was part of the Babylonian administration that

---

39. Zorn, Yellin et al., “The *m(w)sh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period,” 174–183. For the administrative usage of Aramaic script during the Neo-Babylonian period, see the Sass and Marzahn's recent treatment of Aramaic-impressed bricks from Nebuchadnezzar's building projects in Babylon. They argue that the use of Aramaic script for these bricks (rather than traditional cuneiform) may be a product of Nebuchadnezzar's gargantuan building agenda and the need to get massive amounts of bricks to various different sites. The stamps, likely identified with a given foreman at a given site, would have helped to streamline distribution of the raw materials. Benjamin Sass and Joachim Marzahn, *Aramaic and Figural Stamp Impressions on Bricks of the Sixth Century B.C. from Babylon* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 127; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 196.

40. Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot et al., “The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice,” *Transeu* 41 (2012): 75.

41. Madadh Richey, David Vanderhooft et al., “Two Private Babylonian Period Stamp Impressions from Ramat Raḥel,” *Maarav* 23 (2019): 289–306.

42. Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot et al., “Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74 (2011): 35.

lasted until the Persian period, at which point it was replaced by the *yhwd* stamp impression system.”<sup>43</sup>

### *Material Diacritics of Judeanness in Judea*

Material culture is a notoriously difficult indicator of ethnic identity. It is often the product of arbitrary and unexamined cultural practices that lack the discursive element required for the (re)production of ethnic identity.<sup>44</sup> However, this reality does not exclude the possibility that particular kinds of material *could* become part of the broader process by which collective identities are constructed through a kind of discourse of *things*.<sup>45</sup> This is particularly the case in colonial or imperial settings, in which, according to Carla Antonaccio, “[t]he persistence of

---

43. Oded Lipschits, “Shedding New Light on the Dark Years of the “Exilic Period”: New Studies, Further Elucidation, and Some Questions Regarding the Archaeology of Judah as an “Empty Land.”,” in *Interpreting exile: Displacement and deportation in biblical and modern contexts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Atlanta, 2011), 63.; Rather than reflecting early Persian iconography, including a “fire altar,” (cf. the early evaluations of the seals in Ephraim Stern, “Seal-Impressions in the Achaemenid Style in the Province of Judah,” *BASOR* 202 [1971]: 9ff.), Lipschits believes the lions show stronger affinities with Iron Age Mesopotamian lion iconography. Lipschits, Gadot et al., “The Riddle of Ramat Rahel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice,” 75. Notably, there is a short-lived practice of impressing bricks with lion iconography in Babylonia that Sass and Marzahn have isolated to the Neo-Babylonian period and likely the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Along with Aramaic impressions, the lion iconography was likely used to facilitate brick distribution among the Babylonian king’s various building projects and also as an example of royal propaganda. Sass and Marzahn, *Aramaic and Figural Stamp Impressions on Bricks of the Sixth Century B.C. from Babylon*, 194–195.

44. Siân Jones, “Historical Categories and the Praxis of Identity: The Interpretation of Ethnicity in Historical Archaeology,” in *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge* (eds. Pedro Paulo A. Funari, Martin Hall et al.; *One World Archaeology* 31; New York: Routledge, 1999), 226–227.

45. Carla M. Antonaccio, “(Re)Defining Ethnicity: Culture, Material Culture, and Identity,” in *Material culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World* (eds. Shelley Hales and Tamar Hodos; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 38–46.

‘local’ or indigenous traits, habits, styles, and so on constitutes a kind of descent,”<sup>46</sup> a genealogy that connects previous examples of an item (and the communities that produced it) with the present. In this case, the imperial or colonial power interacts with the local practice (and practitioners), opening up an object to the possibility of inclusion within the discourse, which can result in a perceived ethnic identity.<sup>47</sup> As such, the object in question can then be subject to the same kinds of recursive and reproductive efforts that we have perceived in other diacritics of ethnic identity.

As an example of material culture, the YSIs do not necessarily or inherently function as diacritics of ethnic identity. However, there is strong evidence that they underwent the kind of process described above and were incorporated into the broader discursive project of constructing Judean identity in Judea. First of all, the YSIs are part of a “lineage” of storage-jar making that is unique to Judea from the 8<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE. If Na’aman’s recent reconstruction of their origins is correct,<sup>48</sup> and Hezekiah instituted the practice as a mode of propaganda to emphasize his authority in the face of encroaching Assyrian pressure, then the earliest exemplars were already participating in the discourse of identity construction. Secondly, the shifting use of symbols within the stamp seals reflects a sense of local political authority. Even as the entities at the top of the administrative hierarchy changed (Judean monarch, Babylonian regime, Persian

---

46. Carla M. Antonaccio, “(Re)Defining Ethnicity: Culture, Material Culture, and Identity,” in *Material culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World* (eds. Shelley Hales and Tamar Hodos; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 48.

47. Jones, “Historical Categories and the Praxis of Identity,” 219–232.

48. See n. 30 above.

regime), the symbolic representation of local authority and the recognition of that power remained the same.

Finally, the symbols used on the seals reflected not just recognized power structures, but also the cohesion of the body over which those structures held authority. The new YSI stamp seal that made its debut in the Persian period establishes a link between the practice of sealing and Judean identity. According to Joseph Naveh, the new Aramaic toponym *YHWD* for the territory once ruled by the kingdom of Judah (rendered *YHWDH* in Hebrew) is best understood as a backformation of the Aramaic gentilic *YHWDY'*. Like the *BBLY'* who came from Babel (*BBL*), and the *LMY'* who came from Elam (*LM*), the Persians likely concluded that the *YHWDY'* they encountered must have come from “Yehud” (*YHWD*).<sup>49</sup> It is also possible that the Persians inherited this name for the territory from their Babylonian predecessors who also made heavy use of Aramaic as administrative language.<sup>50</sup> In either case, the situation is much like the use of the category *Yahūdāya* we encountered in our discussion of the Judeo-Babylonians of rural Nippur: the emergence or codification of the toponym *YHWD* in the YSIs represents an imperial recognition of the cultural-political collective who produced these stamp seals and the jars on which they were impressed, thereby reinforcing the local identity associated with the practice.

In a study on the relationship between Iron Age personal seals and the early forms of the YSIs, David Vanderhooft has also considered what these seals and their scripts might indicate

---

49. Naveh, “Gleanings of Some Pottery Inscriptions,” 44; Joseph Naveh and Jonas C. Greenfield, “Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Introduction: The Persian Period* (eds. Louis Finkelstein and W. D. Davies; 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128–129. Cf. Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 74–77.

50. Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages,” 192–200.

about the ethnic consciousness of the scribes who produced them. He claims that the transition from the Paleo Hebrew script of the late Iron Age used in personal seals to the Aramaic lapidary script of the YSIs “had little to do with ethnicity or group identity but was rather simply a functional and technological adjustment to a changing international marketplace and the exigencies of the Achaemenid imperial system.”<sup>51</sup>

On its face, Vanderhooft’s conclusion is persuasive. The shift to Aramaic script was not the result of some revolution in local Judean identity inspired by the new imperial power; rather, it was an adjustment to the economic and political context of the day. However, from another angle, Vanderhooft seems to downplay or underestimate the potential of script and the symbols used in a stamp to figure in the discursive project of identity construction. As we saw in our discussion of both the Samaritan and Judeo-Babylonian communities, choice of script can function as a diacritic of collective identity. It is reasonable to consider that the introduction of a new script through imperial chanceries would have some effect on how artisans and scribes understood their projects.<sup>52</sup> Second, Persian intervention is not just visible in the YSIs in the shift of script, but also through the imposition or re-codification of an Aramaic toponym that reflected

---

51. David Vanderhooft, “’*el-mēdīnā ūmēnīnā kiktābāh*: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 539.

52. The earliest YSIs show influence of an earlier Aramaic script known from 7<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century inscriptions, often alongside forms from the classic lapidary script of the Persian period. Lipschits and Vanderhooft compare this epigraphic phenomenon to the Aramaic-inscribed bricks from Babylon (see n. 39 above). However, later forms of the YSI exhibit the uniformity of Aramaic script we encounter throughout the empire. As discussed in ch. 3, this uniformity strongly suggests that scribal training occurred in local imperial chanceries. Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 74–77.

its understanding of the socio-political entity that populated the territory. This kind of categorization asserted by an authority is an intervention that has consequences for a group's self-perception.<sup>53</sup>

It is difficult to determine what kind of changes this might have entailed from the available evidence, but it is clear that the symbolic system embodied in the iconography and epigraphy of stamp seals transformed in response to a new political authority in the region, just as it had under the Babylonians (eg. the lion seals), and through a sequence of the final kings of Judah. This shift highlights the malleability of the meaning or symbolic value of material cultural as a (potential) marker of ethnic identity in changing political and cultural contexts, even as the physical object remains a relative constant.

#### *Continuity in Local Judean Identity During the Neo-Babylonian Period*

In this section I have argued that despite a significant depopulation of Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period, the land was not “empty” (nor do our literary sources say that it was). Nor did Judeanness come to an abrupt end, even as some of its markers (the pillared house, burial practices) disappeared from the archaeological record in the wake of the Babylonian conquest of the region. Rather, we can observe the persistence of an element of Judeanness through the reproduction of a distinct style of storage jar and the stamping practice associated with it. These jars do not participate in the discourse of identity construction in the same ways as much of the evidence that we have encountered in previous chapters. Nonetheless, they reflect an intentional practice that was reproduced in the region over despite significant political and administrative

---

53. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 75.

shifts. It adapted to those shifts through the development of new symbols impressed on the jars, a practice already attested under the Judean monarchy. Furthermore, the Judeanness of this practice and the group that undertook it seems to have been recognized by the imperial institutions who imposed the new Aramaic toponym “Yehud” on the region and eventually onto its storage jars. The recognition and reification of that classification by the Babylonians and/or the Persians would then have had its own effects on how the population of Judea came to define its own Judeanness, even if those discussions and claims are beyond what these jars impart to us.

### New Beginnings: Judean *Mythomoteurs* in the Persian Period

#### *Establishing a New Community*

Despite the lines of continuity between monarchic, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods that I demonstrated in the previous section, the literature of the Hebrew Bible depicts the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE as moments of new beginnings. This material presents a series of competing and often conflicting origin stories for the community in Judea following the rise of Cyrus the Great and the Persian empire. While these origin stories often draw links between the communities who produce them and the Judea of the monarchic period, they do so in service of claims that the community makes about itself in its contemporary context.

Within this section I will examine four texts, composed in Hebrew and preserved in the Hebrew Bible, that situate themselves in the early and mid-Persian period: the book of Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and two of the prayers of confession (Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9) from Ezra-

Nehemiah. I have chosen these texts for a number of reasons. First of all, they offer self-conscious narrative accounts of new beginnings for the Judean community in Judea. They are, each in their own way, examples of *mythomoteurs* — narratives that establish a community’s “us” by outlining the salient values that define it over against a perceived “them,” while rooting those values in a purportedly shared past.<sup>54</sup> Next, each text takes as its setting Judea under Persian hegemony and seeks to define its in-group in that context. This does not mean that other compositions that are set in the Persian period but located in the diaspora (eg. Esther and Daniel) or whose compositions are traditionally dated to that period (eg. Ruth, Malachi, Jonah, Isa 49–66) are less important to the project of reconstructing Judeanness, only that they approach the issue from different angles. Nor does it discount the value of other genres for this purpose.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, scholars have relied heavily on these *mythomoteurs* for reconstructing the history of Judea during this period. This is especially true for Ezra-Nehemiah, the only material in the Hebrew Bible that offers a historiographical account seeking to cover the 6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. As such, these narratives have had significant influence on how scholars have understood the nature of Judeanness during this period.

Before I begin my analysis I want to outline my perspective on these compositions. First, I understand that the book of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 are distinct documents, rather than a

---

54. See my extended discussion of *mythomoteurs* in ch. 3.

55. As I argued in the excursus in ch. 3, genealogies and lists, like those in Ezra 2 // Neh 7, Ezra 10, and Neh 10, can also function as *mythomoteurs* and are especially productive tools for political claims. In addition to Hall and (1997) and Konstan (1997), see also for ancient Greece, Robert L Fowler, “Genealogical Thinking, Hesiod’s ‘Catalogue,’ and the Creation of the Hellenes,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 44 (1998): 1–19; and the recent work of Tobolowski in biblical studies. Andrew Tobolowsky, “The Problem of Reubenite Primacy: New Paradigms, New Answers.,” *JBL* 139 (2020): 27–45.

single intentional composition joined together through a shared editorial framework, and treat them as such in my analysis. Although these works have a common set of primary characters, dating systems, and temporal outlooks (520–518 BCE),<sup>56</sup> the narrative frameworks that are often understood to bind them together function dissimilarly enough so as to demonstrate different authorship.<sup>57</sup> So, too, do the differences in message, style, and communal outlook of the prophetic material preserved in each composition.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, following the consensus in biblical scholarship, I understand Zech 1–8 and Zech 9–14 to be distinct compositions, despite their combination into a single work within the Book of the Twelve. Zechariah 1–8 has a clear

---

56. On the dating formulae, see Hag 1.1, 15; 2.10, 20; Zech 1.1, 7; 7.1. The date given in Zech 1.1 establishes the opening of the book to the month before Haggai's last oracle in Hag 2.10. For arguments concerning the unifying editorial function of these dating formulas and their general similarities, see Wim Beuken, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der fruhnachexilischen Prophetie*. (SSN 10; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 331–333; Peter R Ackroyd, "The Book of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8," *JJS* 3 (1952): 151–156; Carol L Meyers and Eric M Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible Commentary 25B; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1987), xlv–xlviii.

57. For example, Kessler highlights the absence of Babylonian month names in Haggai, but their presence in Zechariah, a specific date offered for the foundation ceremony in Haggai that is absent in Zechariah, and Zerubbabel's official title of פַּחָה, which occurs in Haggai (1.1, 14; 2.2, 21), but not in Zechariah. John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 91; Boston: Brill, 2002), 56. For the foundation ceremony (Hag 2.18) see A. Sérandour, "Reflexions apropos d'un livre recent sur Aggee-Zacharie 1–8," *Transeu* 10 (1995): 79.

58. In addition to those listed in n. 57 above, many of the differences in content, style, and outlook will be drawn out in the analysis. For scholars who maintain that the compositions are distinct, see Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 56–57; Mark J. Boda, "Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (eds. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; Studies in Theology and Religion 5; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 49–54; Martin Hallaschka, "From Cores to Corpus: Considering the Formation of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8," in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations-Redactional Processes-Historical Insights* (eds. Rainer Albertz, James Nogalski et al.; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 433; 2012), 171–189.

timeframe and narrative framework (1.1–6; 7.1–8.23) that separates it as distinct from Zech 9–14. The border between the works is marked by a new heading in 9.1 (משא; cf. 12.1) and a significant shift in style, outlook, and content.<sup>59</sup>

Turning now to Ezra-Nehemiah, this work is not so much a *mythomoteur* itself, but rather a collection of origin stories that have been literarily juxtaposed in an approximation of chronological order so as to give the appearance of a single narrative.<sup>60</sup> This arrangement has the effect of flattening out and homogenizing the competing and often conflicting narratives that it contains.<sup>61</sup> Based on the list of high priests offered in Neh 12.22, Lisabeth Fried has persuasively suggested a *terminus post quem* for the composition as it has been preserved in the Hebrew Bible

---

59. This division has long been recognized in critical biblical scholarship. See the overview in James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 218; New York: De Gruyter, 1993), 213–217.

60. There is a debate in biblical scholarship as to whether the Artaxerxes of the book of Ezra should be identified with Artaxerxes I, “Longhand” (465–424 BCE), or Artaxerxes II (404–352 BCE). While this debate is relevant for a discussion of the so-called Ezra Memoir prior to its inclusion in Ezra-Nehemiah, the current literary position of this material — following the account of the first return migrants under Cyrus and Darius in Ezra 1–6 and before the Nehemiah Memoir that takes place during the reign of Artaxerxes II — only allows for identifying Ezra 7’s ארתחשטא with Artaxerxes I, although the co-presence of Ezra and Nehemiah in Neh 8 causes another problem. See the helpful summary of the chronological issues at stake in John Hayes, H. and J. Miller, Maxwell, *A History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 528–530.

On the use of sequence alone as a means of creating a story, see Rimmon Kenan. In her classic study of narrative fiction, she argues that all it takes to create a story — a series of events with logical relationships that can be paraphrased — is two events set in sequence: “this, then that.” While the link between events that is created through sequence is weaker than that of causality or inversion, sequencing nonetheless does the work of placing the events in the same universe, thus constituting a story. Shlomith Rimmon Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 7–30, esp. 19–21.

61. Prof. Simeon Chavel, personal communication.

in the very late Persian or early Hellenistic period.<sup>62</sup> However, the literary material combined to form Ezra-Nehemiah predates the final form significantly. Scholars have traditionally identified three primary blocs of material within Ezra-Nehemiah: Ezra 1–6, the Nehemiah Memoir (NM) in Neh 1–7, 12.27–43\*, and 13.4–31,<sup>63</sup> and the Ezra Memoir (EM) in Ezra 7–10 (and perhaps Neh 8).<sup>64</sup> The amount of material left out of this division (eg. the confessional prayer in Neh 9, the list of signees in Neh 10, etc.), however, highlights the complex compositional process behind Ezra-

---

62. Coordinating epigraphic, literary, and numismatic evidence, Fried argues that the “Yohanan Hakkôhen” mentioned in a Judean coin that dates to between 378–368 (based on comparative evidence from Samaria and Cilicia), the Johanan identified as the son of Jehoiada and grandson of Eliashib (Neh 12.23; Neh 13.28), and the high priest *Yhwḥnn* mentioned in TAD A4.7:18 (=A4.8:17, although there the title is in a break) are all the same individual. He would have held the position of high priest from approximately 410 BCE (the date mentioned in the RLR) to 368 BCE (the *terminus ad quem* for the minting of the coin and title that bears his name). His son, Jaddua, the last recorded high priest in Neh 12.22, would then have held the position until the reign of Darius III, from approximately 368 BCE – 333 BCE and the start of Macedonian rule in the territory. Meticulously argued, Fried’s reconstruction has the benefit of simplifying previous efforts to reconstruct missing priests from the list in Neh 12.22 by recourse to papyponymy and haplography. Lisbeth S. Fried, “A Silver Coin of Yohanan Hakkôhên,” *Transeu* 26 (2003): 65–85. For the dangers of multiplying officials through such recourse in the case of Sanballat of Samaria, see Jan. Dušek, “Archaeology and Texts in the Persian Period: Focus on Sanballat,” in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. Martti Nissinen; Boston: Brill, 2012), 117–132.

63. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, iii–xiii.

64. Williamson’s approach is one of four highlighted in Eskenazi’s recent appraisal of theories for the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah. In addition to Williamson, Eskenazi discusses Blenkinsopp’s view of the text as part of a broader composition that includes Chronicles, Dor’s fragmentary hypothesis, and Wright’s view of a gradually-expanded building report. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, “Revisiting the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Prolegomenon,” in *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards* (eds. Kent Harold Richards, Charles William Miller et al.; BSNA 24; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 215–234. I am persuaded by Japhet’s rejection of the Chronicler as the author of Ezra-Nehemiah, although the anti-northern polemic she identifies in Ezra-Nehemiah is perhaps not as strong as she suggests. I think Dor’s works, but is also compatible with Williamson’s model. The collection and coordination of smaller bits of material can work well at the level of narrative bloc, the components that eventually are combined into Ezra-Nehemiah as we have received it.

Nehemiah. These issues are further compounded if, as scholars often argue, the primary blocs of source material also demonstrate evidence of editorial development.<sup>65</sup> This means that while there are important things that might be said about Ezra-Nehemiah as a complete composition on its own terms,<sup>66</sup> particularly with regard to the period in which it reached the form in which we have received it, it nonetheless preserves a number of different and competing narratives of the founding of the community in Judea during the early Persian period. In the discussion below, I follow H. G. M. Williamson's approach to the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah: I will treat the

---

65. Wright, for example, has identified seven distinct compositional layers within the Nehemiah Memoir that also reflect development in the other source blocs (eg. Ezra 1–6 and 7–10). Jacob L Wright, *Rebuilding identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 348; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 340 for a helpful chart. Cf. Pakkala on Ezra 7–10 (+ Neh 8). Juha Pakkala, "The Original Independence of the Ezra Story in Ezra 7–10 and Neh 8," *Biblische Notizen: aktuelle Beiträge zur Exegese der Bibel und ihrer Welt* 129 (2006): 17–26; Juha Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemia 8* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 347; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 300–309.

66. See, for example, the recent work of Carlson Hasler, who has argued that Ezra-Nehemiah is best understood as an example of what she calls "archival historiography." According to Carlson Hasler, "This type of historiography is not devoid of story but is a mode of storytelling in which narrative coherence gives way to abrupt and often fragmentary interruptions by other types of texts... [It is] a form [of historiography] that prioritizes collection over coherence." Laura Carlson Hasler, *Archival Historiography in Jewish Antiquity*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 2. Carlson Hasler's approach is extremely helpful for understanding the logic of a document that does not quite feel like historiography; it can account for the narrative complications (how many letters were sent between Judea and the Persian homeland in Ezra 4–6, and why?) and the heavy use of source material like lists and registries. As a work of archival historiography, Ezra-Nehemiah has the potential to speak to the values of the community at the time it reached its final form. According to Carlson Hasler, this occurred during the early Hellenistic period in response to economic pressure applied to Judea by the Ptolemies (11–13; see also n. 62 above).

These observations do not, however, inform the earlier status of the blocs of material that have been worked, reworked, and included in Ezra-Nehemiah as we have received it. These works were all composed to answer particular questions in particular historical moments and thus require a case-by-case analysis.

confessional prayer in Ezra 9 as part of the EM (inclusive of Neh 8), and the prayer in Neh 9 as part of the NM,<sup>67</sup> although it is likely that it was not composed for its current literary setting.

### *Audience, Actors, and Intent*

As I shift focus from material culture to ideological literature in this section, it is important to note some important differences in how and to/for whom this material contributed to the construction of ethnic identity. As I argued in the previous section, material culture is not, by default, a carrier of ethnic identity. There are any number of pragmatic or non-ideological reasons for the construction or use of a particular object. However, these objects can come to represent ideas about communal membership through interactions with others and the symbolic value with which they are imbued by those who use them. A particular style of pot can be “just a pot” for centuries until a set of interactions produces a response that transforms it into *our* pot, a diacritic of in-group membership.<sup>68</sup> This is not the case with literature like that which is under discussion in this section. *Mythomoteurs* are at their core ideological documents that are

---

67. The prayer is not typically associated with the NM, but once Neh 8 is removed, Neh 9 flows perfectly well from the conclusion of ch. 7 as Nehemiah’s narration of events that occurred following the construction of wall and his perusal of the genealogical lists of return migrants. See further discussion below.

68. See, for example, the study of D’Agostino and the reproduction of material culture along the Upper Khabur and Tigris rivers during the Neo-Assyrian period. D’Agostino notes that local utilitarian pots continued to be used even as Neo-Assyrian styles were imported and produced in the region. She argued the preservation of a traditionalist style of cooking pot (against the spread of Neo-Assyrian styles in other sectors) permitted local cultural and culinary traditions to be reproduced, even if their reproduction was not the specific goal of making the pots. Anacleto D’Agostino, “The Contribution of Pottery in Reconstructing Aspects of Local Rural Economy at the Northern Frontier of the Neo-Assyrian Empire,” in *Dynamics of Production in the Ancient Near East: 1300–500 BCE* (ed. Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia; Philadelphia: Oxbow books, 2016), 107–123.

concerned with issues of group identity, with defining who is part of the in-group, and with what markers are most salient in determining in making that determination. While both (material culture and the *mythomoteur*) can participate in a discourse of identity construction, the latter takes this as its primary function, while the former does so only secondarily.

There is also a significant difference in the breadth of the communal body who might be exposed to the discourse of these different kinds of evidence. In the case of the YSIs and Judean jar sealing practices more generally, a broad population would have been exposed to these items: the craftspeople who were responsible for producing the jars and the symbols stamped on them, the top-level officials who chose the symbols to be applied, the local administrators responsible for the collection and redistribution of the jars, farmers who produced the foodstuffs that were stored in the jars, and the state dependents who received those goods through reshipment. That is not the case with the literary *mythomoteurs*. Rather than dealing in recognizable symbols that would have been legible the literate and non-literate alike,<sup>69</sup> written compositions would have been accessible to a much smaller segment of the population, namely those with a high level of

---

69. Eg. the YSIs and their alphabetic and iconographic predecessors, including the Lion seals from the Neo-Babylonian period and the inscribed circles used during the last days of the Judean monarchy. For the symbolic value of script even for those who cannot read it, see the recently discovered Persian period seal from Jerusalem that features the *approximation* of script. The seal is large and apparently created from a discarded pot sherd. Early reports describe the seal as crude and “very local,” but the approximation of script that has been etched into it speaks to the symbolic value of script itself, even if that script does not represent language. For the announcements of these findings and preliminary photos of the seal, see Rosella Tercatin, “2,500-year-old seal shows Jerusalem status in Persian period,” *The Jerusalem Post* (July 1, 2020); Amanda Borschel-Dan, “2,500-year-old seals may show Jews rebuilding Jerusalem after 1st Temple exile,” *The Times of Israel* (June 30, 2020).

scribal training in Hebrew and the economic resources to procure writing materials.<sup>70</sup> It is likely that at least some of the material preserved in these *mythomoteurs* was meant to be experienced aurally; certainly the oracles preserved in the book of Haggai are framed in this way, as are the confessional prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh 9. However, the reading of the book of the law of Moses

---

70. As a critique of the traditionally-held view that a significant amount of Judean literature was composed by the “pious poor” during the Persian and Hellenistic periods in response to the oppression of the ruling class (eg. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion v. II*, 493–522, esp. 518–522.), Ro has recently argued that the agrarian class of Persian Judea — the vast majority of the province’s population — would not have had access to the resources (time, training, writing utensils) required to have produced the literature in question. It was not, as Ro stresses, a matter of intellect or creativity among the economically disadvantaged members of society, but the skill and access to what was required to attain it. Johannes Un-Sok Ro, *Poverty, Law, and Divine Justice in Persian and Hellenistic Judah* (2018), 13–32.

Furthermore, as Schniedewind has pointed out, imperial scribal training alone would not have prepared the authors to compose the Hebrew literature that has been preserved. Persian chancelleries would have taught students to compose administrative documents in Official Aramaic, the evidence of which is preserved in Ezra 5–6. Regardless of the authenticity of the documents preserved in these chapters, the Aramaic used to compose them is consistent with the Official Aramaic documented through the empire. Hebrew was thus transformed from an administrative and literary language in the Iron Age to a strictly literary language during the Persian period. As such it came to be associated with communal ideology, theology, and what Schniedewind calls “nationalistic expectations.” William M. Schniedewind, “Scribal Education in Ancient Israel and Judah into the Persian Period,” in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context* (eds. Jason Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini; Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Fur Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 228; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 19–28. For a discussion of the Aramaic chancellery under the Persians, see Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic*, 168–177. Despite the uniformity and ubiquity of Aramaic attested in the administration of their empire, the Persians actually employed a complex system of decree and translation at various levels of their administrative hierarchy that included a variety of local vernaculars when necessary. See the extremely helpful discussion in Jan Tavernier, “The Use of Languages on the Various Levels of Administration in the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen” aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire* (Classica et Orientalia 17; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 337–412.

to the Judean community as narrated in Neh 8 reflects some of the problems posed by verbally presenting an extended written composition to a large audience.<sup>71</sup> This means that this literature was written by and for a narrow swath of elite Judeans with particular sets of concerns that need not have been shared by the broader population.

Finally, it is important to recognize that these *mythomoteurs* are produced and written in *response* to questions about what it means to be part of the community they seek to define, and often retroactively. As we saw in our discussion of the *mythomoteurs* of Judean communities in Egypt, the anti-*mythomoteur* in Jer 41–44 was developed in response to the issue of how to evaluate the status of Judeans outside of Judea. The Request for a Letter of recommendation was trying to navigate the complex relationship between diaspora communities and the bureaucracy of the Persian empire. The *mythomoteurs* analyzed in this section are driven by similar issues (eg. the priorities of the community, the relationship between homeland and diaspora, the importance of the Babylonian diaspora) and thus take as their starting point a question about communal belonging.

---

71. Part of the trouble with the scene concerns our understanding of the participle מִפְרָשׁ in v. 8, which is typically understood in one of two ways: either to “translate” or to “explain.” In favor of the first rendering is Nehemiah’s claim in ch. 13 that the Judean children no longer speak Yehudit (13.23ff) and would therefore require explanation in Aramaic. See, for example, the discussion of what may be evidence of a Persian translation practice among the Levites in Naveh and Greenfield, 116. Cf. Schniedewind, 22; Tavernier, 348–352. On the other hand, as argued by Williamson, it would have been extremely difficult for a crowd of that size to process the new information delivered orally and so the participle is best understood as an adverbial accusative (GKC §118p), which he renders as “paragraph by paragraph,” that is, in sections, divisions. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 278–279, 290–291. Regardless of the position one takes with regard to the meaning of מִפְרָשׁ, the scene is meant to demonstrate the difficulties in introducing a large group to a new text, all the more so if translation is involved.

## Prophetic Origins: The Book of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8

### *Considering Judean Identity in the Early Persian Period*

As a *mythomoteur* for the community in Judea set in the second year of Darius I's reign (520 BCE),<sup>72</sup> the book of Haggai takes as its fundamental issue the reconstruction of the temple of Yahweh in Judea during the early Persian period. It is a collection of oracles (1.3–11; 2.2–9, 11–19, 21–23) that has been attributed to the prophet Haggai and arranged chronologically through a secondary narrative framework (1.1–2, 12–14; 2.1, 10, 20). John Kessler has argued persuasively that the two components — the oracles and the narrative framework — should be understood as closely related both in terms of chronology and outlook.<sup>73</sup> According to Kessler, “The most viable working hypothesis, I would maintain, is one which views the book as a holistic redactional presentation of Haggai's words and their effects which stands in their general continuity with the words of the prophet himself, notwithstanding potential differences in emphasis, scope of application, and the presence of redactional shaping.”<sup>74</sup>

Particularly persuasive among Kessler's arguments is his treatment of the inconsistent nature of the dating formulae preserved in the composition's narrative framework. On some occasions the dates are consistent with the form and precision of the later Persian period (day, named month, regnal year; eg. 2.10) while others are reminiscent of the monarchic period in

---

72. The oracles and actions recorded take place over the course of an approximately four-month span during Darius I's second year, with the first oracle issued on the first day of the sixth month (1.1) and the last oracles delivered on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month (2.10, 20).

73. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 42–56.

74. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 56.

Judea (year, numbered-month, day; eg. 1.1).<sup>75</sup> He argues that this reflects the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule in the region. This is consistent with what we observed in the YSIs: craftsmen maintained and used a variety of older forms and styles during the early Persian period before consolidation and uniformity became the norm during the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>76</sup> If the editor responsible for compiling these oracles and composing the narrative frame that organizes them had written long after their original delivery, then why should there be such asymmetrical representation of the dating system? In further favor of an early dating for the composition, including both oracles and the narrative framework, Kessler also notes that the prediction for Zerubbabel's ascent to the Judean throne in the composition's final oracle (2.20–23) has not been qualified or attenuated. It is not necessary that the (failed) hopes for Zerubbabel's rise should have been erased from the record,<sup>77</sup> but the untempered expectations for Zerubbabel in 2.20–23 are nonetheless suggestive of an early dating.<sup>78</sup>

---

75. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 42–51.

76. Cf. Vanderhooft, 529–544; Jason M. Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements in the Early Teispid and Achaemenid Empire : The King's Acolytes* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 690; London: T&T Clark, 2020), 13.

77. It remains a point of scholarly debate as to whether or not the Zerubabel has been written out of two key passages in Zech 1–8, the so-called זמח oracle of the many crowns and thrones narrated in Zech 6.9–15. For a history of scholarship that takes the position that early messianic expectations for Zerubbabel were initially included and then later written out of Zech 1–8, see Anthony R. Petterson, *Behold Your King: The Hope for the House of David in the Book of Zechariah* (Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 513; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 25–32.

78. See the discussion of potential responses to the failure of prophecy in R. P. Carroll, “Ancient Israelite Prophecy and Dissonance Theory,” *Numen* 24 (1977): 135–151. He notes that erasure and reinterpretation (as he believes might be the case of Zerubbabel in Zech 6.6–15) reflect the problems that later communities may have experienced when encountered failed prophecy and dissonance in the written traditions they inherited (146).

Kessler offers a *terminus ad quem* of 515 BCE for the composition based on these factors and on the absence of a reference to the temple dedication ceremony that, according to the narrative of Ezra 6.13–22, took place following the temple’s completion “on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius” (v. 14; 515 BCE).<sup>79</sup> However, on this point he is on less sure ground. While it is possible that the author responsible for this passage in Ezra-Nehemiah had access to the date of the second temple’s dedication (despite his/her chronological distance from it),<sup>80</sup> the date offered in v. 14 is also literarily convenient, potentially coinciding with the celebration of the New Year festival and with the 70 year prediction offered in Jer 25.11–12; 29.10 (cf. Dan 9.2, 24–27).<sup>81</sup> Even if I am less confident in the veracity of the dates offered in Ezra-Nehemiah (and in its value as a historical source in general, see below), Kessler’s more general claim that the book of Haggai reached essentially the form in which we have received it prior to the completion of the second temple in Jerusalem is still persuasive.

### *The Temporal and Geographical Immediacy of Haggai*

As a composition, the book of Haggai is almost singularly focused on the reconstruction of temple in Jerusalem. From its opening oracle (1.3–11), a searing critique of the community for sitting comfortably in their houses (ביתכם ספונים) while the deity’s house remains in ruins

---

79. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 52.

80. On the dating of this passage, see below.

81. Williamson, following Brockington, notes that if the consecration of the temple took seven days and the dedication occurred on the eighth (cf. Lev 9.1ff; Ezek 43.27; 2 Chr 7.1–10), then it would have coincided with the New Year festival on the first of Nisan. Further, while the time between the temple’s fall and its rededication is calculated at 72 years, the span is so close to a round number that it may have been originally intended to be so and to thus the date chosen to fit the prediction from the book of Jeremiah. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 83–84.

(רַב הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה הָרַב v. 3), the work relentlessly attacks its audience for failing to undertake the building the project. It blames their relative comfort and lack of action for the drought that the community has experienced (1.5–11; 2.15–17) and claims that the offerings they do make at the site are disqualified by the shabby state of the structure there (2.10–14; cf. 2.3).<sup>82</sup> Rather than residing in their “roofed houses” (בְּתֵיכֶם סְפוּנִים), the community and its leaders — Zerubbabel the governor (פַּחָה) of Judea and Joshua the high priest — are encouraged to redouble their efforts in the rebuilding project (2.3–4). This is because Yahweh has big plans for the temple, including the pilgrimage of the nations (גּוֹיִם) in order to offer tribute, riches, and precious things by which the deity will glorify the temple and himself (2.5–9).

Interestingly, the city is not actually named in the composition, nor is any other location in Judea or the surrounding territory mentioned.<sup>83</sup> Both Haggai the character who delivers the oracles and the narrator in the editorial framework expect the audience to understand all of the relevant details (where, what, how) and thus do make them explicit. For comparison, Zechariah 1–8 mentions Jerusalem seventeen times.<sup>84</sup> This lack of specificity in the book of Haggai makes

---

82. The exchange between Haggai and the priests in 2.10–14 suggests the prophet and the narrator imagined the ongoing offering of sacrifices on the temple mount, despite the state of the temple itself. This view is also shared by Jer 41, which narrates the capture of pilgrims from Israel on their way south to sacrifice at the temple (בֵּית יְהוָה) when they were captured by Ishmael and his party following the assassination of Gedaliah.

It has also been argued that the תּוֹרָה offered in this verse also functions as a parable, declaring the audience unclean for their culpability for the current state of the temple. See, for example Klaus Koch, “Haggais unreines Volk,” *ZAW* 79 (1967): 52–66.

83. The name of the province (יְהוּדָה) does occur, but only in connection with Zerubbabel’s position as governor (1.1, 14; 2.2, 21). There is also a reference to Egypt in an allusion to the exodus story in 2.5.

84. Zech 1:12, 14, 16–17; 2:2, 6, 8, 16; 3:2; 7:7; 8:3–4, 8, 15, 22

the composition feel immediate in both time and space; few details are given because the audience does (or at least should) not need them. They are expected to share the viewpoint of the prophet as he speaks and of the narrator who frames those speeches.<sup>85</sup> This immediacy is also felt in the absence of concern for the Judean diaspora, which is not mentioned in the composition.<sup>86</sup> There is no mention of the Judeo-Babylonian heritage of Zerubbabel and Joshua, a crucial element of their identities in their characterization in Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>87</sup> The two individuals are simply *there*, within earshot of the prophet and his calls to rebuild.

This feeling of immediacy also extends to the title used to address the audience throughout the composition, **𐤇𐤍**. It is employed by both the prophet (2.4, 14) and the narrator (1.2, 12–14). Lacking specificity, the generic term **𐤇𐤍** does not carry the same boundary-marking force as the titles used by and for other communities of Judeans analyzed in the preceding chapters. Its use in Haggai does not imply a proximate other against whom the members of the in-group might define themselves. Instead it has an inclusive effect; it hails all of those who are

---

85. Compare, for example, Cowley's comments on the absence of a named king in the Donations List from Yeb (TAD C3.15). The name of the king is excluded because it would have been obvious to the appropriate people involved. Cowley and Ahikar, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 66.

86. Sara Japhet, "The Concept of the 'Remnant' in the Restoration Period: On the Vocabulary of Self-Definition," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 434.

87. On the importance of the experience of the diaspora for the construction of Judeanness in Ezra-Nehemiah, see below.

in the immediate vicinity, everyone who could hear the prophet's call to rebuild and recognize what, where, and why.<sup>88</sup>

This reading of עַם is complicated, however, by the occasional qualification of the term through the use of bound phrase. It appears in construct with הָאָרֶץ in 2.4, an expression that will be the subject of significant analysis in our discussion of Ezra 9. Its use in Haggai seems to reflect broadly the population of Judea and is consistent with the usage of עַם elsewhere in the composition.<sup>89</sup> The more controversial formulation takes the noun שְׂאֲרִית as its *nomen regens* and הָעַם as the *nomen rectum*: שְׂאֲרִית הָעַם (1.12, 14; 2.2). This expression has been a crux for scholars trying to reconstruct the historical audience of the book of Haggai and the makeup of the population of Judea during the early Persian period. It has typically been interpreted in one of two ways: it either refers primarily or exclusively to Judeans who remained in the land during the Neo-Babylonian period,<sup>90</sup> or primarily or exclusively to Judeans who undertook return migration from the eastern diaspora during the early Persian period.<sup>91</sup> Consonant with the first

---

88. However, see the helpful caveat to this inclusive conclusion offered by Ristau. To paraphrase his observations: just because the author has not let the reader in on the boundary that he/she seeks to establish with this inclusive language, that does not mean that such a boundary does not exist. Kenneth A. Ristau, *Reconstructing Jerusalem: Persian-Period Prophetic Perspectives* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 126–127 n. 30. On those whom this composition might exclude through this inclusive language, see below.

89. On the potential claim to continuity between this designation and the institution of the עַם הָאָרֶץ attested in Biblical literature set in the monarchic period, see below.

90. Japhet, “The Concept of the ‘Remnant’,” 433–436.

91. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 82–98; Ronald E. Clements, Še’ar, Še’erit, *ThWAT* 7: 947. Even Meyers and Meyers, who maintain a neutral meaning for expression (see my thoughts below) nonetheless understand the primary audience of the text and the prophet to be recent return migrants. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 19.

interpretation, Sara Japhet has argued that at the time of Haggai, Judeans who remained in Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period would have made up the overwhelming majority of the population of Judea and are identified in the expression עַם הָאָרֶץ. Because the composition otherwise does not otherwise recognize a contingent of return migrants, עַם שְׂאֵרֵיט הָעָם (כל) refers primarily to the “remnant” who remained in Judea.<sup>92</sup> In contrast, and consonant with the second interpretation, Dalit Rom-Shiloni argues that the expression was transformed into a *terminus technicus* for those who experienced deportation under the Babylonian empire and their descendants, the *remnant* who would later return migrate to Judea.<sup>93</sup> According to Rom-Shiloni, it is impossible to imagine that the book of Haggai would use this overloaded terminology so fraught with meaning to refer to any other group than the Babylonian diaspora and the return migrants of the early Persian period.<sup>94</sup>

Both of these positions have their weaknesses. In the case of Japhet’s argument, I believe she is correct both in asserting that the population of Judea was primarily composed of Judeans who had not been deported under the Babylonians and that the expression עַם is broadly inclusive. Where I disagree with her is in her explicit association of the expression עַם הָאָרֶץ with that population who remained in Judea. As John Tracy Thames, Jr. has shown, this expression is not used to specifically identify groups or to link them with a particular territory, but rather as a kind of generalization. It is employed when the speaker or narrator does not wish to individuate

---

92. Japhet, “The Concept of the ‘Remnant’,” 433–436.

93. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 82–98.

94. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 91.

beyond the primary protagonists of a scene.<sup>95</sup> In the case of Hag 2.4, Zerubbabel and Joshua are called to steel themselves (חזק) for the rebuilding project, and so is *everyone else*. Without any other clear links in the text between העם and the community in Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period,<sup>96</sup> it is difficult to maintain such a strong association between the expression and this group.

In the case of Rom-Shiloni's work, Kessler has shown that her assumption that remnant language like שארית העם would have been too theologically freighted in light of its use in literature of the Babylonian diaspora to apply to any group beyond return migrants begs the question. As I have noted already, the book of Haggai makes no mention of the Babylonian diaspora or Judeo-Babylonians who return migrated. It is therefore problematic to assume that an expression like שארית העם should have carried the same meaning as it does in works like the

---

95. John Tracy Thames, "A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase 'am hā'āreš in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 130 (2011): 124–125. Thames Jr. calls this the "idiomatic interpretation" in which עם הארץ is best understood as "a literary expression used to communicate something very ordinary, such as 'everyone in a particular locality who is relevant to a particular set of circumstances,' but with the deliberate intent to efface or obfuscate the exact actor(s)." (120) Thames Jr. frames his argument as a response to Fried who had previously argued that the עם הארץ was used with reference to an aristocratic class within the literature of the Hebrew Bible. Lisbeth S. Fried, "The 'am hā'āreš" in Ezra 4:4 and Persian Imperial Administration," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 123–146.

96. On the potential relationship between the substantive participle הנשאר in 2.3 and the Neo-Babylonian period, see below.

Book of Ezekiel and Isa 40–48.<sup>97</sup> Nor is there any obvious proximate other against whom **כל שארית העם** define themselves. As we will see in our discussion of Ezra-Nehemiah, there are clear ways of defining in- and out-groups in terms of the experience of the diaspora, but the use of this expression in the book of Haggai does not seem to be one of them.

This brings us to a third option for how to understand the the expression **כל השארית העם**. Rather than identifying those who remained in Judea or the community of Judeo-Babylonians who return migrated, I want to suggest that it serves as a neutral summary phrase meant to include all Judeans who are close enough to hear the message regardless of where they or their parents lived during the Neo-Babylonian period. In this sense, **כל השארית העם** functions in much the same sense as **עם הארץ**. This reading is based on the broader semantic range of the noun **שארית**: in addition to referring to a “remnant,” something preserved or that has survived, the noun **שארית** can also act as an inclusive summary statement at the close of a list.<sup>98</sup> This is the sense of the expression in Jer 41.16, where it refers to those captives — the soldiers, women, children, and officials — whom Johanan had redeemed from Ishmael following the assassination

---

97. John Kessler, “Is Haggai Among the Exclusionists? A Response to Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s Exclusive Inclusivity,” in *Exclusivity and Inclusivity in Post-Monarchic Society and Literature: A Conversation on Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th–5th Centuries BCE)* (ed. Mark A. Leuchter; JHebS 18; 2019), 13–35. Cf. Ristau, who agrees with that the dating formulae make the most sense in a transitional context between the rule of the Babylonian and Persian empires. He also suggests, provisionally, that the use of these imperial forms by a local Judean scribe or scribes suggests *acceptance* of the prevailing political situation, otherwise they could have used traditional forms. Ristau, *Reconstructing Jerusalem*, 120. However, see the discussion in Vanderhooft about the adjustment of craftsmen and professionals to the new imperial context (without clear evaluations of that context) through their use of new technology and new accepted forms. Vanderhooft, 529–544.

98. Cf. “שארית שאר,” *HALOT*, 4:1380, def. 1. b and c.

of Gedaliah.<sup>99</sup> The compound phrase כל שארית also has this summary function when in construct

with other nouns. See for example the conclusion of the list of Babylonian officials in Jer 39.3:

ויבאו כל שרי מלך בבל וישבו בשער התוך נרגל שר אצר סמגר נבו שר סכים רב סרים נרגל  
שר אצר רב מג וכל שארית שרי מלך בבל

All the officers of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nergal-šar-ušur,<sup>100</sup> the *simmagir* official,<sup>101</sup> Nabû-šarrūsu-ukīn,<sup>102</sup> commander of the court officers, Nergal-šar-ušur, the *mungu* official,<sup>103</sup> and **all the rest** of the king of Babylon's officers.

---

99. Kessler recognizes this interpretation for Jer 41.16 (and 41.10), but still believes the usage in Haggai to bear more ideological weight. For more on Kessler's reading, see below. Kessler, 26 n. 51.

100. On the formula "DN-šar-ušur" in the names of officials during the Neo-Babylonian period, see my discussion of Yāhû/Bēl-šar-ušur and *Beamtennamen* in ch. 4.

101. The *simmagir* was a high-ranking official in the Babylonian court who served as governor in a particular district. The Nergal-šar-ušur attested in Jer 39.3 has been positively identified with an individual bearing the same name and holding the same title in Nebuchadnezzar's *Hofkalendar* (*terminus ante quem* 598). It has been further argued that this figure is to be identified with the future king Neriglissar. Beaulieu, 196–197 n. 34; Rocio Da Riva, "Nebuchadnezzar II's Prism (EŞ 7834): A New Edition," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 103 (2014): 204. For the identification of the figure from Jer 39 with the future Babylonian king, see Michael Jursa, "Der neubabylonische Hof," in *Der Achamenidenhof = The Achaemenid Court: Akten des 2. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen"*, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 23.-25. Mai 2007 (eds. Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 85–86; Da Riva, "Nebuchadnezzar II's Prism," 204.

102. Jursa has identified שר סכים נבו with Nabû-šarrūsu-ukīn (<sup>md</sup>AG-LUGAL-*su*-DU), who held the title of *rāb ša-rēši* (<sup>lu</sup>GAL SAG) during the tenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to BM114789. Michael Jursa, "Nabû-šarrūsu-ukīn, *rāb ša-rēši*, und 'Nebusarsekim' (Jer. 39:3)," *NABU* (2008): 9–10.

103. For the Neo-Assyrian period, Parpola has argued that the title likely referred to the head of the horses and chariotry. Simo Parpola, Esarhaddon et al., *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. (Alter Orient und Altes Testament Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1 Jahrtausend v Chr 5/2; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983), 515. Jursa believes the name of this official in Jer 39.3, Nergal-šar-ušur, is a dittographic scribal mistake. He notes that an individual named Nabû-zākir held this title at roughly this time (CT 55, 338 is from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar but lacks a regnal year. The official appears in ll. 2–3, with his title spelled <sup>lu</sup>GAL *mu-un-gu*). Jursa, "Der neubabylonische Hof," 85–86.

The expression occurs in a similar context in 1 Chr 12.39 where it concludes a long list of warriors who came to Ziklag in support of David as he evaded Saul's pursuit. Following the enumeration of these soldiers in vv. 1–38, including a numerical breakdown by tribal affiliation (vv. 23–38), the list concludes with a summary statement:

כל אלה אנשי מלחמה ערכי<sup>104</sup> מערכה בלבב שלם באו חברונה להמליך את דויד  
על כל ישראל וגם כל שרית ישראל לב אחד להמליך את דויד

All these soldiers, arrayed in battle formation with solidarity in their hearts, came to Hebron in order to make David king over all of Israel. Indeed **all the rest** of Israel was of a single mind to make David king.

In each of these examples (and cf. Neh 7.72) it is clear that כל שארית does not bear exclusionary weight in the the sense that Rom-Shiloni has attributed to it in the book of Haggai. Rather, the expression is narrowly *inclusive*, summarizing the remaining entities who were not specifically identified in the preceding list but who are still relevant to the broader whole. This seems to me to be the sense of the expression in the book of Haggai, where the compound כל שארית העם is always preceded by a reference to both Zerubbabel and Joshua (1.12, 14; 2.2). The reference is therefore to “everyone else” who is called to support these two communal leaders.

The preceding analysis demonstrates that the designation כל שארית העם does not demarcate a division among the population of Judea in the book of Haggai; it does not explicitly or clearly define that community against a clear proximate other. The use of עם or כל שארית העם is therefore not about a “them;” it is about defining an “us.” First and foremost, this “us” is

---

104. Reading ערכי for MT עדרי along with the Greek, παρατασσόμενοι παράταξι, “arrayed in battle formation.”

defined by participation in the rebuilding project and subsequent worship at the temple. It is one people, coming to one place, and engaging in the single and communal act of rebuilding.<sup>105</sup>

For scholars who recognize this inclusive but territorially-demarcated meaning of **אֶלֶּם**, the next step is identifying other values encoded in the expression for the in-group of the text. For example, Peter Ackroyd claims that it is imbued with theological value, identifying Haggai's audience as "the divinely chosen survivors of disaster, the purified community in which the promises of the past are made real."<sup>106</sup> Kessler, too, identifies an effort to establish continuity with previous generations of Judeans, those who managed to survive the catastrophe of 586 BCE.<sup>107</sup> He sees it as an example of what he calls "functional equivalents," efforts made in the book of Haggai to present the setting and context of that work (the early Persian period) as functionally equivalent to the monarchic period.<sup>108</sup> According to Kessler, "These theological, rhetorical, and literary strategies reinforce the impression that, in Yahweh's sight, the postexilic

---

105. Cf. Ristau, *Reconstructing Jerusalem*, 127.

106. Peter R Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1968), 162–163.

107. Kessler argues that the "remnant" language in Haggai reflects the idea as represented in the Book of the Twelve rather than Ezekiel or Deutero-Isaiah (as argued by Rom-Shiloni). Within the Book of the Twelve, and in Mic 2, 4 and Zeph 3 in particular, Kessler argues that it the locations of to which members of the "remnant" had been dispersed were less important than their future regathering, undivided, in the homeland. "The issue is not so much where one has been (although it must be acknowledged that exile from the land is presupposed in many texts, sometimes to Babylon, but sometimes to places left undefined as in Zech 8:7) but the removal of Yahweh's judgment, and the hope for re-gathering, healing and restoration, at Yahweh's hand." Kessler, 25–31, here 31.

108. Among other evidence of this approach, Kessler identifies the insertion of Darius I into the traditional dating formula known from texts set in the monarchic period in Hag 1.1, language of covenant (dis)obedience familiar from D, and an appeal to the exodus and Sinai covenant traditions in 2.5. Kessler, 24. Cf. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 273–274.

community constituted a *legitimate functional equivalent of the Israelite nation of tradition and history*.<sup>109</sup>

While I am not fully convinced that the expression כל שארית העם should be understood to carry the ideological weight of continuity suggested by Ackroyd and Kessler, the composition does draw lines connecting the contemporary community it addresses to Judean society from the monarchic period. This is perhaps clearest in the composition's final oracle (2.20–23), a prediction of Zerubbabel's ascent from his position of governor (פחה) to Yahweh's signet ring (חתום). This oracle is traditionally understood in terms of royal expectations related to Zerubbabel's purported Davidic lineage.<sup>110</sup> However, there is no explicit link drawn between Zerubbabel and the Davidic line in the book of Haggai,<sup>111</sup> only a patronym — Shealtiel —

---

109. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 274, emphasis original.

110. Cf. Paul J. Redditt, "The King in Haggai–Zechariah 1–8 and the Book of the Twelve," in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (eds. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd; Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 475; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 58–60; Janet E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8* (Journal for the study of the Old Testament Supplement series 150; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 135–144.

111. Zerubbabel's Davidic lineage is only established through the genealogy offered in 1 Chr 3 where Zerubbabel is listed not as the son of Shealtiel (cf. Hag 1.1; Ezra 2.3), but of Pedaiah, Shealtiel's brother (vv. 18–19). The Old Greek version of this verse, however, identifies Shealtiel (Σαλαθηλ) as Zerubbabel's father. Nonetheless, Meyers and Meyers, following the work of Avigad, draw on the Davidic genealogy from Chronicles and inscriptional evidence from the early Persian period as cornerstones of their historical reconstruction. They point to a bulla belonging to "Elnatan the governor" (לאֵלְנָתָן פְּחוּא) from approximately 500 BCE (no. 5 in Avigad) and another contemporary scaraboid seal belonging to "Shelomit, lady of Elnatan, the governor," (לְשִׁלְמִית אֵמֶת אֵלְנָתָן פְּחוּא) (Avigad no. 14). While the exact meaning of אֵמֶת in this seal is unclear, the quality of the seal and the fact that a woman possessed it indicates that she was of significant standing. Her rank is important because in addition to Zerubbabel's five sons (which the Chronicler tallies), the Davidic genealogy in 1 Chr 3 also mentions Zerubbabel's daughter, Shelomit (v. 19). Triangulating the evidence from the biblical sources (Haggai,

offered without further correlation. Nonetheless, Janet Tollington has shown that the prophet has

---

Zechariah, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles) and the inscriptional evidence from Judea, these scholars have reconstructed the succession of the Judean governorship as follows: following Zerubbabel's service as governor, Elnatan was able to associate himself with the Davidic line through Shelomith, either through marriage or appointment, thereby firming up his claim to the position. This would mean that the Davidic line did not die with Zerubbabel, but continued on in a position of power for at least another generation. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 9–16; Nahman Avigad, "Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive / בולות וחותמות מתוך ארכיון ממלכתי מימי שיבת ציון," *Qedem* 4 (1976): 11–13, 31–32; Lemaire, *Levantine Epigraphy*, 92 and see n. 71 for further bibliography.

In their evaluation of the probability of this reconstruction, Meyers and Meyers conclude, "Although there is no absolute proof, it seems highly unlikely that there would have been two women named Shelomith at this time, one the daughter of one governor, Zerubbabel, and another the 'amah of another governor, Elnathan" (12–13). I think that this conclusion is sound in so far as its premise holds, namely that the genealogy in 1 Chr. 3 is historically accurate, at least in biological terms. However, as Jonathan Hall has shown to be the case for ancient Greece and as I discussed in ch. 3, genealogies are political and ideological documents and not simple reflections of reality. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*. This is all the more true in terms of political hierarchy and succession. For example, Darius I's claim to shared ancestry with Cyrus the Great in the Behistun inscription has been recognized in scholarship as an effort to establish legitimacy and not a legitimate biological claim. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, 137; Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 110–111. This does not, of course, invalidate the effectiveness of Darius I's claim; rather, it speaks to the ideological and political power of genealogies.

Returning to the question of Zerubbabel's Davidic ancestry and Shelomith's role in perpetuating that line and its connection to political authority, I want to suggest the possibility that we have approached this issue from the wrong angle. Rather than presuming the historical reality of the politically and ideologically important genealogy in 1 Chr 3, what if we treated that source as an *explanation* of the early political history of Persian period Judea. That is, what if the Chronicler knew the political history of the region during the period in question and then fit that history into a set of genealogical relationships that was consistent with his broader outlook on the Davidic dynasty? This might explain why earlier sources like Haggai and Zech 1–8 do not explicitly mention Zerubbabel's Davidic origins even as they use imagery and symbols from the monarchic period in their expectations for his political career. This hypothesis would need significantly more research to be argued persuasively, but I am nonetheless struck by how often Zerubbabel's Davidic lineage is accepted as fact, when in reality it is predicated on a genealogy (a political and ideological document) that is preserved in a theological document with its own idiosyncratic understanding of the unfolding of the history of Judea, Judah, and Israel. And what is more, that document is in disagreement with other sources, understood to be roughly contemporary with Zerubbabel's time as governor, concerning that lineage.

drawn on themes familiar from biblical representations of the Judean monarchy and Yahweh's relationship with its Davidic rulers.<sup>112</sup> These include Yahweh's claim to have taken (לקח) and chosen (בחר ב) Zerubbabel to act as his servant (עבדי) and signet (חתום). No single one of these elements on its own is not enough to establish a link with the monarchic period native kingship. However, the accumulation of such symbols suggests the possibility of such a connection.<sup>113</sup> The text thus offers a new vision of rule in Judea that maintains strong ties to the old. Zerubbabel's

---

112. But not, however, necessarily predicting another Davidide to take the throne or to do so through political means. Rather, according to Tollington, the passage highlights the political weakness of Zerubbabel's current position (Haggai is not anticipating a coup) and the need for divine intervention. Only through cosmic upheaval (v. 21) will Zerubbabel gain his position. It is not a political act, but an eschatological one. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*, 135–144.

113. See, for example, Kashow's response to Rose's critique that scholars overstate the royal expectations for Zerubbabel. "Rose is correct that individually these terms are not required to carry any Davidic connotations. However, a collocation of the choice terms used in Hag. 2:23 makes quite clear that a reactivation of the Davidic promise (2 Samuel 7) is in view (see I Kgs. 11:34; Isa. 41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2)." Robert C. Kashow, "Zechariah 1–8 as a Theological Explanation for the Failure of Prophecy in Haggai 2:20–23," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 64 (2013): 387 n. 11. Cf. Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 304; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 208–238.

It is true, however, as Rose correctly identifies, that this language can be used to describe other, non-Davidic agents of the deity (eg. Cyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, and Jacob-Israel in Isa 40–48 [cf. my discussion of this terminology in ch. 4]), which means that a specific claim to Zerubbabel's Davidic lineage is not necessarily at stake in this oracle. Rather, it is his election to the *position* or *rank* that had previously been held by Davidides. It is a new form of leadership for the Persian governor of Judea that appears to be at stake, but not necessarily *Davidic* kingship.

new position is described in traditionalist monarchic language that elevates him above his current role as governor and local imperial representative.<sup>114</sup>

This new vision of Zerubbabel raises the issue of the book of Haggai's view of Persian hegemony in Judea. Unlike what we saw with the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeh and what we will see in Ezra-Nehemiah, loyalty to Persia does not seem to play an important role in how the book of Haggai defines the text's in-group. Aside from Darius I's presence in the dating formulae in the narrative framework, Persia is absent from the discourse of the composition. The empire plays no role in the reconstruction of Jerusalem temple, either as a sanctioning body or as financiers (cf. Ezra 1, 5–6). Instead, the project is presented as community-initiated and community-led. It is the task of העם and its leaders alone to restore the temple so that the community might reap its benefits. This does not exclude the Persians from the historical process of temple-reconstruction — Zerubbabel was a Persian-appointed official — nor need it indicate a sense of hostility between the imperial power and the the in-group of Judeans envisioned by the book of Haggai.<sup>115</sup> Rather, the composition seeks to isolate and emphasize the agency of Judeans in this process. Because the composition anchors Judean values in the physical presence of the temple, it was

---

114. It should be noted that it would not have been unreasonable for the community to hope that Zerubbabel or another Judean might regain the title of king under the Persians. It was not at all uncommon for the imperial power to allow local kings to maintain their titles so long as they paid their tribute. See, for example, Fitzpatrick-McKinley's discussion of Persian approaches to local rule among the Lycians and the Arabs. Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, *Empire, Power, and Indigenous Elites: A Case Study of the Nehemiah Memoir* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 169; Boston: Brill, 2015), 98–130.

115. Aside from the prediction of the eschatological overthrow of “the kingdoms of the nations” (ממלכות הגוים) in v. 22), there is no clear or direct animosity aimed at the Persians in the composition.

crucial that it present the temple's reconstruction as the product communal efforts — efforts that would lead to the deity's glorification and the community's own financial success.

*Zechariah 1–8: Jerusalem as the Center of Yahweh's Centripetal Force*

Zechariah 1–8 is a *mythomoteur* that takes as its primary focus a vision of a restored Jerusalem that has exceed even its former glory. Its devotes significant attention to the physical status of the city, its temple, and surrounding area, all benefits contingent on Yahweh's eventual resettlement there. It is also concerned with the city's leadership — most importantly the high priest Joshua. There is, therefore, significant thematic overlap with the book of Haggai. However, Zech 1–8 is also concerned with issues not explicitly addressed in the book of Haggai, most notably the questions of who should be included within the composition's envisioned in-group and under what circumstances.

Zechariah 1–8 is traditionally divided into three units: 1.1–6; 1.7–6.15; and 7.1–8.23.

Each unit opens with a date formula (1.1, 7; 7.1), the primary function of which seems to be to correlate the material in Zech 1–8 with the dating scheme in the book of Haggai.<sup>116</sup> The first unit,

---

116. As Ristau has argued, these dates do not have any “cultic or festal significance and are not ultimately related to the content that they introduce.” Ristau, *Reconstructing Jerusalem*, 140. He thus concludes that they are most likely a secondary addition meant to organize these blocs of material in Zech 1–8. He also argues that the compositional linkages between the book of Haggai and Zech 1–8 that have been identified by scholars like Meyers and Meyers (see n. 56 above), are also the product of this secondary authorship. In this reconstruction, there is not an individual responsible for aligning both texts, but rather the author of the date formulae in Zech 1–8 responding to a complete (or nearly so) version of the book of Haggai. For an argument that takes Zech 1–8 as a response to the book of Haggai, and to the rise of Zerubbabel in 2.20–23 in particular, see Kashow, “Zechariah 1–8 as a Theological Explanation,” 386–403.

On the other hand, Carlson Hasler has recently suggested that Zech 1–8 (although she does not refer to material outside the night visions in 1.7–6.15) was written prior to the book of

dated to a month before the last date of in the book of Haggai,<sup>117</sup> is a sermon by the prophet (identified as Zechariah son of Berechiah descendent of Ido) in which he demands that his audience (addressed in the second person plural) turn from the rebellious paths of their ancestors (אבותיכם). The middle or second unit (1.7–6.15), dated three months later,<sup>118</sup> contains a series of eight night visions and interpretations in which the prophet interacts with heavenly beings and witnesses fantastic images like a divine court room (3.1–10), flying hybrid creatures (5.5–11), and the departure of four divine horsemen (6.1–8). The final section (7.1–8.23) is dated two years later, in the fourth year of Darius I’s reign,<sup>119</sup> the *terminus a quo* for the current form of the work.<sup>120</sup> It includes a narrative about a delegation seeking an oracle from the deity (7.2–3), a

---

Haggai and later updated through the addition of the so-called “Zerubbabel Insertion” in Zech 4.6–10a, a passage that seems to disrupt the lamp stand vision of 4.1–5, 11–15. According to Carlson Hasler, the insertion was meant to update the priest-centric but diarchy-hopeful message of the original Zecharian material in order to bring it into line with the book of Haggai’s political expectations for Zerubbabel. Laura Carlson, “Zechariah, Zerubbabel, and *Zemah*: Ideological Development in Early Post-Exilic Judah,” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy* (eds. John J. Collins, Joel S. Baden et al.; Boston: Brill, 2017), 268–275. Scholars have traditionally understood the contrast between the immediacy of the book of Haggai and the patience and expectation of Zech 1–8 as a function of failed expectations. However, Carlson rightly points to the danger of too closely associating ideology with a particular historical moment (through an appeal to Sommer’s category of “pseudo-historicism”), and the possibility cannot be ruled out. If this were the case, it would not invalidate the conclusion that the date formulae in Zech 1–8 are later than and dependent on the book of Haggai. On the contrary, it would further demonstrate the importance of the book of Haggai for the author responsible for the dates and explain the efforts to correlate the two.

117. Zech 1.1: “In the eighth month, in the second year of the reign of Darius...” Cf. Hag 2.10: “On the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month, in the second year of the reign of Darius...”

118. “On the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of the reign of Darius...”

119. “And then, in the fourth year of the reign of Darius the king, the word of Yahweh was to Zechariah on the fourth of the ninth month, in Kislev.”

120. Kashow, “Zechariah 1–8 as a Theological Explanation,” 392.

searing response from the deity about the community's ancestors (7.4–14), and a sequence of oracular units (introduced by the prophetic formula **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**) that offer a vision of the reconstruction and repopulation of Jerusalem (8.1–23).<sup>121</sup>

It is clear from the preceding discussion and from the variety of materials contained within Zech 1–8 that the composition underwent some significant diachronic development prior to having reached the form in which we have received it.<sup>122</sup> The second unit (the night visions and interpretations) are typically understood to be the earlier core of the composition, with the first and third units being added to it at a later date.<sup>123</sup> This raises the issue of dating; as mentioned above, the composition could not have reached the form in which we have received it any earlier than the fourth year of Darius I. As argued recently by Jason Silverman, if one wants to claim that the dating formulae are a much later addition to the composition, then one has to account for the choice and ideological value of the particular dates.<sup>124</sup> However, these dates do

---

121. The formula occurs in 8.2–4, 6–7, 9, 14, 19–20, 23, although the final element of the traditionalist title of the deity, **צְבָאוֹת** is missing from v. 3. On the significance of the terminology within the context of Jerusalem, the primary focus of Zech 1–8, see Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements*, 129 and bibliography. However, the title does appear in at least two and possibly three ostraca from Elephantine: nos. 167, 175, and perhaps no. 185 in Lozachmeur, Ballet et al., *Clermont-Ganneau*. On the use of this prophetic formula as the opening to a new section or unit in a prophetic work, see its function in the book of Haggai as analyzed in Koch, “Haggais unreines Volk,” 56–57.

122. The secondary literature on the redactional history of the composition is extensive. See, for example, the resources collected in Mark J. Boda, *Haggai & Zechariah Research: A Bibliographic Survey* (Tools for Biblical Study 5; Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2003), 165–169.

123. John Kessler, “Diaspora and Homeland in the Early Achaemenid Period: Community, Geography and Demography in Zechariah 1–8,” in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (ed. Jon L. Berquist; SemeiaSt 50; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 137–139; Ristau, *Reconstructing Jerusalem*, 139–140.

124. Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements*, 122–125.

not seem to have any broader significance beyond their correlation with the material from the book of Haggai.<sup>125</sup> It is also notable that like the book of Haggai, there is no clear reference to the completed reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple. Rather, that event remains a matter of hope and expectation. That being said, my working hypothesis is that Zech 1–8 is best understood as another work of the early Persian period composed prior to the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, although subsequent to and dependent on the book of Haggai in the form that we have received it.

Like the book of Haggai, Zech 1–8 is first and foremost concerned with Jerusalem and its reconstruction. However, the composition presents a very different program from that found in the book of Haggai. More than a call to undertake the physical act of rebuilding, Zech 1–8 speaks to the importance of ethical behavior for the ultimate success of the project. The composition makes this clear through its opening unit, 1.1–6. In it, Zechariah appeals to his unnamed audience’s past in order to guide them in right action. He appeals to the prophets of the past and echoes their warnings to turn back to Yahweh, and the consequences of failing to do so. Notably, the unit ends with the ancestors’ recognition of their failures and a subsequent change in action.<sup>126</sup> This recognition has a three-fold function within this introductory unit: first,

---

125. See n. [116 above](#)

126. Lambert calls the use of *š-w-b* in this passage the “*shuv* of cessation of sin.” According to Lambert, this usage is different from what we encounter in the literature from the monarchic period — “the *shuv* of appeal” — when the verb had a sense of appeal or petition. For example, in Hosea 7.8ff., the deity critiques the northern kingdom for seeking help from political allies rather than turning to (*š-w-b* v. 10) the deity (cf. 5.13–6.4). However, there was a shift in usage, starting in the prose portions of the book of Jeremiah, that becomes the dominant meaning of the expression in the second temple period. He defines the *shuv* of cessation of sin as “a state in which sin, once present, is now absent, and disaster, therefore, can be averted.” Notably, he

it offers an example proper behavior. Second, it authorizes the prophet Zechariah — he is identified as a prophet (נביא) in v. 1 — and the message that is attributed to him in the rest of the composition. And this authorization works not only through the observable consequences of the previous generation’s failure to listen to the prophets (אבותיכם איה הם, “Your ancestors; where are they now?!”), but also through their recognition of their mistakes:

דברי וחקי אשר צויתי את עבדי הנביאים הלוא השיגו אבותיכם וישבו ויאמרו כאשר זמם  
יהוה צבאות לעשות לנו כדרכינו וכמעללינו כן עשה אתנו

My words and my statutes that I commanded through my servants the prophets — did they not overwhelm your ancestors?! But they turned [from their sins]<sup>127</sup> and said, “Just as Yahweh of hosts planned to do punish us in accordance with our actions and our rebellions, so he punished us.” (v. 6)

Finally, this brief appeal to ancestral failure and recognition adds a tinge of contingency to the rest of the composition.<sup>128</sup> Despite the hopeful, if esoteric, tone of the visions and oracles in 1.7–6.15, and the optimistic note of 7.1–8.23, Yahweh’s plans for Jerusalem require correct action from those who would reap the benefits. This goes beyond call for the physical reconstruction of a building to defining the customary action required to participate in the community, Yahweh’s דברים and חוקים. It is only through the acceptance and execution of these actions that Yahweh’s vision will be fulfilled.

---

argues that the state of mind of the actors is unimportant; it is only the action that matters. In this way, *š-w-b* during the time of Zech 1–8 remains at a distance from the introspective “repentance” of the Hellenistic era. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 71–89, esp. 85–88, here 86.

127. See n. 126 above

128. Kashow, “Zechariah 1–8 as a Theological Explanation,” 392–393.

By providing a broader, if vaguely defined,<sup>129</sup> set of customs required for participation in the community, Zech 1–8 offers a more inclusive view of who might be considered a Judean. The book of Haggai limits its in-group to those immediately responsible for rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. While the reconstruction of Jerusalem and its temple is the clear focus of Zechariah 1–8, the composition also looks outward at the diaspora, something we did not observe in the book of Haggai. For example, the status of Judeans beyond the borders of Judea is a prominent concern within Zech 8. In vv. 7–8, the fifth of ten oracular units in this chapter,<sup>130</sup> the prophet speaks directly to the relationship between diaspora and homeland:

כה אמר יהוה צבאות  
הנני מושיע את עמי מארץ מזרח ומארץ מבוא השמש  
והבאתי אתם ושכנו בתוך ירושלם  
והיו לי לעם ואני אהיה להם לאלהים באמת ובצדקה

Thus says Yahweh of Hosts:

I am about to deliver my people from the east and from the west.

I will bring them and they will dwell in Jerusalem.

They will be my people, and I will indeed be their steadfast and loyal god.

---

129. Meyers and Meyers see in this terminology in vv. 5–6 an allusion to Deut 28.15, shared terminology in bold:

והיה אם לא תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמר לעשות את כל מצותיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה  
היום ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה והשיגוך

To be sure, there are important parallels, most notably the idea of the consequences of elicit actions pursuing and overtaking (*n-š-g*) the actors (cf. 28.45 and 29.19 which lacks *n-š-g* but contains *r-d-p*, present in 28.45 but absent from 28.15), although this motif seems to be common in ANE treaty literature (see the discussion in Moshe. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 108ff. However, “my words” (דברי) replaces the more characteristically Deuteronomistic expression “my laws” (מצותי), and the original threat from Deut 28.15 is significantly rearranged and broken. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 95–96.

130. Each new oracular unit is marked by the expression כה אמר יהוה צבאות: 2, 3\*, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23. Verse 3 is lacking צבאות from the divine name.

First of all, the deity claims that members of the Judean diaspora — both in the east and the west<sup>131</sup> — are “my people” (עמי). There is no value claim associated with life in the diaspora nor on having participated in the deportations to Babylonia under Nebuchadnezzar. The inclusive language here suggests that neither the community who remained in Judea during the middle of the 6th century nor those who were resettled in Babylonia have any more or less of a legitimate claim to inclusion in the Judean in-group.<sup>132</sup> There is no animosity shown towards the diaspora like we saw in Jer 43–44, nor does the experience of deportation grant that community superior status. All Judeans at home and abroad are on equal footing.

However, it is not the case that this Jerusalem-centric view reflects a sense of translocal Judean identity like we saw in the evidence for the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb. Rather, as argued by Kessler, Zech 1–8 understands the bifurcation of the Judean community between Judea and Babylonia to be a temporary and ultimately unsustainable situation.<sup>133</sup> With the fulfillment of Yahweh’s plan to take up residency in Jerusalem, the two groups will be reunited in their proper

---

131. Aside from the appeal to the west in this verse, there is no indication that Zech 1–8 is aware of or acknowledges the Judeo-Egyptian community of Yeb or any other community of Judeans in Egypt. While Judeans in and from Babylonia are recognized elsewhere (eg. 2.10–17; 6.9–15), it may be that the expression here functions as a merism meant to encompass all Judeans currently living outside of Judea. Cf. “the north... the south” (ארץ צפון ... ארץ תימן) in 6.6 and the discussion in Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 325–328, 418.

132. Those already in Judea as a result of never having left or through an early wave of return migration have an advantage due to their current location in Judea, but there is nothing suggesting that further return migrants would not hold equal status in the community.

133. Kessler, 152. cf. John Kessler, “The Diaspora in Zechariah 1–8 and Ezra–Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity,” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (eds. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

homeland, Judea. The diaspora is not a place of settlement, but rather a place of danger from which one must be delivered (מושיע), and the proper relationship between deity and people is restored through return migration.

Once in Judea, the return migrant population is included within the broader Judean community. This point is made through the use of in-group designations that are developed over the course of the chapter. The first of these occurs in v. 6, where the prophet describes the witnesses to Yahweh's miraculous efforts to rebuild Jerusalem as שארית העם הזה, "the remnant of this people."<sup>134</sup> This expression differs slightly from the exegetically important designation that we encountered in the book of Haggai (כל שארית העם) in terms of syntax and context, suggesting that it demarcates a different construction of the in-group in Zech 1–8. First of all, unlike the examples in the book of Haggai, כל שארית העם does appear at the conclusion of a list. Rather, the expression identifies the entire body relevant to the message of the oracle. It does not serve as an inclusive summary statement, but as a designation that is meant to stand on its own.

Secondly, the argument of Zech 8 indicates a broader scope of inclusion than we observed for the expression in the book of Haggai. The three oracular units that precede the first occurrence of שארית העם הזה in Zech 8.6 (vv. 2, 3, 4–5) were focused on the work to be done in Judea, suggesting that the most likely reference for שארית העם הזה is the community that currently resides there and is thus able to witness Yahweh's awesome deeds.<sup>135</sup> However, the situation changes when the designation is used again in vv. 11–12. The divine plan to restore the

---

134. On this translation, see below.

135. Clements, *Še'ar, Še'erit*, 7: 947.

diaspora community to Judea had been introduced in vv. 7–8, leading to an expansion of *שארית העם הזה* in order to include the return migrants as part of the in-group. Notably, the expanded body signified by the expression in vv. 11–12 is associated with agricultural productivity and fecundity. Within the context of Zech 8, the positive developments with Judean land are part of Yahweh’s plan for restoration, but agricultural and “root” metaphors are often associated with return migration.<sup>136</sup> Although there are more explicit examples of return migrants being “planted” in their homeland of Judea (cf. Isa 61), vv. 11–12 seem to intentionally employ an agricultural metaphor in the association of these groups.

In the previous section, I argued that “remnant” was an inappropriate translation of *שארית* as it was used in the book of Haggai. A word like “rest” or “remaining” better fit the contexts in which the term was found. However, in Zech 8, I do find “remnant” to be a productive and valid rendering.<sup>137</sup> This is primarily because of the designations for the in-group

---

136. See, for example, Basu’s discussion of “roots tourism” among members of the Scottish Highland diaspora Paul Basu, “Route Metaphors of ‘Roots-Tourism’ in the Scottish Highland Diaspora,” in *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* (eds. Simon Coleman and John Eade; European Association of Social Anthropologists. London: Routledge, 2004), 153–177. He discusses the ways in which the metaphor of seeking out one’s “roots” can be empowering and transformative for those who undertake these journeys, creating new senses of self through connections with the traditions of the homeland their ancestors once new. Southwood productively borrowed the terminology to describe return migration. Southwood, “Second and Third Generation Returnees”; Southwood, “Second and Third Generation Returnees.” 330 n. 23.}

137. Rom-Shiloni argues that in Zechariah, too, *שארית* refers *exclusively* to the community of return migrants in Judea, those who have already arrived and those whose arrival is anticipated by the oracles in ch. 8. She makes this case based on the presentation of the land of Judea as “empty” in 1.8–17 and 7.14 and on the absence of a counter designation for the community who remained in Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period. Dalit Rom-Shiloni, “From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded

in 8.13–23. On three occasions the prophet refers to this group as בית יהודה (vv. 15, 19, paired with בית ישראל in v. 13), a traditionalist designation that establishes a connection between the community of restored Jerusalem and that of the final days of the monarchic period, the last time when all Judeans resided in Judea.<sup>138</sup> By identifying with a kinship-based rather than politically-

---

Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 135–137. However, this reading fails to account for 1.) creativity on behalf of the author responsible for 1.8–17 and 7.14 and the use of hyperbole to emphasize the scale of Yahweh’s rebuilding project and 2.) that the return migrants would have recognized the community in Judea as distinct from themselves, thus requiring a counter designation mark that distinction. This latter assumption begs the question.

138. According to Meyers and Meyers, “The first half of this verse (13) is retrospective and hence it must be understood as reflecting those earlier conditions at the beginning of the exilic period.” Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 424.

determined entity signified by *בית*,<sup>139</sup> the community can claim to be the remnant (*שארית*) of that entity and thus the inheritors of the territory (Judea) it once held.

The centrality of Judea and Jerusalem to the construction of Judeanness is the primary point of focus in a second passage in Zech 1–8 that is concerned with the status of Judeans in the diaspora. In the prophet’s third vision (2.5–17), Zechariah witnesses a divine architect determining the dimensions for what would become the restored Jerusalem (vv. 5–6) and learns from an interpreting angel that the city will so be massive Yahweh himself will act as its fiery

---

139. On the use of *בית* to define kinship relationships, see “*בית*,” *HALOT*, 1:124, no. 4; “*בית*,” *BDB*, 108, no. 5, esp. C–D.

Within the Deuteronomistic History, *בית יהודה* is a title given to the kinship- and territorially-defined tribe of Judah (eg. 2 Sam 2.4, 7, 10–11; 1 Kgs 12.21, 23). Literature set immediately before or after the fall of the monarchy seems to embrace the language to create continuity between the contemporary community and the members of the dissolved political entity. Two recent articles have made this case for the use of *בית* in the Ezekiel: Delorme, “*Byt Ysr’l* in Ezekiel: Identity Construction and the Exilic Period,” 121–131; C L Crouch, “Ezekiel’s Immobility and the Meaning of ‘the House of Judah’ in Ezekiel 4,” *JSOT* 44 (2019): 182–197. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Delorme argues that the frequent use of expression *בית ישראל* allowed the author of the Book of Ezekiel to lay genealogical claim to the heritage of ancient Israel even after Judah’s fall. Crouch, dealing with the crux of how to understand *בית יהודה* in Ezek 4.6, argues that the entity Judah (*יהודה*) originally had a predominantly territorial meaning (eg. as the object of a Babylonian military expedition in 21.25), its appearance in later (redactional/editorial) material signifies a shift towards something approximating an ethnic collective (eg. the ethno-territorial sense of *יהודה* in ch. 48). He sees a similar phenomenon with the use of the expression in the book of Jeremiah — where it typically occurs alongside *בית ישראל* (eg. 3.18) — in what he determines to be widely-accepted later material in the work.

protective boundary (vv. 7–9). And then, having witnessed this vision, the prophet begins his own speech in v. 10–11:<sup>140</sup>

הוי הוי ונסו מארץ צפון  
נאם יהוה  
כי כארבע רוחות השמים פרשתי אתכם  
נאם יהוה  
הוי ציון המלטי יושבת בת בבל

Attention attention! Flee from the land of the North!  
-utterance of Yahweh-  
Because like the four winds of the heavens I dispersed you  
-utterance of Yahweh-  
Attention Zion! 141 Flee inhabitant of daughter Babel!<sup>142</sup>

140. The speaker of these lines is unidentified in the text. The two primary options include the prophet (chosen here), and the second interpreting angel who had been speaking to the prophet's primary interpreting angel in the previous verses. In favor of the latter interpretation, there is no indication at all in the text of a shift in speaker from v. 9 (clearly the angel) and v. 10. Sweeney, for example, presumes it must be the angel who continues to speak, although he is offering new information distinct from what preceded Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets: vol. 2*, 587.

In favor of the first option, that Zechariah is the speaker of this call for return migration, there is the presence of the speech marker נאם יהוה traditionally associated with human prophetic activity. Secondly, it is not the job of the divine beings elsewhere in Zech 1.7–6.17 to deliver messages to a human audience. It is only Zechariah who is provided access to their world through his visions, and receive occasional explanation from an angel. The divine being does convey a message to Zechariah that is to be delivered to the Judean community in 1.14–17, but in that case the exchange is clearly marked (ויאמר אלי המלאך). Finally, the prophet also claims to have been sent by the deity in 6.15 (וידעתם כי יהוה צבאות שלחני), the final line of Zech 1–8's second literary unit. There is a strange shift in voice from the reported speech and directions of the deity given to Zechariah in vv. 10–14 to what appears to be the direct address of the prophet to Joshua and the branch, and perhaps also the members of the *Golah* community (the last mentioned individuals prior to the direct address).

141. Meyers and Meyers translate הוי ציון המלטי as “Hey! Escape to Zion!” arguing that ציון should be understood as an accusative of direction based on the clear description of Jerusalem surrounded by villages (cf. Greek: εἰς Σιών ἀνασῶζεσθε). Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 164–165. (Cf. Joüon §125n and the locale-first word order). However, this reading is untenable. The decisive factor for the translation offered above is that ציון is the nearest and only possible feminine antecedent for the feminine imperative המלטי. (cf. the translation in the NRSV). Meyers and Meyers are

The designation of “Zion” for the diaspora community in Babylonia is striking. As noted by Peter Ackroyd, “It is significant that the sense of belonging to the community even while in exile in Babylonia is expressed so strongly that the exiles can be described as ‘Zion who dwells in Babylon’.”<sup>143</sup>

Mark J. Boda has argued that this passage draws heavily on material from the book of Jeremiah, and especially from chs. 50–51. While his demonstration of Jeremiah’s influence is generally persuasive — the association of Babylon with the North, the construction **בַּת** + **יְשׁוּבָה** + place name<sup>144</sup> — I find his appeal to flight language in Jer 50–51 ill-fitting for our passage. In the examples cited by Boda (Jer 50.5, 28; 51.10, 24, 35), the prophet *predicts* the fall of Babylon as part of Yahweh’s plan to punish nations who have acted harshly with his people, a prediction that includes the return migration of Judeo-Babylonians. This is certainly the case in ch. 8 (discussed above), and the same general scenario that seems to hold in Zech 2.10–17; indeed, the prophet enumerates Yahweh’s plan to punish the enemies of Judea (vv. 12–13). However, there is a

---

certainly correct that focusing particle **הוּי** can serve to call an audience’s attention to the subject of an oracle (eg. Isa 1.24). However, it is used far more frequently in direct address when followed by a vocative (eg. Isa 33.1: **הוּי שׁוֹדֵד וְאַתָּה לֹא שׁוֹדֵד**, “Attention O Destroyer who has not yet been destroyed!”), which is consistent with the usage here.

142. On **בַּת בָּבֶל** (and **בַּת צִיּוֹן**) and the genitive of apposition, see GKC §128k, Joüon §129f, and Mark J. Boda, “Hoy Hoy: The Prophetic Origins of the Babylonian Tradition in Zechariah 2:10–17,” in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (eds. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd; Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 475; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 177–178, esp. the bibliography in n. 22.

143. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century*, 179–180.

144. [142 above](#) Boda, 173–175, and cf. n. 143 above}. On Babylon and the “enemy from the North” motif in Jeremiah and its relationship to return migration, see Gosse’s study of Jer 30–31. Bernard Gosse, “La menace qui vient du nord, les retournements d’oracles contre Babylone et Jérémie 30–31,” *EstBib* 56 (1998): 295–311.

difference in terms of agency with regard to those return migrants in 2.10–11. Rather than predicting the return migration of Judeo-Babylonians as a consequence of Yahweh’s action against Babylon, the prophet addresses the diaspora community directly and calls on them to undertake the journey to Judea prior to the execution of the deity’s punishment. The call for members of the diaspora to flee, and to flee *now* (המלטי; נסו) fits better with the message of Isa 40–48 and its call for Jacob-Israel to leave the diaspora in favor of Judea (cf. 48.20: צאו מבבל) than it does the prediction of Babylon’s fall in Jer 50–51. This thematic overlap between Zech 2.10–17 and Isa 40–48 does not necessarily indicate the former’s literary dependence on the latter.<sup>146</sup> It does, however, demonstrate a shared view of Judeanness that is ultimately defined by life in Judea,<sup>147</sup> a view that dominates within Zech 1–8.

In both of these passages, which directly address the status of Judeans in the diaspora, the expectation is for their immediate reintegration into the population in Judea. This was a population that would include Judeans who remained there during the Neo-Babylonian period, early return migrants, and those who would return shortly as part of Yahweh’s plan for Jerusalem’s restoration, all as equals. In neither passage is a future envisioned in which a

---

145. See my extended discussion of this theme in Isa 40–48 in ch. 4.

146. Sweeney does, however, attribute significant influence to the material collected in the book of Isaiah (including Isa 40–48) in Zech 1–8. He sees the collection of oracular material in the book of Isaiah as the primary influence on the author(s) of Zech 1–8. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets: vol. 2*, 561–567. Ackroyd, too, identifies shared motifs between Zech 1–8 and Isa 40–48, especially with regard to Yahweh’s divine sovereignty. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century*, 178.

147. As argued by Meyers and Meyers, the use of the title and the call to flee in 2.10–11 are meant to pull members of the diaspora to Jerusalem, to include them in the Judean body there. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 173–174.

(legitimate) Judean diaspora continues beyond the moment of Yahweh's intervention and ingathering;<sup>148</sup> the entire Judean in-group will dwell in their ancestral homeland of Judea.

There may, however, be one exception. Zechariah 6.9–15, a passage that has received significant scholarly attention with regard to the identification of the צמח and the status of the high priest in early Persian period Judea,<sup>149</sup> opens with a directive to the prophet to collect materials from a list of men:

לְקוֹחַ מֵאֵת הַגּוֹלָהּ מִחַלְדֵי וּמֵאֵת טוֹבִיָּה וּמֵאֵת יְדַעִיָּה וּבֵאת אֶתְּהָ בְיוֹם הַהוּא וּבֵאת בֵּית יֵאֲשִׁיָּה  
בֶּן צַפְנִיָּה אֲשֶׁר בָּאוּ מִבָּבֶל וּלְקַחְתָּ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְעִשִׂיתָ עֲטֹרוֹת וּשְׂמַתָּ בְרֹאשׁ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן יְהוֹצָדֵק  
הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל

Take silver from the *Golah* — from Haldi, from Tobiah, and from Yedaiah who have come from Babylon — and come on that same day and enter the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Then make crowns and set [one] on the on the head of Joshua son of Yehozedek, the high priest. (vv. 9–10)

---

148. Kessler, 137–166; Kessler, 119–145.

149. I am less concerned with the question of Zerubbabel's presence, absence, or deletion from this passage than with the role that the delegation from the *Golah* plays in the process. I understand the oracle to refer to two individuals, Joshua and a royal figure who will institute the rebuilding process. While it is likely that this figure is Zerubbabel based on his association the the צמח elsewhere (Zech 3–4), other candidates cannot be ruled out — see, for example, Silverman's recent suggestion that the branch is in fact a reference to Darius. Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements*, 208–209. I do not believe that a figure has been removed from the passage or that the Joshua has replaced the royal figure on the throne, *pace* Carroll, "Ancient Israelite Prophecy and Dissonance Theory," 146–147. Rather, the seemingly strange image of the dual thrones and dual crowns reflects an elaborate interpretation of Jer 33 and its association between a Davidide on the throne and the Levites there to serve the deity on his behalf. For this reading, see, for example, Mark J Boda, "Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1:7–6:15," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 3 (2001): 4.3.2. And for further bibliography, see Boda, *Haggai & Zechariah Research: A Bibliographic Survey*, 197–200.

While the syntax of these verses is somewhat strange,<sup>150</sup> its sense is clear: Zechariah is to receive precious materials from these men associated with the *Golah* and make crowns, one of which is to be ceremonially place on the head of Joshua. This passage raises two important questions for our discussion of the diaspora within Zech 1–8. First, does *Golah* refer here to the Judeo-Babylonian community who is still in Babylonia in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, or to a group of return migrants who have taken the title to be an in-group identifier? Second, how does the answer to the first question fit within the broader program for the diaspora in Zech 1–8 outlined above?

---

150. There are a number of issues with these two verses. First of all, the passage open with an infinitive absolute with imperative force. This construction in itself is not uncommon, particularly in the context of divine speech (cf. GKC §113bb; Joüon §123u). That infinitive is then paired with a finite form (ולקחת), also with imperative force, that takes the direct objects (כסף וזהב). Again, this is not uncommon. What is strange is that intervening between infinitive and finite verb — the finite form typically follows immediately after the infinitive absolute when both forms appear together (eg. — is an extended list of individuals and further instructions (באת...באת)).

Secondly, in the list of three individuals from whom the materials are supposed to be taken, two are identified with the compound preposition מאת, while the third with a partitive מן. מאת also precedes הגולה, the category to which all three individuals individuals belong.

There is also a text critical issue in that the names of the donors and the owner of the house where everyone is to be received do not match up with those honored by the זכרון in v. 14. Demsky, however, has offered an ingenious solution to this problem. First of all, the interchange between Haldi (v. 10) and Helem (v.14) seems to be a scribal corruption along the lines of Heled son of Baanah (1 Chron 11.30) and Heleb son of Baanah (2 Sam 23.9). Regarding the second substitution, *l-h-n* (v. 14) for Josiah (v. 10), Demsky has suggested that *l-h-n* is not a name (eg. MT's לְחָן) but rather a title associated with the temple. We encountered Anani the steward (לְחָן) of the temple of Yahu in Yeb in chapter 3, as well as his wife, Tapmet, the stewardess (לְחָנָה). As I noted there, Aramaic *lhn* is based on the Assyrian title *alahinnu*, a position well-attested in the context of temples during the Neo-Assyrian period. Demsky argues that Josiah held the same position for the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. While this title is otherwise unattested in Biblical Hebrew, Demsky's solution is persuasive, solving a text critical issue through an appeal to (near) contemporary parallels with only a minor textual emendation — a second *lamed* added before the title לְחָן, dropped originally due to haplography. Aaron Demsky, "The Temple Steward Josiah ben Zephaniah," *IEJ* 31 (1981): 100–102.

Based on the third person plural verb in the relative clause that follows the list of men from whom Zechariah is to receive the precious metals (אשר באו מבבל), it would appear that Haldi, Tobiah, and Yedaiah had recently arrived from Babylonia. The purpose and period of their stay in Judea, however, is not stated. As we will see in the next section, הגולה served as an in-group identifier for at least a portion of Judean return migrants in the Persian period and it is applied within Ezra 1–6 to the earliest group to travel to Judea from Babylonia in order to settle there permanently.<sup>151</sup> If this is the meaning here and these three Judeans are representatives of the Judeo-Babylonians who had recently return migrated, then Zech 6 reflects an early attestation of the usage we encounter in Ezra-Nehemiah.

However, it is important to note that this reference to the *Golah* community would be the only signal of a division between the return migrant population and the one who remained in Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period in Zech 1–8. In fact, there is no reference to any return migration in Zech 1–8 except for the coming one that is predicted in the passages discussed above. Like Haggai, the figure of Zechariah has traditionally been associated with the efforts of the first waves of return migrants to rebuild the temple. This is due to the claims in Ezra 5–6 that the two prophets supported the project. But Zech 1–8 — with the potential exception of the passage in question — does not refer to previous waves of return migrants or recognize any distinction within the Judean community in Judea between those who remained and those who return migrated.

---

151. See, for example, Ezra 4.1, wherein the returnees looking to undertake temple restoration are identified as the בני הגולה. בני הגולה also qualifies the earliest return migrants in Ezra 1.11 and 2.1, but in those cases it seems to refer to a geographic location or ongoing state in that location.

Alternatively, it is possible that the Judeo-Babylonians in Zech 6 are not return migrants, but representatives of the diasporic community (הגולה) bearing gifts for the project of temple reconstruction. This would be consistent with the usage of הגולה as a term for the diaspora community in the Book of Ezekiel<sup>152</sup> and in the letter that has been reproduced in Jeremiah 29. Further, the possibility of travel between Judea and the diaspora is imagined in the literature of the Hebrew Bible and attested in the evidence from Elephantine.<sup>153</sup> If this kind of travel is what is being imagined in Zech 6.9–15, then the trio’s journey would be more akin to an embassy or a pilgrimage than to return migration, and the sign act that is outlined in vv. 11–15 would provide two important insights concerning relations between the community in Judea and Judeo-Babylonians in the eastern diaspora. First, the establishment of a memorial (זכרון) that designates these individuals as representatives of Judeo-Babylonian community would indicate local Judean recognition of a shared collective identity between the two groups. The deity commissioned their support in the rebuilding project and honored them by displaying the products of their

---

152. See, for example, Ezek 3.11, where הגולה is qualified using kinship language: ולך בא אל הגולה אל בני עמך. Cf. Ezek 1.1; 3.15; 11.24–25.

153. Jeremiah 29, for example, imagines that the prophet is able to send a letter via messenger to the Judeo-Babylonian community during the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, while Neh 1 narrates Judeans travelling from Judea to the eastern diaspora in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.

In TAD A4.3, Mauziah son of Nathan complains to the Judeo-Egyptian leadership at Yeb that “Khnum has been against us from the time Hananiah has been in Egypt until now” (l. 7). As I argued in ch. 3, it is likely that Hananiah was not a member of the broader Judeo-Egyptian community, but rather an envoy from another Judean community, most likely in Judea. Cf. the ritual instructions he sent to the Yeb community in A4.1.

contributions (העטרות). That memorial would thus stand to represent their continued presence in the temple and as part of the Judean community.<sup>154</sup>

Second, it would represent the diaspora's involvement in the political and cultic affairs of a geographically distant community. If in fact Zech 6.9–15 envisions a Judeo-Babylonian community in the eastern diaspora that sends pilgrims rather than return migrants, then the situation would parallel the implicit support offered by Judean officials for the reconstruction of the temple to Yahu in Yeb discussed in ch. 3. In that case, local elites offered their political influence to support temple rebuilding efforts, while here, the Judeo-Babylonians appear to be offering economic assistance as part of the restoration project in Judea. As Jason Silverman has suggested, “Perhaps, then, pilgrimage was a suitable way to foster closer Yehud-diaspora ties, social cohesion within Yehud, and bring local prestige while not challenging imperial order.”<sup>155</sup> This interpretation of Zech 6.9–15 would then point to the potential for a sense of translocal

---

154. On the role of dedicatory inscriptions in reproducing the worldview associated with the ritual production of inscriptions, see the recent work of Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Dedicatory Inscriptions as Communication with the Divine,” in *Mediating Between Heaven and Earth: Communication with the Divine in the Ancient Near East* (eds. C. L. Crouch, Jonathan. Stokl et al.; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 566; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 1–15.

155. Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements*, 205. Cf. Knowles, *Centrality Practiced*, 80–81.

Judean identity that was not dependent on shared territory, either in Zechariah 1–8’s present, or perhaps even in its hoped-for future.<sup>156</sup>

Ultimately there is not enough evidence in the text to decide the matter one way or the other. Both solutions require asserting an early example of phenomena attested in later sources but without parallel in the current composition: a division in the population of Judea between the Judeans who remained there during Neo-Babylonian period and Judeo-Babylonian return migrants or a very early example of pilgrimage or monetary support from the eastern diaspora to Judea. Either interpretation would offer valuable insight into how Zech 1–8 understood the relationship between Judea and the diaspora and the importance of location for the construction of Judean identity.

### *The Community of Zechariah 1–8*

Zechariah 1–8 extends its communal boundaries beyond those that are set in the book of Haggai. It does so in terms of both time and space. It, too, takes as its geographical focus the city of Jerusalem and its temple, but looks out to Judeans in the diaspora as a means to grow the city’s population and expand the Judean in-group. It also looks to the future, to Yahweh’s physical restoration of the city and renewed presence there. Where the book of Haggai focuses on the

---

156. “Clearly structured by migration policies and legal regimes, pilgrims’ belonging nevertheless crosses the boundaries of nation-states in space, and the here-and-now in time. It draws on and enacts an imaginary of transcendental belonging that is moral and ethical, yet substantially embodied and connected to particular sacred spaces.” Claudia Liebelt, Gabriele Shenar et al., “Migration, Diaspora, and Religious Pilgrimage in Comparative Perspective: Sacred Geographies and Ethical Landscapes.,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 19 (2010): 37.

immediate moment and the necessary participation of the text's in-group in the needs of that moment, Zech 1–8 is concerned with the potential for the community in Judea, both present and future.

### From Return Migration to Life in the Land

#### *Sin, Confession, and Prayer in the Persian Period*

In her treatment of Ezra-Nehemiah as a work of what she calls “Postexilic Historiography,” Sara Japhet highlights the importance of sin and punishment for the communal identity asserted in the composition, and especially for how that community understands its past: “[Sin and punishment] are strongly emphasized in the several confessions and prayers included in the book, and serve to explain God’s ways in conducting the fortunes of his people.”<sup>157</sup> In fact, Ezra-Nehemiah contains three of the four paradigmatic examples of confessional prayers in Hebrew Bible (Ezra 9.6–15; Neh 1.4–12; 9.5–37; Dan 9.5–24), a type of prayer traditionally associated with the Persian and Hellenistic periods.<sup>158</sup> Rodney Werline, one of the editors of a recent three-volume series devoted to the study of this genre, has defined it as a “direct address to God in which an individual,

---

157. Sara Japhet, “Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?,” in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 313.

158. The traditional title for this genre is penitential prayer or prayer of penitence, but for reasons that will become clear through my discussion, I prefer Lamberts’ title of “confessional prayer.” Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 61–63.

group, or an individual on behalf of a group confesses sins and petitions for forgiveness as an act of repentance.”<sup>159</sup>

The confessional prayer is a particularly productive genre for our discussion of Judean identity for a number of reasons. First, two of its key features as identified by Werline (focus on sinfulness, repentance) are coterminous with second temple Judaism and the exilic rupture model as outlined in ch. 1. For example, Claus Westermann, the dominant scholarly voice on confessional prayers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, argued that their form reflected a fundamental shift in theology that was caused by the exile.<sup>160</sup> According to Samuel Balentine, Westermann surmised... that the historical catalyst for the replacement of lament with penitence in ancient Israel’s prayers was the trauma of the exile. That experience, he argued, was so devastating that Israel had no choice but to yield to the Deuteronomistic theologians, who insisted it could only be interpreted as a divine judgment on disobedience so definitive that it muted any conceivable protest of innocence.<sup>161</sup>

This marked a dramatic shift away from previous modes of discourse with the deity from the monarchic period, most notably the communal lament. This meant that the inheritors of these liturgical traditions were bereaved of essential tools for approaching the divine. Westermann’s work has been critiqued for valuing Christian constructive tendencies over its descriptive value

---

159. Rodney Werline, “Defining Penitential Prayer,” in *Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; 1; Boston: Brill, 2007), xv.

160. Claus Westermann, *Praise and lament in the Psalms* (Translated by Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 201–213, esp. 206; Claus. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 153–157.

161. Samuel Balentine, ““I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask”,” in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; EJM 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 8.

for critical biblical studies,<sup>162</sup> but the lingering trauma of exile as a theological constant in postexilic thought nonetheless looms large in scholarly reconstructions of this period.

Secondly, these prayers occur at definitive moments of community construction within the blocs of material of which they are a part. The prayer in Ezra 9.6–15 is a crucial reflection that drives communal action in the mixed marriage crisis that is narrated in Ezra 9–10. The prayer offered by the Levites in Neh 9.5–37 immediately precedes the signing of a new communally-binding agreement introduced in Neh 10.1 and detailed in 10.29–40. In both cases the prayers are intimately connected with the question of who is and is not part of the text’s “in-group,” as well as with determining the criteria by those decisions are made. This includes, among other things, the past events that are chosen for the prayer’s historical overview and the in-group / out-group designations applied within the prayer and the broader narrative context.

Finally, while scholars have traditionally linked these two confessional prayers through an appeal to genre and to their literary and historical settings, the compositions actually diverge from each other in a number of important ways. These include the number of supplicants directly involved, the focus and breadth of the past narrated, and the degree to which the contemporary community aligns with the sinfulness of those shared pasts. Careful reading allows us to recognize these differences and contextualize them as part of a broader and in-process discussion of Judean identity in Persian period Judea.

---

162. Samuel Balentine, ““I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask”,” in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; EJM 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1–10.

*Ezra 9.6–15: The Risk of Planting the Holy Seed Planted in a Land Polluted*

The ethical considerations surrounding the mixed marriage crisis that is narrated in Ezra 9–10 is not the focus for this section,<sup>163</sup> nor am I concerned with the issue of whether or not this event really happened. Instead, I will look at how that event has been narrated, the role of the prayer in Ezra 9.6–17 in that narration, and the social boundaries that are constructed or reinforced through its telling.

I treat the prayer in Ezra 9.6–17 as part of the broader bloc of material in Ezra 7–10 + Neh 8, the Ezra Memoir (EM). This unit, which is set in the reign of Artaxerxes,<sup>164</sup> presents a narrative set in mid-5<sup>th</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Judea during the period of Persian hegemony. This bloc of material originally existed as an independent work before it was included with the rest of the material in Ezra-Nehemiah at some point in the late Persian or Early Hellenistic period.<sup>165</sup> It

---

163. As argued by Lester Grabbe, “Whether the reforms of Ezra-Nehemiah were good or bad is not a judgment that can be made by scholarship. It is essentially a question for the theologian or, more particularly, the believer.” Lester Grabbe, “Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes? The Ezra-Nehemiah Reforms and their *Nachgeschichte*,” in *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (eds. Siân Jones and Sarah Pearce; Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 31; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 65.

164. On the question of *which* Artaxerxes, see 60 above.

165. This position is best represented by the work of Pakkala. He has argued this point along seven points: 1.) the incongruities between views of the גולה in the Ezra Memoir (ES for Ezra Story in his work) and the Nehemiah Memoir (NM); 2.) the very loose connections between ES and Ezra 1–6; 3.) the notable narrative incongruities between ES and NM; 4.) the awkward transition between ES and the blocs of tradition on either side of it in Ezra-Nehemiah; 5.) the lack of clear chronological coordination between it and Ezra 1–6 and NM; 6.) what he sees as a final conclusion to the narrative in the annulment of the marriages in Ezra 10.16–44; and 7.) the independence of ES from the rest of Ezra-Nehemiah according to his own redactional-critical approach to the unit. I find Pakkala’s points on the lack of clear chronological coordination and discrepancies in ideological outlook particularly persuasive, although I am suspicious of the potential for circularity in his argument with regard to the redactional history of the document

is also probable that this bloc underwent editorial development both prior to its inclusion in Ezra-Nehemiah and as part of its incorporation into what became that work's broader narrative.<sup>166</sup> As a *mythomoteur*, the EM most likely represents the concerns of a community in Judea in the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>167</sup>

The primary issue at stake in Ezra 9–10 is the reinforcement of social boundaries between Ezra's Judean community and its most proximate out-group, referred to most frequently within this passage as עמי הארצות. This group, a vague and undefined “other”<sup>168</sup> has penetrated Ezra's Judean community (identified as הגולה) through intermarriage. The communal leaders did not make explicit why this should be a problem when they approached in Ezra in 9.1–5; they note only that they have been in a state of rebellion due to the intermixing of the holy seed (זרע הקדש)

---

demonstrating its independence. Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemia 8*; Pakkala, “The Original Independence of the Ezra Story in Ezra 7–10 and Neh 8,” 17–26.

166. On the diachronic development of Ezra 9–10, see especially Yonina Dor, “The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX–X.,” *VT* 53 (2003): 26–47. Dor identifies four layers within the chapters: 1.) the long narrative (10.7–44); 2.) the short narrative (10.2–6); 3.) the prayer (9.6–15); and 4.) the narrative frame (9.1–5; 10.1) meant to join the previous three. Her solution addresses important issues in continuity within these chapters, included the apparent repeated admission of the problem of foreign women in the short and long narratives as well as the shift to third person narration in ch. 10.

167. A number of possible historical situations have been proposed in association which Ezra's mission, including uprisings in Egypt ca. 440 BCE and again in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. See the discussion in Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration*, 207–240.

168. See the discussion of this expression on p. 393 above. Thames, “A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase ‘am hā'āres in the Hebrew Bible,” 120.

with עמי הארצות.<sup>169</sup> The prayer that Ezra offers in response to their confession, however, makes the situation clear: this intermixing threatens expulsion from Judea.

Ezra begins his prayer with a vague description of the community's sinful past and praises the deity for sparing a remnant (פליטה) of those ancestors in spite of that past.<sup>170</sup> Despite centuries of subjugation to imperial rule, the community has survived as a result of Yahweh's steadfast devotion. In fact, Ezra claims, he and his contemporaries have actually flourished under the current Persian regime, which has allowed the Judeans to rebuild their temple and a wall in Jerusalem (v. 9).

The prayer shifts in verse 10, marked by a disjunctive ועתה, moving from a general description of the community's past to the focused retelling of the moment immediately preceding Israel's conquest of Canaan. Ezra narrates that moment as follows:

ועתה מה נאמר אלהינו אחרי זאת כי עזבנו מצותיך<sup>11</sup> אשר צוית ביד עבדיך הנביאים לאמר הארץ אשר אתם באים לרשתה ארץ גדה היא בנדת עמי הארצות בתועבתיהם אשר מלאוה מפה אל פה בטמאתם<sup>12</sup> ועתה בנותיכם אל תתנו לבניהם ובנתיהם אל תשאו לבניכם ולא תדרשו שלמם וטובתם עד עולם למען תחזקו ואכלתם את טוב הארץ והורשתם לבניכם עד עולם

---

169. Williamson points to the Pentateuchal traditions as a source for the the community leaders' perceived guilt, especially the threat of apostasy or syncretism posed by intermarriage that is suggested in Exod 34.11–16; Deut 7.1–4; 20.10–18; and cf. Gen 24; 28.1–9. It is possible that the event of the reading of the Torah in Neh 8, which originally intervened between Ezra 8 and Ezra 9, prompted the response to what they had just learned from Ezra and the Levites. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 130–131.

170. Van Grol has argued that vv. 6–7 draw on a variety of traditions preserved in the Hebrew Bible for its construction of the concepts of communal shame and guilt as well as what he sees as guilt accumulation (eg. v. 6b). He notes especially the influence of prophetic material from the Babylonian and Persian periods (eg. the salience of shame [*b-w-š*; *k-l-m*] in Jer 3.25; 31.19; Ezek 7.18; cf. Jer 9.18; 51.51; Ezek 36.15; Isa 54.4). Harm W. M. van Grol, "Schuld und Scham: Die Verwurzelung von Esra 9, 6–7 in der Tradition," *EstBib* 55 (1997): 31–52.

<sup>10</sup>And now what shall we say, o our god, after all this — because we abandoned your commandments <sup>11</sup>which you gave to us by means of your servants the prophets: “The land, which you are about to enter so that you might inherit it, is impure with impurity of the peoples of the lands by means of their abominations which have filled [the land] from end to end<sup>171</sup> with their sin. <sup>12</sup>Now, do not give your daughters to their sons and do not take their daughters for your own sons. Do not ever seek their goodwill or their benefit so that you will strengthen yourselves, consume the goodness of the land, and bequeath [the land] to your sons in perpetuity.”

In composing a *mythomoteur*, the moments that are recorded do not become so by chance; rather, they are chosen by the author so as to meet the needs of a contemporary audience or community, or at least what the author perceives to be those needs.<sup>172</sup> Within the broader composition of which Ezra 9 is a part, the recounting of this particular moment in the community’s long history does not happen by chance: rather, it achieves a number of important narrative goals. First of all, it provides much needed background for both Ezra’s violent reaction to the news of rampant intermarriage that the local officials had brought to his attention —

---

171. The expression *מפה אל פה*, literally “from mouth to mouth,” is unique to this verse, but it clearly has a sense of totality, of complete coverage. A similar expression, *פה לפה*, occurs twice in the book of Kings (2 Kgs 10.21; 21.16), both times with a sense of complete fullness. See “פה,” *HALOT*, 3:914, §4c.

172. This is certainly the case for the *mythomoteur* as I have defined it, but so, too, for the broader category of history-writing or historiography. As Hayden White discusses in his highly influential essay, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” history is the narration of “real” events. However, as White argues, the “real” events that are included in any such work are not self-evident; they are neither the only events that could have been narrated nor do their interpretations speak for themselves. They are instead the products of discourse; they are culturally mediated, interpreted, and ranked for inclusion by their importance to the community and how it understands itself. These values and parameters can pertain to any number of facets that a society might hold up as worthy of defense or justification, including social hierarchy, political systems, and moral norms, and the past that is told moralizes those values and reinscribes them on that society. Thus, “real” events are only determined to be so as they fit within a society’s moral order. As a discursive form, historiography can therefore be an extremely powerful tool. Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5–27.

“When I heard this news I rent my garment and my shawl, I tore out hair from my head and beard, and I sat, destroyed” — and to explain why those leaders brought the issue to him in the first place: the deity, through his prophets, had explicitly forbidden such unions.

The relevance of that moment for Ezra’s present is made clear both through the final lines of the prayer (“Why, after all that has happened to us... should we once again break your commandments by intermarrying with these polluted people?” [vv. 13–14]) but also through shared language and imagery. In their confession to Ezra (vv. 1–2), the Judean leaders claim that the women in question are part of the עמי הארצות (//9.11), a group who is further qualified through an unfavorable comparison of its own תועבות (//9.11) to those of ancient and contemporary people groups: “the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizite, the Jebusite, the Ammonite, the Moabite, the Egyptian, and the Amorite.” This list, which approximates enumerations of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan found throughout the literature of the Hebrew Bible,<sup>173</sup> establishes an equivalence between the actions of Ezra’s contemporary Judean

---

173. This particular combination of groups is unique to this passage, but various combinations of its components occur in the Pentateuchal sources and Deuteronomistic History (Eg. Gen 15.19–21; Exod 3.8, 17; 33.2; 34.11; Deut 7.1; 20.17; Judges 3.5; Cf. the list of Solomon’s wives in 1 Kgs 11.1–2). As noted by numerous scholars, this list is anachronistic and cannot reflect a Persian (or even Hellenistic) period setting. The Canaanites, Hittites, Perizites, Jebusites, and Amorites had long disappeared from the Levant. Smith-Christopher describes the choice of these long-gone peoples as references for a contemporary community as “anachronistic vilification.” Daniel Smith-Christopher, “Between Ezra and Isaiah: Exclusion, Transformation, and Inclusion of the ‘Foreigner’ in Post-Exilic Biblical Theology,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Boston: Brill, 2002), 121–128. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 175; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 130–132; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTR; New York: Routledge, 1998), 32–34, 136–138. For a treatment of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan throughout the literature of the Hebrew Bible, see Tomoo Ishida, “The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations,” *Bib* 60 (1979): 461–490.

community and the threat that intermarriage (חתחתן) with עמי הארצות posed to their ancient ancestors.

Next, Ezra's association of the present moment with this pre-conquest tradition points to the consequences of the unions in question. In Ezra's prayer, the deity claims that the land had been defiled (גדה) by the foreign actions (תועבות) of the עמי הארצות. This use of specifically female impurity language to describe the land of Canaan is unique to Ezra within the Hebrew Bible, but the image of improper activity is familiar from the Holiness Code.<sup>174</sup> According to Lev 18, the land vomited out (ותקא v. 25, cf. v. 27) the previous inhabitants of Canaan, identified as אנשי הארצות, are expelled as a result of their actions (vv. 26–27, 29). Ezra's appeal to that moment is therefore an appeal to precedent.

Finally, the rehearsal of the ancient situation in which a group of people, chosen by Yahweh to inherit a swath of land in the Levant, mapped well onto Ezra's historical moment and his community's own self-perception within the narrative. The clearest sign of this association is the community's self designation as הגולה, “the exile,” or בני הגולה, literally “sons of the exile.”<sup>175</sup> The noun גולה is applied as a self-designation seven times in the book of Ezra to demarcate

---

174. Lev 18.24–30. In this case, the pre-Israelite inhabitants leave the land “defiled” (ותטמא) (הארץ in v. 25). For a discussion of the fate of Canaan's pre-Israelite inhabitants in H, see Schwartz, 159–170. Cf. Stackert's discussion the land in H as a kind of agentive Israelite with similar concerns for purity and defilement as the deity expects of his people. It can, and has, protected itself from such defilement through drastic measures. Jeffrey Stackert, “The Sabbath of the Land in the Holiness Legislation: Combining Priestly and Non-Priestly Perspectives,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 73 (2011): ,@246–248.

175. Translation בן with the kinship language of “son” may be more appropriate than other, non-familial renderings like “member” due to the genealogical claim that the title asserts.

members of the narrative's community.<sup>176</sup> The use of this terminology as an in-group designation in Ezra-Nehemiah is remarkable. It represents a significant development in how the experience of displacement was interpreted and valued by those Judean communities who claimed it as an identity marker in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*Redefining Exile: Communal Trauma as Centripetal Force*

In biblical texts that date to the monarchic period or are set prior to the fall of Jerusalem, exile is understood as the ultimate punishment for covenant disobedience and a sign of Yahweh's rejection. It is the last recourse of a scorned deity in the D source (28.36, 64) and the ultimate fate of an unfaithful northern kingdom in 2 Kgs 17.<sup>177</sup> Within the Book of Ezekiel and the book of Jeremiah, this is also presented as the view of (at least a portion) of those Judeans who remained in Judea following the first wave of deportations in 597 BCE. Both works present quoted speech from Jerusalemites who claim that the experience of exile disqualified the Jehoiachin-era deportees from being Judeans and any claims to the territory of Judea. For

---

176. Ezra 4:1; 6:19–20; 8:35; 10:7, 16. And see also קהל הגולה in Ezra 8.10. Nissim Amzallag, "The Authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah in Light of Differences in Their Ideological Background," *JBL* 137 (2018): 274–275.

177. As argued by Albertz, exile is equated with the end of history in the book of Kings, even if history ends on a not altogether negative note. Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 8–12. On the metaphor of exile in monarchic period literature and its equation with a form of death, see Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor, *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 144; Boston: Brill, 2011), 21–38. On the use of exile in Assyrian propaganda and its influence on early prophetic literature, see Jan Christian Gertz, "Military Threat and the Concept of Exile in the Book of Amos," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 13–18.

example, in the penultimate scene of Ezekiel’s vision of the mobile throne in Ezek 8–11, the deity quotes to the prophet the speech of Jerusalemites describing the Jehoiachin deportees as “far away from Yahweh. The land has been given to us so that we might inherit it” (Ezek 11.15).

However, as I argued in ch. 4, the experience of dislocation is redefined in the book of Ezekiel; it is transformed into an act of deliverance by the deity meant to preserve a remnant of Israel who would eventually — after further refinement — be restored to Judea.<sup>178</sup> In that chapter I focused primarily on the Book of Ezekiel’s concern for maintaining boundaries between the Judeo-Babylonian community and neighboring communities in the diaspora in order to highlight different constructions of diaspora identity. However, another important proximate other in the Book of Ezekiel is the community in Jerusalem.<sup>179</sup> Rom-Shiloni has argued that this reconceptualization of the experience of exile is part of a broader social phenomenon that she calls “exclusive inclusivity.”<sup>180</sup> She claims that the Jehoiachin deportation in 597 prompted a reconsideration of the relationship between Judean identity and habitation in Judea that, as it has been preserved in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, split in two mutually exclusive trajectories. One trajectory, represented by the Jerusalemites’ perspective in Ezek 11.5 (cf. Ezek 33.24; Jer 32.6–15), maintained a “traditional” view of exile in which dislocation was equivalent to

---

178. \*\*\*Cross Reference\*\*\*

179. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 13.

180. According to Rom-Shiloni, “Exclusivity constitutes a perception of superiority in prestige and rank of one group over any other and particular stereotyped characteristics symbolize the differences between antagonistic groups.” Rom-Shiloni, 130.

disqualification from the community.<sup>181</sup> According to the opposing trajectory, represented by the Judean in-group of the Book of Ezekiel (eg. Ezek 11.1–12) and of portions of the book of Jeremiah (eg. Jer 24.1–7),<sup>182</sup> dislocation from the homeland does not equal disqualification or even disinheritance. Instead, the concept of exile has been radically reimagined as a *qualifying* component of Judean identity both in the present and the future.

This of course raises the question of how such a transformation could have taken place. One place to begin for the Book of Ezekiel is in its author's source material. The Book of Ezekiel draws significant influence from the two Pentateuchal law collections: the D source and the Holiness Code.<sup>183</sup> D understands exile to be the last step in an escalating series of punishments that culminates in the permanent dissolution of the relationship between Yahweh in his people (eg. Deut 28). The Holiness Code, however, offers a different version of the role of exile in the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people. As outlined in Lev 26, exile remains the

---

181. This view is only sparsely attested in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, and typically as an example of opposition to prophetic figures who would oppose it. However, it is not that those who remained in Judea did not continue to write. Rather, their voices have been drowned out during the processes that resulted in the compilation of the Hebrew Bible. Rom-Shiloni direct the reader to Jill Middlemas' treatment of this material for further discussion. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 9.; Jill Middlemas, *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile"* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 28–51.; cf. the argument in Jer 40–44 in which *voluntary* departure from Judea resulted in disqualification.

182. Rom-Shiloni argues that multiple perspectives have been preserved within the book of Jeremiah and, as a result of its editorial process, have been placed side by side. This includes a pro-Jehoiachin deportation strand like that observed in 24.1–7 (cf. chs. 41–44), and two more Babylonian strands, as well as what she calls pro-land views like those found in Jer 32.6–15; 42.7–17). Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Group Identities in Jeremiah: Is It the Persian Period Conflict?," in *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (eds. Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Vikander Edelman et al.; PHSC 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 11–46.

183. On the relationship of the Book of Ezekiel to this material, see my discussion in ch. 4.

final phase of corrective divine punishment for a rebellious Israel, but the relationship between the two parties is not severed. Rather, the deity swears that he will remain loyal to his promise despite his partner's bad behavior.<sup>184</sup> As relayed to the Israelites through Moses in Lev 26.44–45,<sup>185</sup> the deity promises

---

184. On the meaning of ברית as a one-sided divine promise to the Israelites in Lev 26.9, 42, 44–45, see Jeffrey Stackert, “Distinguishing Innerbiblical Exegesis from Pentateuchal Redaction: Leviticus 26 as a Test Case,” in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas Dozeman, B, Konrad Schmid et al.; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 376–377.

185. Following Stackert, I read Lev 26 as an essential unity, including vv. 39–45. Jeffrey Stackert, “Distinguishing Innerbiblical Exegesis from Pentateuchal Redaction: Leviticus 26 as a Test Case,” in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas Dozeman, B, Konrad Schmid et al.; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 372 n. 15 for further bibliography. It has been argued, however, that vv. 39–45 represent a late addition to the chapter. For example, Müller has recently argued that this unit is secondary on generic and continuity grounds. Because Deut 28 ends with a threat and not hope, he expects that Lev 26 — which he sees as a generically parallel text — should do the same. He also sees a number of continuity issues between vv. 39–45 and the rest of the chapter (eg. the shift from direct address to third person verbs and pronouns in v. 39, “spurn” [געעלה נפשי אתכם] in v. 30 vs. “not spurn” [ולא געעלתי] in v. 44, singular ארץ in v. 38 vs. plural ארצות in v. 39). Reinhard Müller, “A Prophetic View of the Exile in the Holiness Code,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 221–227.

However, none of Müller's arguments seem decisive to me. As demonstrated recently by Nihan, all of the continuity issues identified by Müller either have precedents in Lev 26.1–38 (plural ארצות in v. 36) or through the narrative logic of the composition as a whole (the shift to third person pronouns refers to a *future* remnant who survives exile rather than the current generation who is addressed directly [cf. *your* survivors in vv. 36, 39], and the difference in degree between spurning (*g-* ‘-l) and spurning to extinction [לכלתם], that is to the point of nullifying Yahweh's promise to the community [להפר בריתי אתם]). Christophe Nihan, “Leviticus 26:39–46 and the Post Priestly Composition of Leviticus,” in *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch: New Perspectives on its Redactional Development and Theological Profiles* (eds. Jean Louis Ska, Federico Giuntoli et al.; FAT 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 314–318.

Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that Lev 26 is serving the same function as Deut 28 within the logic of P/H. The former takes as its template the traditionally ANE blessings/curses section of a *conditional* treaty relationship to analogize the relationship between Yahweh and

ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ איביהם לא מאסתי ולא געלתי לבלתם להפר בריתי אתם כי אני  
יהוה אלהיהם וזכרתי להם ברית ראשנים אשר הוצאתי אתם מארץ מצרים לעיני הגוים להיות  
להם לאלהים אני יהוה

And even then, when they are in the land of their enemies I will not reject them, nor will I loathe them so as to finish them off, so that I break my promise to them, for I am Yahweh their god. Rather, I will recall on their behalf the promise [I made] to their predecessors whom I delivered from the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations so that I might be their god, I, Yahweh.

Jeffrey Stackert has argued that H's view of exile as outlined in Lev 26 — a view that differs significantly from that of the pre-H (P)riestly History in that P simply cannot or does not conceive of a dissolution of the relationship between Yahweh, Israel, the land, and the temple — reflects a historical reality in which the relationship between the people and the territory that Yahweh promised to them is severed through conquest and/or exile. Based on this shift in worldview and the use of a borrowed Neo-Babylonian idiom,<sup>186</sup> Stackert concludes that H was likely composed during the Neo-Babylonian period following the fall of Jerusalem and the

---

Israel. This is not the case with Lev 26, which outlines an unconditional relationship, leaving no opportunity for either party to leave the agreement. The blessings and curses are contingent on behavior, while the agreement itself is not. This means that one should not necessarily expect the chapter to end on a threatening note, especially when the curse section is predicated on the notion of instruction (*y-s-r*, 26.18, 23, 28), which takes reform as its primary goal. See Nihan, “Leviticus 26:39–46,” 317–318; cf. Stackert, “Distinguishing Innerbiblical Exegesis,” 379.

186. Stackert argues that the strange Hebrew idiom, לְשֵׂאת חַטָּא “to bear sin,” which appears in Lev 19:17; 20:20; 22:9; 24:15, is a translation of the Late Babylonian expression *hītu ša šarri zabālu / šadādu*, “to bear the king’s sin.” The expression is common in Late Babylonian legal material, but its use is circumscribed chronologically to the Neo-Babylonian period. Notably, the Late Babylonian expression is documented among the tablets related *Āl-Yāhūdu* in two texts from BaAr 6 (nos. 4 and 83) Jeffrey Stackert, “Political Allegory in the Priestly Source: The Destruction of Jerusalem, the Exile and their Alternatives,” (eds. Peter Dubovský, Dominik Markl et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 220–223.

destruction of its temple.<sup>187</sup> We can see, then, a shift in how exile was conceived vis-à-vis the prospect of Israel's return to its homeland in the Book of Ezekiel's source material.

Within the Book of Ezekiel's reconceptualization, the exile is further transformed into a positive and group defining experience; it is a prerequisite for membership in the in-group. Rom-Shiloni argues, however, that this is not the only ideologically exclusionary move the Book of Ezekiel makes. Pointing to the importance of counter identifications for in-group definition in the construction of a collective, she argues that the Book of Ezekiel disqualifies the Judean population in Judea by identifying them with the pre-Israelite population of Canaan. For example, in Ezekiel 16.2–43, Jerusalem is depicted as the offspring of an Amorite father and a Hittite mother (v. 3).<sup>188</sup> The city's sins, which are condemned in quite graphic language, are thus a product of (and typical of) its Canaanite roots. The Jehoiachin deportees are thus freed from the negative geographical influence and eligible for restoration in accordance with the deity's plans. Rom-Shiloni identifies a direct and continuous line of influence between this rhetorical approach — what Rom-Shiloni calls Babylonian exilic ideology — and the (unflattering) comparison that Ezra 9–10 makes between עמי הארצות and Canaan's pre-Israelite population.<sup>189</sup> She states “I believe we can safely see [Babylonian exilic ideology's] latest manifestation in Ezra-Nehemiah

---

187. Cf. the similar conclusions of Baumgarten who argues based that Lev 26's view of exile and the potential for return are indicative of an exilic or early post-exilic date of the the chapter and H as a whole. Norbert Clemens Baumgart, “Überkommene Traditionen neu aufgearbeitet und angeeignet: Lev 26, 3–45. Das Heiligkeitsgesetz in Exil und Diaspora,” *BZ* 43 (1999): 10–11.

188. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 13; Rom-Shiloni, 140–142.

189. Rom-Shiloni, 135–136.

as an ideological delegitimization of *Judeans who remained in the land*, a denigration the repatriates inherited from their exiled ancestors and brought to Yehud on their return.”<sup>190</sup>

Rom-Shiloni’s argument is not, however, without its problems. Her work has been criticized for reading elements of Babylonian exilic ideology into works like Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 where it does not seem to appear,<sup>191</sup> and her effort to read a disqualification of the Judean population into the allegory of Ezek 16 is difficult to defend.<sup>192</sup> If, then, her chain of

---

190. Rom-Shiloni, 147.

191. Kessler, 13–35; Mark Boda, “Reconsidering Exclusive Inclusivity: Perspectives from Zechariah and Ezra–Nehemiah,” in *Exclusivity and Inclusivity in Post-Monarchic Society and Literature: A Conversation on Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th–5th Centuries BCE)* (ed. Mark A. Leuchter; JHebS 18; 2019), 6–12. See also my discussion [כל שארית העם](#) above.

192. Rom-Shiloni argues that the people Israel are independent of their capital city, a moveable population brought into the Canaanite capital following the exodus, but not rooted there. They — and specifically the Jehoiachin generation — are a moveable population who can maintain proximity to the deity even away from the land he promised to them. Rom-Shiloni, 140–142. To make this argument she appeals to the personified territory of Canaan (see n. [174 above](#)) as it is presented in Lev 18 and 20 and its ability to continue even as it churns through local populations.

There are a few issues with hypothesis, however. First of all, it is totally dissonant with the composition’s push toward an eventual return to the city. If Ezekiel’s community does not need Jerusalem to maintain its relationship to the deity, then why locate the restored community there (20.40)? This is even more the case if the city permanently tainted by its Canaanite heritage, as is suggested in ch. 16. Secondly, the appeal to H material would not have reflected well on the Ezekiel’s community who had already been “vomited out.” Rather, it would seem to legitimize the claims of the community who remained. The land had already rejected those who it was going to reject.

Furthermore, the primary critique leveled against Jerusalem in this extended and violent allegory is political impropriety Peggy L Day, “The Bitch Had It Coming to Her: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Ezekiel 16,” *BibInt* 8 (2000): 231–254, Day also provides an excellent history of scholarship on the passage; Odell, “Fragments of Traumatic Memory.” 107–124. Jerusalem, who had thrived under Yahweh’s care, proved disloyal to its political partners who were then called to engage in its punishment. The reference to the city’s lowly beginnings is more about its eventual success than actual genealogical claims. To pin so much of one’s argument on this rhetorical flourish seems to me to miss the forest for the trees.

transmission between the Book of Ezekiel and Ezra-Nehemiah is missing links and other elements of her argument are ultimately unpersuasive (eg. Jerusalem's Canaanite origins), then how do we account for appear to be similar constructions of exile between the two texts? I want to suggest that the phenomenon of cultural trauma can account for the relationship between their shared outlooks with regard to community construction.

According to Jeffery Alexander, "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways."<sup>193</sup> This does not, however, happen "naturally." Societies can experience significant disruptions without necessarily being traumatized. Rather, as Alexander argues, cultural traumas are the product of discourse, the effort of what he calls a carrier group within the broader society to transform a particular event — eg., the Babylonian exile — into a community-defining experience that shapes not just how the past is understood and (re)constructed, but also has significant influence on the "contemporary sense of self."<sup>194</sup> If a carrier group can produce a persuasive narrative of the event that explains why the event occurred,<sup>195</sup> then that narrative can have long and impactful effects on how a community defines itself. Even as the socially-constructed traumatic event recedes further and further into the past and loses some of its

---

193. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 6.

194. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 6–30.

195. For Alexander's list of component for a successful trauma narrative, see my discussion of his theory in ch. 2.

emotional force, “the reconstructed collective identity remains, nevertheless, a fundamental resource for resolving future social problems and disturbances of collective consciousness.”<sup>196</sup>

The apparent ideological continuity that Rom-Shiloni has identified between the Book of Ezekiel and Ezra-Nehemiah — or at least the *mythomoteur* contained in Ezra 9–10 — might therefore be productively understood as an example of a successful trauma narrative, the expression of which has come to demarcate an impenetrable boundary between הגולה and עמי הארצות. It is the experience of the exile as constructed and discursively reinscribed that is identified as *the* defining feature of group identity; it is the cornerstone in how the in-group of the text understood themselves — הגולה.<sup>197</sup>

#### *In-Group / Out-Group Designations in Ezra 9–10*

The juxtaposition of the unlanded גולה against the landed עמי הארצות is only one of many sets of binaries that is embraced to define the in-group / out-group dynamics at play within Ezra 9–10. In Ezra 9.2, the Judean leaders who approached Ezra describe the act of intermarriage as a mixing of the “holy seed” with the peoples of the lands (והתערבו זרע הקדש בעמי הארצות), “they have mixed the holy seed with the peoples of the lands”). Katherine Southwood has argued that

---

196. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 27.

197. Consider the comment of Languille: “Thus, the discourse of exile informed and conferred a special status on the returnees that is not uncommon to survivors of collective trauma.” Timothy Languille, *Reshaping the Persistent Past: A Study of Collective Trauma and Memory in Second Temple Judaism* (PhD diss., Department for the Study of Religion, 2014), 67.

the expression זרע הקדש, appearing only here and in Isa 6.13,<sup>198</sup> is meant to index a number of traditions that have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible to construct a legal argument against intermarriage.<sup>199</sup> If we are correct in believing that the reading of the law in Neh 8 was originally meant to precede Ezra 9–10, then the appeal to these traditions would speak to the community leaders’ processing of recently-learned Pentateuchal material within the world of the text. However, the in-group designation also does significant work within its immediate narrative context aside from whatever traditions it may or may not be drawing upon.

As I argued in the case of Zech 8,<sup>200</sup> the use of agricultural imagery here in Ezra 9–10 asserts a claim of rootedness, of emplacedness for the in-group of the passage. This group, which defines itself in terms of the experience of uprooting through its members’ (ancestors’) deportation to Babylonia, is trying to establish (or plant) itself in the land of Judea. The clear

---

198. The expression appears without the definite article (זרע קדש) following Isaiah’s vision in the divine throne room and his commission to prophesy to about the Syro-Ephraimite crisis (6.1–12). The reference is most likely a late addition to the prophecy meant to align it with the outlook of Ezra 9–10. It does appear in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 6.8–10). It is missing, however, from the Old Greek. Van der Vorm-Croughs attributes the absence in OG to parablepsis (...מצבה מצבה). Mirjam. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses* (SCS 61; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 482. Cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 226.

199. According to Southwood, the expression “at once aligns numerous boundaries. Through unifying diverse notions such as Abraham’s elected seed (Gen 9:9, 12:7, 15:5; 17:8), injunctions against mixing seeds (Lev 19:19), and the notion of Israel as a ‘holy’ nation (Exod 19:6, Deut 7:6–7) texts are exegetically twisted into a pseudo-legal argument against heterogamous selection.” Katherine E Southwood, “The Holy Seed: The Significance of Endogamous Boundaries and Their Transgression in Ezra 9–10,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 205.

200. See the discussion that begins on p. [410 above](#).

connections that Ezra 9 draws between the moment of pre-conquest narrated in Ezra's prayer and the current state of affairs faced by the Judean community complicates this agricultural metaphor through the introduction of holiness language. The passage argues that the holy seed, a symbol of male virility and agricultural fecundity, is at risk of losing its sacred status and thus its ability to root deeply and permanently Judea. This is due to exposure to the land that has been made femininely impure (גדה) through the abominable acts of עמי הארצות.<sup>201</sup> This use of traditionalist holiness language is meant to reinforce a firm boundary between the text's in-group and the proximate other. It excludes the polluting "other," thereby preventing the the Judean community's uprooting and expulsion from the land, the outcome of mixing to which the rehearsal of history in Ezra's prayer points.<sup>202</sup>

The narrative of Ezra 9–10 thus heaps up in-group / out-group language that distinguishes Ezra and his community from עמי הארצות from a variety of perspectives: a claim to ancestral

---

201. Washington has argued that the appeal to feminine imagery in Ezra 9 is "used to stigmatize the peoples of the land and their defilement as feminine" over against the masculine and (literally) productive גולה community. Washington points to Lev 15.6–19 and the impurity of both men and women caused by sexual fluids and argues a shift has occurred in the logic of this passage by which the women become the sole bearers of impurity. I think Washington's reading offers an insightful perspective of the complicated gender dynamics presented in this passage (eg. the total effacement and expendability of women within the community), but it may be less productive with regard to the issue of communal identity with which the passage seems to be dealing. Nonetheless, his comments on the "high cost" of community membership asserted in Ezra 9–10 are instructive. Harold Washington, "Israel's Holy Seed and the Foreign Women of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Kristevan Reading," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 434–437.

202. According to Southwood, "Effectively, Ezra transforms the language of holiness by applying it to ethnicity. The terms are used in an exclusionary, polemical sense, and through this ethnicity is communicated in the guise of ritualized religious regulation." Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*, 127. Cf. Saul M. Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* (2004): 1–18.

continuity in Judea, a shared and transformative trauma narrative, viability for continued rootedness in Judea, and the contingency of that rootedness on separation from impurity. The overlapping of these different facets of identity results in the assertion of an impenetrable boundary between הגולה and עמי הארצות, one that cannot be breached without a claim to *each* of the constituent elements of Judeanness.<sup>203</sup> Through the dense, repeated, and overlapping use of such strong in-group / out-group language, the logic of the narrative leaves no room for the shifting of boundaries so as to include these foreign women (נשים נכרות) or even their *children*, leaving the community no choice but to expel them all (ch. 10).<sup>204</sup>

---

203. Southwood, drawing on the work of P. M. Blaug, has argued that as different facets of identity (religious, linguistic, cultural, etc.) begin to overlap with each other or are consolidated, the boundary that defines a community becomes firmer and less willing to incorporate heterogeneity. In the case of Ezra 9–10, the alignment of genealogy (shared history), a claim to the experience of the exile, and holiness language compounds to present a highly exclusive construction of Judeanness that refuses to acknowledge any shared traits between the community and the “foreign women” who must be expelled. Southwood, 189–224. See, especially Southwood’s helpful charts (195, 200, 207) for visualizations of the interlocking elements of identity she describes.

204. Dor has suggested that rather than depicting the expulsion of these women in Ezra 10 — an event that is not actually narrated — the passage actually reflects a ritual by which these women are actually *incorporated* into the community, or at least their status as proximate other is made more acceptable. Working from Turner’s definition of ritual as a kind of societal release valve, Dor argues that the creation of a list of Judean men who have taken foreign wives (Ezra 10.18–44) reflects a practice through which the community can recognize the impropriety of the unions without having to actually *dissolve* them. The symbolic acknowledgement is enough to relieve the tension, producing a practical outcome in which the women continued in the community. Dor’s analysis, however, assumes that the narrative in Ezra 10.7–44 reflects an event that really happens and was recorded. Yonina Dor, “The Rite of Separation of the Foreign Wives in Ezra–Nehemiah,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 173–188.

As a balance to these outward-looking discursive steps that served to entrench strong boundaries between the גולה and the “other” within Ezra 9–10, this *mythomoteur* also outlines in-group facing strategies taken by Ezra to reinforce internal cohesion. In this regard, Ezra’s prayer takes center stage. As I noted above, Ezra’s prayer has traditionally been counted among the four penitential prayers included in the Hebrew Bible. These prayers, which reflect both on the community’s rebellious ancestral past as well as its current and ongoing state of sin are supposed to demonstrate “penitence” before the community resolves whatever issue is at stake.<sup>205</sup> In the case of Ezra 9, this is the threat that the foreign wives pose to the community.

David Lambert has argued persuasively that repentance, what he defines as a penitential discourse (of both language and ritual) that is the result of a series of historical processes, is not “biblical” — that is endemic to the literature of the Hebrew Bible — but rather a product of the Hellenistic period that has been mistakenly read back into that literature by its interpreters, a kind of misreading that dates all the way back to the New Testament and early Rabbinic periods.<sup>206</sup> What theologians and scholars have traditionally interpreted as acts of repentance — fasting, appeal, confession, etc. — are better understood as articulations and exploitations of the hierarchical relationship between a deity and his/her worshippers. Lambert shows that these acts are well attested in literature from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and are not invented in the Second Temple period.

---

205. Michael W. Duggan, “Ezra 9:6–15: A Penitential Prayer within Its Literary Setting,” in *Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; 1; Boston: Brill, 2007), 174–176.

206. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 9..

For the context of the current discussion, Lambert’s treatment of guilt and confession is particularly helpful. He argues that guilt and confession (e.g. Ezra 9.7) express a social hierarchy between agent and patient, and in the case of ancient Israel, between deity and worshipper. According to Lambert, “Guilt or wrongdoing, it would seem, is the relational state whereby judgment invests one party with power over another.”<sup>207</sup> In this regard, acknowledging guilt is more like an act of submission or surrender than a sign of spiritual expression. Confession — the acknowledgment of that guilt — is a means of packaging the pain currently experienced by the patient — the confessor— so as to move the agent — Yahweh — to action.<sup>208</sup> It is a demonstration of social etiquette whereby the worshipper acknowledges his/her inferior status in hopes that the deity will act in his/her superior position as supremely able agent.<sup>209</sup>

In Ezra 9.6–15, Ezra is presented as having recognized that his community is in violation of its agreement with Yahweh due to its propensity towards intermarriage. Through Ezra’s acknowledgement of that state and his assertion of the deity’s righteousness (יהוה אלהי ישראל צדיק אתה) v. 15) he attempts to preempt what he knows to be the consequence of covenant violation for his community: expulsion from the land. In offering his confession, he submits himself and the community to Yahweh’s authority in order to highlight the deity’s

---

207. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 46–66..

208. “It is a way of constructing divinity and a relationship to it when material realities would suggest, instead, the severing of ties. In this situation, the social practice of acknowledging sin with its implications for the formation of a relationship, albeit fraught, between victimizer and victim offered a pathway for continuing to conceptualize the possibilities of divine presence: “O YHWH, God of Israel, you are in the right. We were left a remnant, as is the case today. We are in a state of guilt before you; because of this, we cannot stand before you” (Ezra 9:15). And yet, in so saying, of course, they managed to do precisely that.” Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 67.

209. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 66.

superior (and justified!) status in the relationship. In this way his confession seeks to realign the vertical plane between deity and community.

Confessional prayers also work as a galvanizing force for a community on the horizontal plane. This can include both the content of the confession as well as the ritualized actions attendant to it. In a recent study of Ezra 9, Angela Kim Harkins has demonstrated the ways in which the expression of emotion through confessional prayer and ritual can play a “pro-social role” in the construction of community, both within the world of Ezra-Nehemiah’s narrative and for members of the composition’s earliest (and subsequent) audiences:

The reenactment of grief through the performance of prayers and mourning gestures, and its outward display in the form of tears or trembling, can produce a pro-social effect upon the community that observes it. The expression of tears, trembling, blanching, blushing, sweating, or some other physical manifestation can be understood as a mechanism for signaling costly displays or credibility-enhancing displays to serve a pro-social purpose.<sup>210</sup>

In publicly mourning in this fashion and demonstrating proper vertical alignment with the deity, the confessional prayer builds a bridge between the community’s present and its past in order “effectively reconstruct memories of the past in order that older narratives might better meet ‘the demands of a new way of life’ after the exile.”<sup>211</sup> That is, the enacting of the ritual and its historical content assert the proper status of the community vis-à-vis both the deity and its members. Importantly, Harkins’ argument accounts for this cause-and-effect within the logic of the narrative as well as for the audience who was exposed to it. According to Harkins, members

---

210. Angela Kim Harkins, “The Pro-Social Role of Grief in Ezra’s Penitential Prayer,” *BibInt* 24 (2016): 482.

211. Angela Kim Harkins, “The Pro-Social Role of Grief in Ezra’s Penitential Prayer,” *BibInt* 24 (2016): 482.

of the audience would have taken Ezra's actions to heart, thereby predisposing them toward the humility Ezra displayed and an acceptance of the model Judean identity that the composition defines as normative.<sup>212</sup>

The prayer offered in Ezra 9.6–15 discursively constructs its in-group through a variety of tactics. These include outward-facing approaches like the use of counter designations that present the proximate other as a threat to the community's longevity in Judea. The prayer and its surrounding narrative also turn inward, reinforcing the positive construction of the in-group through appeals to a shared history, including the mobilization of a trauma narrative, confession and its attendant ritual, and a reimagined understanding of the exilic experience that is affirming and constitutive rather than disqualifying.<sup>213</sup>

#### *Nehemiah 9.5–37: A Judean History without the Exile?*

The second confessional prayer that I want to analyze is the one that has been preserved in Neh 9.5–37. It is part of the bloc of material known as the Nehemiah Memoir (NM), which was composed between approximately 430 BCE<sup>214</sup> and the compilation of Ezra-Nehemiah at the end of the Persian period or early in the Hellenistic period.<sup>215</sup> In general, there are a number of similarities between the literary contexts in which we find it and the confessional prayer offered

---

212. Harkins, "The Pro-Social Role of Grief in Ezra's Penitential Prayer," 478–479.

213. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*, 204.

214. This date is based on Hanani's initial approach to Nehemiah in year 20 of Artaxerxes in Neh 1.1 (445 BCE), the claim that he served as governor of Judea for twelve years before returning to Susa (433 BCE), and then his return to Judea sometime later, before the death of Artaxerxes in 423 BCE.

215.

in Ezra 9.6–15. First, both prayers are offered by communal leaders. A group of Levites stand before their community as they address the deity with the prayer offered in Neh 9.5–37.<sup>216</sup> Secondly, as was the case in Ezra 9, the Levites' prayer is preceded by a narrative introduction outlining a series of mourning rites, including fasting, wearing sack cloth, and general self affliction (וּאֲדַמָּה עֲלֵיהֶם, v. 1). Both narrative introductions also refer to their respective in-groups using agricultural imagery combined with language of separation (*b-d-l*) (Neh 9.2 זָרַע יִרְשָׁאֵל // Ezra 9.2 זָרַע הַקֹּדֶשׁ).<sup>217</sup> Next, the members of the community in Neh 9 are said to have “confessed their sins” (וּיְתוּדוּ עַל חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם) prior to the prayer's offering, and continued doing so for a quarter of the day (vv. 2–3). The *hitpa'el* of the root *y-d-y* is considered a hallmark of biblical

---

216. The Greek version of this event (2 Esdras 19) notes the presence of the Levites but gives Ezra the role of speaker ( <sup>5</sup>καὶ εἶπσαν οἱ Λευῖται... <sup>6</sup>καὶ εἶπεν Ἐσδρας... ). Japhet has argued for Greek Esdras' is later than and dependent on the MT tradition of Ezra-Nehemiah Japhet, 325–329. In addition to literary dependence, one can also make a strong case for *lectio difficilior* in the MT reading. The issue of Ezra's disappearance in MT Neh 9 creates a serious narrative issue and has been a crucial part of identifying Ezra 8–9 as the original literary setting for this narrative. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 308–309.

217. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 309.

confessional prayers<sup>218</sup> and in connection with each of the traditional examples (Dan 9:4, 20; Ezra 10:1; Neh 1:6; 9:2–3).<sup>219</sup>

Finally, in both cases the prayer precedes the narration of significant steps to reinforce the boundaries of the community. In Ezra 9, Ezra's prayer catalyzes the decision to expel the foreign woman that is undertaken in ch. 10. In Neh 9, the Levitical prayer serves as a kind of historical preamble for a new agreement that is witnessed, signed, and enumerated in ch. 10. The prayer

---

218. Prior the Persian period, this practice is best attested in the Priestly History and associated with preparations for expiatory sacrifice. For example, Aaron placed his hands on the scape goat, confessed (והתודה עליו) the community's sins, thereby transferring them to the goat. Cf. Lev 5.5; 26.40; Num 5.7. Milgrom argued that this part of the ritual was meant to convert intentional sins to accidental onse, thereby allowing them to be purged. Jacob Milgrom, *Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 106–110. Cf. Richard J Baultch, "The Formulary of Atonement (Lev 16: 21) in Penitential Prayers of the Second Temple Period," in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions* (eds. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas; TBN. Brill, 2012), 33–45. Lambert, following a similar line of thought, has argued that the point of confession is ultimately the removal of affliction by the deity. Confession of sin is a recognition of hierarchy and also the role the supplicant in creating vertical misalignment through his/her sin. Confession acknowledges the misalignment and the issues it has caused, thereby inviting the deity to intervene. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 58–64. On the relationship of confession to the genre of the confessional prayer, see Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 277; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 28; Eileen Schuller, "Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: A Research Survey," in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 2: The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk et al.; EJS 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 13–14.

219. The verb actually occurs within the text of the prayer in Neh 1.6. In the case of Ezra 10, the confession actually *follows* Ezra's prayer. The sequence is potentially important if, as argued by Dor, 10.1 is part of the latest layer of Ezra 9–10, the narrative frame. If so, then the addition may indicate an effort by the editor responsible for the Ezra Memoir to associate Ezra's prayer with others in the genre. On the relationship of Ezra 10.1 to the rest of Ezra 9–10, see Dor, "The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX-X.," 26–47.

and its attendant rituals unite the community on a horizontal plane within the narrative and lay out a future in the wake of the reinforcement of boundaries.

Despite these general similarities, there are also some notable and important differences between the two prayers in terms of both their content and their literary context. First of all, the prayer in Neh 9 offers a very different (and much longer) rehearsal of the Judean community's past. Rather than focusing on a single event (i.e. the moment immediately preceding entry into Canaan), the Levites' prayer (vv. 5–37) offers an extended account that begins with the creation of the universe and the selection of Abraham, dwells on the exodus and the wandering period, before moving briskly through the time of the monarchy and into the present of its speakers, a period of imperial domination. The primary focus of the prayer is Yahweh's steadfast loyalty throughout Israel's sinful history and the manifestation of that loyalty in the possession of the land of Canaan. Through the first two thirds of the prayer, Israel's history of rebellion is juxtaposed against Yahweh's steadfast dedication to his covenant relationship with them:

וברחמיך הרבים לא עשיתם כלה ולא עזבתם כי  
אל חנון ורחום אתה

On account of your great compassion you did not finish them off, and you did not abandon them, because  
you are a gracious and compassionate god. (v. 31)

However, there is a shift in v. 32 that is marked grammatically by a disjunctive *ועתה*. The perspective of the supplicants shifts from the rehearsal of the deeds of their ancestors (vv. 9, 32, 34, 36) in the past, outlined primarily through the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> person verbs and pronouns, to the present of the speakers (*עד היום הזה*, v. 32) who now come to the fore through the abundant



הנה אנחנו היום עבדים והארץ אשר נתתה לאבותינו לאכל את פריה ואת טובה הנה אנחנו עבדים עליה<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>And [our ancestors], when they had their kingdom and your great goodness that you gave to them, and [were] in the wide and fertile land you set before them, they did not serve you nor did they turn back from their wicked actions.

<sup>36</sup>And now we, today, are servants! And the land that you gave to our ancestors so that they might eat its good fruits – we are servants upon it!

The Levite supplicants offering their prayer do not claim to be blameless

(כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו in v. 33), but they also do not heap up admissions of individual and communal guilt like Ezra does on behalf of his community in Ezra 9. There is no equivalent to Ezra's claim that his own sins are stacked as high as the heavens (v. 6).<sup>221</sup> Instead, in a way that seems to hew closer to communal lament than to how scholars have traditionally understood confessional prayer,<sup>222</sup> the Levites — perhaps implicitly — call on Yahweh to account for the current situation in Judea.<sup>223</sup> In her own analysis of the narrative of Neh 8–10, Donna Laird describes the prayer as follows:

The prayer [in Neh 9.5–37] straddles the line between lament and penitential forms. Laments conceive of people devoted to God who beseech God to honor his obligations toward them. This is consistent with the petitioners' self-portrayal. In addition, the prayer ends very much like a

---

221. כי עונותינו רבו למעלה ראש ואשמתנו גדלה עד לשמים.

“For our sins have increased above our heads, and our guilt has grown to the heavens!”

222. Psalms of the communal lament genre (eg. Pss 79, 44, 80, 89) take as their premise unjust suffering of the supplicants. The supplicants then call on the deity to intervene on their behalf. Westermann outlines the typical features of the genre: address (and introductory petition), complaint (against god/over personal suffering/against the enemy), turning towards God (confession of trust), petition, vow of praise. He notes just how bitter the complaints against god can become, treading “that thin line between reproach and judgment.” Westermann, *Praise and lament in the Psalms*, 173–181, here 177.

223. Dalit Rom-Shiloni, “Socio-Ideological *Setting* or *Settings* for Penitential Prayers?,” in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; EJM 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 56–61.

lament as it describes the desperate straits of the people. Yet the dissonance of their situation and God's goodness is resolved in a way more consonant with penitential prayers. God is declared just, while the ancestors are repeatedly faulted for disobedience and failure to remain loyal to God. However, *only* the ancestors are implicated in this. The present-day petitioners stand innocent of wrongdoing, and remain faithful to God and his covenant as they await divine renewal from a faithful God. The line drawn between past and present resolves these binary expectations of covenant obligations.<sup>224</sup>

I would add to Laird's conclusion, drawing again from Lambert's work on repentance, that the Levites offering their prayer in Neh 9 do not just *await* divine renewal from their deity; rather they attempt to move him to action by calling attention to his failure to protect his subordinates. Mark Boda has argued that the primary difference between the communal lament and the confessional prayer concerns a shift in context from the monarchic period to the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. The fall of Jerusalem removed any ambiguity concerning the sinfulness of Judeans and their culpability for the punishment wrought upon them. Thus for Boda, "the key to the setting of penitential prayer is that it arose from people who had experienced the pain of the loss of state."<sup>225</sup> This description does not, however, match the tenor of Neh 9.5–37. The assertion of Yahweh's righteousness in his past acts is not an acceptance of a kind of Deuteronomic worldview that implicitly accepts culpability on behalf of the community as a theological disposition developed in the wake of the Babylonian exile.<sup>226</sup> Instead, it is an implicit

---

224. Donna Laird, *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah* (AIL 26; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 278–279.

225. Mark Boda, "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament: Sitz im Leben and Form," in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (eds. Mark Boda, Richard Falk et al.; EJL. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 190. Cf. Rom-Shiloni, 63–68.

226. *Pace* Boda, 188–190.

call for the deity to uphold his end of the covenant with this community *now*, in the present moment of the Levite speakers.

This raises a second glaring difference between the prayers in Neh 9.5–37 and Ezra 9.6–15 and their surrounding narratives: Neh 9.5–37 does not mention the Babylonian exile. To be sure, the prayer in Ezra 9 only refers to exile (שב) as part of a stock list of covenantal punishments in v. 7, but as the preceding discussion has demonstrated, it was a fundamental component of collective identity for the community — both literary and historical — to whom the prayer was addressed. And yet, there are no clear references to this foundational event in Neh 9.<sup>227</sup> Instead, the prayer focuses on the Israelites in the desert followed by the inheritance of the land of the Canaanites, emphasizing throughout the deity’s exceedingly generous approach to dealing with the community’s ancestors. See, for example, the repeated description of the deity as patient, merciful, and devoted (vv. 17, 19, 27, 28, 31). Newman argues that the prayer’s goal is “to establish an inalienable claim to the land,”<sup>228</sup> although I think this may be too strong of a conclusion. Rather, I interpret the prayer’s rehearsal of history as a reminder to the deity that no matter how rebellious the community’s ancestors may have been and how deserving of

---

227. Newman argues for a subtle reference to the exile in v. 30: ותתנם ביד עמי הארצות, “and you [Yahweh] delivered them to the peoples of the lands.” However, there is nothing in these lines that indicates deportation. Rather, given the intentionally vague nature of the expression עמי הארצות (see n. 168 above) and prayer’s general lack of contemporary historical references, there is nothing in this verse to suggest anything other than imperial domination, which might include the Assyrians or any of their successors. Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (EJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 99.

228. Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (EJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 99.

punishment, Yahweh never let that punishment get out of control. He heard their calls in distress and responded accordingly. He also never, according to this account, alienated them from the land he promised to their ancestors.

### *Contextualizing Nehemiah 9.6–37*

In addition to the thematic and generic differences between the confessional prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh 9, there is also an important editorial difference. While the prayer in Ezra 9 has been well integrated into its current literary context,<sup>229</sup> the broader narrative in which we find Neh 9 shows clear editorial seams. This is especially clear in the arrangement of Neh 7–10 as it has been preserved in the MT. For example, the protagonists of Neh 8's public reading ceremony, Ezra and Nehemiah, disappear completely from the scene in Neh 9–10.<sup>230</sup> There is also a dramatic shift in tone from that joyful public reading of the תורה to the somber fasting and mourning rites of Neh 9.1–4. However, if we excise ch. 8 and insert it between Ezra 8–9 in the EM, both of these issues are resolved. Ezra disappears all together from the NM and the joyful reading of the Torah no longer immediately precedes the sorrowful ritual narrated in Neh 9.1–5. In fact, the date formula that concludes the account of the wall's construction in 7.72 (ויגע החדש) coordinates well with Neh 9.1 (וביום עשרים וארבעה לחדש הזה נאספו בני ישראל בצום) (“By the beginning of the seventh month, all of the Israelites were in their cities.”) coordinates well with Neh 9.1 (וביום עשרים וארבעה לחדש הזה נאספו בני ישראל בצום) (“Now, on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of *that* month, the Israelites had gathered in fasting,

---

229. At least to the degree that an effort has been made to coordinate the narrative introduction in vv. 1–6 with the prayer that follows. See Dor, “The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX-X.,” 26–37.

230. On Ezra's appearance in the Greek translation as a secondary addition, see n. 216 above.

wearing sackcloth with earth upon them”), with both verses using the same in-group designator (בני ישראל) for the Judean community.<sup>231</sup>

However, even with the smooth transition between the end of Neh 7 and the opening of Neh 9 that is created by the excision of Neh 8, there still remains a lack of coordination between the sins raised by the prayer and the stipulations of the agreement concluded by members of the community in ch. 10. As we saw in Ezra 9, the choice of the event rehearsed in the prayer spoke directly to the current situation facing Ezra’s community. It was fitting for the context. However, there is no mention of any of the stipulations included in the document signed and outlined in Neh 10 — foreign wives, illicit trade practices, Sabbath observance, support for the temple — within the Levites’ prayer in Neh 9. Instead, the supplicants condemn their ancestors for unrelated transgressions.<sup>232</sup> Perhaps most glaringly, the conclusion of the prayer calls attention to the ongoing oppression of the community by an imperial power. In the context of the NM, Nehemiah — the primary protagonist of the account — was a representative of the Persian regime, and only able to effect change in Judea as a result of his relationship with its Great King.

This lack of narrative integration strongly suggests that the prayer in Neh 9.5–37 was not composed for its current literary context. Rather, it was produced independently and only subsequently introduced into Neh 9, preceding the signing of the communal agreement, including the long list of signees, in Neh 10. This observation raises the issue of the prayer’s

---

231. The in-group designation בני ישראל occurs on five other occasions in Nehemiah (excluding two attestations in Neh 8.14, 17): Neh 1.6; 2.10; 10.40; 13.2. Leaving aside the reference in 10.40, which is directly related to the scene in Neh 9–10, the other three examples are all in the traditional Nehemiah Memoir.

232. Neh 9.14 does refer to the introduction of Sabbath observance, but there is no mention of the community’s ancestor’s transgressing that statute.

original historical context, and scholars have offered a variety of opinions on the topic. For example, Adam Welch and Gary Rendsburg have advocated for an origin of the prayer in the northern kingdom prior to Jerusalem's fall to Babylonia based on content and language, respectively.<sup>233</sup> Gili Kugler has suggested that the coexistence of sinful kings with imperial overlords (Neh 9.32) better fits a Judean context in the early Neo-Babylonian period,<sup>234</sup> while Mark Boda, following the work of H. G. M. Williamson argues for a date in the early Persian period.<sup>235</sup>

Despite its lack of clear historical referents, with the obvious exception of the kings of Assyria in v. 32, there are nonetheless some clues as to the dating of the composition. The prayer, which draws on a wealth of traditions that have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible, seems to know Pentateuchal material in its compiled form.<sup>236</sup> First, the author of the prayer had access to

---

233. Welch argued for a northern origin based on parallels he identified between the description of Ahab in 1 Kgs 19 and the “slaying of prophets” referenced in Neh 9. More recently, Rendsburg upheld Welch’s conclusions, but rooted his argument in the linguistic features of the prayer. He argued for a number typically Israelian features within the prayer’s language. Adam C Welch, “The Source of Nehemiah IX,” *ZAW* 6 (1929): 130–137; Gary A. Rendsburg, “The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9,” *Bib* (1991): 348–366. Cf. Waldemar Chrostowski, “An Examination of Conscience by God’s People as Exemplified in Neh 9: 6–37,” *BZ* 34 (1990): 253–261.

234. Gili Kugler, “Present Affliction Affects the Representation of the Past: An Alternative Dating of the Levitical Prayer in Nehemiah 9,” *VT* 63 (2013): 605–626, esp. 621–624.

235. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, 189–195.

236. I follow what has been called a Neo-Documentarian approach to the composition of the Pentateuch. According to this literary theory, a single individual — the compiler — combined four distinct and independent documentary sources about the origins of Israel — J, E, P, and D — into a single (but narratively incoherent) account of Israel’s past. According to Schwartz, his/her approach to this task seems to have been guided by two primary principles: “maximal preservation of each of the source texts, in their precise, verbal form and given order, if possible in their entirety and without addition; and alternating from one source to another as required by strictly chronological criteria, placing what must have occurred first before what must logically

all four Pentateuchal sources: it quotes E's account of Abraham's selection in Gen 15.7 (v. 7)<sup>237</sup> and of the creation of the golden calf (v.18);<sup>238</sup> it is dependent on J's narrative for the flight from Egypt (v. 12);<sup>239</sup> it draws on P's version of the miracle with the Egyptians at the sea,<sup>240</sup> and D's

---

have come next." Baruch J. Schwartz, "How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, Interpretation* (eds. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr et al.; 2012), 268. For support for this approach and productive illustrations of how it can explain the text of the Pentateuch as we have received it, see, for example, Joel S. Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (FAT; Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (The Anchor Yale Bible reference library; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Jeffrey Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation* (FAT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*; Baruch J. Schwartz, "What Really Happened at Mount Sinai? Four Biblical Answers to One Question," *BibRev* 13 (1997): 20–40. For the use of Pentateuchal materials in Neh 9, cf. Thomas Römer, "Extra-Pentateuchal Evidence for the Existence of Pentateuch? The Case of the 'Historical Summaries,' Especially in the Psalms," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas Dozeman, B. Konrad Schmid et al.; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 474–477.

237. Both verses share the construction  $y\text{-}\dot{y}\text{'}$  + pronoun +  $\text{מִן אֹרֶךְ כְּשָׂדִים}$ . Abram / Abraham's homeland is also identified as Ur of the Chaldeans in the Priestly History in 11.28, 31. However this is likely a later addition by the compiler. On the identification of Gen 15 as an E passage, see Joel S. Baden, *The Promise to the Patriarchs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 188–191 n. 100.

238. Neh 9.18 quotes the deity's words to Moses following the creation of the calf in Exod 32.8:  $\text{עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֵגֶל מִסֶּכֶה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלֹךְ מֵאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם}$ . Notably, the verse in Nehemiah maintains the singularity of the calf (see the pronoun  $\text{זֶה}$  for  $\text{אֱלֹהֵי}$  in Exod 32.8 and  $\text{הָעֵלֹךְ}$  for  $\text{הָעֵלֹךְ}$ ), while the E version shifts into the plural. D also knows E's version of this story (Deut 9.16), but the language in in Neh 9 is much closer to the E version.

239. The pillar of cloud/fire are distinct elements of J's narrative. The introduction of the motif in Exod 13.1 ( $\text{וַיְהִי הַלַּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בַּעֲמֹד עָנָן לַלַּיְלָה וְלִדְרֹךְ הַדֶּרֶךְ וְלִלְיָהּ אֲשֶׁר לְהַאֲרִיר לָהֶם לְלַכֵּת}$ ) is quoted almost verbatim in v. 12:  $\text{וּבַעֲמֹד עָנָן הַנְּחִיתֵם יוֹמָם וּבַעֲמֹד אֲשֶׁר לִלְיָהּ לְהַאֲרִיר לָהֶם}$ . On J's use

240. The language of "cleaving" ( $b\text{-}q\text{'}$ ) the sea (Neh 9.11) is from the P version of this account (Exod 14.16, 22, 29; 15.19) The verb  $b\text{-}q\text{'}$  does occur in Ps 78's account of the miracle at the sea (v. 13), which takes a distinct J narrative as its primary source material. Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127 (2008): 241–265. However, the presence of the noun  $\text{יַבְשָׁה}$ , "dry land," in Neh 9.11 in the expression

description of the land that the Israelites were about to inherit (v. 25)<sup>241</sup> and the 40 years of Yahweh offered them in the desert (v.21).<sup>242</sup> Second, there are moments where the prayer reflects the combined form of those traditions. See, for example, v. 13:

ועל הר סיני ירדת  
ודבר עמהם משמים

On Mount Sinai you descended,  
and you spoke with them from the heavens.

Sinai is the name of the mountain in the J and P accounts of the epiphany in the desert that begins in Exod 19. In the E version, the mountain is called הר האלהים, “the mountain of god,” and identified as Horeb.<sup>243</sup> However, it is only in the E version (and the D rehearsal of that version) that Yahweh is described as speaking to the people from the heavens:

ויאמר יהוה אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל אתם ראיתם כי מן השמים דברתי עמכם  
Yahweh said to Moses: “Thus you shall say to the Israelites: ‘You have seen that I speak with you all from the heavens.’” (Exod 20.22)<sup>244</sup>

---

היבשה is only reflects the P account (Ex 14.16, 22, 29; Cf. Gen 1.9–10).

241. Compare Neh 9.25 with Deut 6.11:

Neh 9.25

ויירשו בתים מלאים כל טוב ברות חצובים כרמים וזיתים ועץ מאכל לרב ויאכלו וישבעו  
וישמינו ויתעדנו בטובך הגדול

Deut 6.11

ובתים מלאים כל טוב אשר לא מלאת וברת חצובים אשר לא חצבת כרמים וזיתים אשר  
לא נטעת ואכלת ושבעת

Cf. the description of the land elsewhere in D (Deut 8.10, 12; 31.20; 32.15). Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, 170–171.

242. See especially Deut 8.4: שמתך לא בלתה מעליך ורגלך לא בצקה זה ארבעים שנה; Römer, “Extra-Pentateuchal Evidence,” 476.

243. Eg. Exod 3.1; 17.6; 18.5; 24.13; 33.6. The mountain is called Horeb in D, as well (eg. 5.2).

244. Cf. Deut 4.36:

מן השמים השמיעך את קלו ליסרך ועל הארץ הראך את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעת מתוך  
האש

From the heavens he made you hear his voice to instruct you. On the earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from the midst of the fire.

This spliced form of the epiphany at the mountain in Neh 9.13 alongside quoted material from all four sources of the Pentateuch is most easily understood as a product of the author of Neh 9's source material: the author of the prayer had access to these sources in their combined form<sup>245</sup> — that is in a version of the Pentateuch that is much the same as we have received it.

In recognizing that the author of the prayer in Neh 9.6–37 used a compiled Pentateuch as a source for the prayer's telling of Israel's history, we are provided with a *terminus a quo* for the composition that excludes a date from the 8<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.<sup>246</sup> We can further narrow down that time frame through an appeal to Stackert's identification of Neo-Babylonian linguistic influence in H.<sup>247</sup> The Holiness Code was written as an editorial addition to P and included in that document prior to the compilation of the Pentateuch.<sup>248</sup> This then excludes the 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup>

---

245. However, he did not have to follow the narrative order of that source material exactly. He/she was free to rearrange as necessary in order to accomplish the goals of the new composition. Römer, "Extra-Pentateuchal Evidence," 475–476.

246. As Baden has shown, at the time of its composition, the D source knew the J and E documents as distinct sources. Joel S. Baden, "Deuteronomistic Evidence for the Documentary Theory," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas Dozeman, B. Konrad Schmid et al.; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 327–344; Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*. D's knowledge of the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon provides a *terminus a quo* no earlier than the publication of that document in 672 BCE. On D's use of the STE, see Moshe Weinfeld, "Traces of Assyrian treaty formulae in Deuteronomy," *Bib* 46 (1965): 417–427. For a recently discovered example of the treaty in the western Assyrian empire (early attestations had all features treaty members from the east), see Jacob Lauinger, "Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat," *The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 6 (2011): 5–14; Jacob Lauinger, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary," *JCS* 64 (2012): 87–213.

247. See the discussion above.

248. Nihan has demonstrated that H presupposes the narrative of P and cannot stand on its own as a distinct composition. Further, H shows a systematic approach to the revision and interpretation of material from both P and D (and E, see Stackert) and must therefore be subsequent to and dependent on both documents. Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (Forschungen zum Alten

centuries BCE, leaving us with a date for the compilation of the Pentateuch no earlier than the Neo-Babylonian period.<sup>249</sup>

Even if we are unable to narrow the window for the compilation of the Pentateuch any further than the mid-to-late Neo-Babylonian period, we have nonetheless cleared an important historical hurdle for the consideration of Neh 9.6–37’s use of it to construct a Judean *mythomoteur*: Nebuchadnezzar’s deportation of a significant population of Judea during the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The absence of a reference to this event in a composition that post-dates it marks a significant divergence from the privileging of that experience in the construction of Judean identity in Ezra 9–10.

---

Testament 2 25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 545–559. However, H should not be considered as a redaction of the Pentateuch in its compiled form. Rather, its concerns are limited to the literary world of P. See Jeffrey Stackert, “Holiness Code and Writings,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law* 1 ADM–LIT: 394–396; Stackert, “The Sabbath of the Land in the Holiness Legislation: Combining Priestly and Non-Priestly Perspectives,” 339–350.

249. We might be able to narrow this dating down even further through an appeal to the Persian/Imperial Authorization Hypothesis, a view that identifies Ezra’s mission as outlined in the Artaxerxes rescript (Ezra 7.12–26) as the codification (and compilation) of the Pentateuch as the local law of Judea. For an overview of this theory, see the contributions to the volume *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (SBL Symposium Series 17; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001). However, as argued most recently by Fried, if in fact Ezra was a historical figure and he was commissioned by Artaxerxes to enforce the king’s  $\pi\pi$  in Judea (which seems to me to be a highly implausible scenario), that  $\pi\pi$  was almost certainly *not* the Pentateuch. See a helpful overview of the relevant issues and problems with the hypothesis, including the so-called parallels in the Demotic Chronicle and the Xanthus inscription in Lisbeth S. Fried, “The Artaxerxes Letter and the Mission of Ezra — *noch einmal*,” in *‘His Word Soars Above Him’: Biblical and North-West Semitic Studies Presented to Professor Charles K. Krashmalkov* (eds. Robert M. Kerr, Robert Miller et al.; Ann Arbor, MI: 2018), 31–44, esp. 37–40. In general, I think that the Persian period serves as the most likely time for the compilation of the Pentateuch, but I do not believe that the imperial government played a role in that process.

The exclusion of the experience of the Babylonian exile from the prayer in Neh 9.6–37 indicates that this event was not an integral part of how its author constructed Judeanness. In this regard the views of the prayer coincide with a number of similarly inclusive moments in the NM that do not distinguish between Judeans in the diaspora, return migrants, or the population that remained in Judea during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. For example, in the introduction to the NM (Neh 1.1–4), Nehemiah inquires of Hanani concerning the wellbeing of those in Judea whom the Persian official refers to as *היהודים הפליטה אשר נשאר מן השבי*, “the surviving Judeans who remained from the exile” (v. 2). The Hebrew phrasing is ambiguous and there are two primary possibilities for how to understand the group defined as *הפליטה*, “the survivors.”<sup>250</sup> On the one hand, the term could refer to Judeo-Babylonians and their descendants who had undertaken return migration during the early years of Persian rule. This interpretation, as offered by Rom-Shiloni, views *פליטה* as a *terminus technicus* associated with the post-exilic ideology that she has identified in the Babylonian and Persian periods. In support of this argument, she cites its usage in Ezra 9 (vv. 8, 13–15).<sup>251</sup> However, as I demonstrated above in my discussion of *כל שארית העם* in the book of Haggai, we cannot just assume that terms like *פליטה* bear the same kind of ideological and theological freight from composition to composition.

---

250. The singular noun functions here as a collective, standing in apposition to the *יהודים* who are the subject of the plural verb *נשאר*. On the use of plural verbs with collective nouns, see GKC §145b–g.

251. Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 36.

Within the context of the NM, the reference to the פליטה could also refer to those Judeans who survived the fall of the kingdom of Judah and remained in Judea. As argued by Williamson,<sup>252</sup> the Judean delegation's reply seems to support the latter interpretation (Neh 1.3):

הנשארים אשר נשארו מן השבי שם במדינה ברעה גדלה ובחרפה  
Those [Judeans] left over from the exile *there in the province*, are in great distress and agony.

It is possible that נשרים refers to the entire population of Judea in this context, which would include among “those who remained” the return migrants who made their way to Judea in the early Persian period. This usage would be consistent with what I observed in the group defined by שארית העם הזה in Zech 8. The “remnant” there included previous return migrants as well as those yet to come. In either case, the exchange between Nehemiah and the Judean delegation does not acknowledge any distinction between these different groups. The יהודים are identified first and foremost with the population in Judea without any explicit reference to a previous homeland.

There is also a notable absence of גולה used as an in-group identifier within the book of Nehemiah.<sup>253</sup> Instead, as demonstrated by Nissim Amzallag, the most frequent appellations for the community are יהודים (which occurs ten times in Nehemiah but does not appear at all in the

---

252. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 171–172. Cf. Amzallag, “The Authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah in Light of Differences in Their Ideological Background,” 274–275; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 207.

253. The term does appear once in the introduction to the list of returnees in Neh 7.6 (=Ezra 2.1). However, this is likely a product of the list's secondary use in the Nehemiah Memoir. It may also demonstrate a temporary relevance for the term within the context of the genealogical list of return migrants, losing its meaning once that population was understood to have integrated with the population of Judea.

book of Ezra) and, even more frequently, **עַם**.<sup>254</sup> Rather than emphasizing continuity between the in-group and the cultural trauma of the Babylonian exile, the primary in-group designations within the composition point to Judea's status as a distinct geo-political entity within the broader Persian imperial apparatus.<sup>255</sup> This is clear in the distinction between the population of Judea and its "enemies all around," the community's proximate others represented by the triumvirate of Sanballat of Samaria, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab.<sup>256</sup> Within the NM, Nehemiah

---

254. According to Amzallag's calculations, the term **עַם** is used to refer to the Judean community 43 times in the book of Nehemiah, and on ten occasions it refers to non-Judeans. In contrast, **עַם** is applied to the in-group in the book of Ezra some 11 times, while it refers to outsiders (often in the construct **עַם הָאֲרָץ** or **עַמֵי אֲרָצוֹת**) on seven occasions. Amzallag, 2018, #62039275

255. The primary "others" within Nehemiah, and the NM in particular, are Nehemiah's geo-political competitors in the surrounding provinces. His definition of Judeanness, therefore, seems to rest primarily on affiliation with Judean territory, a diacritic that seems to have been controversial even within the NM narrative. On this topic, see the helpful discussion in Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 135–168.

256. Fitzpatrick-McKinley has argued that the antagonism between these figures reflects the competition among local leaders for capital in the Persian approach to local rule. According to her interpretation of these relationships, the primary issue between Nehemiah and Sanballat was the former's interference with the latter's influence in Judea. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, *Empire, Power, and Indigenous Elites*, 96–171.

Fitzpatrick-McKinley's work is primarily a response to Lisabeth Fried's 2004 monograph, *The Priest and the Great King*. In that highly influential work, Fried argued for a model of Persian imperial control that she defined as centralized with nodes of local bureaucracy. Drawing on evidence from Babylonia, Egypt, and Anatolia, she argued that that the system was essentially top-down, with the Persian king (or his representatives) delegating authority to hand-picked local representatives. Then, applying a model derived from the case studies, Fried argues for a similar system in Judea, wherein figures like Ezra and Nehemiah — historical figures in her analysis — were appointed by the central government to rule the territory as representatives of the empire. There were conflicts between appointees and the local priesthood, but the power ultimately stood with the appointees and the central government.

Fitzpatrick-McKinley, however, has argued that the case studies in Fried's work are flawed with regard to their value for understanding Judea. They were too established and powerful at the time they came under Persian control and so required more direct intervention than other less

goes to great pains to defend the integrity of the Judean community against threats of its civic and political identity,<sup>257</sup> but shows little concern for dividing or subdividing the Judean community according to the routes its members took to get there.

### *Competing Mythomoteurs in the Prayers of Ezra-Nehemiah*

I started this section by introducing the genre of confessional prayer, a genre traditionally associated with the Persian and Hellenistic periods in part because of its purported ties to the trauma of the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile. I analyzed two different examples of confessional prayers and the roles that they played in their narrative contexts with a particular focus on how they constructed the communities the those texts were meant to represent.

In my analysis of Ezra 9.6–15 I focused on the cumulative effort to construct firm boundaries between the prayer’s in-group — identified as הגולה through the narrative introduction as הגולה — and a proximate other identified as עמי הארצות. I argued that the primary distinction that the text demarcates between the two groups was the claim to have been among

---

influential regions. In order to understand Judea, we need to look to polities of similar size and influence like Samaria, the kingdoms of Lycia, the city states of Phoenicia, and the Arabs of Idumea and Nabatea. In each of these examples, Fitzpatrick-McKinley argues that the Persians essentially maintained the varied and diverse local systems they inherited from their Neo-Babylonian predecessors, including titles like “king” and “governor,” as well as the tribute producing institutions that were already in place. This practice could lead to competition among local elites for imperial support (and the social and economic capital that came with it). This, she argues, is the background against which we should understand the conflicts between Nehemiah (again, taken as a historical figure) and elites from Samaria, Ammon, and the Qedarites. On the role of local elites in administering imperial rule, see also the recent monograph by Silverman, *Persian Royal–Judean Elite Engagements*, 215–265.

257. See the discussion of Nehemiah’s antagonistic relationship with the leaders of Judea’s neighbors in Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 142–153. Cf. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, *Empire, Power, and Indigenous Elites*, 172–216.

the descendants of Judeans who had been deported under Nebuchadnezzar. I attributed that emphasis to the reproduction of a successful trauma narrative that transformed the experience of exile into a positive and productive component of Judean identity while acting as a centripetal social force that produced firm boundaries at the borders of the community. This need not mean that Judeans who identified with the *mythomoteur* presented in the prayer would necessarily have had ancestors who were deported or who participated in return migration. Rather, it is the assertion of and identification with those moments as cornerstones of Judean identity that were important, or at least presented as such within the text.

When I turned to Neh 9.5–37 I encountered a different construction of the values of the prayer's in-group. Rather than focusing on the routes taken to arrive in Judea, the prayer was primarily concerned with the relationship between the community and the territory it now inhabits, a relationship guaranteed by a covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The biggest threat facing that community, at least as it is expressed in the prayer, is imperial domination of that territory and the exploitation of its fecundity. Drawing on the deity's history of vindicated punishment and support for the community's ancestors, the supplicants in the prayer sought to motivate Yahweh to action, to resolve the current untenable circumstances of imperial hegemony. This is a significantly different stance towards imperial rule than the thanks offered for the Persians in Ezra 9.9.<sup>258</sup> The broader narrative context within which Neh 9.5–37 has been

---

258. כי עבדים אנחנו ובעבדתנו לא עזבנו אלהינו ויט עלינו חסד לפני מלכי פרס לתת לנו מחיה לרומם את בית אלהינו ולהעמיד את חרבתינו ולתת לנו גדר ביהודה ובירושלם

For now we are servants and in our servitude our god has not abandoned us. Rather he has extended his good will on our behalf to the kings of Persia so that they might give us life, so that we might erect a temple to our god, and so that he might keep his promise to

preserved does share a concern for group boundaries with its counterpart in Ezra 9,<sup>259</sup> but the primary “other” of the prayer itself is the list of enemies encountered by the community’s ancestors and the contemporary (unnamed) imperial power in control.

Within their literary contexts, both of these confessional prayers and the attendant rituals that Ezra and the Levites perform result in the reinforcement of communal boundaries along vertical and horizontal axes, albeit by different means. In the case of Ezra 9.6–15, Ezra recalls an important moment from the community’s shared history that speaks to contemporary concerns about the diacritics of Judean identity in the text’s literary world. It also asserts the boundaries it creates in terms of divine mandate, reinforcing a religious component of that identity.

In the case of Neh 9.6–37, the rehearsal of a shared history serves a somewhat different purpose. Rather than a warning to community members about the threat of failing to maintain communal boundaries, the prayer is part of rhetorical strategy meant to spur the deity to action on behalf of the community, to remove from them the burden of imperial rule. However, encoded in that appeal is a claim to the land the community holds within the literary world in which the prayer exists. Through generations of rebellious ancestor’s Yahweh remained loyal to the

---

us to give us a stake in Judea and Jerusalem.

On the potential Persian influence in this positive construction “servitude” through a translation of Persian *bandaka*- “subjects,” see Janzen, 2017, #63152839–856 Cf. Oeming’s attempts to read the Neh 9.36ff as a positive reflection on Judea’s role as subject to the Persians rather than a dissonant note in disagreement with the rest of the Nehemiah Memoir. Manfred Oeming, “‘See, We Are Serving Today’ (Nehemiah 9:36): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 576–588.

259. See, for example, the separation of the community from foreigners (בני נכר) in the narrative introduction to the prayer (Neh 9.2).

community (even as he had to discipline them often), and a key element in that loyalty was the possession of the land that he promised, which he accomplished, because he was righteous (v. 8). On a horizontal level, the prayer highlights the community's relationship to Canaan from the very beginning. There is no mention of separation from it, nor any hint that the supplicants believe it could be lost.

And yet, as we have seen, the borders of those communities as presented in these *mythomoteurs* and the constituent or defining traits they hold up as definitive differ significantly. In the case of the confessional prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh 9, we have two different versions of shared pasts that construct the boundaries and constituent markers of Judean identity in dramatically different terms, particularly with regard to the importance of the exilic experience. These differences point to divergent, if not competing claims over the defining characteristics and values of the Judeanness during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.

## Conclusion

I began this chapter by arguing for a thread of continuous Judean identity in Judea during the Neo-Babylonian period. Rather than a complete break in local communal identity between the monarchic and Persian periods, or a surge in foreign settlement of the region, I showed that the continued production of a particular kind of material culture, storage jars impressed with stamp seals, represented an avenue by which a continuous sense of Judean identity could have been

constructed and reproduced among the local population of Judea. This process and the institution that was behind it facilitated the reproduction of the symbolic value of that institution and its material output to the degree that when the Persians took control of the region in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, they recognized it as יהודי and thus named the region after the self-designation of its inhabitants.

This continuity of Judean identity in the material record is counterbalanced by a series of *mythomoteurs* for the community in Judea during the Persian period that have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. I focused on four such origin stories — the book of Haggai, Zech 1–8, Ezra 9.6–15, and Neh 9.5–37 — to analyze how the elites responsible for producing the texts constructed their communities within them. I chose these narratives because of their ideological function within their communities and also for how often they are used in modern scholarship to reconstruct historical events in Judea during the Persian period. The four different accounts offered four different constructions of Judean identity. For the book of Haggai, I highlighted the immediacy of the narrative and the text's effort grab anyone within its reach. While the text showed concern for the future political identity of Judea through an appeal to traditionalist images of Judean kingship, it was first and foremost focused on the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple as the primary node of its community identity. Zechariah 1–8, on the other hand, offers a broader view of the community, both in terms time and space. This text is also concerned with Jerusalem and its temple, but looks out to Judeans in the diaspora as a means to grow its community and also to the future, to Yahweh's physical restoration of the city and renewed presence there. Zechariah 1–8 focuses heavily on potential, while the book of Haggai is

primarily concerned with the here and now. Notably, in neither case did loyalty to Persia seem to play a particularly significant role in how the texts construed Judeanness. This is an important point for modern scholarship which often identifies Persia as a benevolent sponsor of Judean building activities.

The situation is somewhat different for the confessional prayers in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9. The narratives of which they are a part are set later in the Persian period, in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, between 80 and 120 years after the date formulae included in the book of Haggai and Zech 1–8. Nonetheless, each is part of an account of a new communal beginning in Judea. In the case of Ezra 9.6–15, the prayer serves to reinforce the primary identity marker it associates with a group of return migrants: their experience of the exile. The prayer and the narrative that surrounds it highlight the danger of allowing non-Judeans — the out-group defined primarily by not having experienced the exile — to permeate their communal boundaries and the threat they posed to the recently reestablished settlement in Judea. The situation is different in Neh 9. In this case the prayer ties the community, through its ancestors, to the territory it now holds while implicitly calling on the deity to remove the contemporary imperial presence from it. This version of history emphasizes roots over routes and does not imagine alienation from Judea. The view is generally in line with the Nehemiah Memoir's broader concerns for shoring up Judea's economic, political, and cultural borders and resist influence from its neighbors. One significant difference between the prayer and the narrative of which it is a part, however, is the decidedly negative stance taken towards an imperial presence in Judea in the former and Nehemiah's benevolence as a representative of Persian authority as presented in the latter.

This preponderance of *mythomoteurs* set in the early and mid-Persian period demonstrate a variety of constructions of Judeanness during this time, and among the literate elite in particular. These origin myths speak to the presence of multiple and competing voices participating in a broader discussion over what it meant to be a Judean during this time. While the experience of the exile could be mobilized as fundament of Judean identity, it was only one of many potential diacritics of Judeanness that was embraced in the *mythomoteurs* surveyed here, alongside possession of Judea and the centrality of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem for Judean life therein.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

#### From 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany to 6<sup>th</sup> Century Babylonia

##### *Introduction*

The central argument of this dissertation has been that there is no single or representative example of Judean identity during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries common to the populations in Egypt, Samaria, Babylonia, and Judea. Rather, each community possessed its own unique “Judeanness” that was the product of a variety of factors, including (but not limited to) time period, geographic location, perspective (insider vs. outsider), and the political status of the community.

I began this project with a critique of the scholarly position that takes the Babylonian exile, both the experience and the period, as a defining moment for what it meant to be among the יהודים (יהודיא / *Yāhūdāya*) in the post-monarchic period. According to this construction (what I have called the radical rupture model), the Judeans of the monarchic period — a socio-political body — were transformed into Jews — a body bound together by a set of shared religious beliefs

and elective membership. This new communal body was defined by the traumas of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of its population, and the loss of the homeland. In an effort to avoid future divine reprisals, it developed a new outlook that took as its primary foci sin and repentance.

I argued that this view of the post-monarchic יהודים as a monolithic entity defined by exile, trauma, and a fixation on sin and its removal has its roots in 19<sup>th</sup> century German (anti-Jewish) state-formation and in the field-defining work of W. M. L. de Wette and Julius Wellhausen. Their “invention” of Second Temple Judaism was a product of their historical moment. As an ideological construction, it served the needs of a burgeoning German identity that sought to define itself against its European neighbors through an appeal to a romanticized, pre-Judaized / pre-Catholicized Christianity. Through this invention of a petrified Second Temple Judaism — an aberration or diversion in the development of ancient Israelite religion — the (very Protestant-seeming) Hebraism of the pre-Exilic — period could be claimed (and redeemed) as the forerunner and genealogical antecedent to the unalloyed message of Jesus and its eventual revival in the work of Luther.

Rather than accept this reconstruction of the יהודים during the post-monarchic period, I have argued that to define subsequent constructions of Judean identity only in terms of exile is to essentialize a broad range of experiences and to disproportionately emphasize the importance of those experiences for Judeans across a variety of political and cultural situations. Instead, if we attend to the fact that the constituent elements of Judeanness that are observable in administrative documents from rural Nippur are not identical to those articulated in letters from Yeb or what can

be interpreted from the material culture of Judea, it becomes clear that Judeanness could be variously constructed and construed depending upon the various historical factors at work in each context. While the experience of exile was by no means absent from ongoing discussions of Judean identity, especially within some of the more self-conscious and ideological evidence like letters or the literature that has been preserved in Hebrew Bible, it was not a universal or necessary component of the discourse of identity construction.

Contextualizing the Evidence: Analyzing the Varieties of Judean Identity in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
Centuries BCE

*(Self-)Presentations, Pots, Peoples, etc.*

One of my primary takeaways from this study has been that different kinds of evidence speak to different aspects of communal identity. In my critique of earlier treatments of this period and the influence of the Babylonian exile, I argued that while the ideological concerns of scholars played a significant role in how the past is imagined, they were nonetheless drawing on evidence from the Hebrew Bible that offered a consistently (though not uniformly) negative portrayal of the experience of deportation and resettlement in a foreign land. This literature, however, is not the product of dominant or disinterested views of that experience. Rather, it was written in light of the political and religious predispositions of its authors and thus reflects only portions of the broader experience of Judeans in diaspora. Occasionally, the one-sided nature of this position is brought to light through the quoted speech of would-be opponents. For example, the appeal of

the elders to Ezekiel in Ezek 20 indicates that the negative view of temple worship outside Jerusalem presented both in ch. 20 and throughout the broader composition was *not* universal among the Judeo-Babylonians of the Nippur region, and perhaps not even a main stream opinion. The same can be said for the call to return migration offered by the Prophet responsible for Isa 40–48: if the members of his or her audience had already been clamoring to undertake the journey to Jerusalem, would the Prophet have had to go to such dramatic rhetorical lengths to persuade them to do so?

To put it differently, Judean identity was not a singular or monolithic entity, and the reconstruction of its shape and defining features in a given context is dependent upon the evidentiary lenses through which it is encountered. Recognizing the ideological and discursive nature of the biblical material makes possible a much broader spectrum of responses to life in Babylonia and in Judean communities throughout the Babylonian and Persian empires. This, in turn, opens the door to how other types of evidence like material culture, archival materials, and administrative records may further elucidate that spectrum, and from a variety of angles.

### *Judeans from the Imperial Perspective*

The construction of Judeanness was not a one-sided affair. Ethnic identity, as argued by Barth, requires a proximate other, a “them” against whom the “us” can be defined. But Judeanness was also shaped, in significant part, by the larger political institutions in which it was formed. The hegemonic Persians, Babylonians, and Egyptians were not the primary “others” by which

Judeans defined themselves;<sup>1</sup> however, their approach to rule was nonetheless critical in providing the spaces in which Judeanness could be constructed. Rather than trying to erase or eradicate the distinct identities of minority populations, these empires' administrative approaches allowed for minorities' cultural survival and often exploited the systems they preserved and reformed for their own gain.

From the perspective of the imperial governments who oversaw these groups (either as imperial soldiers, state-dependent workers, or the inhabitants of a subjugated territory), the category of Judean was primarily administrative and its primary salient characteristic, at least initially, was place of origin. In the case of the יהודיא of Yeb, discussed in ch. 3, the attachment of a group associated with a particular ethnonym to a particular fort (e.g. the יהודיא of the Yeb garrison and the ארמיא of the Syene garrison) suggested that soldiers who had migrated to Egypt from Greece, Anatolia, and the Levant were initially settled in ethnically-distinct units by the Saites. The purpose of these settlements, as argued by Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, was to construct and maintain boundaries between these soldiers and the surrounding Egyptian population, who had a history of rebelling against the rulers of the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty. These ethnically-distinct units were meant to ensure loyalty to the crown and dissuade the formation of

---

1. The non-Judean and non-imperial population of Yeb during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE may be an exception to this rule. The Judeo-Egyptian community certainly defined itself against the rebellious Egyptian locals (e.g. TAD A4.5). Further, if the evidence for the treatment of Greek and Anatolian soldiers under the Saites speaks to a similar situation to that experienced by contemporary Judeo-Egyptians, then it would seem that Saite kings may have been at pains to establish boundaries between their imported military force and the local population. However, we have no evidence from the Judeo-Egyptian perspective on its relationship to anyone else during this early period, and so this remains an open question.

sympathetic relationships with members of the majority population. When the Persians took control of Egypt following Cambyses's conquest, they appear to have inherited this system and preserved its structure. While the ethnic makeup of the garrisons seems to have shifted over time — one could be a Judean while serving with the Arameans of Syene — the value of such units remained constant: the יהודיא of Yeb could be counted on to remain loyal to the imperial government when their Egyptian neighbors rebelled (cf. TAD A4.5).

In chapter 4, I argued that the *Yāhūdāya* of the Nippur region had been intentionally settled together by the Babylonians following their forced migration, allowing the central administration to exploit pre-existing systems of power within the group in order to facilitate its inclusion into the broader imperial system. This approach to resettled deportees was not unique to these Judeo-Babylonians; rather, it was the standard approach to resettling minorities in the rural Babylonia, a point demonstrated by the Neirabians of Āl-Nērib. In this context, deportees were relocated to sparsely populated regions in an effort to increase agricultural production for the use of the central government. Thus, this policy was less concerned with intentional boundary maintenance between groups than was the case in Saite- and Persian-ruled Egypt. Once again, the Persians inherited this system of ethnically distinct settlements and workforces (dubbed *ḥaṭrus* in this period) from their Babylonian predecessors, and seem to have maintained their basic structure as part of the broader land-for-service model. As was the case in Egypt, there is evidence that the ethnic compositions of these groups shifted over time, but their basic function as units of control for state-dependent workers remained in place.

The situation in Judea is somewhat different, in that we are dealing with a majority group under imperial control. There is also significantly less evidence concerning the administration of that territory during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, by drawing comparisons with the Persian approach to rule elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and over diaspora Judean communities, I argued that we can still observe imperial intervention in the construction of Judeanness. The appearance of the toponym *YHWD* in the area's local material culture demonstrates that the Persians not only recognized that the population responsible for producing that culture identified as יהודים, but also that they incorporated the category into their own administrative vocabulary, effectively reifying it. The use of YSIs in a local system of redistribution points once again to the utility of the category for the central administrative authority.

These conclusions are important in that they highlight the role of outside forces in the construction of group identity among ancient Judeans. While the Persians and their Babylonian and Egyptian predecessors may not have been directly interested in aiding in the reproduction of local cultures in the territory over which they ruled — *contra* the frequent depiction of Persia as fostering a multi-cultural society for its own sake — they nonetheless played a role in these processes through the execution of plans that served their needs. In so doing, they created a space in which a group like the יהודים could exist, and in a variety of contexts.

### *Judeo-Egyptians on the Nile's First Cataract*

While the evidence for the imperial perspective on Judeanness is somewhat limited and of a primarily administrative nature, the sources for the insider view are many and varied. In the

preceding chapters I have appealed to onomastic and inscriptional evidence (both for content as well as script and language choices), to material remains, and to preserved literary sources. Rather than a monolithic claim about what defined Judeanness during this period, this evidence demonstrates a wide variety of possible constructions that are determined by both claims to continuity with a communal past as well as by the experiences of those communities over time and space.

For the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb, I argued that the community, or at least its representatives, understood themselves to be fully integrated into their Egyptian context by the time they are first attested in the written record. They owned property, had a temple dedicated to their deity, and took part in the day-to-day life on the island. There is no hint in these records that the Judeans felt out of place, nor is there any evidence of a driving urge to return to Judea, the homeland of their ancestors.

Based on the *mythomoteur* that has been preserved in the RLR, Judeo-Egyptian identity included a claim to deep roots on the island of Yeb, an unwavering loyalty to the Persian empire, dedication to the deity Yahu, and translocal ties to communities in Judea and Samaria. I also argued for the agentive role that religion played in this process. Using a congregational model borrowed from the social scientific study of immigrant and diasporic religious practice, I showed how religion and its institutions could strengthen the experience of ethnic identity for members of the in-group while reflexively increasing the importance of religion as a diacritic or constituent element of that identity.

Finally, I wanted to show the dynamic nature of religious expression among the Judeo-Egyptians and the ways in which it was adapted to the community's diasporic context. Furthermore, the process of adaptation was not one-sided; rather, as members of the community and their religious expression became more "Egyptian," so, too, did the Egyptian culture in which they found themselves become more "Judean." The mainstream culture also changed to accommodate the contributions of the many different groups of non-Egyptian soldiers and their families who established homes in Yeb, Syene, and beyond. There arose a kind of koine in which individuals from a variety of backgrounds could be fluent, in which they could participate and contribute.

It is possible that this construction of Judean identity is the product of time, of a gradual normalizing of the diaspora experience for the community. If the claims of Yedaniah and his colleagues in the RLR are to be believed, then Judeans had been present in Yeb for over a century by the time the letter was composed. The community seems to have adapted to the Egyptian context over the course of that period and come to terms with its diasporic reality. It is also possible that the circumstances that led to their settlement played a role. If, as has been suggested, the Judeans arrived originally as mercenaries or imperial soldiers in a Saite pharaoh's army, then they would be absent the traumatic experience of exile or deportation experienced by their contemporaries in Babylonia. These circumstances may have also afforded the earliest settlers an opportunity to prepare for the journey, which may have included gathering resources for the institution of a new temple.

*Diaspora vs. Exile: Views of Judean Life in Babylonia*

In ch. 4, I shifted my focus to the diaspora community of Babylonia and the administrative and literary evidence that attests to its experience. The juxtaposition of this evidence spoke to the variety of ways by which one could identify and be identified as Judean in the Babylonian diaspora in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Many of the differences that can be observed in these constructions of Judeanness might be attributed to the nature of the evidence that presents them. From the perspective of the Babylonian administration as represented in the cuneiform record, *Yāhūdi* was primarily a tax and labor unit. It continued as a salient category as long as it served the central government's needs. On the other hand, the Book of Ezekiel presents Judeanness from the perspective of an insider; the work defines the collective (בית ישראל) in terms of ancestral kinship, geography, and relationship to a deity. The varying presentations are dependent upon the genre of the evidence, the perspective of the author of the text, and the value of ethnicity for that author.

However, the variation in observable Judeanness in these texts was not solely a function of these factors; I have also argued for significant differences in how ethnic identity was constructed based on the primary social or institutional point of reference for an individual Judean. Aḥīqam son of Rāpa–Yāma was a Judeo-Babylonian who achieved a certain level of economic, political, and social success in his role as a representative of his diasporic community. Even as he maintained markers of his Judeanness — use of Hebrew, veneration of Yahweh, continued ties to his Judeo-Babylonian community — he and his descendants established long distance and long term relationships with both Judean and non-Judean neighbors. Through the

development of these networks and the kinds of capital associated with them, Judeans like Aḥīqam adapted to their diasporic Babylonian context and developed a kind of fluency in local professional subcultures. Even as some members of the collective undertook return migration during the first decades of Persian rule, a community of Judeo-Babylonians continued to live in the Nippur region for another century, allowing further integration of Judean identity into its diasporic context.

In the material written from a Judean insider's perspective — the Book of Ezekiel and Isaiah 40–48 — there is a dramatically different interpretation of life in Babylonia. Despite evidence of the clear cultural (linguistic, symbolic, material) influence of their diasporic context, both works condemn adaptation to and integration into life outside of Judea. Instead, they look prescribe and forward to return migration, claiming Judea to be the uniquely acceptable homeland for Judeans. In the case of the Book of Ezekiel, I argued that this drastically different feeling toward life in Babylonia was at least in part a function of the work's association with the Jerusalemite priesthood. Its projection of Judeanness was rooted in a theological outlook that privileged a best, ideal, or unique place to worship Yahweh, a conviction that I have called a "theology of place." While primarily ideological in nature, I also argued that the opportunities for cultural and economic capital associated with theology of place would have played a significant role in how the Book of Ezekiel constructed Judeanness and its relationship to Judea. In support of this argument, I suggested that the return migration of religious professionals in contemporary diasporic communities of Assyrians and Neirabians shared the Book of Ezekiel's

theological outlook and abandoned the positions and capital they had developed over generations in Babylonia.

Finally, through a close reading of the introduction to Isaiah 40–48, I argued that the theology of place that drove the book of Ezekiel’s construction of Judeanness was not universal among members of the diaspora. Instead, the author of Isaiah 40–48 offered a rhetorically complex and impressive composition meant to convince those he/she considered to be members of the collective body that a return to Judea was part of a broader divine plan. By hailing its audience as heralds proclaiming Yahweh’s triumphant march to Jerusalem, the composition argues that rebuilding life in Judea is incumbent upon those who would be included among the deity’s servants. When faced with the question, “given who I am, where do I belong?” the author of Isaiah 40–48, following in the footsteps of the author of the book of Ezekiel, argues strongly and decisively that the answer is clear: Judea.

#### *The View from the Homeland: Judeans in Judea*

A fundamental question in my analysis of the Judeo-Egyptian and Judeo-Babylonian communities addressed how the diaspora viewed its relationship to Judea. In ch. 5, I reversed the direction of that question, asking how Judeans in Judea — both those who remained in the region during the Neo-Babylonian period and those who later undertook return migration — reflected on their relationship to Judeans in the diaspora.

In order to address this question, I first sought to establish that there were Judeans in Judea throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. I argued that there was not a complete break in local

communal identity between the monarchic and Persian periods, nor was there a clear surge in foreign settlement of the region, two views that scholars have traditionally identified within the literature preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, I showed that the continued production of a particular kind of material culture — storage jars impressed with stamp seals — represented an avenue by which a continuous sense of Judean identity could have been constructed and reproduced among the local population of Judea. Following the deportation or execution of members of the monarchy in 586 BCE, a new class of local elites stepped into the power vacuum that was left behind and were able to maintain the system of redistribution of which the storage jars were a part. In so doing, they also facilitated the reproduction of the symbolic value of that institution and its material output to the degree that the Persians, when they took control of the region in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, recognized it as יהודי and thus named the region after this self-designation of its inhabitants.

This continuity of Judean identity in the material record is counterbalanced by a series of *mythomoteurs* for the community in Judea during the Persian period that have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. I focused on four such origin stories — the book of Haggai, Zech 1–8, Ezra 9.6–15, and Neh 9.5–37 — to analyze how the elites responsible for producing the texts constructed their communities within them. I chose these narratives because of their ideological function within their communities and also for how often they are used in modern scholarship to reconstruct historical events in Judea during the Persian period. This preponderance of *mythomoteurs* set in the early and mid-Persian period demonstrate a variety of constructions of Judeanness during this time, and among the literate elite in particular. These origin myths speak

to the presence of multiple and competing voices participating in a broader discussion over what it meant to be a Judean during this time. While the experience of the exile could be mobilized as a fundament of Judean identity, it was only one of many potential diacritics of Judeanness that was embraced in these *mythomoteurs*, alongside possession of Judea and the centrality of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem for Judean life therein.

### *Beyond Ancient Judeans*

In addition to providing a new approach to the study of ancient Judean identity, I believe this project has much to offer those fields of ethnicity, diaspora, and trauma from which it has drawn significant insights. Because the Judeans of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE have served as paradigmatic models within these fields of research, the model proposed here has ramifications within those fields as well. Rather than assuming loss and suffering as the cornerstones of diaspora identity, as does Safran in his discussion of the paradigmatic "Jewish" model, my analysis asks scholars to look closely at the evidence to see if such loss is present or dominant. If these Judeans were not necessarily defined by these features, then later communities need not be, either, thus setting the stage for more nuanced explorations of these phenomena.

## Conclusions

*Seeking Judeans Where We Might Expect to Find Them: Limitations of My Approach*

As I outlined in ch. 2, the nature of the evidence for analyzing identity construction among ancient communities and individuals is quite different from contemporary treatments of ethnicity and diaspora. We lack access to the interviews, observations, and personal experiences on which contemporary social scientific models are typically based. Instead, I have had to rely on a wide variety of kinds of necessarily incomplete evidence, including ideological literature, inconsistently preserved administrative and personal documents, and a limited material record available for only a very small percentage of the communities in question. Further complicating the issue, it has been rare that preserved evidence for a given Judean community overlapped in kind with another. Despite the occasional paralleling of source material (e.g. a roughly contemporary corpus of Aramaic legal documents in Yeb and Samaria), the evidence for each community studied has been relatively idiosyncratic, thereby limiting any universal claims that I might offer in conclusion.

I also noted in ch. 2 that relying so heavily on onomastic evidence for Judean identity, as I have had to do in this project, limits and potentially skews my results. While I have tried to defend this approach through an appeal to insights from ancient and contemporary naming patterns, I recognize that my work is nonetheless subject to a certain level of critique for circularity. I determined that Judeans would have Judean names (e.g. Hebrew or Yahwistic) and thus those individuals who had these kinds of names should be considered Judean. In so doing, I have potentially over-relied on religious or linguistic aspects of Judean identity in a given context or under-appreciated other potential diacritics of collective identity like food culture or building practices. This skewing may also parallel a class distinction among those represented in

the evidence, as written sources that likely reflect the ideologies of a literary elite have served as important sources for this work. This weighting is perhaps somewhat balanced by the administrative records from Babylonia and Yeb. But even here, this evidence has notably less to say about how those Judeans who feature in it may have constructed their sense of identity than it does about the scribes and their considerations of what were relevant details within the context of the document.

In pointing out these limitations, I also recognize that the discovery of further evidence for any of the communities that I have studied may dramatically alter the necessarily partial portraits offered in this study. This is perhaps best illustrated by the insights gained through the study of the material from *Āl-Yāḥūdu* in CUSAS 28 and the second volume of that material, BaAr 6, that still awaits publication. In addition to highlighting the provisional nature of the conclusions that I have offered over the course of this project, the reality of this situation nonetheless points to one of the project's primary tenets: that identity is always historical and contextual. It is the product of a variety of political, social, economic, and cultural factors. Further, its expression is determined, or at least mediated, by the sources available to the group or individual who would express it.

It is therefore somewhat ironic that I opened this project with a critique of a 19<sup>th</sup> century model of Second Temple Judaism by arguing that it was the product of its historical and ideological context. My project, too, is a product of its historical moment and subject to my own presuppositions about what questions to ask of the ancient sources as well as what answers they might be able to offer. My work is grounded in a traditional historical critical model of Biblical

Studies that also draws from a variety of social scientific whose insights I have found to be productive for a discussion of ancient communities. However, I realize that if my work should be reexamined by scholars 100 years from now (or even next week), it will no doubt be susceptible to the same critique concerning its historical nature; that is, my own (perhaps subconscious) goals for the project will become evident and my approach critiqued for any number of reasons that I cannot yet predict.

These limitations, however, are not necessarily a threat to the primary thesis of the work: that the ongoing process of constructing Judeanness were the product of a variety of factors, including (but not limited to) time period, geographic location, perspective (insider vs. outsider), and the political status of the community. Rather, the provisionality of the analysis that I have offered allows it to grow with new evidence and better comparative examples. It is certainly possible that certain small-scale conclusions could be invalidated, but the larger model of Judeanness would no doubt be enriched and refined through the process.

#### *Roads Not Traveled: Areas for Further Research*

Despite the wide net cast for this dissertation, I was unable to include a number of texts from the Hebrew Bible that would add further depth and nuance to the communal studies provided here. For example, the book of Lamentations offers a dramatic rehearsal of Jerusalem's fall and is written from the perspective of witnesses to its destruction. As a literary response to that traumatic event — either in its immediate aftermath or some time afterwards — the work would add significant insight into how Judeans processed not just the loss of homeland through

deportation as a result of the Babylonian conquest, but also witnessing the violence and destruction of siege warfare. As a balance to Lamentations, the author of Chronicles dramatically downplays the catastrophe, emphasizing instead a longstanding and inclusive sense of continuity for the inhabitants of Judea and the surrounding territory. The inclusion of these texts would no doubt enrich the portrait(s) of Judean identity presented above.

In addition to incorporating more sources into my analysis, I believe there is more work to be done on the hierarchical positions these communities held within the Persian empire and its predecessors. I have gestured toward the privileged status of the Judeo-Egyptians of Yeb vis-à-vis their subjugated Egyptian neighbors, but the community's liminal position as ethnic minority and imperial representative is worthy of further discussion. The role of these power dynamics in identity construction could be particularly productive when put into conversation with the subjugated status of Judeans in Judea and dependent status of Judeo-Babylonians who found themselves integrated into the land-for-service system. I believe insights from the field of post-colonial studies could be particularly helpful in pursuing this line of questioning.

Related to this question of the role of Judeans in the imperial hierarchy, I am also interested in how the figures of Ezra and Nehemiah came to be heroes in the collection of texts that bears their name. The narrative material makes clear that these figures were considered members of the in-group, but they also serve as representatives of the imperial government. Leaving aside the question of whether these complex individuals were historical figures or literary creations, their lionization — as members of the Judean diaspora and wielders of imperial authority — in these narratives and their inclusion within the broader collection of Ezra-

Nehemiah raises a number of questions about their value for the process of identity construction that is reflected in that collection. Scholars have argued that their missions should be understood within broader imperial policies in the eastern Mediterranean. Even if one were to accept these conclusions, which are by no means uncontroversial, the question still remains as to why their narratives should have been preserved in a Judean document.

*The יהודים, יהודיא, and Yāhūdāya of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE*

In this dissertation I have argued that Judean identity during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries was not a monolithic and static entity defined by trauma, loss, displacement, and guilt. Not every community was defined by exile. Rather, the ‘Judeanness’ of the post-monarchic period was a complex, contextual, and continuous process of identity formation that was undertaken, consciously or unconsciously, by individuals and communities in a variety of contexts, resulting in new and hybrid constructions of identity. Members of communities in different geographical, cultural, and political circumstances (including Egypt, Samaria, Babylonia, and Judea) would have conceived of and expressed their collective Judean identities differently. Crucially, these differences — often the product of the intercultural interactions facilitated by population movement — do not signal a dilution or diversion from some ‘ideal’ or ‘natural’ form of ‘Judeanness’; rather they reflect productive and adaptive processes that defined the variety of Judean experiences in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.



## Bibliography

- Abraham, Kathleen. "West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from Sixth Century BCE: New Evidence from a Marriage Contract from Āl-Yahudu." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 51 (2005/2006): 198–219.
- , "An Inheritance Division among Judeans in Babylonia from the Early Persian Period." Pages 206–211 in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean, and Cuneiform* Edited by M. Lubetski; HBM 8. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2007.
- Ackroyd, Peter R. "The Book of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8." *Journal of Jewish Studies* 3 (1952): 151–156.
- . *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1968.
- Agut-Labordère, Damien, "Administering Egypt Under the First Persian Period: The Empire as Visible in the Demotic Sources." Pages 677–698 in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen" aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*. Edited by Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann, and Matthew W. Stolper. *Classica et Orientalia*. 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.
- Aharoni, Yohanan. "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 31 (1968): 2–32.
- . "Trial Excavation in the 'Solar Shrine' at Lachish: Preliminary Report." *Israel Exploration Journal* 18 (1968): 157–169.
- Ahituv, Shmuel. *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period*. Jerusalem: Carta, 2008.
- Ainiäla, Terhi and Jan-Ola Östman, "Introduction: Socio-onomastics and Pragmatics." Pages 1–18 in *Socio-nomastics : The Pragmatics of Names* Edited by Terhi Ainiäla and Jan-Ola Östman; *Pragmatics & Beyond New Series* 275. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing

- Company, 2017.
- Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration." *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 826–874.
- Alba, Richard D. and Victor Nee. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Albertz, Rainer. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*. Vols. I– II. The Old Testament Library. Translated by John Bowden. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- . *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century BCE*. Studies in Biblical Literature 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Lit, 2003.
- Aldrin, Emilia, "Creating Identities through the Choice of First Names." Pages 45–68 in *Socionomastics : The Pragmatics of Names* Edited by Terhi Ainiola and Jan-Ola Österman. Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 275. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Trauma: A Social Theory*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2012.
- Allen, Leslie C. *Ezekiel: 1–19*. Word Biblical Commentaries 28. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990.
- Alstola, Tero Esko. "Judeans in Babylonia: A Study of Deportees in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BCE." PhD diss., Leiden University, 2017.
- Alt, Albrecht. *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*. 2. Munchen: C.H. Beck, 1953.
- , "Zur Geschichte der Grenze zwischen Judäa und Samaria." Pages 346–362 in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* Edited by 2. Munchen: C.H. Beck, 1953.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative: Revised and Updated*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- Althusser, Louis, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation)." Pages 85–126 in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays with a New Introduction by Frederic Jameson* Edited by Louis Althusser. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.
- Amzallag, Nissim. "The Authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah in Light of Differences in Their Ideological Background." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137 (2018): 271–297.
- Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of*

- Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Antonaccio, Carla M., “(Re)Defining Ethnicity: Culture, Material Culture, and Identity.” Pages 32–53 in *Material culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World* Edited by Shelley Hales and Tamar. Hodos; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Arai, Mahmood and Peter Skogman Thoursie. “Renouncing Personal Names: An Empirical Examination of Surname Change and Earnings.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 1 (2009): 127–147.
- Armstrong, John Alexander. *Nations Before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Avigad, Nahman. “Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive / בולות וחותמות מתוך ארכיון ממלכתי מימי שיבת ציון.” *Qedem* 4 (1976): 1–36, א.
- Awabdy, Mark A. “YHWH Exegetes Torah: How Ezekiel 44:7–9 Bars Foreigners from the Sanctuary.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131 (2012): 685–703.
- Azzoni, Annalisa. *The Private Lives of Women in Persian Egypt*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.
- Baden, Joel S. *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*. FAT. Mohr Siebeck, 2009.
- , “Deuteronomic Evidence for the Documentary Theory.” Pages 327–344 in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* Edited by Thomas Dozeman, B, Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz, J; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
- . *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*. The Anchor Yale Bible reference library. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- . *The Promise to the Patriarchs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Balaev, Michelle, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered.” Pages 1–14 in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. Edited by Michelle Balaev; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Balberg, Mira and Simeon Chavel. “The Polymorphous Pesah: Ritual Between Origins and Reenactment.” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 8 (2017): 292–343.
- Balentine, Samuel, ““I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask”.” Pages in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* Edited by Mark Boda, Richard Falk and Rodney Werline; EJM 21. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

- Banks, Marcus. *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Bankston, Carl L. and Min Zhou. "Religious Participation, Ethnic Identification, and Adaptation of Vietnamese Adolescents in an Immigrant Community." *The Sociological Quarterly* 36 (1995): 523–534.
- Barstad, Hans M. *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah During the "Exilic" Period*. Symbolae Osloenses Fasc Supplements 28. Boston: Scandinavian University Press, 1996.
- Barth, Fredrik, "Introduction." Pages 9–38 in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* Edited by. Frederik Barth. London: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin, 1969.
- , "Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity." Pages 11–32 in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* Edited by Hans. Vermeulen and Cora. Govers; Hague, Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994.
- Barton, John, "Wellhausen's Prolegomena to the History of Israel: Influences and Effects." Pages 169–179 in *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Essays of John Barton* Edited by John Barton. Society for Old Testament Study Monographs. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.
- Basu, Paul, "Route Metaphors of 'Roots-Tourism' in the Scottish Highland Diaspora." Pages 153–177 in *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* Edited by Simon Coleman and John Eade; European Association of Social Anthropologists. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Baumgart, Norbert Clemens. "Überkommene Traditionen neu aufgearbeitet und angeeignet: Lev 26, 3–45. Das Heiligkeitsgesetz in Exil und Diaspora." *Biblische Zeitschrift* 43 (1999): 1–25.
- Bautch, Richard J, "The Formulary of Atonement (Lev 16: 21) in Penitential Prayers of the Second Temple Period." Pages 33–45 in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions* Edited by Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas; TBN. Brill, 2012.
- Beaulieu, Paul-Alain. *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* YNER 10. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
- . "The Cult of AN.ŠÁR/AŠŠUR in Babylonia after the Fall of the Assyrian Empire." *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 11 (1997): 55–73.

- , “Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium BC Mesopotamia.” Pages 187–216 in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Culture*. Edited by Seth Sanders; OIS 2. 2006.
- , “The Afterlife of Assyrian Scholarship in Hellenistic Babylonian.” Pages 1–18 in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch*. Edited by J. Stackert, B. N. Porter and D.P. Wright; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010.
- , “Yahwistic Names in Light of Late Babylonian Onomastics.” Pages 245–266 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- . *A History of Babylon, 2200 BC - AD 75*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018–02–05.
- Becker, Birgit. “Immigrants’ Emotional Identification with the Host Society: The Example of Turkish Parents’ Naming Practices in Germany.” *Ethnicities* 9 (2009): 200–225.
- Becker, Eve-Marie, “‘Trauma Studies’ and Exegesis.” Pages 15–29 in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* Edited by Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Doehorn and Else K. Holt; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica. Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.
- Becking, Bob, “In Babylon: The Exile in Historical (Re)construction.” Pages 10–39 in *From Babylon to Eternity: The Exile Remembered and Constructed in Text and Tradition* Edited by Bob Becking, Alex Cannegieter, Wilfred van de Poll and Anne-Mareike Wetter; Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2009.
- , “Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance? Two Examples of Lending Deities Among Ethnic Groups in Elephantine.” Pages 30–43 in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World* Edited by. Boston: Brill, 2017.
- Bentley, G. Carter. “Ethnicity and Practice.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 24–55.
- Berlejung, Angelika., “New Life, New Skills, and New Friends in Exile: The Loss and Rise of Capitals of the Judeans in Babylonia.” Pages 12–45 in *Alphabets, Texts and Artifacts in the Ancient Near East: Studies Presented to Benjamin Sass* Edited by Israel Finkelstein, Christian Robin and Thomas Römer; Paris: Van Dieren, 2016.
- , “Social Climbing in the Babylonian Exile.” Pages 101–124 in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria : Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* Edited by Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir and Andreas Schüle; Leipziger altorientalistische Studien 5.

Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.

Beuken, Wim. *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8*. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der fruhnachexilischen Prophetie. SSN 10. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. OTL. Westminster John Knox Press, 1988.

———. *A History of Prophecy in Israel: Revised and Enlarged*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

———. *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 19. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

———. *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 19a. New York: Doubleday, 2002.

Bloch, Yigal. “Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile: Assimilation and Perseverance under Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Rule.” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 1 (2014): 119–172.

———. “From Horse Trainers to Dependent Workers: The Šušānu Class in the Late Babylonian Period, with a Special Focus on Āl-Yāhūdu Tablets.” *KASAL: Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico* 14 (2017): 91–118.

Block, Daniel I. “The Tender Cedar Sprig : Ezekiel on Jehoiachin.” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 173–202.

Block, Daniel Isaac. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*. NICOT 1. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997.

———. *The Book of Ezekiel; Chapters 25–48*. NICOT 2. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997.

Boase, Elizabeth, “Fragmented Voicess: Collective Identity and Traumatization in Lamentations.” Pages 49–66 in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma* Edited by Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette; Semeia Studies 86. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.

Boda, Mark, “Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet.” Pages 49–69 in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*. Edited by Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; Studies in Theology and Religion 5. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003.

———, “Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament: Sitz im Leben and Form.” Pages 181–192 in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* Edited by Mark Boda, Richard Falk and Rodney

- Werline; EJL. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.
- , “Reconsidering Exclusive Inclusivity: Perspectives from Zechariah and Ezra–Nehemiah.” Pages 5–12 in *Exclusivity and Inclusivity in Post-Monarchic Society and Literature: A Conversation on Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th–5th Centuries BCE)* Edited by Mark A. Leuchter; JHebS 18. 2019.
- Boda, Mark J. “Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1:7–6:15.” *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 3 (2001).
- Boda, Mark J. *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 277. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- . *Haggai & Zechariah Research: A Bibliographic Survey*. Tools for Biblical Study 5. Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2003.
- , “Hoy Hoy: The Prophetic Origins of the Babylonian Tradition in Zechariah 2:10–17.” Pages 171–190 in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* Edited by Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd; Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 475. New York: T & T Clark, 2008.
- Bompiani, Brian. “Style Switching in the Speech of Transjordanians.” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016): 51–71.
- Bonus, Rick. “Assimilation.” *Encyclopedia of American Studies* (2016).
- Borschel-Dan, Amanda. “2,500-year-old seals may show Jews rebuilding Jerusalem after 1st Temple exile.” *The Times of Israel* (June 30, 2020).
- Botta, Alejandro, “Egypt.” Pages 366–377 in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* Edited by Herbert Niehr; HOS 106. 2014.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Bowman, Raymond A. “An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944): 219–231.
- Boyarin, Daniel. *A Traveling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Boyd, Monica. “Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas.” *The International Migration Review* 3 (1989): 638–670.

- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities. Gender, Racism, Ethnicity*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. "Judaism in the Hebrew Bible? The Transition from Ancient Israelite Religion to Judaism." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1999): 429–447.
- Briant, Pierre. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002.
- Buell, Denise Kimber and Caroline E Johnson Hodge. "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 235–251.
- Bunimovitz, Shlomo and Avraham Faust, "Building Identity: The Four-Room House and the Israelite Mind." Pages 411–423 in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors From the Late Bronze Age Through Roman Palaestina: Proceedings from the Centennial Symposium W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research Jerusalem, May 29–May 31, 2000* Edited by Seymour Gitin and William G. Dever; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Bursell, Moa. "Name Change and Destigmatization Among Middle Eastern Immigrants in Sweden." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (2012): 471–487.
- Carlson Hasler, Laura. *Archival Historiography in Jewish Antiquity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Carlson, Laura, "Zechariah, Zerubbabel, and Zemaḥ: Ideological Development in Early Post-Exilic Judah." Pages 261–275 in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy* Edited by John J. Collins, Joel S. Baden, Hindy Najman and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Boston: Brill, 2017.
- Carroll, R. P. "Ancient Israelite Prophecy and Dissonance Theory." *Numen* 24 (1977): 135–151.
- Carroll, Robert P. "The Myth of the Empty Land." *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79–93.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the 'Old Testament' and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works. 2*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983.
- Chavel, Simeon. "Prophetic Imagination in the Light of Narratology and Disability Studies in

- Isaiah 40–48.” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 (2014): 1–47.
- . “Divine Presence and Its Representation in the Elohist and Priestly Histories.” Paper presented at SBL. Boston, 2017.
- , “Yahweh Become a Temple? MT Ezekiel 11:16 *מִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה*.” Forthcoming. 2020.
- . “Ezekiel Ben Buzi, the Raggedy-Ann Prophet.” Paper presented at SBL-EABS Conference in Helsinki, Finland, July 30-August 3, 2018
- Christensen, Duane L. *Nahum: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 24F. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Sue, Christina A. and Edward E. Telles. “Assimilation and Gender in Naming.” *American Journal of Sociology* 5 (2007): 1383–1415.
- Chrostowski, Waldemar. “An Examination of Conscience by God’s People as Exemplified in Neh 9: 6–37.” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 34 (1990): 253–261.
- Clements, Ronald E. Še’ar, Še’erit. *ThWAT* 7: 933–950
- Clements, Ronald, E. “Beyond Tradition History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31 (1985): 95–113.
- Clifford, James. “Diasporas.” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): 302–338.
- Clifford, Richard J. *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah*. Theological inquiries. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.
- Cogan, Mordechai. “Sennacherib’s Siege of Jerusalem: Once or Twice?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 27 (2001): 40–45, 69.
- Cogan, Mordechai and Hayim Tadmor. *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 11. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
- Cohen, Anthony P., “Boundaries of Consciousness, Consciousness of Boundaries. Critical Questions for Anthropology.” Pages 59–80 in *The Anthropology of Ethnicity* Edited by Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers; Hague, The Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994.
- Cohen, Robin. “Rethinking ‘Babylon’: Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 21 (1995): 5–18.
- . *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2001.

- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. HCS 31. University of California Press, 1999.
- Colburn, Henry P., “Pioneers of the Western Desert: The Kharga Oasis in the Achaemenid Empire.” Pages 86–114 in *The Archaeology of Imperial Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Empires in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* Edited by Bleda S. Daring and Tesse Dieder Stek; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Conzen, Kathleen Neils. “Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (1991): 5–20.
- Cook, Stephen L. “Innerbiblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44 and the History of Israel’s Priesthood.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995): 193–208.
- Cornell, Collin. “Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb.” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 47 (2016): 291–309.
- Cowley, A. E. and Ahikar Ahikar. *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Cross, Frank M. “The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 274–277.
- Crouch, C L. “Ezekiel’s Immobility and the Meaning of ‘the House of Judah ‘in Ezekiel 4.’” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44 (2019): 182–197.
- Crouch, C. L. “What Makes a Thing Abominable? Observations on the Language of Boundaries and Identity Formation from a Social Science Perspective.” *Vetus Testamentum* 65 (2015): 516–541.
- Cunningham, Marshall A. “Isaiah 40:1–2: Reading Royal Commission as a Call for Return Migration in the Early Persian Period.” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 19 (2019): 1–33.
- D’Agostino, Anacleto, “The Contribution of Pottery in Reconstructing Aspects of Local Rural Economy at the Northern Frontier of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.” Pages 107–123 in *Dynamics of Production in the Ancient Near East: 1300–500 BCE* Edited by Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia; Philadelphia: Oxbow books, 2016.
- Da Riva, Rocio. “Nebuchadnezzar II’s Prism (EŞ 7834): A New Edition.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 103 (2014): 196–229.
- Dandamayev, Muhammad, “Twin Towns and Ethnic Minorities in First-Millennium Babylonia.” Pages 137–151 in *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium of the*

*Assyrian And Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project, Held In Innsbruck, Austria, October 3rd - 8th 2002* Edited by Robert. Rollinger, Christoph Ulf and Kordula. Schnegg; OeO 6. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004.

Dandamayev, Muhammad A., “The Neo-Babylonian Elders.” Pages 38–41 in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of I M Diakonoff* Edited by Nicholas Postgate and Muhammad A. Dandamayev; Westminster: Arts and Phillips LTD, 1982.

———. *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia*. Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 6. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1992.

———, “The Neo-Babylonian Popular Assembly.” Pages 63–71 in *Šulmu: Papers on the Ancient Near East Presented at International Conference of Socialist Countries (Prague, Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 1986)*. Edited by P. Vavroušek et al. Prague: Charles University Edited by Petr Vavroušek and Vladimír Souček; Prague: Charles University, 1988.

Davis, Ellen F. *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy*. JSOT Supplement Series 78. Sheffield, England: Almond, 1989.

Day, Peggy L. “The Bitch Had It Coming to Her: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Ezekiel 16.” *Biblical Interpretation* 8 (2000): 231–254.

De Vaux, Roland. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. Translated by John Mchugh. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

de Wette, Wilhelm Martin Leberecht. “Ueber Religion und Theologie: Erläuterungen zu seinem Lehrbuche der Dogmatik.” (1815).

———. *Biblische Dogmatik Alten und Neuen Testaments oder kritische Darstellung der Religionslehre des Hebräers, des Judenthums und Urchristentums. Zum Gebrauch akademischer Vorlesungen*. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1831.

DeGrado, Jessie. “Authoring Empire: Intellectual Engagement with the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the Bible.” PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2018.

Delorme, Jean-Philippe. “Byt Ysr’l in Ezekiel: Identity Construction and the Exilic Period.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138 (2019): 121–139.

Demetriou, Denise. *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean: The Archaic and Classical Greek Multiethnic Emporia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Demsky, Aaron. “The Temple Steward Josiah ben Zephaniah.” *Israel Exploration Journal* 31 (1981): 100–102.

- Dever, William G. "Cultural Continuity, Ethnicity in the Archaeological Record and the Question of Israelite Origins." *Eretz-Israel* 24 (1993): 22–33.
- . *What Did the Biblical Writers Know, and When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001.
- Dhorme, P. "Les tablettes babyloniennes de Neirab." *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 25 (1928): 53–82.
- Dobbs-Allsopp, Frederick William. "Rethinking Historical Criticism." *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1999): 235–271.
- Dor, Yonina. "The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX-X." *Vetus Testamentum* 53 (2003): 26–47.
- , "The Rite of Separation of the Foreign Wives in Ezra–Nehemiah." Pages 173–188 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*. FAT. Edited by Thomas Dozeman, B. Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz, J. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
- Dubnow, Simon. "Diaspora." *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 4: 126
- Dufoix, Stéphane. *The Dispersion: A History of the Word Diaspora*. Brill's Specials in Modern History 1. Boston: Brill, 2017.
- Duggan, Michael W., "Ezra 9:6–15: A Penitential Prayer within Its Literary Setting." Pages 165–180 in *Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Mark Boda, Richard Falk and Rodney Werline; 1. Boston: Brill, 2007.
- Dusek, Jan. *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450–332 av. J.-C.* CHANE 30. Boston: Brill, 2007.
- Dušek, Jan., "Archaeology and Texts in the Persian Period: Focus on Sanballat." Pages 117–132 in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* Edited by Martti Nissinen; Boston: Brill, 2012.
- Dusinberre, Elspeth R. M. *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Ebaugh, Helen Rose and Janet Saltzman Chafetz. "Structural Adaptations in Immigrant

- Congregations.” *Sociology of Religion* 61 (2000): 135–153.
- Ebaugh, Helen Rose Fuchs and Janet Saltzman Chafetz. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000.
- Edelman, Diana Vikander, “Introduction.” Pages 15–26 in *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*. Edited by Diana Vikander Edelman; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Ezekiel: A Commentary*. The Old Testament library. Translated by Coslett Quin. London: Students Christian Movement Press, 1970.
- Eidheim, Harald, “When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma.” Pages 39–57 in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* Edited by Fredrik Barth; London: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin, 1969.
- Eph’al, Israel. “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th-5th Centuries B.C.: Maintenance and Cohesion.” *Orientalia*. 47 (1978): 74–90.
- . “On the Political and Social Organization of the Jews in Babylonian Exile.” *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. 5 (1983): 107–122.
- Eph’al, Israel. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th–5th Century B.C.* Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1982.
- Erikson, Kai, “Notes on Trauma and Community.” Pages 183–199 in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* Edited by Cathy Caruth; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn, “Revisiting the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Prolegomenon.” Pages 215–234 in *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards*. Edited by Kent Harold Richards, Charles William Miller and Frank Ritzel Ames; BSNA 24. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.
- Fales, Frederick Mario, Luc Bachelot and Ezio Attardo. “An Aramaic Tablet from Tell Shioukh Fawqani, Syria.” *Semitica*. 46 (1996): 82–121.
- Faust, Avraham. “The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West: Olive Oil Production as a Test-Case.” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 54 (2011): 62–86.
- . *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation*. SBLABS 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

- . *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*. Translated by Ruth Ludlum. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- Feldman, Burton. and Robert D. Richardson. *The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680–1860*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Finkelstein, Israel and Yuval Gadot. “Mozah, Nephtoah and royal estates in the Jerusalem highlands.” *Semitica. et Classica* 8 (2015): 227–234.
- Finkelstein, Louis and W. D. Davies, *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Introduction: The Persian Period*. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Fitzpatrick-McKinley, Anne. *Empire, Power, and Indigenous Elites: A Case Study of the Nehemiah Memoir*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 169. Boston: Brill, 2015.
- , “Preserving the Cult of Yhwh in Judean Garrisons: Continuity from Pharaonic to Ptolemaic Times.” Pages 375–408 in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy* Edited by John J. Collins, Joel S. Baden, Hindy Najman and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Boston: Brill, 2017.
- Flynn, Shawn W. YHWH is King: *The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 159. Boston: Brill, 2014.
- Fowler, Robert L. “Genealogical Thinking, Hesiod’s ‘Catalogue,’ and the Creation of the Hellenes.” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 44 (1998): 1–19.
- Frechette, Christopher G. “The Old Testament as Controlled Substance: How Insights from Trauma Studies Reveal Healing Capacities in Potentially Harmful Texts.” *Interpretation* 69 (2015): 20–34.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Moses and Monotheism*. Translated by Katherine Jones. New York: Knopf, 1939.
- Fried, Lisbeth S. “A Silver Coin of Yohanan Hakkôhên.” *Transeuphratène* 26 (2003): 65–85.
- , “The “am hā’āreš” in Ezra 4:4 and Persian Imperial Administration.” Pages 123–146 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- . *Ezra: A Commentary*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015.
- , “The Artaxerxes Letter and the Mission of Ezra — noch einmal.” Pages 31–44 in *‘His Word Soars Above Him’: Biblical and North-West Semitic Studies Presented to Professor*

- Charles K. Krashmalkov Edited by Robert M. Kerr, Robert Miller and Philip C. Schmitz; Ann Arbor, MI: 2018.
- Fried, Lisbeth S. *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California 10. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- Fried, Lisbeth S., “The Role of the Governor in Persian Imperial Administration.” Pages 317–331 in *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten* Edited by Alejandro F. Botta; CHANE 60. Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Ganzel, Tova and Shalom E. Holtz. “Ezekiel’s Temple in Babylonian Context.” *Vetus Testamentum* 64 (2014): 211–226.
- Garber, David G. “Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies.” *Currents in Biblical Research* 14 (2015): 24–44.
- Garfinkel, Yosef and Madeleine Mumcuoglu. “The Temple of Solomon in Iron Age Context.” *Religions* 10 (2019): 1–17.
- Garlan, Yvon. “Les timbres amphoriques en Grèce ancienne. Nouvelles questions. Nouvelles méthodes. Nouveaux résultats.” *Journal des savants* 2 (2013): 203–270.
- Gerdmar, Anders. *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*. Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20. Boston: Brill, 2009.
- Gertz, Jan Christian, “Military Threat and the Concept of Exile in the Book of Amos.” Pages 11–26 in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.
- Gesundheit, Shimon. *Three Times a Year: Studies on Festival Legislation in the Pentateuch*. FAT 82. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Gitay, Yehoshua. “Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 185–197.
- Gitin, Seymour. “Tel Mique-Ekron: A Type-Site for the Inner Coastal Plain in the Iron Age II Period.” *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 59 (1989): 23–58.

- Glazer, Nathan and Daniel P. Moynihan. *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1963.
- Goldingay, John. "Isaiah 42.18–25." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67 (1995): 43–65.
- Goldingay, John. and David Payne. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55: Volume I*. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.
- Goldstein, Ronnie. "Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 20 (2013): 433–451.
- Golub, Mitka R. "Personal Names in Judah in the Iron Age II." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 62 (2017): 19–58.
- Gordon, Milton Myron. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Gosse, Bernard. "La menace qui vient du nord, les retournements d'oracles contre Babylone et Jérémie 30–31." *Estudios bíblicos* 56 (1998): 289–314.
- Grabbe, Lester, "Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes? The Ezra-Nehemiah Reforms and their Nachgeschichte." Pages 50–65 in *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* Edited by Siân Jones and Sarah Pearce; *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 31*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Grabbe, Lester L., ed. *Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 278*. Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- . *Ezra-Nehemiah*. OTR. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Granerød, Gard. *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaeon Community at Elephantine*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 488. Boston: De Gruyter, 2016.
- Grayson, A.K. *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000.
- Greenberg, Moshe. *Ezekiel, 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 22. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983.
- . *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible

22a. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Greenen, Elke, “Gesellschaftliche Verfügung über Kapitalien und Vulnerabilität in knozeptioneller Perspektive.” Pages 41–67 in *Disaster and Relief Management = Katastrophen und ihre Bewältigung* Edited by Angelika Berlejung; FAT 81. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

Greenfield, Jonas C. “The Dialects of Early Aramaic.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37 (1978): 93–99.

Greenstein, Edward L. “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism in Canaanite Poetry and their Psycholinguistic Background.” *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 6 (1974): 22–39.

———. “One More Step on the Staircase.” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 9 (1977): 77–86.

Grelot, Pierre. *Documents arameens d’Egypte: Introduction, traduction, présentation*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1972.

Gropp, Douglas M., “The Wadi Daliyeh Documents Compared to the Elephantine Documents.” Pages 826–835 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Major Issues and New Approaches : An International Congress, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, July 20–25, 1997* Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov and James C. VanderKam; Jerusalem: The Israel Museum : Israel Antiquities Authority : The Hebrew University of Jerusalem : Israel Exploration Society, 2000.

Gudme, Anne Katrine de Hemmer, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Dedicatory Inscriptions as Communication with the Divine.” Pages 1–15 in *Mediating Between Heaven and Earth: Communication with the Divine in the Ancient Near East* Edited by C. L. Crouch, Jonathan Stokl and Anna Elise. Zernecke; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 566. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012.

Gzella, Holger. *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam*. HOS 111. Boston: Brill, 2015.

Hackl, Johannes, “Babylonian Scribal Practices in Rural Contexts: A Linguistic Survey of the Documents of Judean Exile and West Semites in Babylonia (CUSAS 28 and BaAr 6).” Pages 125–140 in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria : Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* Edited by Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir and Andreas Schüle; Leipzig: Altorientalistische Studien 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.

Hall, Jonathan M. *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

- Hallaschka, Martin, "From Cores to Corpus: Considering the Formation of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8." Pages 171–189 in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations-Redactional Processes-Historical Insights* Edited by Rainer Albertz, James Nogalski and Jakob Wöhrle; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 433. 2012.
- Halpern, Baruch, "Sybil, or the Two Nations? Archaism, Kinship, Alienation and the Elite Redefinition of Traditional Culture in Judah in the 8th–7th Centuries B.C.E." Pages 289–338 in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21st Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* Edited by Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz; 291–338. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996.
- Hals, Ronald M. *Ezekiel*. Forms of the Old Testament Literature 19. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Halvorson-Taylor, Martien A. *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 144. Boston: Brill, 2011.
- Haran, Menahem, "Literary Structure and Chronological Framework of the Prophecies in Is. xl–xlviii." Pages 127–155 in *Congress Volume Bonn 1962* Edited by P. A. H. De Boer G. W. Anderson; Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*. Boston: Brill, 1963.
- . *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985.
- Harkins, Angela Kim. "The Pro-Social Role of Grief in Ezra's Penitential Prayer." *Biblical Interpretation* 24 (2016): 466–491.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies." *New Literary History* 26 (1995): 537–563.
- Harvey Jr, Paul B and Baruch Halpern. "W. M. L. de Wette's "Dissertatio Critica...": Context and Translation." *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 14 (2008): 47–85.
- Hayes, John, H. and J. Miller, Maxwell. *A History of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Heckl, Raik. "Inside the Canon and Out: The Relationship Between Psalm 20 and Papyrus Amherst 63." *Semitica* 56 (2014): 359–379.
- Heffelfinger, Katie M. *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah*. Boston: Brill, 2011.

- Henige, David. "Found But Not Lost: A Skeptical Note on the Document Discovered in the Temple Under Josiah." *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7 (2007): 2–17.
- Henkelmann, Wouter F.M., "Imperial Signature and Imperial Paradigm: Achaemenid Administration Structure and System Across and Beyond the Iranian Plateau." Pages 45–256 in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen" aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*. Edited by Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann and Matthew W. Stolper; *Classica et Orientalia*. 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.
- Hensel, Benedikt. "On the Relationship of Judah and Samaria in Post-exilic Times: A Farewell to the Conflict Paradigm." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44 (2019): 1–24.
- Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.
- Herodotus. *The History*. Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Herzog, Ze'ev, "Perspectives on Southern Israel's Cult Centralization: Arad and Beer-sheba." Pages 169–199 in *One God–One Cult–One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* Edited by Reinhard Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; Beiheft zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 405. Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.
- Herzog, Ze'ev, Miriam Aharoni, Anson Rainey and Shmuel Moshkovitz. "The Israelite Fortress at Arad." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 254 (1984): 1.
- Hirschhorn, Sara Yael. *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.
- Hoglund, Kenneth G. *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah*. SBL Dissertation Series 125. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1992.
- Holloway, Steven W. *Aššur is king! Aššur is king!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. CHANE 10. Boston: Brill, 2002.
- Holm, Tawny L. "Nanay and Her Lover: An Aramaic Sacred Marriage Text from Egypt." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 76 (2017): 1–38.
- Holmstedt, Robert D. *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*. Linguistics Studies in the Ancient

World 10. 2016.

Holohan, Siobhan. "Assimilation." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (2012).

Honigman, Sylvie, "The Birth of a Diaspora: The Emergence of a Jewish Self-Definition in Ptolemaic Egypt in the Light of Onomastics." Pages 93–127 in *Diasporas in Antiquity* Edited by Shaye J. D. Cohen and Ernest Frerichs; BJS 288. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.

———. "Soldiers and Civilians in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Jewish Politeuma at Heracleopolis." *Scripta Classica Israelica* I (2002): 1–16.

———. "The Jewish Politeuma at Heracleopolis." *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002): 251–266.

———. "'Politeumata' and Ethnicity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt." *Ancient Society* 33 (2003): 61–102.

Hossfeld, Frank-Lothar and Erich Zenger. *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*. Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005.

Howard, Thomas Albert. *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Hundley, Michael B. *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine presence in the Ancient Near East*. Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 3. Atlanta: SBL, 2013.

Hurowitz, Victor. *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings*. JSOTSup 115. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

———. "The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985): 21–30.

Ilan, Tal, "Women's Archives from Elephantine and the Judean Desert: Law Codes and Archaeological Finds." Pages 171–180 in *Structures of Power: Law and Gender Across the Ancient Near East and Beyond* Edited by Ilan Peled, Brian Paul Muhs and Janet H. Johnson; OIS 12. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017.

Ilany, Ofri. *In Search of the Hebrew People: Bible and Nation in the German Enlightenment*. Translated by Ishai Mishory. 2018.

Isaacs, Harold R. "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe." *Ethnicity* 1 (1974): 15–41.

- Ishida, Tomoo. "The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations." *Biblica* 60 (1979): 461–490.
- Iyer, Lakshmi. "Direct Versus Indirect Colonial Rule in India: Long-Term Consequences." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92 (2010): 693–713.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Jain, Sonali. "For Love and Money: Second-Generation Indian-Americans 'Return' to India." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (2013): 896–914.
- Japhet, Sara, "The Concept of the 'Remnant' in the Restoration Period: On the Vocabulary of Self-Definition." Pages 432–449 in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* Edited by. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Japhet, Sara. *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- , "Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?" Pages 307–330 in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. Edited by. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Jenkins, Richard. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008.
- Joannès, Francis and André Lemaire. "Contrats babyloniens d'époque achéménide du Bît-Abî Râm avec une épigraphe araméenne." *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 90 (1996): 41–46.
- . "Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique (collection Sh. Moussaïeff) (Pls. I-II)." *Transeuphratène* 17 (1999): 17–34.
- Johnson, Janet H, "Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt." Pages 211–222 in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* Edited by Emily Teeter and John A. Larson; *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 58. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1999.
- Johnston, Alan. "The Naukratis Project: Petrie, Greeks and Egyptians." *Archaeology International* 17 (2014): 69–73.
- Jones, Siân. *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*. London; New York: Routledge, 1997.

- , “Historical Categories and the Praxis of Identity: The Interpretation of Ethnicity in Historical Archaeology.” Pages 219–232 in *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge* Edited by Pedro Paulo A. Funari, Martin Hall and S. Jones; One World Archaeology 31. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Jursa, Michael, “Accounting in Neo-Babylonian Institutional Archives: Structure, Usage, Implications.” Pages 145–198 in *Creating Economic Order: Record-keeping, Standardization, and the Development of Accounting in the Ancient Near East: a Colloquium Held at the British Museum, November 2000*. Edited by Michael Hudson and Cornelia Wunsch. Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2004.
- , “The Transition of Babylonia from the Neo-Babylonian Empire to Achaemenid Rule.” Pages 73–94 in *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt: From Sargon of Agade to Sadam Hussein* Edited by Harriet Crawford; New York: The British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . “Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn, rab ša-rēši, und ‘Nebusarsekim’ (Jer. 39:3).” *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* (2008): 9–10.
- , “Der neubabylonische Hof.” Pages 67–106 in *Der Achamenidenhof = The Achaemenid Court: Akten des 2. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen”, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 23.-25. Mai 2007* Edited by Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.
- , “Taxation and Service Obligations in Babylonia from Nebuchadnezzar to Darius and the Evidence for Darius’ Tax Reform.” Pages 431–448 in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich = Herodotus and the Persian Empire : Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen,” Innsbruck, 24.-28. November 2008* Edited by Robert Rollinger, Truschnegg Brigitte and Reinhold Bichler. *Classica et Orientalia*. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011.
- , “The State and Its Subjects under the Neo-Babylonian Empire.” Pages 43–67 in *Private and State in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 58th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Leiden: 16–20 July 2012* Edited by R. de Boer and J. G. Dercksen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017.
- Jursa, Michael, Johannes Hackl, Bojana Janković, Kristin Kleber, Elizabeth E. Payne, Caroline Waerzeggers and Michaela Weszli. *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC : Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth*. *Alter Orient und Altes Testament Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1 Jahrtausend v Chr* 377. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010..

- Kahn, Dan'el. "Judean Auxiliaries in Egypt's Wars Against Kush." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127 (2007): 507–516.
- . "Some Remarks on the Foreign Policy of Psammetichus II in the Levant (595–589 B.C.)." *Journal of Egyptian History* 1 (2008): 139–157.
- Kaplan, Philip. "Cross-cultural Contacts among Mercenary Communities in Saite and Persian Egypt." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18 (2003): 1–31.
- Kartveit, Magnar. *The Origin of the Samaritans*. Boston: Brill, 2009.
- Kashow, Robert C. "Zechariah 1–8 as a Theological Explanation for the Failure of Prophecy in Haggai 2:20–23." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 64 (2013): 385–403.
- Kaufman, Stephen A. "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof." *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1985): 41–57.
- Kaufmann, Yehezkel. *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Kellermann, Natan PF. "Epigenetic Transmission of Holocaust Trauma: Can Nightmares Be Inherited." *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences* 50 (2013): 33–39.
- Kenan, Shlomith Rimmon. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Kessler, John. *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*. Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 91. Boston: Brill, 2002.
- , "Diaspora and Homeland in the Early Achaemenid Period: Community, Geography and Demography in Zechariah 1–8." Pages 137–166 in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* Edited by Jon L. Berquist; SemeiaSt 50. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.
- , "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1–8 and Ezra–Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity." Pages 119–145 in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* Edited by Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- , "Is Haggai Among the Exclusionists? A Response to Dalit Rom-Shiloni's Exclusive Inclusivity." Pages 13–35 in *Exclusivity and Inclusivity in Post-Monarchic Society and Literature: A Conversation on Dalit Rom-Shiloni's Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th–5th Centuries BCE)* Edited by

- Mark A. Leuchter; JHebS 18. 2019.
- Khosravi, Shahram. "White Masks/Muslim Names: Immigrants and Name-Changing in Sweden." *Race & Class* 53 (2012): 65–80.
- Kidron, Carol A. "Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel." *Current Anthropology* 50 (2009): 5–27.
- King, Rhyne. "Taxing Achaemenid Arachosia: Evidence from Persepolis." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 78 (2019): 185–199.
- King, Russell, "Generalizations From the History of Return Migration." Pages 7–55 Edited by. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2000.
- Klein, Ralph, W. "Theology for Exiles: The Kingship of Yahweh." *Dialog* 17 (1978): 128–134.
- Kletter, Raz, "Can a Proto-Israelite Please Stand Up." Pages 573–586 *I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times. Archaeological and Historical studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Edited by Amihai Mazar. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- . "In the Footsteps of Bagira." *Approaching Religion* 4 (2014): 2–15.
- Knauf, Ernst Axel, "Elephantine und das vor-biblische Judentum." Pages 179–188 in *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden* Edited by Reinhard Kratz; Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 22. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag Gütersloh, 2002.
- Knohl, Israel. "Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12 (2012): 1–21.
- Knoppers, Gary N. "How It Began and Did Not End: The History of Samari(t)an and Judean Relations in Antiquity." *Conversations with the Biblical World* 35 (2015): 189–211.
- . *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Knowles, Melody D. *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora During The Persian Period*. ABS 16. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.
- Koch, Ido and Oded Lipschits. "The Rosette Stamped Jar Handle System and the Kingdom Of Judah at the End of the First Temple Period." *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

129 (2013): 55–78.

- Koch, Klaus. “Haggais unreines Volk.” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 79 (1967): 52–66.
- Konstan, David. “Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (1997): 97–110.
- Kratz, Reinhard, “The Second Temple of Jeb and of Jerusalem.” Pages 247–264 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- , “Judean Ambassadors and the Making of Jewish Identity.” Pages 421–444 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- Kratz, Reinhard Gregor. *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah*. 2015.
- Krebs, Christopher B. *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus’s Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011.
- Kugler, Gili. “Present Affliction Affects the Representation of the Past: An Alternative Dating of the Levitical Prayer in Nehemiah 9.” *Vetus Testamentum* 63 (2013): 605–626.
- Kühn, Dagmar, “Society, Institutions, Law, and Economy.” Pages 37–70 in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* Edited by Herbert Niehr; HOS 106. Boston: Brill, 2014.
- Kuhr, Amélie. *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- , “Ancient Near Eastern History: The Case of Cyrus the Great of Persia.” In *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* Edited by H. G. M. Williamson; Oxford: British Academy, 2007.
- Laird, Donna. *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah*. AIL 26. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- Lambert, David A. *How Repentance Became Biblical : Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Langille, Timothy. “Reshaping the Persistent Past: A Study of Collective Trauma and Memory in Second Temple Judaism.” PhD diss., Department for the Study of Religion, 2014.

- Lanoir, Corinne. "Jérémie 44: pourquoi maudire les exilés égyptiens." *Foi et Vie* 114 (2014): 37–48.
- LaRocca-Pitts, Elizabeth C. *Of Wood and Stone: The Significance of Israelite Cultic Items in the Bible and its Early Interpreters*. HSM 61. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraun, 2001.
- Lauinger, Jacob. "Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat." *The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 6 (2011): 5–14.
- . "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 87–123.
- Leclère, François., A. Jeffrey. Spencer, et al. *Tell Dafana Reconsidered: The Archaeology of an Egyptian Frontier Town*. Research Publication 199. London: The British Museum Press, 2014.
- Leith, Mary Joan Winn, "Religious Continuity in Israel/Samaria: Numismatic Evidence." Pages 267–304 in *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd?: The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case* Edited by Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny and Izak Cornelius; OBO 267. Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.
- Lemaire, Andre. *Levantine Epigraphy and History in the Achaemenid Period (539–332 BCE): The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 2013*. Corby: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Lemos, T. M., "Kinship, Community and Society." Pages 377–393 in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* Edited by Susan Niditch; Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons, 2016.
- Leonard, Jeffery M. "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008): 241–265.
- Leuchter, Mark. *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- . "The Levites in Exile: A Response to L.S. Tiemeyer." *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (2010): 583.
- Levinson, Bernard M. *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Levitt Kohn, Risa. *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah*. JSOT Supplement Series 358. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Levitt, Peggy and B. Nadya Jaworsky. "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and

- Future Trends.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 129–156.
- Levtow, Nathaniel B. *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008.
- Liebelt, Claudia, Gabriele Shenar and Pnina Werbner. “Migration, Diaspora, and Religious Pilgrimage in Comparative Perspective: Sacred Geographies and Ethical Landscapes.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 19 (2010): 32–50.
- Lincoln, Bruce. *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Lindenberger, James M., “What Ever Happened to Vidranga? A Jewish Liturgy of Cursing from Elephantine.” Pages 134–157 in *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* Edited by P. M. Michele. Daviau, John William. Wevers, Michael Weigl and Paul-Eugene Dion; Journal for the Old Testament Supplement Series 325. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Lipschits, Oded, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.” Pages 19–52 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- , “Shedding New Light on the Dark Years of the “Exilic Period”: New Studies, Further Elucidation, and Some Questions Regarding the Archaeology of Judah as an “Empty Land.”” Pages 57–90 in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* Edited by. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Atlanta, 2011.
- Lipschits, Oded, Yuval Gadot and Dafna Langgut. “The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice.” *Transeuphratène* 41 (2012): 57–79.
- Lipschits, Oded, Yuval Gadot, Benjamin Arubas and Manfred Oeming. “Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel.” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74 (2011): 1–49.
- Lipschits, Oded, Omer Sergi and Ido Koch. “Royal Judahite Jar Handles: Reconsidering the Chronology of the lmlk Stamp Impressions.” *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 3–32.
- . “Judahite Stamped and Incised Jar Handles: A Tool for Studying the History of Late Monarchic Judah.” *Tel Aviv* 38 (2011): 5–41.
- Lipschits, Oded. and David Stephen. Vanderhooft. *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

- Loader, James. "The Exilic Period in Abraham Kuenen's Account of Israelite Religion." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 96 (1984): 3–23.
- Loewenstamm, Samuel E. "The Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 14 (1969): 176–196.
- Lowe, Malcolm. "Who Were the IOYΔAIOI?" *Novum Testamentum* 18 (1976): 101–130.
- . "Ἰουδαῖοι of the Apocrypha: A Fresh Approach to the Gospels of James, Pseudo-Thomas, Peter and Nicodemus." *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981): 56–90.
- . "Concepts and Words." Pages 33–37 Edited by Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014.
- Lozachmeur, Helene, Pascale Ballet, Charles Clermont-Ganneau, A. E. Cowley and Andre. Dupont-Sommer. *La collection Clermont-Ganneau: ostraca, epigraphes sur jarre, etiquettes de bois*. 2 vols. *Memoires de l'Academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 35. Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2006.
- Lyons, Michael, A. *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code*. Library of Hebrew Bible/old Testament Studies 507. New York: T & T Clark, 2009.
- Machinist, Peter, "Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C." Pages 77–104 in *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike* Edited by Kurt Raaflaub and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner; Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien 24. München: Oldenbourg, 1993.
- Magen, Izchak, Haggai Misgav and Levana Tsfania. *Mount Gerizim Excavations. Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology*. Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004.
- Magen, Yitzhak, "The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence." Pages 157–211 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N Knoppers and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Malamat, Abraham. "On the Akkadian Transcription of the Name of King Joash." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 204 (1971): 37–39.
- Maliepaard, Mieke, Marcel Lubbers and Mérove Gijsberts. "Generational differences in Ethnic and Religious Attachment and their Interrelation. A Study Among Muslim Minorities in the Netherlands." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (2010): 451–472.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. *Princeton Studies in Culture / Power / History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton

- University Press, 1996.
- Mason, Steve. "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457–512.
- Mazumdar, Shampa and Sanjoy Mazumdar. "Hindu Temple Building In Southern California: A Study Of Immigrant Religion." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 20 (2006): 43–57.
- Meshorer, Ya'akov. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins From the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba*. Nyack, NY: Amphora, 2001.
- Mettinger, Tryggve N. D. *No Graven Image?: Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context*. Coniectanea biblica Old Testament series 42. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995.
- Meyers, Carol L and Eric M Meyers. *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible Commentary 25B. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1987.
- Meyers, Carol L. "Of Drums and Damsel : Women's Performance in Ancient Israel." *Biblical Archaeologist* 54 (1991): 16–27.
- Middlemas, Jill. *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile"*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
- Milgrom, Jacob. *Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance*. Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- Min, Pyong Gap. *Preserving Ethnicity Through Religion in America : Korean Protestants and Indian Hindus Across Generations*. New York: NYU Press, 2010.
- Montgomery, Kathryn. *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure Of Medical Knowledge*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Moore, Stewart Alden. *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 171. Boston: Brill, 2015.
- Müller, Reinhard, "A Prophetic View of the Exile in the Holiness Code." Pages 207–228 in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.
- Muraoka, Takamitsu and Bezalel Porten. *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*. HOS. New York: Brill, 1998.

- Na'aman, Nadav. "The lmlk Seal Impressions Reconsidered." *Tel Aviv* 43 (2016): 111–125.
- Na'aman, Nadav and Ran Zadok. "Sargon II's deportations to Israel and Philistia (716–708 BC)." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40 (1988): 36–46.
- Naveh, Joseph. "Gleanings of Some Pottery Inscriptions." *Israel Exploration Journal* 46 (1996): 44–51.
- . "Scripts and Inscriptions in Ancient Samaria." *Israel Exploration Journal* 48 (1998): 91–100.
- Naveh, Joseph and Jonas C. Greenfield, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian Period." Pages in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Introduction: The Persian Period* Edited by Louis Finkelstein and W. D. Davies; 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Nawyn, Stephanie J., Linda Gjokaj, DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga and Breanne Grace. "Linguistic Isolation, Social Capital, and Immigrant Belonging." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 41 (2012): 255–282.
- Newman, Judith H. *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*. EJM 14. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999.
- Nicholson, Ernest W. *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Niehr, Herbert, "In Search of YHWH's Cult Statue in the First Temple." Pages 73–95 in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* Edited by Karel van der Toorn; Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 21. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997.
- . *Baalsamem: Studien zu Herkunft, Geschichte und Rezeptionsgeschichte eines phönizischen Gottes*. OLA 123. Leuven: Peeters, 2003.
- Niehr, Herbert, ed. *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*. Handbook of Oriental Studies 106. Boston: Brill, 2014.
- , "Religion." Pages 127–204 in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* Edited by Herbert Niehr; HOS 106. Boston: Brill, 2014.
- Nihan, Christophe. *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2 25. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- , "Leviticus 26:39–46 and the Post Priestly Composition of Leviticus." Pages 305–329 in *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch: New Perspectives on its Redactional Development and*

*Theological Profiles* Edited by Jean Louis Ska, Federico Giuntoli and Konrad Schmid; FAT 101. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Nissinen, Martti. "(How) Does the Book of Ezekiel Reveal Its Babylonian Context." *Die Welt des Orients* 45 (2015): 85–98.

Nogalski, James. *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 218. New York: De Gruyter, 1993.

Nongbri, Brent. *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Nunn, Astrid. "Nekropolen und Gräber in Phönizien, Syrien und Jordanien zur Achämenidenzeit." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 32 (2001): 389–464.

Nutkowicz, Hélène. "Note sur une institution juridique à Éléphantine, 'dh, la « cour »." Note on a Legal Institution in Elephantine, 'dh, the Court

*Transeuphratène* (Paris) 27 (2004): 181–185.

Lipschits, Oded, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Oded, Bustenay. *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979.

———, "'Yet I have been to them LMQDŠ M'T in the countries where they have gone" (Ezekiel 11:16)." Pages 103–114 in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* Edited by Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom Paul. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.

Odell, Margaret S., "Fragments of Traumatic Memory: Šalmê zākār and Child Sacrifice in Ezekiel 16:15–22." Pages 107–124 in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*. Edited by Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette; Semeia Studies 86. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.

Oeming, Manfred, "'See, We Are Serving Today' (Nehemiah 9:36): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period." Pages 571–588 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Olyan, Saul M. "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community."

*Journal for the Study of Judaism* (2004): 1–18.

Page, Stephanie. “A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah.” *Iraq* 30 (1968): 139–153.

Pakkala, Juha. *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemia 8*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 347. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.

———. “The Original Independence of the Ezra Story in Ezra 7–10 and Neh 8.” *Biblische Notizen: aktuelle Beiträge zur Exegese der Bibel und ihrer Welt* 129 (2006): 17–26.

Parpola, Simo, *Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1 Jahrtausend v Chr 5/2. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983.

Pasto, James. “When the End is the Beginning? Or When the Biblical Past is the Political Present: Some thoughts on Ancient Israel, “Post-Exilic Judaism,” and the Politics of Biblical Scholarship.” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 12 (1998): 157–202.

———. “Who Owns the Jewish Past? Judaism, Judaisms, and the Writing of Jewish History.” PhD diss., Cornell University, 1999.

———. “WML de Wette and the Invention of Post-Exilic Judaism: Political Historiography and Christian Allegory in Nineteenth-Century German Biblical Scholarship.” Pages 33–52 in *Jews, Antiquity, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* Edited by Hayim Lapin and Dale B. Martin; Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2003.

Patton, Corrine, “Priest Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct.” Pages 73–90 in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* Edited by Stephen L. Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

Paul, Shalom M. *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary*. ECC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.

Pearce, Laurie, “New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia.” Pages 399–411 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Pearce, Laurie E. “Continuity and Normality in Sources Relating to the Judean Exile.” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 3 (2014): 163–184.

———. “Identifying Judeans and Judean Identity in the Babylonian Evidence.” Pages 7–32 in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*. Edited by Jonathan Stökl and Caroline

- Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 478. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Pearce, Laurie E. and Cornelia Wunsch. *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*. Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 28. Bethesda: CDL Press, 2014. Babylonia Dissertation Chapter.
- Petrie, W. M. F. *Tannis II — Nebesheh (Am) and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)*. London: 1888.
- Petterson, Anthony R. *Behold Your King: The Hope for the House of David in the Book of Zechariah*. Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 513. New York: T & T Clark, 2009.
- Polak, Frank H., “The Judean Speech Community in the Achaemenid Empire.” Pages 589–628 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Polliack, Meira, “Deutero-Isaiah’s Typological Use of Jacob in the Portrayal of Israel’s National Renewal.” Pages 72–110 in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* Edited by H. G. Revetlow and Y. Hoffman; JSOT Supplement Series 319. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Pongratz-Leisten, Beate. *Religion and Ideology in Assyria*. Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records 6. Boston: de Gruyter, 2015.
- Porten, Bezalel. *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1968.
- , “The Jews in Egypt.” Pages 372–400 in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 1, Introduction: The Persian Period* Edited by Louis Finkelstein; 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- . *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*. *Idocument et Monumenta Orientis Aniqui* 22. Boston: Brill, 1996.
- Porten, Bezalel. and Ada. Yardeni. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. 4 vols. Winona Lake, IN: Hebrew University, Dept. of the History of the Jewish People; Distributed by Eisenbrauns, 1986–1999.
- Poser, Ruth, “No Words: The Book of Ezekiel as Trauma Literature and Response to Exile.” Pages 27–48 in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*. Edited by Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette; Semeia Studies 86. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- Propp, William, Henry. *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*.

- The Anchor Bible 2a. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Pucci, Giuseppe, “Inscribed Instrumentum and the Ancient Economy.” Pages 137–152 in *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* Edited by John P. Bodel; Approaching the Ancient World. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Radner, Karen, “Aššur’s ‘Second Temple Period’: The Restoration of the Cult of Aššur, C. 538 BCE.” Pages 77–96 in *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit* Edited by Christoph Levin and Reinhard Müller; Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 21. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.
- Ray, John D. “Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia.” *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* 2 (1995): 1185–1194.
- Redditt, Paul J., “The King in Haggai–Zechariah 1–8 and the Book of the Twelve.” Pages 57–82 in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* Edited by Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd; Library of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 475. New York: T & T Clark, 2008.
- Reinhartz, Adele, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity.” Pages 5–10 Edited by Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014.
- Renberg, Gil H and William S Bubelis. “The Epistolary Rhetoric of Zoilos of Aspendos and the Early Cult of Sarapis: Re-reading P. Cair. Zen. I 59034.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (2011): 169–200.
- Rendsburg, Gary A. “Linguistic Variation and the ‘Foreign’ Factor in the Hebrew Bible.” *Israel Oriental Studies* 15 (1995): 177–190.
- Rendsburg, Gary A. “The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9.” *Biblica* (1991): 348–366.
- . “Kabbîr in Biblical Hebrew: Evidence for Style-Switching and Addressee-Switching in the Hebrew Bible.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992): 649–651.
- Renz, Thomas. *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel*. Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 76. Boston: Brill, 1999.
- Richey, Madadh, David Vanderhooft and Oded Lipschits. “Two Private Babylonian Period Stamp Impressions from Ramat Raḥel.” *Maarav* 23 (2019): 289–306.
- Ristau, Kenneth A. *Reconstructing Jerusalem: Persian-Period Prophetic Perspectives*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016.
- Ro, Johannes Un-Sok. *Poverty, Law, and Divine Justice in Persian and Hellenistic Judah*. 2018.

- Rogerson, J. W. *W.M.L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography*. JSOT Supplement Series 126. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Rohrmoser, Angela. *Götter, Tempel und Kult der Judäo-Aramäer von Elephantine: Archäologische und schriftliche Zeugnisse aus dem perserzeitlichen Ägypten*. AOAT 396. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014.
- Rom-Shiloni, Dalit. “Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology.” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 76 (2005): 1–45.
- , “Socio-Ideological Setting or Settings for Penitential Prayers?” Pages 51–68 in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* Edited by Mark Boda, Richard Falk and Rodney Werline; EJM 21. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.
- , “Group Identities in Jeremiah: Is It the Persian Period Conflict?” Pages 11–46 in *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel* Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Vikander Edelman and Frank Polak; PHSC 5. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009.
- , “From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology.” Pages 127–151 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- . *Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts Between the Exiles and the People who Remained (6th-5th centuries BCE)*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Römer, Thomas, “Extra-Pentateuchal Evidence for the Existence of Pentateuch? The Case of the ‘Historical Summaries,’ Especially in the Psalms.” Pages 471–488 in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* Edited by Thomas Dozeman, B. Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz, J; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
- Roosens, Eugene, “The Primordial Nature of Origins in Migrant Ethnicity.” Pages 81–104 in *The Anthropology of Ethnicity. Beyond Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Edited by Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers; Hague, The Netherlands: Het Spinhuis, 1994.
- Rose, Wolter H. *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 304. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Rosenberg, Stephen G. “The Jewish Temple at Elephantine.” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2004): 4.

- Rosenmeyer, Patricia A. *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Runesson, Anders. *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study*. Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 37. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001.
- Russell, Stephen C. *The King and the Land: A Geography of Royal Power in the Biblical World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Ruzicka, Stephen. *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire, 525–332 BC*. OUP USA, 2012.
- Sack, Ronald H. Nabonidus. *ABD* 4: 973.
- Safran, William. “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1 (1991): 83–99.
- Sagi-Schwartz, Abraham, Marinus H van IJzendoorn and Marian J Bakermans-Kranenburg. “Does Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Skip a Generation? No Meta-Analytic Evidence for Tertiary Traumatization with Third Generation of Holocaust Survivors.” *Attach Hum Dev* 10 (2008): 105–121.
- Said, Edward W., “Reflections on Exile.” Pages 173–186 in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* Edited by Edward Said. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Sanders, Seth L. *The Invention of Hebrew*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Sass, Benjamin and Joachim Marzahn. *Aramaic and Figural Stamp Impressions on Bricks of the Sixth Century B.C. from Babylon*. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 127. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.
- Schaudig, Hanspeter, “The Magnanimous Heart of Cyrus: The Cyrus Cylinder and Literary Models.” Pages 65–91 in *Cyrus the Great: Life and Lore* Edited by Rahim M. Shayegan; Ilex Foundation Series 21. Boston: Ilex Foundation, 2018.
- Schloen, J. David. *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*. Studies in the archaeology and history of the Levant; 2. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001.
- Schmitz, Philip C. “The Phoenician Contingent in the Campaign of Psammetichus II Against Kush.” *Journal of Egyptian History* 3 (2010): 321–337.
- Schniedewind, William M., “Scribal Education in Ancient Israel and Judah into the Persian Period.” Pages 11–28 in *Second Temple Jewish “Paideia” in Context* Edited by Jason

Zurawski and Gabriele Boccaccini; Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Fur Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 228. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.

Schuller, Eileen, “Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: A Research Survey.” Pages 1–16 in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 2: The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* Edited by Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk and Rodney A. Werline; EJM 22. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.

Schütz, Alexander, “Local Administration in Persian Period Egypt According to Aramaic and Demotic Sources.” Pages 489–515 in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen” aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire..* Edited by Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann and Matthew W. Stolper. *Classica et Orientalia*. 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.

Schwartz, Baruch J. “What Really Happened at Mount Sinai? Four Biblical Answers to One Question.” *Bible Review* 13 (1997): 20–40.

———, “A Priest Out of Place: Reconsidering Ezekiel’s Role in the History of the Israelite Priesthood.” Pages 61–72 in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*. Edited by Stephen L. Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

———, “Reexamining the Fate of the ‘Canaanites’ in the Torah Traditions.” Pages 151–170 in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* Edited by Moshe Weinfeld, Chaim Cohen, Avi. Hurvitz and Shalom M. Paul; 2004.

———, “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37.” Pages 263–278 in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, Interpretation* Edited by Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr and David L. Peterson; 2012.

Schwartz, Daniel, “The Different Tasks of Translators and Historians.” Pages 18–20 Edited by Timothy Michael Law and Charles Halton; Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014.

Schwartz, Daniel R. *Judeans and Jews: Four Faces of Dichotomy in Ancient Jewish History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.

Seitz, Christopher R. “The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 229–247.

- Sérandour, A. “Reflexions apropos d’un livre recent sur Aggee-Zacharie 1–8.” *Transeuphratène* 10 (1995): 75–84.
- Shippey, Tom, “A Revolution Reconsidered: Mythography and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century.” Pages 1–28 in *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm’s Mythology of the Monstrous* Edited by Tom Shippey; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 291. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005.
- Silberman, LH. “Wellhausen and Judaism.” *Semeia* 25 (1982): 75–82.
- Siljanen, Esko. “Judeans of Egypt in the Persian Period (539–332 BCE) in Light of the Aramaic Documents.” PhD diss., Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki, 2017.
- Silverman, Jason M. *Persian Royal–Judaean Elite Engagements in the Early Teispid and Achaemenid Empire : The King’s Acolytes*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 690. London: T&T Clark, 2020.
- Smend, Rudolf. *Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wettes Arbeit am Alten und am Neuen Testament*. Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1958.
- . *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- , “De Wette and the Relationship between Historical Biblical Criticism and Philosophical System in the Nineteenth Century.” Pages 215–224 Edited by Edward Ball and Margaret Barker; Society for Old Testament Study Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.
- Smith (-Christopher), Daniel L. *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile*. Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989.
- Smith-Chrisopher, Daniel, “Between Ezra and Isaiah: Exclusion, Transformation, and Inclusion of the ‘Foreigner’ in Post-Exilic Biblical Theology.” Pages 117–142 in *Ethnicity and the Bible* Edited by Mark G. Brett; Boston: Brill, 2002.
- , “Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE).” Pages 7–36 in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* Edited by James M. Scott; Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Smith, Anthony D. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. New York: B. Blackwell, 1987.
- . *National Identity*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.
- . “Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some Religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals.”

- Nations and Nationalism* 5 (1999): 331–355.
- . “Nations Before Nationalism? Myth and Symbolism in John Armstrong’s Perspective.” *Nations & Nationalism* 21 (2015): 165–170.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago studies in the history of Judaism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Smith, Mark S., “In Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6–7): Between Text and Archaeology.” Pages 275–282 in *Confronting the Past : Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* Edited by William G. Dever, Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright and J. P. Dessel; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Sommer, Benjamin, D. *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*. Contraversions. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Southwood, Katherine E, “The Holy Seed: The Significance of Endogamous Baoundaries and Their Transgression in Ezra 9–10.” Pages 189–224 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- . *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10: An Anthropological Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- , “The Impact of Second and Third Generation Returnees as a Model for Understanding the Post-Exilic Context.” Pages 322–335 in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*. Edited by Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 478. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Spronk, Klaas. *Nahum*. HCOT. Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997.
- Stackert, Jeffrey. *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*. FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- , “Distinguishing Innerbiblical Exegesis from Pentateuchal Redaction: Leviticus 26 as a Test Case.” Pages 369–386 in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* Edited by Thomas Dozeman, B, Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz, J; FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
- . “The Sabbath of the Land in the Holiness Legislation: Combining Priestly and Non-Priestly Perspectives.” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 73 (2011): 239–250.
- . *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law and Israelite Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

- . “Review of Gary Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*.” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 35 (2015): 181–188.
- . “Holiness Code and Writings.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law* 1 ADM–LIT: 389–396
- , “Political Allegory in the Priestly Source: The Destruction of Jerusalem, the Exile and their Alternatives.” Pages 211–226 Edited by Peter Dubovský, Dominik Markl and Jean-Pierre Sonnet; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
- Stampfl, Barry, “Parsing the Unspeakable in the Context of Trauma.” Pages 15–42 Edited by Michelle Balaev; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Steiner, Richard C. and Nims, Charles. “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: Text, Translation, and Notes.” (2017): 6/26/18. Cited on [https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The\\_Aramaic\\_Text\\_in\\_Demotic\\_Script\\_Text\\_Translation\\_and\\_Notes](https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The_Aramaic_Text_in_Demotic_Script_Text_Translation_and_Notes).
- Stern, Ephraim. “Seal-Impressions in the Achaemenid Style in the Province of Judah.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 202 (1971): 6–16.
- . *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE. II*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
- Stern, Philip. “The ‘Blind Servant’ Imagery of Deutero-Isaiah and its Implications.” *Biblica* 75 (1994): 224–232.
- Stolper, Matthew W. “A Note on Yahwistic Personal Names in the Murašû Texts.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 25–28.
- . *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašû Archive, the Murasašû Firm, and Persian Rule in Babylonia*. Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul = Publications de l’Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 54. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985. Babylonia Dissertation Chapter.
- . “The Governor of Babylon and Across-the-River in 486 B. C.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 48 (1989): 283–305.
- . Murashû, Archive of. *ABD* 4: 927
- Strassmaier, JN and BTA Evretts. *Babylonische Texte: Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.)*. 1890.
- Streck, Michael P. “Das Onomastiken der Beamten am neubabylonischen Ebabbar-Tempel in

- Sippar.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 91 (2001): 110–119.
- Sullivan, Benjamin M. “Paying Archaic Greek Mercenaries: Views from Egypt and the Near East.” *The Classical Journal* 107 (2011): 31–61.
- Sweeney, Marvin, A. *The Twelve Prophets. Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* 2. Edited by David W. Cotter. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Tainter, Joseph A. “Post-collapse societies.” *Companion Encyclopedia of Archaeology* 2 (1999): 988–1039.
- Tappy, Ron E., “The Final Years of Israelite Samaria.” Pages 258–279 in “*Up to the Gates of Ekron*”: *Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin*. Edited by Seymour Gitin, Sidnie White Crawford and Amnon Ben-Tor; Jerusalem: published by the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, the Israel Exploration Society, 2007.
- Tavernier, Jan. *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Linguistic Study of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords, Attested in Non-Iranian Texts*. OLA 158. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006.
- , “The Use of Languages on the Various Levels of Administration in the Achaemenid Empire.” Pages 337–412 in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich : imperiale Muster und Strukturen : Akten des 6. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen” aus Anlass der 80-Jahr-Feier der Entdeckung des Festungsarchivs von Persepolis, Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 14.-17. Mai 2013 = Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*. Edited by Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F.M. Henkelmann and Matthew W. Stolper. *Classica et Orientalia*. 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017.
- Tayob, Abdulkader. “Religious Institutions.” *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* ii (2004): 584–590.
- Tercatin, Rosella. “2,500-year-old seal shows Jerusalem status in Persian period.” *The Jerusalem Post* (July 1, 2020).
- Thames, Jr., John Tracy. “A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase ‘am hā’āreš in the Hebrew Bible.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011): 109–125.
- Thompson, Henry O., “Chebar.” *ABD* 1: 893.
- Tiemeyer, Lena-Sofia. “Review: *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45* Mark Leuchter.” *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (2009): 508.

- Tigay, Jeffrey H. *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.
- , “The Role of the Elders in the Laws of Deuteronomy.” Pages 89–96 in *A Common Cultural Heritage: Studies on Mesopotamia and the Biblical World in Honor of Barry L. Eichler*. Edited by Grant. Frame and Barry L. Eichler; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2011.
- Law, Timothy Michael and Charles Halton, eds. *Jew and Judean: A MARGINALIA Forum on Politics and Historiography in the Translation of Ancient Texts*. Los Angeles: The MARGINALIA Review of Books, 2014.
- Tobolowsky, Andrew. “The Problem of Reubenite Primacy: New Paradigms, New Answers.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139 (2020): 27–45.
- Tolini, Gauthier, “From Syria to Babylon and Back: The Neirab Archive.” Pages 58–93 in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*. Edited by Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Tollington, Janet E. Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8. *Journal for the study of the Old Testament* Supplement series 150. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
- Tölölyan, Khachig. “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5 (1996): 3–36.
- Trinka, Eric. ““If You Will Only Remain in This Land”: Migration Decision Making and Jeremiah as a Religiously Motivated Nonmover.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2018/): 580–597.
- Tsuda, Takeyuki. “Transnational Migration and the Nationalization of Ethnic Identity among Japanese Brazilian Return Migrants.” *Ethos* 2 (1999): 145–179.
- . “Acting Brazilian in Japan: Ethnic Resistance among Return Migrants.” *Ethnology* 1 (2000): 55–71.
- . “Introduction.” Pages 1–20 in *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective*. Edited by Takeyuki Tsuda; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Tuplin, Christopher. “Xenophon and the Garrisons of the Achaemenid Empire.” *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (1987): 167.
- Tweed, Thomas A. *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

- Uehlinger, Christoph, “Powerful Persianisms in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Palestine.” Pages 136–179 in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*. Edited by Bob. Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel; Oudtestamentische Studiën 42. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999.
- Ussishkin, David. “The Date of the Judaeon Shrine at Arad.” *Israel Exploration Journal* 38 (1988): 142–157.
- Valkama, Kirsi, “What Do Archaeological Remains Reveal of the Settlements in Judah during the Mid-Sixth Century BCE?” Pages 18–38 in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 404. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.
- Van der Spek, Robartus J, “Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods. A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations.” Pages 233–264 in *Extraction & Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*. Edited by Michael Kozuh, Wouter F.M. Henkelman, Charles E. Jones and Christopher Woods; Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014.
- Van der Toorn, Karel. “Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine.” *Numen* 39 (1992): 80–101.
- . *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 21. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997.
- . *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- . “Celebrating the New Year with the Israelites: Three Extrabiblical Psalms from Papyrus Amherst 63.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 633–649.
- , “Psalm 20 and Amherst Papyrus 63, XII, 11–19: A Case Study of a Text in Transit.” Pages 244–261 in *Le-ma’an Ziony: Essays in Honor of Ziony Zevit*. Edited by Frederick E. Greenspahn and Gary Rendsburg; Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017.
- . *Papyrus Amherst 63*. AOAT 448. Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2018.
- van der Veer, Peter. *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- Van der Vorm-Croughs, Mirjam. *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses*. SCS 61. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

- Van Driel, G. *Elusive Silver: In Search of a Role for a Market in an Agrarian Environment; Aspects Of Mesopotamia's Society*. Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 94. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2002. Babylonia Dissertation Chapter.
- van Grol, Harm W. M. "Schuld und Scham: Die Verwurzelung von Esra 9, 6–7 in der Tradition." *Estudios bíblicos* 55 (1997): 29–52.
- Van IJzendoorn, Marinus H, Marian J Bakermans-Kranenburg and Abraham Sagi-Schwartz. "Are Children of Holocaust Survivors Less Well-Adapted? A Meta-Analytic Investigation of Secondary Traumatization." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 16 (2003): 459–469.
- Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Vanderhooft, David S., "Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror? Ancient Historiography Concerning Cyrus in Babylonia." Pages 351–372 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- , "The Israelite *mišpāhâ*, the Priestly Writings, and Changing Valences in Israel's Kinship Terminology." Pages 485–496 in *Exploring the Longue Duree: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*. Edited by J. David Schloen and Lawrence E. Stager; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- , "'*el-mēdīnâ ûmēnīnâ kiktābāh*: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphretene." Pages 529–544 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- , "New Evidence Pertaining to the Transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Administration in Palestine." Pages 219–235 in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*. Edited by Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; Studies in Theology and Religion. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003.
- . *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets*. HSM 59. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999.
- . "Ezekiel In and On Babylon." *Transeuphratène* 46 (2014): 99–119.
- Vanderhooft, David S., Oded Lipschits and Madadh Richey. "A New Type of Yehud Stamp Impression: yhwd / gdlyh." *Israel Exploration Journal* 69 (2019): 54–59.
- Vayntrub, Jaqueline. "Tyre's Glory and Demise: The Poetic of Description in Ezekiel 27." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (FORTHCOMING).

- Visser, Irene, “Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies.” Pages 106–129 in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. Edited by Michelle Balaev. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Vittmann, Günter, “Arameans in Egypt.” Pages 229–279 in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives* Edited by Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir and Andreas Schüle; Leipzigiger altorientalistische Studien 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag,
- Vleeming, Sven P and Jan W Wesselijs. “An Aramaic Hymn from the Fourth Century B.C.” *Bibliotheca Orientalis Leiden* 39 (1982): 501–509.
- Vom Bruck, Gabriele and Barbara Bodenhorn, “‘Entangled in Histories’: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming.” Pages 1–30 in *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Edited by Gabriele Vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Von Pilgrim, Cornelius, “Textzeugnis und archäologischer Befund: zur Topographie Elephantines in der 27. Dynastie.” Pages 485–497 in *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens, Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet* Edited by Heike Guksch and Daniel Polz; Mainz am Rhein : Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1998.
- , “Tempel des Jahu und ‘Strasse des Königs’—ein Konflikt in der späten Perserzeit auf Elephantine.” Pages 303–317 in *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World: Studies in Honor of Jan Assman*. Edited by Sibylle Meyer; Brill, 2003.
- , “‘Anyway, we should really dig on Elephantine some time.’ A Short Tour through the Research History of the Towns Along the First Nile Cataract.” Pages 85–96 in *Zwischen den Welten: Grabfunde von Ägyptens Südgrenze = Between Worlds: Finds from Tombs on Egypt’s Southern Border*. Edited by Ludwig D. Morenz, Michael Hoveler-Müller and Amr El Hawary; Rahden/Westf. VML, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2011.
- Waerzeggers, Caroline. “The Carians of Borsippa.” *Iraq* 68 (2006): 1–22.
- , “Locating Contact in the Babylonian Exile: Some Reflections on Tracing Judean-Babylonian Encounters in Cuneiform Texts.” Pages 131–146 in *Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon: Scholarly Encounters Between Jews, Iranians, and Babylonians in Antiquity*. Edited by Uri Gabbay and Shai Secunda; Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.
- . Review: “Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology* (Cusas) 28.” *STRATA: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel*

- Archaeological Society 33 (2015): 179–194.
- Waltke, Bruce K. and Michael Patrick. O’Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Walton, Joshua Theodore. “The Regional Economy of the Southern Levant in the 8th-7th Centuries BCE.” PhD diss., The Department of Near Eastern Language and Civilization, 2015.
- Washington, Harold. “Israel’s Holy Seed and the Foreign Women of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Kristevan Reading.” *Biblical Interpretation* 11 (2003): 427–437.
- Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*. SBL Symposium Series 17. Edited by James W. Watts. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.
- Weidner, Ernst F., “Jojachin, König von Juda, in Babylonischen Keilschrifttexten.” Pages 923–935 in *Bibliothèque archéologique et historique*. Paris: Geuthner, 1939.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. “Traces of Assyrian treaty formulae in Deuteronomy.” *Biblica* 46 (1965): 417–427.
- . *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992.
- Weingart, Kristin. *Stammevolk - Staatsvolk - Gottesvolk?: Studien zur Verwendung des Israel-Namens im Alten Testament*. FAT 68. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.
- . “What Makes an Israelite an Israelite? Judean Perspectives on the Samaritans in the Persian Period.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42 (2017): 155–175.
- . ““All These Are the Twelve Tribes of Israel”: The Origins of Israel’s Kinship Identity.” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 82 (2019): 24–31.
- Weitzman, Steven. *The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Welch, Adam C. “The Source of Nehemiah IX.” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 6 (1929): 130.
- Wellhausen, Julius. *Israelitische und judische Geschichte*. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1914.
- . *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel with a Reprint of the Article Israel from the Encyclopedia Britannica*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003.
- Wells, Bruce. “Competing or Complementary? Judges and Elders in Biblical and Neo-

- Babylonian Law.” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 16 (2010): 77–104.
- Werline, Rodney, “Defining Penitential Prayer.” Pages xiii–xvii in *Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Mark Boda, Richard Falk and Rodney Werline; 1. Boston: Brill, 2007.
- Westermann, Claus. *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary. The Old Testament library*. Translated by M. G. Stalker. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969.
- . *Praise and lament in the Psalms*. Translated by Keith R. Crim And Richard N. Soulen. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.
- . *Elements of Old Testament theology*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.
- White, Hayden. “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality.” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5–27.
- White, L. Michael and G. Anthony Keddie. *Jewish Fictional Letters from Hellenistic Egypt: The Epistle of Aristeas and Related Literature*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
- Williamson, H. G. M. “Note on 1 Chronicles 7:12.” *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973/07): 375–379.
- . *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah’s Role in Composition and Redaction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- . *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Word Biblical Commentaries 16. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985.
- Wilson, Robert R., “The Community of the Second Isaiah.” Pages 53–70 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*. Edited by Christopher R. Seitz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Wright, Benjamin G. *The Letter of Aristeas: ‘Aristeas to Philocrates’ or ‘On the Translation of the Law of the Jews’*. CEJL. Boston: Degruyter, 2015.
- Wright, Jacob, “Surviving in an Imperial Context: Foreign Military Service and Judean Identity.” Pages 505–528 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- . *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers*. Beiheft zur

- Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 348. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.
- Wunsch, Cornelia, “Debt, Interest, Pledge and Forfeiture in the Neo-Babylonian and Early Achaemenid Period: The Evidence from Private Archives.” Pages 221–255 in *Debt and Economic Renewal in the Ancient Near East* Edited by Michael Hudson and Marc van de Mieroop; *International Scholars Conference on Ancient Near Eastern Economics III*. Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2002.
- , “Glimpses of Lives of Deportees in Rural Babylonia.” Pages 247–260 in *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millenium B.C.* Edited by Angelika Berlejung and Michael P. Streck; Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013.
- Yang, Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebaugh. “Religion and Ethnicity Among New Immigrants: The Impact of Majority/Minority Status in Home and Host Countries.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40 (2001): 367–378.
- Yehuda, Rachel, Martin H Teicher, Jonathan R Seckl, Robert A Grossman, Adam Morris and Linda M Bierer. “Parental Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as a Vulnerability Factor for Low Cortisol Trait in Offspring of Holocaust Survivors.” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 64 (2007): 1040–1048.
- Zadok, Ran. “The Nippur region during the Late Assyrian, Chaldean and Achaemenian periods, chiefly according to written sources.” *Israel Oriental Studies* (1978): 226.
- . *The Jews in Babylonia During the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods According to the Babylonian Sources*. *Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel Monograph Series III*. Haifa: University of Haifa, 1979.
- . “A Prosopography of Samaria and Edom/Idumea.” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 30 (1998): 781–828.
- . *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia*. Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2002.
- , “West Semitic Groups in the Nippur Region Between c. 750 and 330 B.C.E.” Pages 94–167 in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*. Edited by Jonathan Stökl and Caroline Waerzeggers; Beiheft zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 478. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Zauzich, Karl T. “Der Gott des aramäisch-demotischen Papyrus Amherst 63.(Le dieu du papyrus araméo-démotique Amherst 63).” *Gottinger Miszellen Gottingen* 85 (1985): 89–90.
- Zevit, Ziony. “The Common Origin of the Aramaicized Prayer to Horus and of Psalm 20.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110 (1990): 213–228.

Zimmerli, Walther. "Die Eigenart der prophetischen Rede des Ezechiel: Ein Beitrag zum Problem an Hand von Ez. 14 1–11." *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

———. *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*. Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible. Edited by Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer. Translated by Ronald E. Clements. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Zobel, Hans-Jürgen. יהוה יהוה. *TDOT* 5: 482–499

Zorn, Jeffrey. "Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation by Avraham Faust (review)." *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 1 (2013): 185–192.

Zorn, Jeffrey, Joseph Yellin and John Hayes. "The m(w)sh Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period." *Israel Exploration Journal* 44 (1994): 161–183.