

Monotheism and empire

Gildas Hamel

DRAFT, April 1–8, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Working on a history of labor and religious representations in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine has led me to reflect on the broader and longer history of the notion of monotheism.¹ My interest in this topic is also partly prompted by modern questions, two in particular that are important but cannot be addressed directly in this paper. The first one regards the connection made between monotheism and violence. Is the exclusive belief in one divinity a major cause of violence and intolerance, as is often claimed in different ways concerning its three main branches?² One expression given to this idea has sometimes been that polytheism is tolerant and monotheism intolerant and

¹For a social history of ancient Israel, see especially R. KESSLER, *The social history of ancient Israel: an introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), translation of R. KESSLER, *Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel: eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006). This is the best introduction to the history of Israel we have at the present, but much more can be done because of important developments in the interpretation of the archaeology of Israel and in the source criticism of the Bible. For a very detailed and influential study of the early Israelite period: N. K. GOTTWALD, *The tribes of Yahweh : a sociology of the religion of liberated Israel, 1250–1050 BCE* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). For a useful review of the methods used in a social history of ancient Israel: P. M. MCNUTT, *Reconstructing the society of ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999). R. ALBERTZ, “Social history of ancient Israel,” in *Understanding the history of ancient Israel*, ed. H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, Proceedings of the British Academy 143 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 347–67 is a clear, important article. On the general state of the question, see for instance: L. L. GRABBE, *Ancient Israel: what do we know and how do we know it?* (London: T & T Clark, 2007).

²On those ideas in Hume and Schopenhauer, see J. ASSMANN, *Of God and gods: Egypt, Israel, and the rise of monotheism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

fanatical.³ This negative view of monotheism contradicts much of what has long been claimed about monotheism, namely its fundamental progressive role in matters of ethics and justice.⁴

A second idea worth examining is the notion that monotheism and its avatars promote a utilitarian vision of cosmic place and time and are leading the world towards political and ecological catastrophe. The monotheistic faith in Yahweh, conqueror of nature and the gods, would have played a basic role in the formation of that vision.⁵ This would be true of monotheism in its dualistic forms, crude or not, in contradistinction with a more monistic vision in which modern moral values can be teased out on their own, as part of this natural world.⁶

It is true that in the Bible, in a different way from the Greek approach, nature and mythical epics featuring nature and its powers—divinized or not—have fallen under a radical doubt. But this came about because of the Yahwistic anti-mythological struggle of the seventh to fifth century BCE, which needs to be located within the context of the domination of Israel, Judah, and their neighbors by successive empires—Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian, then Hellenistic and Roman—political entities whose ideological justifications took precisely these mythical and epic forms.⁷

³See for instance: J. SOLER, *La violence monothéiste* (Paris: Fallois, 2008); D. A. BERNAT and J. KLAWANS, *Religion and violence: the biblical heritage*, vol. 2, Recent research in Biblical studies (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007); J. KIRSCH, *God against the gods: the history of the war between monotheism and polytheism* (New York: Viking, 2004). Soler's arguments are similar to Kirsch's in their onesidedness. But see M. S. SMITH, *God in translation: deities in cross-cultural discourse in the biblical world*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 57 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

⁴A claim made since at least the nineteenth century, and beginning already with Mendelsohn. This was part of an effort to blunt the corrosiveness of calls for ethics and justice that were not based on transcendental or ontological basis. See the analysis by H. G. KIPPENBERG, *Discovering religious history in the modern age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). For a modern instance of this argument, concerning egalitarianism, but pushing it back very early to a putative Sinaitic (Mosaic) age, see J. BERMAN, *Created equal: how the Bible broke with ancient political thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Berman's argument is important, but is built on the wrong historical basis.

⁵It is not my intention at all here to defend the advantages or happy consequences monotheism may have had in Christian Europe, as argued in the highly speculative and opinionated work of R. STARK, *For the glory of God: how monotheism led to reformation, science, witch-hunts, and the end of slavery* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); reincarnated in R. STARK, *The victory of reason: how Christianity led to freedom, capitalism, and Western success*, 1st ed (New York: Random House, 2005).

⁶Human rights for instance.

⁷See J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 40–55 : a new translation with introduction and commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), ca. 130 [check]. In other words, while adopting a critical

A note on vocabulary: by monotheism, a recent word, I mean a universal, exclusive belief in, and worship of one divinity. I also use the terms monolatry, i.e. the non-exclusive worship of one god or goddess; and polylatry as well as polytheism, to insist on the notion of worship (or cult in the old sense). I don't think "polylatry" has any chance of getting the light of day and replace "idolatry", the language of early Christianity (εἰδωλολατρία, shortened later).⁸

The questions I'm taking up, in a one-millennium chronological sweep, are:

1. what form did the Yahweh cult take in the 1200–1000 period?
2. the nature of polylatry and monolatry in the state societies of Israel and Judah in the 10th to 8th c.;
3. the effect on religious forms of the rise of empires in the 9th–6th c. and responses to them;
4. the development of temple and Torah under the Achaemenids (539–333) and the role of priests;
5. a few remarks on the Hellenistic and Roman period;

This paper is part of an on-going and broad search for a more accurate and rational description of the origins and evolution of the notion of a single, universal divinity.⁹ Much has been done on the topic in recent years on the

historical reading of biblical traditions and suspending their assumed metaphysical underpinning, I take into serious account the faith and hopes of their authors. I note, as a well-known aspect of the history of ideas, that the non-historical reading of the origins of monotheism—meaning the idea of a pure revelation—does fuel the modern critics' view of monotheism as a problem: inexplicable and framed as a stark, radical, exclusive and extreme form of religion. This is still true even when the origins of monotheism are clothed in a superficial history, such as a date under Ramesses II, say, or a borrowing from Akhenaten's anti-priestly establishment version, for which see W. H. PROPP, *Exodus 19-40: a new translation with introduction and commentary*, vol. 2A, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2006) in his commentary still. Or in W. H. PROPP, "Monotheism and "Moses." The problem of early Israelite religion," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31 (1999): 537–75.

⁸For monolatry: Smith and Wellhausen already, ca 1880. Montefiore in 1892: "Monolatry is the worship of one god; monotheism, of the one and only God" (*OED*). Monolatry in pre-state Israel could be attributed to the fact that there was no sufficient differentiation in the culture for more functional deities, as already suggested by M. WEBER, *Ancient judaism*, ed. H. GERTH and D. MARTINDALE (New York: The Free Press, 1952). The notion and name of polylatry is borrowed from A. LEMAIRE, *Naissance du monothéisme : point de vue d'un historien* (Paris: Bayard, 2003).

⁹Note that we come to this question as moderns who assume that the effects of monotheism and the theologies and philosophies linked to it are natural, even if we drop the nineteenth-century evolutionary schemes of Tylor, etc. Perhaps post-moderns are less wont to do this. In any case, universal claims of validity are assumed for scientific explanations. But can we be sure that these claims do not owe much to monotheistic theology? When examining the evolution of notions of divinity in the Bronze and Iron ages, aren't we assuming

evolution of the idea.¹⁰ My own goals: partly a history of this early evolution, with a different accent on why it happened on the fringe of ancient Near Eastern empires, and partly and more importantly an attempt to connect the evolution of ideas regarding the divinity (-ies) and its cult to labor and social structures.

PRE-STATE ORIGINS OR LB TO IA

There is some evidence of a complex religious world in the twelfth to tenth centuries BCE, and some features of its evolution can be described. Stamp seals are an especially important part of this evidence. Given the brevity of this paper, let us simply consider for a moment a large stamp seal from the eleventh-tenth century BCE stratum.¹¹ It features a small, stylized tree in “degenerated” form, two quadrupeds facing each other and standing on either side of this tree, plus a larger quadruped with a suckling young occupying almost half of the seal’s surface, independent of the other scene, and two scorpions.¹² I quote:

The symmetrical design of this seal, along with the depiction of a large, horned quadruped with a young standing independently from the other figures suggests that the symbol of fertility and blessings had already shifted from that of the tree to the suckling animal. The fact that the animal was drawn as a sole motif suggests that the animal no longer served as an object for receiving blessings from the tree, but that it had its own significance. (SUGIMOTO, “An analysis of a stamp seal with complex religious motifs excavated at Tel ’En Gev,” 17)

The author suggests that the replacing of a fertility goddess by a stylized tree was followed by the replacing of this tree by the quadruped suckling a young animal. Scorpion and tree continued to work as symbols of fertility.

the effects the evolution itself has had on our own consciousness? For background, see Max Weber and the discussions of his idea of the evolution of Christian society.

¹⁰See for instance R. WRIGHT, *The evolution of God* (New York: Little, Brown, 2009); similar but more encompassing and not directly on the question of monotheism: R. N. BELLAH, *Religion in human evolution: from the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). Most importantly, the specialist writings of Mark Smith, André Lemaire, Jan Assmann, etc. For a fuller bibliography, see my other paper on the topic.

¹¹D. T. SUGIMOTO, “An analysis of a stamp seal with complex religious motifs excavated at Tel ’En Gev,” *IEJ* 64 (2014): 9–21.

¹²*Ibid.*, 11, with photograph and drawings.

As the focus shifted from the tree to the quadruped, the figure of the scorpion also disappeared during the Iron Age IIB. This shift indicates the loss of the concepts of the goddess and femininity from the figure of fertility and blessings and, in Israel, the likely absorption of these concepts by that of Yahweh. (18)

Much later, perhaps in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, for instance in Deut 7:13, 28:4, 18, 51, Yahweh absorbs or integrates in its vocabulary the names of ancient goddesses of fertility. This process of integration may have begun already in Iron Age IA.¹³ The phenomenon was not limited to Israel since the area where this seal was found was Geshur, to the east of the Sea of Galilee.

Can one suppose then the existence a monolatrous cult of Yahweh (or Yahwoh), in the pre-state period, among certain groups, perhaps from Southern Negev or Northern Sinai, of Midianite or Qenite origin, as the exegetic tradition regarding the Exodus tradition has long suggested?¹⁴ One may suppose also that this cult was non-anthropomorphic though not aniconic, perhaps like the worship by Edomites of Qaus (or Qos), Moabites of Chemosh, Ammonites of Milcom, and even Nabateans of Dušares before the Hellenistic period.¹⁵ Was there a pantheon, a mythology and which?¹⁶ A paredra? The iconographic evidence is strong but difficult to interpret.¹⁷ If it is accepted that

¹³After a suggestion by SUGIMOTO, “An analysis of a stamp seal with complex religious motifs excavated at Tel ’En Gev,” 18, n20.

¹⁴R. de VAUX, *Histoire ancienne d’Israël, des origines à l’installation en Canaan* (Paris, Gabalda, 1971), like many others, discusses the issue, which doesn’t need to detain us here, since it wouldn’t affect the general argument regarding the nature of this monolatrous cult about which we know next to nothing.

¹⁵Regarding the Nabatean “God of the fathers,” see A. ALT, *Der Gott der Väter: ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der israelitischen Religion*, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament. 3 Folge, Heft 12. (Der ganzen Sammlung, Heft 48) (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1929), who used Nabataean epigraphy to show that patriarchal narratives exhibited some affinity with Nabataean tradition (hence nomadic). This has now been taken up anew by J. F. HEALEY, “The Nabataean ‘God of the Fathers’,” in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: a festschrift to honour Professor John Emerton for his eightieth birthday*, ed. K. J. DELL, G. DAVIES, and Y. V. KOH (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 45–58, who argues that Nabataean sources remain useful because the nomadic fathers are presented as settling down. He thinks aniconism, “Rechabatism” and an inchoate monotheism (monolatry?) “find echoes in Jewish religion.” Were there contemporary materials used by the biblical authors in writing their own religious history?

¹⁶We have Ugaritic texts of the fourteenth-twelfth century, which can help reconstruct or guess at a Canaanite mythology, but the main obstacles are that we don’t have their myths of creation, and the comparison is risky.

¹⁷See O. KEEL and C. UEHLINGER, *Gods, goddesses, and images of God in ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998).

the many images, statuettes, and some later inscriptions of the ninth-eighth century BCE are evidence of polytheism (that is: Yahweh as the main god of a pantheon, with a paredra, Asherah), then two explanations come to mind: either an original, pure mosaic monotheism got denatured, as the biblical books propose, or this was the original state of affairs as in the rest of Canaanite society since the Late Bronze period. It think the second option is the only realistic one, considering the iconography. It remains that monolatry is featured in inscriptional evidence in Iron Age, at least since the end of the ninth century BCE: Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

Three other aspects of the Late Bronze period merit further analysis:

1. the demographic aspect: what size are the groups mentioned in texts, and how politically organized?
2. what kind of pantheon did the lineage and family structure have?
3. did the military structure have an effect on the pantheon? About this military aspect, we know very little. Arrow heads of metal or stone, sometimes inscribed, come from the area, and iconography (on pottery often). What else does archaeology reveal in terms of weaponry?

POLYLATRY AND MONOLATRY

The next step, on the basis of the books of Samuel-Kings and more globally the so-called Deuteronomistic History—which spans the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings—is to propose a plausible portrait of the political and religious situations of the kingdom of Israel in the ninth to eighth century BCE.¹⁸ I begin with a note of caution regarding the theory of state development as applied to the area. It is often supposed that there was a long, progressive, development of pre-state, segmentary society such as is imagined to be Late Bronze Israel, to a full state society. However, the different political and cultural environment in the Levant, with a long history of city-states and neighboring large and ancient states,¹⁹ means that states, even in a weak form, may have arisen earlier than theory (or even archaeology) indicates.²⁰ This

¹⁸But important consideration: why trust at all the traditions one finds in those books for the 1000 to 850 period? Their existence would be due to the interests of the monarchy in the 9th and 8th c., possibly some elite, and the writers of the very end of the 7th and the exilic period, if not later, with much different goals.

¹⁹Liverani 2005 drops the name “city-state” and prefers to use “city-regions.”

²⁰One can start with the sociological and ethnographic presuppositions held by defenders of the low chronology (Finkelstein first of all): see R. KLETTER, “Chronology and united monarchy,” *ZDPV* 120 (2011): 13–54. Regarding statehood vs chiefdoms: the usual method

possibility is neatly illustrated by the discoveries made recently at Khirbet Qeiyafa, in what was southwest Judah in the first millennium, on the “border” with Philistine territory.²¹ The site’s archaeologists argue that Kh. Qeiyafa, which was occupied for a very short period of time, is evidence of a new cultural assemblage. They argue it is the earliest level of Iron Age IIA, datable to circa 1025–975 BCE, by radiometry and pottery assemblage. The discovery is passionately discussed because of its location near Philistine territory and because an ostrakon with a few lines of writing, dating to ca. 1000 BCE, has been found in the excavations.

How does the development of social stratification in the early state of Israel relate to religious structures? In Mediterranean, agrarian, territorial states,²² the need for security of access to land and labor led to maximization

consisting of listing features of states and stateless societies has been called into question. See E. PFOH, *The emergence of Israel in ancient Palestine* (London: Equinox, 2009), which is roundly criticized by Hutton in a 2011 review in *RBL*. If one is not content with a feature-rich definition of ancient states and wishes for more logical explanations, can statehood be described after Weber or Gellner as a monopolization of coercive power? Weber’s developments on domination and its charismatic, patrimonial and legal/rational aspects are very important in this regard, because they provide a theory against which one may initiate a dynamic description of ancient states, rather than resort to lists of features: see R. BENDIX, *Max Weber: an intellectual portrait*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). The state was not a pure category of politics in any case. It could remain a complex kinship-based polity (partly fictitious or not), meaning that this monopoly of power did not exist or was distributed broadly, even though aristocratically. Or the monopolization of power by a few clan heads continued under the monarchy and social differentiation proceeded slowly. This may have been the situation for a long while and was assumed to be the case by the later author(s)—exilic or post-exilic—of the Davidic cycle of stories. This kind of transitional explanations has already been offered, for instance by R. D. MILLER II, *Chieftains of the highland clans : a history of Israel in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2005) (secondary complex chiefdoms), or D. MASTER, “State formation theory and the kingdom of ancient Israel,” *JNES*, 2001, 117–31 (a kingship-based patrimonial state). State and kinship or tribal relationships were not necessarily exclusive of each other, or moved in a single direction. Furthermore, in regard to writing as one of the features often thought to signify statehood, a scribal apparatus may have existed early, or continued to exist in a subdued way, and was only later used for legitimation by nascent aristocracy or monarchy. The scribal aspect of ancient states was not something necessarily created of whole new cloth in Iron Age II. On this question, see R. BYRNE, “The refuge of scribalism in Iron I Palestine,” *BASOR* 345 (2007): 1–31; C. A. ROLLSTON, *Writing and literacy in the world of ancient Israel: epigraphic evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); and W. M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *Social history of Hebrew: Its origins through the Rabbinic period* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013).

²¹See most recently Y. GARFINKEL and H.-G. KANG, “The relative and absolute chronology of Khirbet Qeiyafa: very Late Iron Age I or very Early Iron Age IIA?,” *IEJ* 61 (2011): 171–83.

²²Different in that respect from city-states, see G. BUCCELLATI, *Cities and nations of*

of chances to expand. To stay put was not an option. Risk abatement alone and need for diversification (i.e., minimization of ecological risks, essentially, by diversification of land plots, staggered planting, variety of species, etc.) forced these agrarian societies, and the king above all, to maximize access to neighboring, diverse lands, and the labor attached to it. By attached, I mean two things: attached to the place with its local shrines, and attached in the sense of undergoing a beginning social stratification which was in process already in the pre-state period, through debt and bondage.²³

I imagine a two-track strategy was possible: external expansion, and internal constitution and development by the king of a group of dependents with restricted allegiance to his house, such as outright slaves, people fallen into debt bondage, or people freed from others families' control.²⁴

The first strategy, external, was mostly conducted through alliances, marital and otherwise, and war. The access to new sources of wealth which this strategy provided depended upon the habitual or traditional networks of fidelity and trust that these sources of labor could continue to have locally and which were primarily signified or anchored through local gods and shrines, via kinship groups. King Achab's marriage to Jezebel, daughter of Tyre's priest-king, is a good example, presented negatively by the writers of the books of Samuel and Kings. So, multiple local gods and goddesses, multiple shrines even for a single god, all of this entailed a fixity which was part of the guarantee of fidelity of the local, socially stratified, peasantry without which no power could be concentrated.²⁵

Access to more land and labor was to the advantage of the king and of close kin groups who followed the same strategy. Social stratification, through accumulation of land, was reinforced by this process, mainly through loan and

ancient Syria; an essay on political institutions with special reference to the Israelite kingdoms (Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1967).

²³I am using some of the ideas of A. TESTART, *L'esclave, la dette et le pouvoir: études de sociologie comparative* (Paris: Errance, 2001).

²⁴I am not using the concept of patriarchy, too simplistic and inaccurate in describing real but very complex gender and labor differences: see the criticisms by C. L. MEYERS, "Was ancient Israel a patriarchal society?," *JBL* 133 (2014): 8–27.

²⁵The possibility of polylatry, including the parda to Yahweh, his Asherah, needs to be re-thought with the economic background in mind. One common explanation or interpretation is that of adaptation or adoption of Asherah from Phoenician or Canaanite culture. She is the parda of El or consort at Ugarit, but caution is in order here not to assume a continuum Ugarit-Phoenicia-Canaan-Israel, however tempting for political reasons of our time. See the literature and discussion of Dt 32.6–7 and parallel 4.19–20. For a recent account of the discussions in, see J. J. COLLINS, *The Bible after Babel: historical criticism in a postmodern age* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005), chapter 5.

debt mechanisms. Military actions were done in coalitions apparently, under the lead divinity (Yahweh Sabbaot = Yahweh of armies), with the first role given to king's troops that came from his kin group and unrelated individuals: this is illustrated by David's story.²⁶

The second, more internal, strategy for kings was to develop parallel networks of trust that increase their power. They would find them among foreigners (*gêrim*), residents (*toshavim*), all people threatened by debt bondage.²⁷ They could hope to attach these individuals to themselves by suspending debts, at least temporarily, with the kind of social laws eventually incorporated in Ex 21, Lev 25, and Dt 15, which they would support as part of their divinely authorized duty.

YAHWISTIC REACTION UNDER THE OMRIDES

Given this general framework, let's look at the Yahwistic reaction under the Omrides (876–43). Archaeology and textual analysis indicate that under that dynasty a rich period of development occurred in Israel which went together with increased social stratification.²⁸ The situation is illustrated by the story of Naboth vineyard in 1 Kgs 21:1–20a, which source analysis argues is from an early, pre-722 tradition.²⁹

The development of polytheism under the Omrides led to a Yahweh-centered reaction in the northern kingdom—the first struggle for an exclusive cult of Yahweh.³⁰ The resistance was initially symbolized by Elijah, the bearer of a significant name: *Yahw* is my god. He is programmatically portrayed as a resident (the Tishbite, i.e. from Tishbeh, which is conveniently close to the root *toshav*), who operates on the margins of the kingdom, according to the story in 1 Kgs 17-19: near the Jordan, at the limits of Tyre, and then in the

²⁶ Assuming that the stories in 2 Sam–1 Kgs have some value for a period preceding the exile. When did mercenaries begin to serve in ancient armies?

²⁷ But on the latter, see now J. MAYSHAR, “Who was the *toshav*?,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 225–46. Mayshar argues the word means sharecropper. The general social analysis holds or becomes even more clear cut.

²⁸ ALBERTZ, “Social history of ancient Israel,” 358–59.

²⁹ Note on composition of Elijah story: the exilic Deuteronomistic History had only the Naboth story, a shorter Ahaziah story, and the Jehu story. Not yet the drought composition of 1 Kgs 17–18. These three stories pre-date 722. On this, see S. OTTO, *Jehu, Elia, und Elisa: die Erzählung von der Jehu-Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa-Erzählungen*, vol. 8, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001). Early Deuteronomistic History passages were: 1 Kgs 16:29–33; 21:1–29; 22:39–40; 22:52–2 Kgs 1:2, 5–8, 17a, 18; 3:1–3; 8:16–29; 9:1–10:36.

³⁰ ALBERTZ, “Social history of ancient Israel,” 359.

Southern Negev. Parallel epigraphic sources from the eighth and seventh centuries show a preponderance of personal names reflecting a belief in Yahweh's protection, generosity, and grace.

However redacted these passages of the Deuteronomistic History are, we know there was a large political reaction led by Yahwists, Jehu and his group, who eliminated the Omrides and founded a new dynasty. The prophets (one unnamed, Elijah, and Elisha) "cooperated with other social groups," even though they seem detached from any institution.³¹ They represented conservative circles, from the eastern part of the kingdom apparently (near desertic area), where one may surmise that the position of Yahweh was of a singular god.³²

There are interesting economic and social questions to ask, however, regarding the Yahwistic prophets. How did they live? While Elijah is presented as a poor itinerant prophet living of expedients, his successor Elisha is presented as a substantial landowner. Perhaps they benefited from the general economic development, in part due to the policies of their opponents, the Omrides, yet reacting to the strong social stratification which went with it.

However, the internal resistance of local elites (in Ephraim areas mostly?) is not only due to a perceived overreach by the monarchy which took the form of *baalism* (located in Yizreel, with Samaria as capital, i.e. in a process of ex-centering).³³ It is also due to the growing Assyrian menace in the second half of the ninth century BCE. When it diminished in the early eighth century (782–745), perhaps yahwism was seen as a potent factor in this reprieve?³⁴

This reaction would become a prominent part of the theme of social justice in the continuing Yahwistic-led resistance both in Israel and Judah, and eventually in the law (Ex 21, Dt 15, Lev 25) and the theological accounts of the monarchy up to 722 and later. It had important consequences on the later prophetic movement, the transmission of traditions from the north to the south in the seventh century (including Mosaic traditions of salvation), and the passage from monolatry to monotheism.

It is interesting to compare the process in Israel and Judah to Solon's reforms in Athens at the beginning of the sixth century BCE. It seems that the prophetic movement was playing a similar role to Solon's, including the

³¹ALBERTZ, "Social history of ancient Israel," 361. External evidence to some extent: Assyrian texts.

³²Whether this "retrenching," leading to the Jehu revolt and dynasty, isolated or weakened the Northern state and prevented its alliance with stronger neighbors to resist the Assyrians more successfully is suggested by some scholars. See *ibid.*, 359.

³³This ex-centering needs to be examined and already has, presumably.

³⁴This is wholly speculative: are there any traces of this type of attitude among Aramaean states, or in the HB?

use of poetic language. Solon's reforms, however, succeeded in tamping social stratification down and creating a free peasantry, or at least he is credited with doing so. He did this by decreasing the power of the aristocratic families while redistributing wealth (debt cancellation, freeing of *hektēmōroi*, freeing of debt-slaves). Although the social tensions and prophetic solutions look eerily similar in eighth to seventh century Israel and Judah, the creation of a truly free peasantry couldn't happen there because of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.³⁵

To return to the Yahwistic circles, how large were they? Some historians think the Yahwistic group was very small in Israel and Judah, right up to the Babylonian invasion. But the abundance of Yah-theophoric names, both in inscriptions and biblical names from Israel and Judah, indicates otherwise.

As I said regarding the pre-state period, the worship of Yahweh, however, may not have been of a radically alone god or at least not for everyone. Inscriptions have been found at Kuntillet Ajrud (9th-8th c., northern Sinai), referring e.g. to "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" whose interpretation is hotly disputed.³⁶ Do they indicate the existence of a relationship with the goddess Asherah and show that Yahweh is part of a polytheistic pantheon, or is the Asherah a cultic object through which Yahweh's power is approached?

One more word on the general situation of the Omrides. Scholars present the Omride syncretism as part of a system of military alliances, which is an important aspect of the expansion, since military protection against the looming Assyrian threat or its vassal Aramean kingdoms in the ninth and eighth centuries was essential. This doesn't change the more basic facts, to my mind, which are that kingdoms needed to ensure ever greater access to land and labor, as well as military forces connected with this, either by levies or special mercenary forces.³⁷

In terms of religious development in that period, I subscribe to Albertz's words:

it was a very specific political, social, and religious historical constellation during the ninth century BCE, when Israel experienced the transition from an 'early' to a 'mature state', which pushed Israel's religious development in the direction of monolatry and monotheism. (R. ALBERTZ,

³⁵See W. J. WOODHOUSE, *Solon the liberator. A study of the agrarian problem in Attika in the seventh century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965); K. FREEMAN, *The work and life of Solon; with a translation of his poems* (New York: Arno Press, 1976 (1926)).

³⁶See KEEL and UEHLINGER, *Gods, goddesses, and images of God in ancient Israel*, 210–48, with full discussion of the possibilities. I'm following these authors.

³⁷Were there mercenaries at that time? Or are the writers assuming the permanence of a contemporary (Persian?) aspect of war?

From the beginnings to the end of the monarchy, vol. 1 of *A history of Israelite religion in the Old Testament period* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 363)

EMPIRE, ISRAEL, JUDAH, AND NEIGHBORS

Israel's strategy seems similar to that of neighboring Aramean states, whereas Judah's was much more like that of Edom, Moab, Ammon, i.e. monolatry without need for ditheism or polylatry.³⁸ But the fact that Israel and Judah shared Yahweh as their main god, led to a peculiar dynamics when empires weighed in at the end of the eighth century BCE and in the seventh.

When considering the events that engulfed Israel in 722 and Judah in 586, one may wonder about the long-term effect of the early loss of Israel's political entity to Assyria, and its aftermath for the southern kingdom of Judah. What was the long-term effect of the fairly rapid transformation of the imperial political situation in Mesopotamia and the Levant, with Assyria being remembered as having seen its gods submitting to those of Babylonia, and these in turn submitting to those (quite different) from Persia? Taking these changes in consideration makes it easier to explain why Judah alone, and not the Aramaean, northern Israelite, Philistine, or Moabite populations, came to such an understanding of their ethnic god.

1. The standard, age-old, explanation for defeat or for historical catastrophe was that the god or gods had become angry with the people³⁹ and must be propitiated by one or another rite, such as sacrifices, even human sacrifices. This is the impression one gathers from the Moabite stone as well as from much biblical and extra-biblical evidence.⁴⁰
2. In the case of Israel, in the eighth century tradition as we have seen, this widely-held explanation of royal and/or people's failures was focussed on Yahweh.

³⁸Cf. Weber's passages on the ecological reasons that would explain the monolatry of desert or marginal social groups. This could be true also of small agrarian groups: perhaps the demographic question is important in this regard (meaning, the modesty of population numbers, for which see M. BROSHI and I. FINKELSTEIN, "The population of Palestine in Iron Age II," *BASOR*, 1992, 47–60), as well as the type of niche agriculture that was practiced in these areas?

³⁹Or the king? Is this explanation ever given, or again is the royal interest so powerful that this explanation can't even be suggested?

⁴⁰The critically inverted biblical stories on Balaam in Numbers 22–24 and Elijah in 1 Kings 17–19 ("inverted" for the latter: I mean by this that the story gives us a later –exilic and post-exilic– writer's notion of what kings were expecting a prophet to do).

Some scholars suggest that Hezekiah couldn't have taken to Yahweh or developed his cult after Israel's defeat.⁴¹ On the contrary, it seems to me the scenario is entirely possible given a theodicy of punishment. The separate problem of adoption by Judah of pan-Israelite identity is a different question. All of this discussion (similarly Hong, on the emergence of "biblical Israel", 2013) rests on a fragile basis of modern notions of identity. Speculative.

3. Assyrian kings were not content with dominating their vassals but were in need of a guaranteed, regular tribute. They also held to the fiction that the conquered people's god/s gave them the victory.⁴²
4. The defeat in 722 of northern Israel was naturally enough seen in competing Judah as a divine punishment for a variety of sins, especially polytheism but also related failures of social justice.⁴³ The normal internal explanation of failure, prepared by the Yahwistic reaction of the ninth-eighth century, transmitted to Judah by refugees from Israel at the end of the eighth century, was reinforced by the competition that existed between the closely related yet different kingdoms. One supposes that at that time, this was the main reason for collecting some prophetic traditions to which later would the names of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah be attached. From the southern, Judaeian point of view, the causes of the failure of the northern kingdom of Israel were obvious. It was a failure to worship Yahweh alone in the correct way, and failure to be just and merciful.
5. The Assyrian pressure on Judah and its neighboring kingdoms continued throughout the seventh century, however, causing great anxiety, uncertainty, and economic pressure for the people.⁴⁴ Neutrality was impossible, quite as the book of Jeremy would illustrate in an even more difficult situation. The same god Yahweh who had "abandoned" Israel out of anger, according to the natural explanation of the time, was also

⁴¹See P. R. DAVIES, *The origins of biblical Israel*, vol. 485 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 150.

⁴²This seems true of the Assyrians and later the Persians, but perhaps not of the Babylonians.

⁴³The role of northern prophetic traditions, presumably brought by refugees, must have been important in the development of these ideas. The refugees or escapees came to Judah, but where? Jerusalem, to the West, as argued by some? How large a movement? See the argument by I. FINKELSTEIN, *The forgotten kingdom: The archaeology and history of northern Israel* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), in particular. I discuss this problem in my chapter on method: 01_method.tex.

⁴⁴It was a bumpy century, because of the dynastic and military problems of Assyria, the temporary resurgence of Egypt, and the emergence of Babylonian power.

the god of Judah, and its will was a cipher that prophets were to announce and interpret.

Because of Judah's smaller population and the relentless Assyrian pressure on it almost until the end of the seventh century, its kings were not in a position to spread risk and diversify. The situation called for defensive, survival measures. The king's interest, from Hezekiah to Josiah, was to assert control over resources and maximize their power.⁴⁵ This explains their radical position regarding local shrines.⁴⁶ The unity of cult at the Jerusalem temple, the centrality of this city for the royal house, and the eminence of the Jerusalem priesthood were asserted against competing interests, those of local shrines with their priests, and local kinship networks.⁴⁷

The reinforcement of social laws concerning limits on debt, return of property, and relief from bondage also made sense from the monarchy's point of view.⁴⁸ By correcting the social inequities brought about by debt and bondage,⁴⁹ king Josiah and perhaps Hezekiah before him could claim credit (i.e. divinely protected authority) for enacting the laws (=justice) and furthermore implicitly claim fidelity and attachment to himself of all those detached by circumstances from their local networks by loss of land or liberty.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Why the Deuteronomistic History presents only the beginning and the end of the long series of kings of Judah more favorably, in a kind of large chiasmic structure (David and Solomon vs Hezekiah and Josiah), as noted by scholars, is still puzzling.

⁴⁶Ironically, one cannot help thinking that the centralization of wealth and cult made the conquest by Babylonians more efficient. The larger question regards the social ideals invoked or suggested by early prophets. Greater equality and decrease of social stratification would lead to much more dispersion of wealth, hence be less attractive for organized aggressive empires, though not for raiders. But this is imagining history, which is precisely what prophets and their redactors were doing.

⁴⁷But social justice, incorporated into Dt 15:1–11, wasn't applied in Jerusalem, according to Jeremiah's claims, 5:26–29.

⁴⁸See Deut esp., but also Lev and Exod

⁴⁹Critical establishment and reinforcement of early monarchies come from this access to indebted labor and bonded labor, as suggested before, and loyalty networks beyond the kin networks. For a forceful and extreme version of this argument, see TESTART, *L'esclave, la dette et le pouvoir: études de sociologie comparative*. This would be true even if the goal that was sought was that of a free peasantry whose relative means would enable it to arm and defend itself, a bit like the hoplites of ancient Athens.

⁵⁰But note: the law was not issued by kings in Exodus. Also: the Deuteronomistic History doesn't talk about the social angle, only the cultic aspect. Because of priestly influence? See E. OTTO, "Deuteronomy between the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History," *JHS* 9, no. a17 (2009): 22–27 = E. OTTO and R. ACHENBACH, eds., *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,

This would later be memorialized in the form of a divine revelation, in a scroll (a first edition of the Deuteronomy), a more exact revelation of the laws and of a covenant with its god (an old idea) reframing the role of kings, justice, and Jerusalem. Proper cult and the exercise of social justice might avoid the repeat of 735, 721, etc.⁵¹

The upshot of all of this is that there was a reinforcement of monolatry under kings Hezekiah and Josiah in the seventh century. There is good reason to believe there was a Judahite, Josianic reform, perhaps initiated already under Hezekiah, according to the so-called Deuteronomistic History: see ALBERTZ, *From the beginnings to the end of the monarchy*, 2:310–11.⁵² To repeat: it was in the interest of the Judaeen king to do this reform, to circumvent kinship and local networks, to reinforce its control and access to economic and military resources (Yahweh as warlord). The elimination of local shrines made sense in this context, given the Assyrian and later the Babylonian danger.

6. Yet, ca. 600 BCE, in 593, 587, and subsequent incursions, the same kind of punishing war and defeat happened to Judaeans, at the hands of Babylonia. The political and military situation was complex as Babylonia had just recently taken power over Assyria. The question may have then become: What could explain this new catastrophe, when the

2004); Christophe Nihan et al.

⁵¹On the history of the Deuteronomy, see especially K. VAN DER TOORN, *Scribal culture and the making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007): four editions of the book, between –620 and –460 or so? Regarding the writing of the Bible, dating of it, and other possibilities, see W. M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible became a book: the textualization of ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and SCHNIEDEWIND, *Social history of Hebrew*. About Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, see also T. RÖMER, *The so-called Deuteronomistic history: a sociological, historical, and literary introduction* (London: T & T Clark, 2007). A single exilic redactor-author of the Deuteronomistic history, from Deuteronomy to Kings, or several? With a foundation legend in 2 Kgs 22–23. And the Deuteronomistic History would not be simply a “library” being constituted in the Neo-Babylonian period, but a “crisis” literature and a guide to history: Römer, pp. 107–64. The book of Judges invented, and the books of Joshua, Samuel, Kings, considerably enlarged. But was there cult centralization in the seventh century (Knauf thinks not)?

⁵²It seems exaggerated to consider it an invention, since it would have been easy to charge all the kings with being wrong. Furthermore, king Josiah failed in the end, so it is difficult to maintain that he did not do some kind of reform that is highly prized afterwards and continued in more radical ways. The authors, probably Judahite priests, elites, and elders, had an interest in portraying the reasons for a failed monarchy, but without going as far as other critics. Their portrait of the initiators, from Joshua to David and Solomon, and the end, with a charge against Manasseh, the successor of Hezekiah, preceding Josiah, makes sense.

people and a king like Josiah had tried to change their behavior?⁵³ At the same time, perhaps, the fact that imperial masters and defeated peoples changed within about 100 years (Assyria/ Babylonia; Israel/ Judah) meant that the logic at work was deeper than just a single ethnic god being angry with “his” people. This kind of “stereoscopic” view of history (Israel/Judah and Assyria/Babylonia) was not available to other neighboring subject peoples: namely, the Phoenician and Philistine cities, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the Aramean kingdoms of Syria.

The belief grew then that Yahweh, who was not simply interested in his cult but also justice, had used two great powers in turn, both well connected with their own divine world, and must therefore have been greater than all of them, in spite of appearances or rather on account of them. He may have had a greater cosmic, powerful, yet more hidden, and therefore more powerful, role than he was credited with before.⁵⁴

EXILE

During the “second” exile, i.e. from 593-586 on, the transplanted parts of the Judaeans population, who numbered a few thousands only in different areas of Babylonia, now had a more complex explanation for their situation. Many accepted the Deuteronomy-framed premise that they were being punished, but they also saw themselves as an instrument of the divine will now projected more broadly in space and time. Their rapidly developing idea of time and history led eventually to a complex, eschatological, view of it.⁵⁵ The end of the Jerusalem temple (which—as seen above—had developed only recently as a single cultic center and because of the external events had become already the royal, priestly, and prophetic center for Judah) was not the end of all this history, but surreptitiously hid, in counter intuitive fashion, the hope for a new beginning. This belief, I think, led to the reworking of the Isaiah view of the divinity, revised and reinforced also in Ezekiel.⁵⁶ The divinity’s agency

⁵³Or at least this is how the Deuteronomic History presents the story. A highly critical view of the whole monarchic period, with two positive ends (only in Judah): David and Hezekiah/Josiah. See other footnote on the topic.

⁵⁴The attraction of “qualities” borrowed from other gods, especially the great gods of their environment, by “translation” or “convergence,” to their own divinity could have been a longer process both in Israel and Judah, as is argued especially by M. S. SMITH, *The early history of God. Yahweh and the other deities in ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002); SMITH, *God in translation*.

⁵⁵See already in Ezekiel, the final battle against Gog.

⁵⁶Itself actually a very early prophetic book, in the sense of a finished collection.

in history was now presented as much wider but cryptic. It acquired mobility, as imperial power itself, be it Assyrian, Babylonian, or Persian, as well as the military units this power used, also became quite fluid.⁵⁷

EZEKIEL

Among the many revolutionary ideas in the book of Ezekiel, I see the following three as important in a history of monotheism:

1. First of all, the divinity was presented as radically mobile, and this in two ways. In the first vision at the beginning of the book (Ez 1), remarkably set in a location in exile, the enthronement of the divinity is a reworking of the massive architectural features that Assyrian, Babylonian, or imitative kinglets of the East used to base and reinforce their hold on the population. What is striking about these structures, be they the Ishtar Gate of Babylon, the Assyrian or Babylonian statues of kings, bulls, lions, and strange mythological creatures, or the reliefs of the Apadana or great audience hall in Persepolis, is their imposing, massive presence. They were designed to strike the imagination by their weight, inamovibility and immutability.⁵⁸ The flying chariot and the luminous, airy “glory” of the vision is a way to say that true glory (weighty, as the root *kavod* has it) is other than these massive structures.

A second way in which the book presents divine mobility is the scene of the withdrawing of the divinity from the temple, in Ez 10–11, and its return in chapter 42. The abandonment by the deities of their temples, temporarily or not, is a known feature of Near Eastern religions.⁵⁹ But in Ezekiel, the divinity is presented as accompanying the people in their exile to Babylon:

⁵⁷It has been argued that a trend towards monotheism, by which is meant a strict monotheism, existed earlier, as a minority voice, in the seventh century. See C. FREVEL, “Wovon reden die Deuteronomisten? Anmerkungen zu religionsgeschichtlichem Gehalt, Fiktionalität und literarischen Funktionen deuteronomistischer Kultnotizen,” in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur “Deuteronomismus” — Diskussion in Tora und vorderen Propheten*, ed. J. F. DIEHL et al., BZAW 365 (De Gruyter, 2006), 249–77; F. STAVRAKOPOULOU, “Gog’s grave and the use and abuse of corpses in Ezekiel 39:11–20,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 67–84. This argument needs to be analyzed in detail.

⁵⁸Nimrud: Ashurbanipal II’s seat in the ninth century BCE. Apadana: name of the great audience hall at Persepolis and Susa where Persian kings received tribute from all the nations in the Achaemenid empire. First half of 5th c. BCE.

⁵⁹See literature on this question. Cyrus did present himself as restoring the traditional gods of Babylonia who—the topos went—left under Nabonidus.

Therefore say: Thus says the Lord GOD: Though I removed them far away among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a little while [or: to some extent] in the countries where they have gone. (Ezek 11:16).

In other words, the notion of divine mobility permits an extensive revision of monarchic and imperial structures.⁶⁰ Most importantly and radically, it separates divine power from monarchic rule and palatial system. It also makes virtue out of necessity: meaning that what happened to the divinity in Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar is transformed by Ezekiel's vision into something that preceded it.⁶¹

This change in the notion of the mobility of the divinity and its detachment from the land correlated with a change in the notion of justice. The limited corpus of laws changed in tone. In Exodus, it was embedded in a story claiming the absolute reality of salvation from the grip of slavery.⁶² Without sanctuary, without kings, and with a deity who was both *mobile*—therefore potentially closer—and more transcendent, justice became more broadly defined and more *sui generis*. Failures to pursue this justice constituted now a greater part (arguably) of failure in *imitatio Dei*, and sin a more personalized rebellion, rather than a collection of various breaches and transgressions that involved the whole community.⁶³ This is where accounts of the origin of social justice relying on

⁶⁰Imitation of Assyrian and Babylonian Weltanschauung? Also: remember, aspect of punitive, retributive justice still kept up.

⁶¹This notion of the mobility of the divinity was widely adopted, eventually. For instance, it was used ironically in the late story of Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kgs 5, who takes two mule-loads of good Israelite earth back to Damascus so he can properly worship, on his ancestral land, this Yahweh who cured him through Elisha. The authors of this story are clearly aware that the definition of the people of Yahweh requires more than physical presence on the land and closeness to it.

⁶²I say “absolute reality” rather than “history,” in an attempt to stay close to the nature of ancient belief. This is not the place to examine the interrelation of theology and history and the underlying notions of faith and trust, a most important and well studied topic.

⁶³Yet, one needs to explain the throne: “like a throne” (Ezekiel). The “like” is the part that preoccupies us, since the throne itself was the standard mark of kinship and that of the “reigning” gods, unsurprisingly. Even empty, in the first temple (?), on top of griffin-like creatures (the tamed cherubs, כְּרוּבִים, which I presume come from the notion of kings needing to be shown protecting their people and therefore conquering wild animals, as on the Persian bas-reliefs?). So, Ezekiel, as I understand it, is not letting go of this imagery that he knows from Jerusalem and even in a more grandiose fashion from Babylon (and other places perhaps), but he questions it because its similar use in Babylonia, as monumentalized support of an empire itself of short duration, is destined to vanish. Real power was not where one expected it to be, Ezekiel is saying. It could not be transposed but needed to be

a supra-historical divine intervention go wrong. By not developing a more complex historical explanation of its development, they miss its truly revolutionary implications.⁶⁴

2. The law or Torah began to be seen as given directly by the divinity, not only guaranteed by it as was normally done in law codes issued by kings.⁶⁵ Attached to this re-directing of authority behind the law was a change in the control of writing and the repeating of the words. And so, the notion of justice as directly dependent on the divinity—rather than on kings—meant that individual responsibility was redefined. Furthermore, a questioning of the Deuteronomist’s view of history came into being in exile. By which I mean that the collective punishment aspect of the Deuteronomist’s explanation of history could not be accepted wholesale by those exiles who felt they were trying to purify their lives in accordance precisely with the Deuteronomist’s view.⁶⁶
3. Finally, there was the *hope* of a restoration, a return, on a new basis. In the Torah of Ezekiel, however, both the role of the king, significantly called prince, and the physical location of the “prince’s portion,” became reduced, as signs of demotion (and their corollary meant that the power

literally exploded or levitated and leveraged. The above is a short attempt at understanding Ezekielian moves that need further examination.

⁶⁴This is the case most recently with BERMAN, *Created equal*. See the discussion of that book in: S. OLYAN, “In conversation with J. A. Berman, *Created equal: how the Bible broke with ancient political thought*,” *JHS* 10, no. a9 (2010): 1–49.

⁶⁵Large evidentiary set for this, often discussed. See for instance ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*, among many authors. Or M. LIVERANI, *Israel’s history and the history of Israel* (London: Equinox, 2005), 342–44. What is required at this point, and only partially provided, is an analysis of the control of writing and the repeating of traditions, when the normal guarantor or mediator—the king—was gone and scribal schools and priesthood survived. This would be the place again to compare the editing and promulgation of the Torah as directly emanating from the divinity with the solution in Athens of similar social problems caused by aristocratic families (but not because of the same externalities: no empire). Solon’s reform also did away with tyrants or elites as intermediaries, at about the same time as Judaeen writers (beginning of sixth century BCE), for similar reasons, and with similar further editing and ideologizing by later democrats in the fifth century? The danger of tyranny was omnipresent, but consistently fought by the Eupatridai and other leading families. And of course no theocracy or kings. But, most importantly, an interesting, toned down, appeal to divine authority in the enacting of just laws, at least in the fragmentary poems of Solon we have. Much more research needs to be done to compare to Judah this very important, structurally similar, ancient society, and the small number of possible political solutions mapped out more systematically. See R. WESTBROOK, “The laws of Biblical Israel,” in *The Hebrew Bible: new insights and scholarship*, ed. F. E. GREENSPAHN (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 99–119.

⁶⁶See ASSMANN, *Of God and gods*.

of priests increased?).⁶⁷

So, the exile brought about a second phase of ethnogenesis—if we consider that the first was the appearance of Israel as a people at the end of the Late Bronze, as indicated by the stele of Merenptah, dated to 1208 BCE. Two important things must be remembered in discussing this phase. One, the majority of the people remained where they were, especially the peasantry, obviously. So, the words exile and post-exile do not quite describe the situation for the majority of the people, though they shared the fate of being under foreign domination. Secondly, while it is easy to portray Ezra-Nehemiah's reforms negatively or as the product of great political pressure, especially about the ethnic composition of the people, it is important to remember that their definition of a people goes (for the first time?) beyond the usual lineage mapping. Their laws reflect a conflict between a narrowly, biologically defined people, and a broader, more universalist view of the divinity. This conflict was played up for instance in the late books of Ruth and Jonah.

In a situation of exile, in the mosaic-like Babylonian and Persian empires, Judaeans—and also Israelites (because of the sharing of traditions?)—had to respond to the dynamics of assimilation and identity.⁶⁸ The Judaeans knew the dangers of assimilation as did all ancient peoples.⁶⁹ For Judaeans, their “portable”, sophisticated, and deepening explanation for the troubles in their history allowed them to wait and see. Their collected and reframed traditions, including those behind Genesis, now provided an experience as well as an explanation of their suffering and its origins, that the appealing stories of Nineveh and Babylon did not and could not provide. It had become crystal clear by the sixth century that the explanatory and incantatory power and attraction that these imperially adopted stories may have had was considerably weakened by the fact that these empires and their religious frameworks were transitory and were replaced eventually by quite a different but no less exacting master, Cyrus.

⁶⁷Chapters 40 and after of Ezek. See J. D. PLEINS, “Territory and Temple,” chap. 8 in *The social visions of the Hebrew Bible. A theological introduction* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 319–52.

⁶⁸On the complex relationship of Judaeans to northern Israelites in the exilic and post-exilic period, see now G. N. KNOPPERS, *Jews and Samaritans: the origins and history of their early relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁶⁹Assimilation could be forced by the overlords, as it would be for northern Israel, where some limited transfers of population happened. The Judaeans indeed would accuse Samaritans—the heirs to the northern Israelite kingdom—of having been a “motley” population of transferred people without recognizable god: “goyim”.

In parallel with their political re-adaptation, they engaged in a full re-writing of their mythological traditions and ethnic origins, relation to the land, and reasons for mobility. All of this came not from a putative nomadism at the beginning of the story, framed as a consequence of an earliest fault and Cain murder. The end was placed at the beginning.

MOBILITY IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A new geography and a new perspective on time slowly developed that included:

1. a transformed notion of creation, with an anti-mythological bend and a radical one, at that:⁷⁰
 - a) The format of the story of creation was different, in that it was not in poetic form. The Babylonian epic of creation, Ugaritic legends, and Hesiod's *Theogony* were in verse and meant to be sung, as part of a liturgy or not.
 - b) The oneness of the divinity is repeatedly insisted on. It has no paredra, and the verbs following the plural "Elohim" are in the singular. Furthermore, its real name is revealed by the narrator in the second part of the story of creation as "Yahweh Elohim".
 - c) The divinity is not engendered and does not give birth.
 - d) The basic elements of the world are not the product of an engendering either, or of a truncating or dismembering of primeval divinities. They are made (the words used are: "made, created," in the first part of the story, and "shaped" in the second part, or re-telling, of the story).
 - e) The notion of a pre-existing chaos is kept ("tohu wa-vohu") but this chaos is not divine. It is actually di-divinized, as Hebrew "tehom" (= the abyss) may correspond to Babylonian Tiamat. The waters are made and are not the elemental divinities Tiamat and Apsu of the Babylonian epic.
 - f) The world is good in all of its parts (including the wind or spirit). This contrasts with the world of strife and uneasy balance described in the Babylonian epic. The violence of the mythic world can only be subdued by a rebellious, focussed violence, that of Marduk-king,

⁷⁰Note that even if the traditional mythological world of Canaan, on which we know little, was different from the Mesopotamian one—as one should expect—it remains that the themes of the book of Genesis are militantly different from all we know comparatively about ancient Levantine mythologies.

who in turn can preside over the world and guarantee its order and security only by eliminating competitors.⁷¹ Needless to say, the idea of a world created by a perfect, single, outside god makes human sufferings difficult to explain.

- g) Humans haven't been created as slaves for the divinity. They are to work and eventually to toil (in the story of punishment), but not in service to the divinity.⁷² The humans are both divine and earthly in both the Babylonian and Genesis stories.
 - h) In Genesis, however, what is added to the clay is not the blood of the slaughtered, rebellious god Kingu of the Babylonian epic, but divine breath or spirit. Blood is in human bodies by virtue of being made of the ground or reddish clay ("adamah").
 - i) Finally, a word on the notion of time in Genesis 1–11: the story is not closed unto itself, as epic poems are more wont to be, and it is not a self-contained image or mimicry of human polity, but it opens to the history of the universe and its peoples (the genealogies), quickly narrowed down to Abraham and his lineage, Israel (=Jacob), and the birth of the people in the story of Exodus.
2. The new story is also the story of a movement of people eastward, set as if from the beginning, through the first eleven chapters of Genesis, followed by a migratory movement back to its "origin," though not spelled out as such, by Abraham, and with strong attachment to Bethel;
 3. This is followed by the story of an enslavement in Egypt, and the definition of the people by a covenant and the revelation of a law, within a narrative of salvation, before obtaining a land.⁷³
 4. The notion of autochthony, or natural belonging to a land, is played down or rejected. In Genesis, the human beings are expelled (sent away or expelled, Gen 3.23–24). There is no autochthony in Genesis 1–11 (and this is an on-going theme, right through Exodus). Or to put it differently: human origin is ex-centered, or its center is unreachable. There is no mention either of a temple like that of the Esagila, the great Babylonian temple we see in the Babylonian story: it is built by and for the gods, and is at the heart of the Babylonian kingdom and empire. One could argue that Eden, with its flame in Gen 3:24 and its "keruvim" or cherubs

⁷¹Something similar seems to be the case with El, Mot, Baal, etc., in the ancient Ugaritic tales.

⁷²Note: I disagree with Zionit's view regarding the punishment theme: Z. ZEVIT, *What really happened in the garden of Eden?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁷³A revolutionary concept even though it makes virtue out of necessity.

(mythical figures, half-human, half-animal, guarding the king's and god's throne), was that center and a figure of the historical Jerusalem temple, but if this is true, it was an oddly removed center, difficult to reach. It is instructive to compare this late development in the Hebrew scriptures with the near contemporaneous Athenians' view of their origin as proclaimed in the *Menexenus*:⁷⁴

The origin of our ancestors is not that of "arrivals," neither is it to show foreign residents (*μετοικοῦντας*), settled in this land to which they would have come from elsewhere, but they were autochthonous, inhabiting (*οικοῦντας*) and living authentically in their fatherland, and fed not by a stepmother like the others, but by a mother, the earth where they were inhabitants (*οικοῦν*), and now that they are dead, they rest in the places (*οικεῖοις τόποις*) of her who has begot, fed, and received them.

5. Torah as not only guaranteed, but given by the divinity, without any intermediary—certainly not the kings—, except priests and (cautiously) prophets.

UNDER ACHAEMENID PERSIA

KINGS OR PRIESTS?

Two major events occurred in the Achaemenid period: the decision to rebuild the temple and try to eliminate any competitor, and the editing of a version of the Torah, the Law. Judaea was then a very small, impoverished province of the "Beyond-the-Rivers" satrapy, while many Judaeans (eventually broadened as Jews) were dispersed through the empire, e.g. as soldiers in Egypt.⁷⁵ Why did the Achaemenid administration permit and perhaps encourage the temple's construction under the priests, and the editing of the law? One answer would be to follow Deutero-Isaiah and attest to the benevolence and tolerance of Cyrus and heirs, contrasted with the earlier cruelty of Babylonia, itself properly punished by Cyrus.

In reality, the Achaemenid policy made sense in a far-flung empire. There is evidence it was systematic.⁷⁶ In the particular agrarian society we are

⁷⁴Attributed to Plato, but see Nicole N. LORAUX, *Né de la terre : mythe et politique à Athènes* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 175–89, esp. 179 for the text.

⁷⁵See article by J. L. WRIGHT, "The commemoration of defeat and the formation of a nation in the Hebrew Bible," *Prooftexts* 29 (2011): 433–72, on the importance, in terms of imperial recognition, of this choice.

⁷⁶See P. BRIANT, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A history of the Persian empire*, trans. P. T. DANIELS (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002).

looking at in Judah, it was impossible to estimate and control the “surplus” without the cooperation of local elites and authorities, in this case most often the priests and levites, whose own livelihood depended upon their proximity to the people in villages and towns.

The priestly leadership, with the scribes and levites (here stories of long, difficult negotiations), found themselves in the leadership of the society after the eventual complete collapse of the monarchy.⁷⁷ As leaders, however, they were in a precarious or contradictory situation, as they were effectively both the instruments of the tributary empire at the same time as the definers of what would come to be seen as Judaism, primarily marked by a Torah which spelled out the cult in extensive detail, demanded holiness from the people, including a by now clearly defined call to social justice and protection of the poor.⁷⁸

NEHEMIAH 5

Nehemiah 5:1–13 is an example of the complexity of the situation. He is portrayed responding to a broad popular outcry triggered by situations of extreme poverty caused by “their Jewish kin.” They are hungry, have to pledge their property and even their persons in debt bondage. He brings “charges against the nobles and officials,” and forces them in an assembly of the people to restore fields, vineyards, orchards, houses, as well as interest on money and produce.

The usual understanding of Neh 5:1–13 is that it reflects a crisis susceptible of various explanations: vastly increased interest rates? or rather, an increased social stratification, since in an empire, the breaks on local accumulation were less necessary from the king’s point of view? Was there really a crisis, or rather, wasn’t this a particularly difficult moment of what was the normal situation, i.e., the dynamics of debt and cancellation—usually partial—which was systematically practiced in the whole area.⁷⁹ In this text, the priestly leadership defends the people as brothers, and this not as kings of course but as reminders or representatives of divine law (compare the Deut). Furthermore, it is possible that the collapse of the Judaeen monarchy had deprived society of a useful, corrective mechanism and amplified an old demand for debt cancellation, leading to terms guided by the Exodus theology of liberation. The

⁷⁷Reasons: the Josianic reforms and the priests’ activities, as well as the prophets’. On the latter, notice the distinctly scribal aspects in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

⁷⁸The “brotherhood” of Dt. Again, see summary in Blenkinsopp quoted above.

⁷⁹Again, the reason has to do partly with risk abatement, partly with the impossibility of predicting outcomes in the short term.

priests clearly sided with the people in exile. See Lev 25:23: “The land is mine. You are with me but immigrants and hosts.” The sceptic wonders if they claimed more authority precisely because of their divinely-commanded intervention, as the kings of old?⁸⁰

In any case, in Nehemiah as in Deuteronomy, we have strong echoes of Judahites and Judaeans or Jews as brothers: seven times in Neh 5, forty-eight times in Deuteronomy. With some scholars, I think it was not a utopia,⁸¹ given the evidence it is an ancient, common practice in the whole area, where we have evidence of similar phenomena. Yet it is notable that it was actually necessary, and potentially useful for the Persian king. An important reason for debt cancellation or adjustment was as follows. As said above, the difficulty of measuring harvests in advance and properly estimating the coming product, and therefore tithes and taxes, meant that a high premium was put on default, with systematic abatements, formulated in religious terms, which made ancient kings look generous—saviors and fathers as their coinage had it—and led to an expectation of “fidelity” in return.⁸² Demonstrations of fidelity were expected in material form and failures to do so harshly dealt with.⁸³

HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

Let me conclude with a few considerations on the 300 BCE to 70 CE period. It can be shown that the temple and Torah did protect people (or were believed and expected to) against the encroachments of tributary kingdoms or empires. One example is the desire for purity, attached to the notion of holiness, itself

⁸⁰Nehemiah, reportedly, didn’t take advantage of his position. See the analysis by J. L. WRIGHT, *Rebuilding identity; the Nehemiah-memoir and its earliest readers* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 180–87, showing this passage in Neh 5 has been inserted later, which reinforces the ideological interpretation of it.

⁸¹D. BODI, *Israël et Juda à l’ombre des Babyloniens et des Perses* (Paris: De Boccard, 2010), 243.

⁸²Regarding the freeing from debts (immediate according to this text): what is the origin of the fixed-term idea in the sabbatical year and the Jubilee? It existed in *Hammurabi code* 117 (freedom of slaves for debts in the fourth year). But the *andurārum* Akkadian custom was usually without fixed term. The word meant return to a state of origin and was usually practiced upon the king’s accession. Bodi, *ibid.*, 238, proposes that a certain proclamation of *andurārum* in second millennium Mari—apparently of the traditional kind—is “très intéressante pour l’idéologie de la guerre et de la justice.” I disagree. It is much more interesting in what it reveals of the state and kingship’s interests, as well as about the real structure of labor and debt systems.

⁸³Many examples of this in Assyrian texts as well as in Achaemenid inscriptions. But the Hellenistic and Roman texts, even the architecture, could provide ample proof of the phenomenon also.

achieved or negotiated in worship at the temple, and translating into the dynamics of purity and impurity which regulated daily activities: that is, work environment, family structure, contacts with foreigners, relationships in the town's market, etc.⁸⁴ The temple-guaranteed holiness (see Levitical code of holiness) could act as a break on multiple economic encroachments by imperial forces (in land and debt contracts, money usage and banking operations, cultural and religious aspects attached to them, etc.).

But the temple, when in the hands of the Herods (or the Oniads and Hasmoneans before in the Hellenistic period), was being enlarged and beautified to signify the power of an unnamable, invisible, universal divinity. Precisely in the same measure, it was being used and abused by kings and the high priestly families who served at the king's pleasure and ultimately obeyed the distant designs of the Roman empire, i.e. the extraction of 900 to 1000 talents of silver per year. The glaring misuse led to many messianic movements, including Jesus', and the ruin of the temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Another phase of the monotheistic idea then began.

SPIRIT AND EARLY CHRISTOLOGY

How does one explain the very early belief in Jesus' divine character: his naming as lord in Paul, the cult rendered to him, prayers?⁸⁵ Three main options exist: to see it as a radical step from within strict monotheism (Bauckham); or as a later development that came into Christianity via early mixed communities, in other words a Hellenistic influence; and thirdly, perhaps a development internal to Judaism, building on messianic, apocalyptic, and wisdom beliefs. This is discussed in a long, involved article on spirit-monotheism as a possible origin of early Christology.⁸⁶ The old history-of-religion explanation by beliefs originating in the polytheistic world (the *Kyrios* concept, for instance) has been convincingly rejected. The more radical, mediator-less proposal by

⁸⁴Concrete examples would necessitate an analysis of the use of individual ossuaries, stone vessels, sha'atnez rules, miqva'ot. To take the last mentioned item: archaeology of the early Roman period, as well as texts, show that purity baths were part of requirements related to the production of oil and wine. Together with the particular rules governing containers, one may imagine a complex system ultimately based on the temple that helped prevent or delay foreign, and therefore imperial encroachments.

⁸⁵See L. W. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ: devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁸⁶S. E. PORTER and A. W. PITTS, eds., *Christian origins and Hellenistic Judaism. Social and literary contexts for the New Testament*, vol. 2 of *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic context* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Bauckham, who argues for a dynamic, functional view of monotheism, is admired but reworked, rather than rejected, by the writers. Quoting them:

He proposes instead that the continuity between first-century Jewish and primitive Christian monotheism should be described not in terms of intermediaries, but as an incorporation of Christ into the monotheistic divine identity by allowing Christ to share in the two unique roles of the divine presence—an extremely novel and radical development, by Bauckham’s own admission.⁸⁷ (141)

Then, what mediating agents may have prepared the rise of the notion? Wisdom? Logos? Other powers? The authors propose the mediation of spirit, which was somewhat separable from the godhead, in their view, yet participated in divine identity. They detect it in Paul (esp. 1 Cor 8:6; also Romans), and see its association with the most important functions of the monotheistic god (creation, providence or government, salvation/redemption) as having been prepared in Judaism and the Hebrew Bible.

This article by Porter and Pitts forces one to think about the nature and history of divine anthropomorphisms in the long durée. Early Christian christology would not be a sudden, unprepared phenomenon but something preceded by divine forms or mediators, among which especially a personified wisdom (divine government?) and the logos (divine plan?).

Bauckham rejects these suggestions and argues on strong evidence that in the strict monotheism of the time these mediators were not part of the divinity and that the texts show clearly a separation between them and a strictly supreme and unique divinity. The article by Porter and Pitts takes up that question and attempts to show that the divine spirit was a somewhat externalized function of the divinity, yet was part of it and did not threaten its singularity and unicity.

This suggestion brings up for me the question of biblical anthropomorphisms. It seems to me that the question needs to be completely re-studied in view of the progress made in the history of monotheism. Porter and Pitts make no historical discrimination when using the Hebrew biblical texts to show that the characteristic functions of the monotheistic deity were creation of the

⁸⁷Referring to R. BAUCKHAM, *God crucified: monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), the two roles being creator and king; what of salvation and redemption? See also R. BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and other studies on the New Testament’s christology of divine identity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008).

cosmos, kingship (dominion and government?), and salvation plus redemption, with the often expressed idea of covenant and promise.⁸⁸

The expression “divine spirit,” (or: spirit/breath/wind of God) seems to me to belong to a large group of anthropomorphisms that were problematic for the ancients as they are for the moderns. See Smith who seems to hold to the idea of a fairly early monotheism struggling rather victoriously with anthropomorphic pictures of Yahweh in the eighth to seventh centuries (in D and P at least, which he seems to accept as early), but by no means avoiding anthropomorphisms in later exilic and especially post-exilic (apocalyptic) developments.⁸⁹

An inquiry on anthropomorphisms might separate the two periods created by a more historical view of the evolution of monotheism: a before, with already an astralization, and an after, with the clear need to continue (perhaps extend) anthropomorphic definition of the deity and add to the traditional categories more personal features. My hypothesis is that anthropomorphic descriptions of the deity cannot simply be fitted into the story of a progressively purer expression but should rather be seen as products of a constant dynamic or tension. The attribution to the divinity of singularity, exclusivity, separation in space and time, which are in fact extensions of traditional attributes of kingship, government, and salvation (including by battle), led to the creation of new anthropomorphisms. The apocalyptic literature especially testifies to this, with its very physical images of space and time.⁹⁰ Moreover, many passages like Psalm 50 can have been produced late. I conceive that “spirit of God” or “spirit of the Lord” became, or continued to be, a way to give life and warmth to a deity who was both very far and in danger of becoming an old weakening El.

So, the question of the divine spirit needs to be treated as part of the history of these anthropomorphisms, before more is made out of it.

⁸⁸I note that the first function, always presented as having priority in that article by Porter-Pitts, could conceivably follow from the second function, at least historically speaking, when monotheism developed. Texts vary on the question.

⁸⁹M. S. SMITH, *The memoirs of God. History, memory, and the experience of the divine in ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 143–44; SMITH, *The early history of God*, 140–47. Page 140–41, for instance: “Over the course of its history, Israelite religion reduced anthropomorphic depictions of Yahweh.” Page 145: “While the tendency away from anthropomorphism marks priestly and Deuteronomistic traditions belonging to the eighth through the fifth centuries, later works belonging to the priestly traditions continued to transmit anthropomorphic imagery.” Follow examples of Zech 3:7; 12:8; Daniel 7; 1 Enoch 14; Isa 27:1.

⁹⁰See briefly SMITH, *The memoirs of God. History, memory, and the experience of the divine in ancient Israel*, 145–46.

CONCLUSION

So, first of all, I see no straight line of development from polylatry to mono-latry. Secondly, even less do I see a line going from Mosaic monotheism to polytheism (-latry), and back to monotheism. The evidence can only fit a more complex story and doesn't compel one to see a progressively refined monotheism as a necessary outcome. I hope I have shown, though, that much of the monotheistic development is shaped by the need to resist larger forces.

I would like to suggest also that the thread running through the history of monotheism is that of fidelity: first to one's lineage or kinship, then beyond to those hidden (widow and orphan, bonded servants), doing the work, as social stratification increased from the ninth century BCE on, and finally to a broader, even more distant and concealed, yet related source of life (the no name of the exploited in the fully stratified societies of imperial Persia, Hellenistic kingdoms, and Rome).⁹¹ This fidelity was hidden but assumed, counted upon, and militarily enforced.

Is the kind of representation of the divinity we encounter in the second temple period, as a completely unrepresentable and unpronounceable "name", connected with this aspect?⁹² Did the ineffability of this name, or its cautious use, point towards the impossibility to see the real source of one's being beyond the evermore complex social articulations of the time? Or, on the contrary, did it represent a necessarily hidden, unquestionable cosmic and political order?⁹³

The present sketch of the beginning of monotheism was meant to suggest that in the first millennium BCE, the development of the economy, relationships beyond biology, more complex technological articulations, and cultural developments themselves, all contributed to making individuals more remote from the sources of their life. Their life and reproduction of it was not any more at the kinship, village, or even national, level but there was a horizon beyond which, they claimed through their scripture, everything once "hidden" or simply invisible (this is the meaning of the Hebrew word נעלם) became a

⁹¹Yes, but faith (fidelity), hope, compassion, and love are veiled, from historian's perspective.

⁹²On the forms ineffability took in writing, see the detailed analysis by A. LEMAIRE, *The birth of monotheism: the rise and disappearance of Yahwism* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007).

⁹³Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* leads me to think about this ambiguity. Who or what is the real source of authority and well-being? The Shogun or the poor wretch?

structured world and eternity (*‘olam*, in Hebrew עולם).⁹⁴

References

- ALBERTZ, R. *From the beginnings to the end of the monarchy*. Vol. 1 of *A history of Israelite religion in the Old Testament period*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.
- . “Social history of ancient Israel.” In *Understanding the history of ancient Israel*, edited by H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, 347–67. Proceedings of the British Academy 143. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- ALT, A. *Der Gott der Väter: ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der israelitischen Religion*. Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament. 3 Folge, Heft 12. (Der ganzen Sammlung, Heft 48). Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1929.
- ASSMANN, J. *Of God and gods: Egypt, Israel, and the rise of monotheism*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- BAUCKHAM, R. *God crucified: monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999.
- . *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and other studies on the New Testament’s christology of divine identity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008.
- BELLAH, R. N. *Religion in human evolution: from the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.
- BENDIX, R. *Max Weber: an intellectual portrait*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- BERMAN, J. *Created equal: how the Bible broke with ancient political thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- BERNAT, D. A., and J. KLAWANS. *Religion and violence: the biblical heritage*. Vol. 2. Recent research in Biblical studies. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007.
- BLENKINSOPP, J. *Isaiah 40–55 : a new translation with introduction and commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.
- BODI, D. *Israël et Juda à l’ombre des Babyloniens et des Perses*. Paris: De Boccard, 2010.
- BRIANT, P. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A history of the Persian empire*. Translated by P. T. DANIELS. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002.

⁹⁴On this word, see E. JENNI, “Das Wort, ‘ōlām im Alten Testament,” *ZAW* 64 (1952–53): 197–248, and E. JENNI, “Das Wort, ‘ōlām im Alten Testament,” *ZAW* 65 (1953–54): 1–35.

- BROSHI, M., and I. FINKELSTEIN. "The population of Palestine in Iron Age II." *BASOR*, 1992, 47–60.
- BUCCELLATI, G. *Cities and nations of ancient Syria; an essay on political institutions with special reference to the Israelite kingdoms*. Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1967.
- BYRNE, R. "The refuge of scribalism in Iron I Palestine." *BASOR* 345 (2007): 1–31.
- COLLINS, J. J. *The Bible after Babel: historical criticism in a postmodern age*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005.
- DAVIES, P. R. *The origins of biblical Israel*. Vol. 485. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.
- DE VAUX, R. *Histoire ancienne d'Israël, des origines à l'installation en Canaan*. Paris, Gabalda, 1971.
- FINKELSTEIN, I. *The forgotten kingdom: The archaeology and history of northern Israel*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.
- FREEMAN, K. *The work and life of Solon; with a translation of his poems*. New York: Arno Press, 1976 (1926).
- FREVEL, C. "Wovon reden die Deuteronomisten? Anmerkungen zu religionsgeschichtlichem Gehalt, Fiktionalität und literarischen Funktionen deuteronomistischer Kultnotizen." In *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur "Deuteronomismus" — Diskussion in Tora und vorderen Propheten*, edited by J. F. DIEHL, J. C. GERTZ, D. PRECHEL, K. SCHMID, and M. WITTE, 249–77. BZAW 365. De Gruyter, 2006.
- GARFINKEL, Y., and H.-G. KANG. "The relative and absolute chronology of Khirbet Qeiyafa: very Late Iron Age I or very Early Iron Age IIA?" *IEJ* 61 (2011): 171–83.
- GOTTWALD, N. K. *The tribes of Yahweh : a sociology of the religion of liberated Israel, 1250–1050 BCE*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- GRABBE, L. L. *Ancient Israel: what do we know and how do we know it?* London: T & T Clark, 2007.
- HEALEY, J. F. "The Nabataean 'God of the Fathers'." In *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: a festschrift to honour Professor John Emerton for his eightieth birthday*, edited by K. J. DELL, G. DAVIES, and Y. V. KOH, 45–58. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- HURTADO, L. W. *Lord Jesus Christ: devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003.
- JENNI, E. "Das Wort, 'ōlām im Alten Testament." *ZAW* 64 (1952–53): 197–248.

- JENNI, E. "Das Wort, 'ōlām im Alten Testament." *ZAW* 65 (1953–54): 1–35.
- KEEL, O., and C. UEHLINGER. *Gods, goddesses, and images of God in ancient Israel*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998.
- KESSLER, R. *Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel: eine Einführung*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006.
- . *The social history of ancient Israel: an introduction*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
- KIPPENBERG, H. G. *Discovering religious history in the modern age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- KIRSCH, J. *God against the gods: the history of the war between monotheism and polytheism*. New York: Viking, 2004.
- KLETTER, R. "Chronology and united monarchy." *ZDPV* 120 (2011): 13–54.
- KNOPPERS, G. N. *Jews and Samaritans: the origins and history of their early relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- LEMAIRE, A. *Naissance du monothéisme : point de vue d'un historien*. Paris: Bayard, 2003.
- . *The birth of monotheism: the rise and disappearance of Yahwism*. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007.
- LIVERANI, M. *Israel's history and the history of Israel*. London: Equinox, 2005.
- LORAUX, N. *Né de la terre : mythe et politique à Athènes*. Paris: Seuil, 1996.
- MASTER, D. "State formation theory and the kingdom of ancient Israel." *JNES*, 2001, 117–31.
- MAYSHAR, J. "Who was the *toshav*?" *JBL* 133 (2014): 225–46.
- MCNUTT, P. M. *Reconstructing the society of ancient Israel*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- MEYERS, C. L. "Was ancient Israel a patriarchal society?" *JBL* 133 (2014): 8–27.
- MILLER II, R. D. *Chieftains of the highland clans : a history of Israel in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C.* Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2005.
- OLYAN, S. "In conversation with J. A. Berman, *Created equal: how the Bible broke with ancient political thought*." *JHS* 10, no. a9 (2010): 1–49.
- OTTO, E. "Deuteronomy between the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History." *JHS* 9, no. a17 (2009): 22–27.
- OTTO, E., and R. ACHENBACH, eds. *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.
- OTTO, S. *Jehu, Elia, und Elisa: die Erzählung von der Jehu-Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa-Erzählungen*. Vol. 8. Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001.

- PFOH, E. *The emergence of Israel in ancient Palestine*. London: Equinox, 2009.
- PLEINS, J. D. "Territory and Temple." Chap. 8 in *The social visions of the Hebrew Bible. A theological introduction*, 319–52. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- PORTER, S. E., and A. W. PITTS, eds. *Christian origins and Hellenistic Judaism. Social and literary contexts for the New Testament*. Vol. 2 of *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic context*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- PROPP, W. H. "Monotheism and "Moses." The problem of early Israelite religion." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31 (1999): 537–75.
- . *Exodus 19-40: a new translation with introduction and commentary*. Vol. 2A. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2006.
- ROLLSTON, C. A. *Writing and literacy in the world of ancient Israel: epigraphic evidence from the Iron Age*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.
- RÖMER, T. *The so-called Deuteronomistic history: a sociological, historical, and literary introduction*. London: T & T Clark, 2007.
- SCHNIEDEWIND, W. M. *How the Bible became a book: the textualization of ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- . *Social history of Hebrew: Its origins through the Rabbinic period*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013.
- SMITH, M. S. *The early history of God. Yahweh and the other deities in ancient Israel*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002.
- . *The memoirs of God. History, memory, and the experience of the divine in ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- . *God in translation: deities in cross-cultural discourse in the biblical world*. *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 57. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.
- SOLER, J. *La violence monothéiste*. Paris: Fallois, 2008.
- STARK, R. *For the glory of God: how monotheism led to reformations, science, witch-hunts, and the end of slavery*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- . *The victory of reason: how Christianity led to freedom, capitalism, and Western success*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2005.
- STAVRAKOPOULOU, F. "Gog's grave and the use and abuse of corpses in Ezekiel 39:11–20." *JBL* 129 (2010): 67–84.
- SUGIMOTO, D. T. "An analysis of a stamp seal with complex religious motifs excavated at Tel 'En Gev." *IEJ* 64 (2014): 9–21.
- TESTART, A. *L'esclave, la dette et le pouvoir: études de sociologie comparative*. Paris: Errance, 2001.

- VAN DER TOORN, K. *Scribal culture and the making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- WEBER, M. *Ancient judaism*. Edited by H. GERTH and D. MARTINDALE. New York: The Free Press, 1952.
- WESTBROOK, R. "The laws of Biblical Israel." In *The Hebrew Bible: new insights and scholarship*, edited by F. E. GREENSPAHN, 99–119. New York: New York University Press, 2008.
- WOODHOUSE, W. J. *Solon the liberator. A study of the agrarian problem in Attika in the seventh century*. New York: Octagon Books, 1965.
- WRIGHT, J. L. *Rebuilding identity; the Nehemiah-memoir and its earliest readers*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.
- . "The commemoration of defeat and the formation of a nation in the Hebrew Bible." *Prooftexts* 29 (2011): 433–72.
- WRIGHT, R. *The evolution of God*. New York: Little, Brown, 2009.
- ZEVIT, Z. *What really happened in the garden of Eden?* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.